

The Rocking House

Selected Poems
1966-1998

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HYPER POST META

Brown.
Dark brown.
Line.
Blue.
Dark blue.
Blue.
Line.
Greengreengreen.
Curved line.
Jump. Dog. Peach.
Yellowgray sky.
Old woman.
Tilt.

1, 2, 3, 4.
Hold still.
Light.
Underlight.
Slip.

Waiting.
(two hundred and forty-three)
Keembab.

Leaving.

Returning.

Pink.
More pink. Still more pink.
Too much pink.
Less pink.
That's better.

PING

Yesterday she looked at over 3400 paintings by Paul Gauguin
and was astounded by his work.
He could not remember her name but painted her nonetheless;
walked three miles full tilt,
remembered the painting coming alive
and saw the scene painted again
through cognitive coupling
or thrilling thinking
or language linking—
whoops—
or reactive resonance
or artistic assonance
or communicative clutching
four and eleven hundredths miles per hour,
or Willie the Weeper
or Hilly the Heaper
or Rilly the Reaper
or Pilly the Peeper
or Silly the Seeper
or Lilly the Leaper
was a very light sleeper.

Drank water.
Walked a thorough cool down.

Drank water.
Stretched an exemplary set of unobstructing stretches,
took a steadily colder shower in the Chinese manner
and considered how that great painter
left his wife, five children
and high income stockbroker job
saying, "I can paint. I know it. I feel it."
He could and
became difficult, impoverished,
productive. Shortly before he died he was jailed for advising people not to
pay their taxes, to stay away from the Catholic church in particular and
Christianity in general.

Good guys are locked up.
You go to work.
You go to school.
You go to church.
You go to the bank.
Good guys are locked up,
behind bars,
doing time,
wasting away.
Good guys are locked up
while Edwin Meese, George Bush and
you, dear listener,
and
(here you fill in your contribution)
walk the streets.
Good guys are locked up.

If we could turn this world
inside out
like a glove
like a cadaver
like a lover
without pain
without competition
without poverty
(good guys are locked up)
without racism . . .
Can't you hear the sound of humanity?
Can't you hear the hidden away human beings?

And I AM
nervous for
Malcolm X,
Fred Hampton,
Elizam Escobar,
Raphael Cancel Miranda,
who has touched me on the shoulder
as a human being
like a glove
or a flag turning in the wind,
the cold, the snow falling completely over America.
Good guys are locked up.

If racism couldn't do it for this society,
If sexism couldn't do it,
If poverty couldn't do it,
If making bombs and guns couldn't do it,
what could do it, I ask you,
what could do it?
Good guys are locked up.

I considered how long since I had written a poem and the play awaiting completion, dropped a purple comb to the locker room floor, bent to pick it up.

You do remember how in Genesis, Jacob wanted his property and his brother Esau too.
So, in returning from Padan-Aram to Canaan,
Jacob engaged in struggle with an apparently supernatural being.

To them the rain against the window by the step where they sat halfway up the stairs seemed silver. Streams of separate memories, parenthetical comings and goings with or without lines, they felt no less the worse. Nothing dissimilar from grief etched their postures—one fat, one thin.

A while ago it was not raining. Now it is raining. At some point in the future it will stop raining. They can sit this one out. Weather this storm.

"I'm tired of waiting for the rain to stop every time it starts raining," said Jake.

"The better to develop our patience," said Roscoe. "It's just one of nature's little gizmos."

They dream of things dark and wet. You would do as much. They sit and stare as if through a blue, cloudless autumn sky into the infinite beyond.

Jacob wrestled with a divine being, a demon, or a mysterious stranger which, when Jacob was winning, kicked him in the butt in the expurgated version of the bible and in the balls in the original or at least the version the expurgators got to read—well, whichever—I swerved so violently and deftly that—

PING

Alone, she was looking up at the moon quite late one night, wondering if there was some way she could determine simply by singular observation whether the moon was waxing or waning. She worked out a method, decided it was waning, walked home, went inside, checked a calender, and found she was wrong. You probably think she's some kind of bimbo to be out alone—late at night—in the cold—trying to figure out something about the moon and being wrong. Where do you get off thinking the moon is just some stupid rock? The moon was here long before you, gentle reader, and will likewise be here long after you will have gone. The moon's influence on the tides in one day is more than you influence anything in a lifetime. So don't muck about with the moon. And don't try to get out of it by complaining about how this doesn't even sound like poetry to you. So what. Shape up. You can throw your back out, as they say,

lifting no more than a comb from the floor.

She went out late the next night.
Lowdown the fog was like soup peas.
The moon was riding high.
Rain falling only under trees.

She sang this very special sing to herself:
When the loss is to the West,
Moon will lose all the rest.
When the loss is to the East,
Moon has seen its very least.

She calculated that the moon was waning,
and to make a short story shorter, she was correct.

At this point you need feel only 50% bad for her. Anything
more is Liberal posturing—anything less could be mistaken for
clear thinking.

Brown.
Dark brown.
Line.
Blue.
Dark blue.
Blue.
Line.
Greengreengreen.
Curved line.
Jump. Dog. Peach.
Yellowgray sky.
Old woman.
Tilt.

1, 2, 3, 4.
Hold still.
Light.
Underlight.
Slip.
Waiting.

Leaving.

Returning.

(two hundred and forty-three)
Keembab.

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More pink. Still more pink.
Too much pink.
Less pink.
That's better.

WINTER WINDOW WIDE

I dreamt a chandelier fell,
crashed and scattered across the floor
in shards,
when actually my breath had frozen,
fallen and shattered in mid snore —
by my head —
on the pillow —
as I lay sleeping in bed.

**TO JON, A FRIEND: ON TURNING 34
AND DECIDING TO BE LOREN, A MUSICIAN**

Now that the mice are out
of your horn
and the roaches are gone
from your bed
you can finally answer the door
with a senile nod
of the head.

We'll enter, your friends;
although you chased us away
with that madly fluttering tongue.
You'll don your dungaree jacket
and pass the macaroons;
the great shaggy beasts are coming
and the bathtub's under the broom . . .
Huzza—wait—an interlude—
these things are none but their own.

We know your notes won't rhyme
a cage around the holes
you dig
the shapes sounds fill in time.

SONG OF THE MAINTENANCE MAN

The man who maintains the premises has been here again.
He work with his body every day
and his body is rejuvenated
and destroyed.
That he does not use his mind
is the fantasy of someone else
who does not use his mind.
How he must use his mind
is to protect himself
in the social relationships
in and about the work
designed to hasten
the destruction of his body, to disturb not
his ability to work, but to live,
to bring his survival close before his eyes
like a thickening translucent eyelid that
finally
never opens again.
This person has become hard.
People speak of nothing getting in,
the circle of clichés upon which
he supports himself.
Yet, they speak to him in bars—
on moonless nights—
in empty closets.
If they speak to him at all,
they speak where they
think they find they find him.

BEFORE TIPI

The river doesn't work.
The water is always lying down.
The river is like a dream.
There is no effort in that kind of thought.
She makes up songs to herself.
She sings for her daddy is not there.
She does not know she does not need more.
She needs more.
The sun and the ocean pull the river.
Maybe only the sun.
We can not see
That is more for a lake.
She tosses a colander in the air.
The moonlight streams through the holes
casting a spinning tipi of light
about her in the fog
so her song won't get lost
and fall in the river.

The light beams are a prophecy
of the whiskers starting to grow
on the underside of the raft.
The whiskers rub the river's inner thigh.
A catfish will someday live in
that hair tipi under the raft.

THE OTHER WOMAN

My wife speaks much more lovingly to our
dog

than she speaks to me.

She looks at him with long looks and
studies his being.

She does not get angry with him.

Whatever he wants to do that's fine with her—
she does not wish to hang him up.

Yet she loves me much more than this animal.

I think I'll get rid of her anyway.

THE PLEASURES OF MERELY

For
rainyday writers
and those of you who came in late
to this slapdash civilization
making it out a deconstructed dream,
I remind you
no sauce
however sweet,
delicato,
deep,
is worthwhile without good firm pasta.
The mother of all believers!
waves, mocking birds, breasts.
At the zoo — crepuscular,
resistless — water — irresistible and unresisting.

We word as we breath,
with little awareness — not daring to stop
but briefly lest we lose our own holding
and like an ever spinning word wheel, slow, flutterstutter,
keel over and quit.

Sounds separate around the tongue.
Clouds separate before the sun.
Colors separate on the wall.
Sunlight separates in glass
and taken apart parts taken neck ates trap.

Leaves rain down.
The sun blows around.
Wind lifts the ground,

and screams pull apart the sound.
Mrs. O'Leary's cow might just as well have been a sequoia
or an ultrarevolutionary.
Bare branches against the July sun.

VIEW FROM A CHINESE LAKESHORE

A large, black bird slides like a shadow puppet
across deepening blue sky.
The earth is well watered; grass, green; river, high.
Summer is here before we know it.
I remember leaving prison to enter soft prison.
Perhaps I am growing old.
This night I must wait for the waning, gibbous moon
to show itself on the lake
so I can see
now
your beautiful face
now shining at the sun
across the world from me.

JUST STANDING AROUND

If you are poor presume that nobody but you can't say what you mean. Irregardless of all that, the victims believe anything but they are self-made parasites feeding off a generous society again. He is. Furthermore, if you ask me anybody sumptuous past necessity must become inoperative as a matter of fact his worst friend is but a sycophant grazing on his own charitable best enemy. Because the needy are believe you me no luxury but a necessary necklace embellishing wealthy necks, no longer are the indigent prey but self-appointed poachers on America's liberal economy. Give me a liver large enough and a teflon pan so I can fix you a treat and wipe out anemia in my lifetime. The peace on poverty program continues prosperity on war. He does not buy it me nobody you can't say you intend mean anything by it believe me flatterer again. He is poverty asking me his past can't become his friend leeching his own antagonist. Don't asking me what body necklace adorns necks are victims feeding off enemy society.

LEDA AND THE BEAST

He is not what you call beautiful.
A large animal, bird-like,
white feathered but certainly not a swan
hops about a field
wheezing thin brown breath
and braying an intermittent

FWOCK

While flapping frantically
at his bare buttocks.
There is also in this field
a lady, hysterical.

How can she keep this creature from getting
in her way?
She cannot.
A feathered, sticky gloom
presses her to the ground.
This is no fish on her belly.

RAPID TRANSIT

Sure.

Can I have some more seven-up?

These brownies are outta sight.

but I don't think I can eat any more.

Where did you hide the money?

His mother wrote him:

"I went to the store

to buy some (as you musicians say)

bread."

No dummy she knows clothing

is to lose. So far all

she could get rid of was her shoes.

Money is slang for hashish.

A money tunnel is both

a special clay pipe

and a visual experience

resulting from use of the pipe.

"Stick it in your money tunnel,

honey," she said.

Yes she did.

He dropped her brownie.

OUT WEST

Dark corner.
Old men hunchedover

a table

Walls drawing back
eyes piercing the rattle
of glasses and smoke

Brown suit strolls.

Throws a goldnugget

on the table.

Voices and eyebrows

Some teeth

but not many.

The little boy

with a flower

walks up

two
three
one

runs out the door

The street full of bears.

There is an elkrack

over the bar

a meadow over the mountain
and over the blue, deep and moonlit lake
the mallard fly shadows
and by shadows

assure themselves

that geese do see god.

POP

Last week on my thirty-fourth
Birthday, I finally told my
parents that I am a poet. That is:
I write poetry.
My father said,
“I thought you were a teacher. So—
it turns out you’re a faggot after all.”

GEOGRAPHY

He sees her as he hears her.

As if she is the weather, she stutters
in his eye,

her head resting against his chest,

her breath fanning his nipple

like a small island in the Pacific

with a palm tree and volcano

dancing about 750 miles south.

MIDMORNING RUSH

In the small of your back
starts a shudder.
I climb your ribs
to mouth
your utterly white silent flesh
and her eyes come alert
like a lynx breaking from sleep
to move with one motion
from one open retreat
slipping through my eyes
like the belly of your breath
clings to this cheek.

DIAPHRAGM
A Non-Children's Poem

For the last three weeks my testicles
have been aching.

“Is this a promise or a threat,”

I ask myself, “a desire or a complaint.”

I'll settle for “threat”—genital cancer.

Recently I read that cancer

is a venereal disease.

I'm tired of tight pants.

O that the fashion

might soon change.

WELCOME HOME

Look out!!!

Because I am hiding behind the door
and don't have no pants on
and forgot to wipe my bottom
I was so startled to find
a completely naked young lady
down in the basement
putting new verbs in the language
and afraid to come upstairs.

CHILDREN'S POEM

Speedy little weed come flower
this song. The very
fat man has come and gone.
The very fat man with
peek-a-boo eyes who longed
to see cockroaches instead of the flies.
Fat little man with
a whistle wrong left
a strange weed
to flower this song.

NON-POEM POEM

Non-Poem

A woman has just
made me happy
so I have no complaints.
I cannot tell you how good I feel.
There is nothing to revise,
nothing out of place,
no poem to write.

Poem

I have changed my mind.
I will tell you
about this woman:
she is like throwing steak
to a pack of hungry dogs.
The best meet
close to the bone
while the others lick your hand.

**SOMEONE SAID SOMETHING ELSE BUT
NO ONE SAID ANYTHING TO ME ABOUT IT
SO SOMEONE ELSE MUST HAVE SAID THAT**

“Just what are your priorities, enaways?” she asked, getting at them by twisting his left nipple like the combination on a wall safe in a 1930’s movie.

Say for no outrage but none yourself.

So: for this day’s particulars, trees may or may not line the street; one may no longer nor shorter before see old men of many behaviors; breathe now for a time air questionable beyond notice and question; relieve the poor off the pavement horseshit fed them biodegradable over 3000 years a spit of wheat to processed soybean phlegm, coolaid and mineral oil. The young drop their teeth into grandparents’ water glass. Hospital rooms hold old folks who punch their eyes back into the sockets with remote control boxes for the rented T.V. and they say—“Please, Please” forgetting next to ask for. There is no next nor second “please”. That first please really does repeat without insistence: an utterance degenerated to pure form. These old, the language and we have arrived. Someone says intention makes an impersonal tool divine.

An else one, outraged, says in another place and time all this might indicate a revolution at hand while admittedly to us signals nothing of the sort.

We’re putting you all on hold. You won’t be needing that for a while. You must have been thinking of something else. You don’t know how lucky you are to be alive. Sure, we’re only human; we make mistakes, but if you try to replace us now, you’ll have chaos in the streets.

(nice long pause)

They are coming out from all this confusion. So they have spoken to one another again and have made another agreement of which /we/ by one of them may have by now or will be told— one’s version— whenever anyway— to go by until— abiding by that told from all if each one will be again spoken with again until we once are again on the road alone

while you are perhaps asleep now,
accepting neither calls nor callers,
invitations nor retreats;
having taken in the post office,
hung out your questions like sheets—

ground that last small pencil into sharp cheddar cheese—
your knees knocking without entering
or saying good-bye—
the house shaking your uneaten echoes ringing out
window panes, green plants and ashes—
a rocking house teeter-totter
without fulcrum
grabbed by both ends
calling:
“Question can not leave.”

You are alone
and I am asleep
on my foot,
just this once—
an extremely singular
 animated suspension.
Now, from me the words are leaving.

CAPE COD 1697 OR 1699

Last night you walked alone on the beach
in the sand
with the tide coming in—
the tide coming in—
your shapes echoing through the surf
or the fog
as though time were far away
the eye could not see,
but sought mountainous country
green, white
and vertical
in high

still

air.

This morning,
as if you had not left,
the fishermen are singing.
They row out to sea.
Oar tips churn their words
into the water
with swirls at each stroke
a photograph is cast out of the foam,
8 x 10 glossies
of you moving through the fog or the surf
as the fishermen
are singing.

TEMPERATE ZONE HURRICANE

It's not the shit;
it's the fan.
World is full of shit.
Can't get away from the shit.
Get away from the fan.
Don't trip.

600 mile per hour
or 965.6,082,527 ten millionths kilometer per hour shit
is a real problem.
It will hurt you
and
it will
hurt you
good.
Don't trip now.
Get away
from
the fan.

Also, flying sweets, chocolate, biscotti,
green beans, dal, and other airborne lovelies
can kill your ass when encountered at
sufficient velocity—
velocity because speed and direction
are important:
as in travelling fast and striking not you
can be sorta funny
when the speeding turd hits someone else's
redfaced head,
or kinda cute
as the lips shape that elegant,
fishmouthed zero toward the end of "OW."

A friend (under duress) once pointed out
to me
that in the case of a crock of shit,
the crock simply serves to keep the shit
outside the crock from getting on the shit
inside the crock.
Don't trip, block or transport.
Are you pro crock or pro fan?
Profane or procroak?
A crock fan or fan crock?
A crockpot topcork crackpot?
Don't be shit sure and fan foolish.
Don't trip.
Don't trip now.

700,000 DEAD

700,000 dead.
The issue, slavery.
The issue, secession.
Can you leave the Union?
700,000 dead
over the ownership of human beings,
involuntary servitude.
Can you leave?
Can anyone leave any situation?
That the L.A. uprising of '92 left 56 dead,
only double the usual murder rate
in Los Angeles in one week
12,500 arrested
wouldn't mean nothin
if it weren't for T.V.
in America
where violence is the measure.
Fine.
Thank you.
The flaw called death.
If people can get a thrill from bowling,
it's not so difficult to imagine
that there are those who get a thrill
from killing.
There are no flaws in America
where violence is the measure.

RANSACKED

I wish that I could give you an image
that you could take to bed tonight
as you might
a man, a woman, a person—
O—this is not possible—
but say one of my poems
could serve itself up to you
something so seductive
that you would just have to take it out
and lay it down on the pillow
next to your head
like a friendly,
dead fish.

SHAPESHIFTER GUMBO

They call it the pipe.
The crossroads at midnight.
Wind slips past rimblisters and snap blasters
guarded by loup garou.
They feed they loa.

They call eat the pipe.
Goat mon tell you,
“Look Out!
snake whine up yo spine”
Tobe oats feeding on strup neem.

They call eat the pipe.
Green tape screen replay.
Take some frog hys,
some gray stick pitoo,
light seven candles,
stand them in dripwax
on de mirror.
You take it from there.

They call it the pipe
The crossroads at midnight
Wind slip rimblister loup garou
They feed they loa they pipe.
Hamadryas come.
Hamadryas.
Dar he.

IF

I won't make you

(an object)

I'll show you

(yours)

IF

You won't make me

(a mirror)

You'll show me

(mine)

FISH AND COWS

There once was a monkey that would not eat as a matter of principle in the world in which he lived. “If you don’t mind, I would rather not,” he would say. But of course, they did mind, so given the world in which he lived the monkey changed what he said to, “I would rather not.” And then to, “I don’t wanna.”

Those around him continued minding in earnest and the monkey continued not to eat and so starved to death. This took quite some time but happened nonetheless.

LAST STATEMENT

So.
They've been watching the red rum moon set dim.
Your wasted sun—
Say 50 billion years hence—
No longer bleaching blood white
To blend with the page
And having long since sucked up
The earth into a solar deathwobble.
O history
O humanity
Whatever shall become of you?

Easy come easy go. Upon these issues I have nothing to say.
Possibly it is too warm. Leave it at that. Sometime undoubtedly it
will be or has been too cold. Beyond these condition—how can I
express . . . ? This really isn't making things any better.—Not any
worse either. In fact things may never be this good again. They
say the universe is expanding—that the earth is shrinking—so
much the better! Someone learns a language from the sound of a
pen slipping across a page, hearing Bach in the woods seeing
water break sunlight over ripples in the sand at a seashore. And
what of it?

GOOD JOB

Mackerel sky general. (over)
open my
word lands arrest Honey bees
read minds what's this nonsense
Kenneth let's do barnyard
animals got to start finishing
off some of these people love
the common morcot love
it to death at odds even 9
people freeze to death Kansas City 11/12/86
is this the freak one seeing Kenneth rocky branch
creek fatal shores marooned stamp gray mule
tap tap tap what's the frequency Kenneth altocumulus snow drops

2057

seiche: the rhythmic
rocking from side to
side of a lake's water
with fluctuation of

the water
level

IN PRAISE OF THE MIDWEST

Fall.

Running through the woods with head thrown back.

Naked vines on a gray wall.

A stubble of grass and broken cornstalks,

an inelegant breeze that would shame a blowtorch

unsettles the unsettling dust across a vast, flat extravagance of land.

A sight only a Tibetan Yogi would cherish.

Ahh, be with me in this time of rigid vibration, slowtouch.

This memory is not mine.

Who is that dark follower?

I'm someone else,

and not alone.

I spare this stone my touch

and my tune.

I'm a stem without a rose.

I would not be an elephant

nor would I be a dog;

but if a shape were in my head,

I'd croak it like a frog.

And if my vision seems unclear,

I'll take it back to bed.

But you know I would not sleep.

You know

I will not sleep.

rada yeeda rada yeeda rada kahtee rada kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda
rada yeeda rada kahtee rada kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda
rada kahtee rada kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda rada
kahtee rada kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda rada kahtee
rada kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda rada kahtee rada
kahtee kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda rada kahtee rada kahtee
kahtee kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada yeeda rada yeeda rada kahtee rada kahtee kahtee
kahtee rada rada yeeda yeeda rada rada

Night.

A black, silk blouse falls about a woman's waist,

reflections running through the bare woods,

breasts thrown naked.

I'm whole again.

The trees can sing my shaking.

An eyeless prince of shapes climbs from a bower of limbs.

Leaves, and lifelike reflections, a grid of bare twigs,

small things held by that yet smaller

mix in a darkening pool.

I once loved nothing more than fresh raspberries.

I would admittedly indulge in an excess of mulberries

but they were plentiful and often made me sick.

Not so with raspberries.

Then I saw Mr. Armentrout standing on his back steps.

And he said, "Would you eat an old man's breakfast?"

The question seemed rhetorical. His garden fence was very high.

When things go black, the eye begins to see the eye.
The mind turns on itself—a pure attack.
No place, other than where one is,
and the soul knows that's enough.
A dark animal, trapped in the dark, I await the blinding light.
Who would ask to see?
Every shape has its sound.

My fall is my salvation.
I touch the living ground,
an edge,
beginning.

GARBAGE POEM

The can toppling over,
the clatter of metal on concrete
or thud on mud,

the garbage pouring forth—unknown,
the hefty trash bag liner
dropped without breaking two stories
on T.V.—
the nutshell of American Capitalist
Technological Expertise
before her teeth—
so vulnerable,
so doomed,
so admittedly full of shit.

The digging in, the discovery,
the sad ravishing of what people waste,
throw away, discard,
have no further use for.

And then I smell a door opening,
turn,
and hear an angry moving face
looking for warning
and ready to protect.

I am, frankly, at this instant,
startled and afraid.
Then I see this person see me,
very nearly, if not in fact,
shit itself on the spot;
slam the door in greater anger yet
and begone.
Sometimes yelling while retreating:
Scat!! Hey!! or What the fuck?? nice doggie.

I am so sad and disappointed
that these people love to guard
what they have thrown away
and care so little for what they want.

This is why I eat that garbage
even though I get the bloat,
stomach pains
and blow the fart.

I have not the gift of speech
nor High I.Q. would I assume,
yet I seem to speak most human
in garbage I consume.

DOMED LANDSCAPE

I see your reflection
in the field
left this year to clover and grasses.

You are the cornflakes
I ate for breakfast.
That's not the truth.

I never eat breakfast—
yet you were a good idea
while you lasted.

I have been absorbed by a sponge
and await someone to squeeze me out.

The room is lighted by fireflies
crawling across the walls.

The moon is a pendulum
that swings one way only

to knock open the door to the forest—
as opposed to the stars

who knock without entering
and say goodbye without leaving—

or the sun
who is a revolving door

opening on the seasons.

I don't see you

reflected in the water
so you think I am alone.

Your shadow floats down river.

A YOUNG BOY'S DREAM

Sunday breakfast over. What to do?
I say something to father
but he does not hear.
Evening brings on fever.
I lie in bed.
My blood is rushing—rushing.
My heart is in my ear.
Water boils in the kettle.
A simple question echoes in my head.
I'm the sun—
behind a cloud.
A rock in the fire explodes.
The stars at noon through a dark bush,
digging a hole in a tunnel.
The well reaches the water table.
The walls are lit with candles.
I cry to mom for something cold.
She does not hear my call.
I sometimes think I speak so softly
I do not speak at all.

HINTER SKINTER

Hearing right wingers
talk about economics,
global politics and war
is like
watching someone quit working and
put down a puzzle that is too hard,
seeing that toothache pain face of
confusion and defeat
and then
being required to listen to that
same face explain the puzzle, unsolved.

NEMESIS IN BLACK LACE PANTIES

If there were a god,
he would have died laughing ages ago.

If there were a god and I made in
his image, he would have died
laughing ages ago.

If there were a god and I were in his
image made, we should have died
laughing ages ago.

Of course, I do not believe in god
but I do believe in hell — the lesser of
two evils.

NOBODY

he will neither dance nor stand still.
And, oh well, he always drops his keys.
Every entry a trauma.
This man is, even now, coming up the stairs.
Tomorrow the energy gained in this ascent
will be lost
before
the first
fresh
outdoor
accident
has struck
and rocked him
back.

WOMAN WITH BOWL OF FRUIT

Snow stone curves
melted in her bowl
eyes of our lips
while oranges bright apples
touch and peaches

She learned curves
knowing a bowl
of white quivering
oranges
sound
apples
touch
wet
peaches

Her snow stone curves
melted in my eyes
our white exploded into green
sudden bright thighs touch
and peaches

Stone curves,
melting points
were in her
an eye's edge, our edges;
white shapes exploded into green
sudden bright thighs of touch.

She hides her whiteness in a sheet.
This woman's shadow melts the snow.
Pure heat is rapt dark in heat:
within the points that line a bowl,
an eye's edge,
white shapes of oranges,
sound, apples, thighs
and touch.

TROWBRIDGE

Fay following Burton to the old crick at the bottom of Parson's Ridge. Failing light. Autumn breeze above. Burton slipping in the leaves—to the damp. Strong smell of life and death. Fay hurries after. Close steps, good balance, doesn't slip, stops to smell. Burton at the edge—in the sand—intent on crossing—hand to branch, foot on log—buttocks clenched—Fay watching—close behind—to the edge—in the sand—eyes bulging. Burton falters skyward—needs help—out of reach—grabs limb—keeps his balance—out of reach—beyond help. Fay following—grabbing branch—slippery log—wet smell—sharp crack—Burton falling—frantic action—freezing wet—loud screams—bitter cursing.

SEARCHLIGHT SEQUENCE

She loved sequins—
had an exquisite, long sleeved, sequined
blouse and snug pants.
She would never pretend to a spotlight.
So this evening, very late,
she walked with five friends.
She had bought each
his own flashlight.

Some walked ahead of her.
Some behind—
and so on.
All moved around—
back and forth—
shining thin 5-cell
flashlight beams at
her.

Only she walked a straight line.

Occasionally, she would call out to them
what part of her to shine their lights on.
This was done anatomically
but sometimes her group
would shine where they pleased or not hear,
get confused and so on.
She was charmed by this streak of independence,
and wouldn't discourage it for the world.
Someone once said the only reason America never had a
dictator is because its people can't follow directions.
If you think she was some kind of floozy,
you're way off base.
She could hardly call out "buttock"
above a whisper.

Nobody ever bothered them
except a few drunks.
Drunks will bother just about anybody.

One time two policemen
stopped their squad car and both got out.
Apparently confused
by so many flashlights already shining
they didn't even flash theirs in her eyes,
nor ask any questions.
They did say something.
I haven't the slightest idea what.

For a few moments she had had seven flashlight beams.
The patrol car left.
She was unaffected by this fluctuation in her routine.
It would take more than 2 extra flashlights to turn her head or
any other part of her anatomy.
She called out "Three shine on chest—
two shine on the legs, one on head,"
as they crossed to the street

planted in fast growing, quick dying
russian olive shade trees.
They knew the numbers,
though not always who was to shine where.
That also kept them moving
on those muggy,
hot,
dark
nights
of the new moon.

DEEP VOODOO

Not the flash and pop of nuclear warfare
but the whimper of slow pollution
do
voo
was it whatever
voodoo
deep voodoo
in deep
now in
we are now
it was
whatever
we are
now in
I'll tell
whatever it was
now in deep
voodoo
I'll tell you
whatever it was
we're now in deep voodoo
I'll tell you that
Ross Perot
Dar he.

IDIOTOMY

soapy water

kidney stones

iron water

wet water

colitis

dengué fever

sweet water

loudwater

underwater

stutter

malnutrition

black widow spider

Immodicis brevis est aetas et rara senectus

bathwater

mouth water

well water

cold water

salt water

depression

obesity

schizophrenia

cancer

murder

I am disabled. Communicate with me.

Man overboard.

The way is off my ship; you may feel your way past.

I have surplus power. I can take you in tow.

You are proceeding into danger.

Stop carrying out your intentions and watch for my signals.

Shall I take you in tow?

keeyom keeyom keeyom water

dishwater

heavy water

boiling water

seltzer water

quiet water

moonwater

lovewater

hypertension

jungle rot

lumbago, beri beri, pellagra

falling rock

competition

hysteria

brown recluse spiders

amoebic dysentery

The object is in the subject. Form is emptiness.

fire water
running water
muddy water
tidewater
potato water
back water
rain water
deep water

wild dogs
video games
leprosy
exhaustion
poison ivy
unemployment
South American Tarantulas
goblins
bottled water
flooded water
bad water
ground water
holywater

cottonmouth water moccasins
employment
undertow
insomnia
venereal warts

Lisa was married to one of two identical, identical twins. At least one of the twins lied at all times. Wishing to take her husband Robert to bed, she asked the first twin, "Are you Robert?" He replied "Yes, I am." She then asked the same question of the second twin and based on his answer determined which was Robert and took him to bed for a good night's sleep.
Was the first or second twin Robert?

sea water
tap water
snow water
whoopie water
whitewater
hard water
light water
jerkwater

Daemons
conformity
bushmasters
alienation
cobras
exploitation
rattlesnakes
oppression

water cooler
water logged
water leak
water glass

water buffalo
water pump
water tension
water bug

toilet water
dark water
lukewarm water
cloud water
tea water

tiger snakes
tornadoes
trolls
television
tidal waves

water pollution
water blister
water closet
water bucket
water course

brook water
frozen water
blue water

volcanoes
Dalcon shields
earthquakes

water table
water strider
water polo

Keep clear of me. I am maneuvering with difficulty.
You should stop your vessel instantly. Explanation will follow.
My vessel is healthy and I request free entry.
I have lost my bearings and seek orientation.

ice water
brackish water

drinking water
cleft palate

water line
water cure

The subject is in the object.
Emptiness is form.

Blood flukes
Impotency
fire
dehydration
paranoia
drowning
noise
bugbears

water fall

The existence of fools gold assures the existence of real gold—and real fools.
In mare aquam quaerit.

I require assistance.

I must abandon my vessel.

I have sprung a leak and require immediate assistance.

Can you take me in tow?

lice

prophecy

rape

water color

water cress

water hammer

spit in the wind

shot in the dark

stick in the mud

dog in the manger

two in the bush

frog in the throat

pig in a poke

kick in the head

bug in a rug

snake in the grass

money in the bank

snap on the ass

food on the table

burn in the urine

poverty

cholera

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

smallpox

war

trichina

vaginismus

flood

hypothermia

belief

time fear

habit

water tower

water tunnel

water star

water lily

water boy

water wizard

watermelon

water wheel

water fowl

water spout

water hole

water bag

water water

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

All around the trees bend down
and crawl along the ground.
Slow and sick they fall to earth
because there was no pondenome road.
“Nor long before that,” says dry tulip dust
on the lips of dancing mice.
The boulders, the bushes, the rivers)to have(
to have run away.

But there spakly spak so how can I see
as you bend and dance and play?
Just as before, you silly old man,
and probably afterwards too.
But the house is still there by the road,
is it not, the house is still there by the road?
Sh—sh—she is twert all the road ran off
bend a crawldot to do to do whatever they lips.

SUSHI NAGIRI

I saw someone washing my hands
in your hair
before sitting down to raw squid and tuna.
Maybe cooking could remove the only taste
I can touch which is you.

THE DARK WATER

I live in shadows and these shadows live.
Falling out of my skin. Sweet sounds.
Can we eat the echo?
This sequence deceives me.

What's caught in darkness
brings on night,
holds weather away,
is kin to mushrooms
and the deep damp of grass,
tells no more of the captor
than shadows moving in a mirror
tell what light the casters wear.

ACADEMIC

So history I ask you
arranges itself so
and so
and I ask you so on
and so forth I ask you
and so for the classroom.
Not bells ringing in a mirror.
She's too good for you.
Today she shaves her legs
and armpits
but tomorrow,
America?
Tomorrow?

A WINTER SCENE

These students, though not indoors,
are now almost all seldom wearing hats this winter.
Their heads and some faces are covered in general.
The weather and clothing make recognition difficult.
These people are not stopping to speak
not knowing who is not a stranger.

The belly is full or soon will be
after coming out of the snow and cold
into the building where is located the cafeteria.

As long as the situation is cold and snowing,
our having come in will, at the very least,
make us warmer,
while the snow falls on someone
or someplace
where previously we stood.

MANTICORA

I. The Human Head

i. the human head

Final, abundant, leaf fall.
Night.
Leaves skitter across the street like
eyeless animals—
squirrels, fieldmice, birds, magic fish, mittens.

ii. the lion body

First streetfilling snowfall.
Habit is memory forgetting remembering—
an attempt to outwit time.
An avalanche of bender fenders.
A cavalcade of crashes.
Every year, by the third snow—
sure as the solstice,
people will have learned anew to drive in this stuff.
Habit is remembering without awareness.

iii. the dragon tail

Clothing the line by moonlight
at midnight. Full. Full. Full.
The temperature is twenty below.
Full street. Full moon. Full line.
On the blue, moonlit snow,
diamond shards spark next to shadow.
A pool of pale frozen blood,
last summer's strawberry rose,
pokes like a memory through the snow.
The clothes are sublimating dry.
Evening wet. Ice tonight.
Tomorrow morning, dry.
Dry.

II. The Lion Body

forget kind love leave fading goldfinch fall
crows hogfish mitten magic master mime
me down falling street picture blind sublime
time's wit hollows out disaster recall
nothing delivers nothing compost mall
toll ticking times bender crashes to climb
wide eyed noses flare avalanche of time
fear lays habit lust on half-tongue stall
shine full open party port clothing wear
moonful midnight snow pokes through the moment
like next summer's rose from memory drawn
with antimemory timetoxin stare
loves poison shadow blazes flat unbent
bald cypress white rice leaves. wet. ice. dry. gone.

III. The Dragon Tail

If love be a kind of forgetting,
write me down a master.
Picturing what the blind see of regretting,
your steady hand steers me round disaster.

Even so, the poison that a hollow tooth
delivers is nothing to the plugged ear,
habit's stinking compost, time's ticking toll booth
that flare the nose and pry eyes wide with fear.

When lust belays the tongue at half-mast
for every hour over forty,
trembling still is all the rest,
thinking of you, although I'm awfully portly.

When an opening into your loveliness on me you shine,
then love's memory is antitoxin to time.

TAKE OUT

A chocolate malt, a cheeseburger
and an order of fries.

A malt, a burger and fries.

Malt, burger and fries.

Late tand nor dries.

Lame cheer and eyes.

Tall cheek rat dice.

Rain windows turned ice.

Rainbow wind eyes.

Malt, burger, fries.

Fries.

Eyes.

Ice.

WHAT'S THAT NOISE IN THE BASEMENT?

Last night while you were sleeping
that creature struck again.

Not the bandit in a ski mask
nor the gasser of Mattoon,

but a shaggy, vulgar bastard
who always hums a tune,
frightens helpless farmers
and makes their cattle swoon.

It's the Heifer fuckin bear.
Mama, can't you see?
It's the Heifer fuckin bear
and he's coming after me.

ANOTHER INSISTING INVITATION

Most men I've met
wanted to take something
away from someone,
rape
or kill
somebody.
Take your pick.
Women, on the other hand,
Simply don't want anyone
to have a good time
including themselves.
Isn't it amazing
that two such incredibly deluded groups
can each think itself
superior to the other?
Some people at this point
are going to start quantifying
the negativity of each position.
They should be real estate agents.
The rest of us
can sit down to miso soup
and fox ridge.
Gather firewood.
Carry water.

DEEP DROP BLUE

Walking down the crowded, campustown
street, he almost calls out her name,
nearly grabs her arm
as she brushes past
looking just like a young woman
he knows thirty years ago.

A key drops into the snow.
Bending to pick it,
dig it,
scoop it
up,
(perhaps only a dime or a quarter)
he knows better.
It was she;
unlike him, she has remained young
and beautiful
and now
gone
around the corner.

Spring is still a distant foreigner.
Yet, when the snow melts
and the parks are ankle
deep in redolent, canine feculence;
he will spot that key,
or keyring,
or ring,
or whatever
lying on the curb;
he'll avert his eyes,
cold casting past,
not head turned he.

Snow is falling — fluffy water
from a distant sea.
As a sailor sticks his hand in the ocean
to feel the sailboat's speed,
now and again
some valued, small item
drops to the bottom of the sea.

PARTIAL

Love your neighbor
Love your country
Love your parents
Love your house
Love your children
Love your family
Love your lover
Love your spouse
Love your school
Love your employer
Love your community
Love your animals (excuse me, pets)
Love your car (American)
Love your New York
Love your president
Love your self, love is blind
Love your dog, your savior, your etc.
Love in vain

“I love your tie
I love your shirt
I love your shoes”

Love’s eyes
Love’s mouth
Love’s genitals
Love’s price.

Love a morcot
Love it to death
Love an arrogant morcot
Love a self-appointed morcot
Love a sensitive morcot — That’s a morcot
that when you call him a morcot he cries.
Love an apologetic morcot
Love a liberal morcot
Love a manipulative morcot, a denying
morcot, an overachieving morcot, a charming
morcot.
Love a radical morcot, a lovable morcot, an
ambitious morcot
Love a conservative morcot — That’s a
morcot that learns to read and write and
becomes a journalist.
Love an unknowing morcot
Love a morcot savant
Love a shy morcot
Love a smelly morcot.

She could not understand his being alone
so he had him ruin his life.
His wife told him he had given her a bad self image for ten years.
He didn’t know what she meant nor did he agree.
She said she wanted to be his equal.

He saw what she meant and agreed with that
but not with what she said.
So she sued for divorce
and that is always more boring
than what either one meant or said.

I could not stand your being alone
so she had me leave.
Not maybe.
Not maybe not.
A cat's a cat.
Can you believe that?
I can't so why should you?

I took another look and she was glad
to see me
He took leave of his senses
until she would see him
not in any case
So taken with one another's looks to see
delight to see

and blind and improves his memory
and what is it that we remember the future
and then some.
Straight information, he claims (it's true),
he ain't so good at.
She might fool him so he could have her
ruin her life,
nor could she stand under him
so he had her . . .
She could not find him happy so she had him lose her mind.
He could not leave her happy so he had him lose his mind.
She could not make her happy so she had
him tackle her petunia.
He could not find, lie, see, fool, make,
tackle, leave, touch, lose, ruin, cleave, begin

So

(cheerfully)
Don't love being old
Don't love a Corvair
Don't love an Iranian
Don't love athlete's foot
Don't love your mama
Don't love cotton
Don't love dirt
Don't love daylight savings time
Don't love bats, snakes or spiders
Don't love tooth decay
Don't love something silly
Don't love Kansas
Don't love drugs
Don't love fiscal irresponsibility
Don't love fat

Don't love change
Love the heat
Love your washing machine
Love Bach, Shakespeare, Michelangelo
Be a cultural necrophiliac
Love the movies
Love a parade (everybody loves a parade)
Love your bicycle
Love the taste of anything you love the taste of
Love your fellow workers
Love your musical instrument
Love somebody who needs love
Love a baby, a puppy, a new idea

Love a brown Swiss cow
Love while standing, walking or lying down
Don't love while sitting, running or swimming

Love being on a committee
Love being tired
Love the poor
Love being poor —
Love pretending you are poor
Love yourself as you are
Love holidays
Love waking up in the morning, going to sleep and in between
Love him, her, it for what ditto is
Love winning
Love month old snow
Love your comfort being based on someone else's misery
Love doing something poorly

Love being number 1
Love being number 2
Love being number 3-7
Love being not a number

Love your teacher
Love learning
Love doing, love undoing, love not doing,
love do doing
Love is all you need
Love your students
Love your Uncle Cecil

Love your television
Love what your mother warned you about
Love drinking
Love getting lost
Love getting REALLY lost
Love eating
Love the person next to you

Love getting saved from death
Love getting saved from Hell
Love getting saved from whatever irks you
Love getting saved from whichever of the above you choose

Love playing cards
 Love tattoos
 Love chateau blanc 1843
 Love bowling
 Love the sound of ...
 Love Belden Fields
 Love going to work
 Love baseball
 Love rice and beans ... every day
 Love not going to work
 Love being physically fit
 Love the color blue
 Love every single living thing

 Love money
 Love chewing gum
 Love the gaping maw
 Love power
 Love an egg

 Love without reservation
 Love getting wasted
 Love being correct
 Love not loving

 Love the way you've always done whatever you've been doing
 Love tobe oats feeding on strup neem
 Love your alma mater
 Amat quod summus
 Love your own language
 Love spelling in English
 L-O-V-E-G-H-O-T-I-A-N-D-F-R-E-S-H-V-E-G-E-T-A-B-L-E-S
 Love tobe oats feeding on strup neem
 Love the magic of not believing
 Love having your car break down in the middle of nowhere
 Stick your head in the shade and your shell in the sun
 Love the middle of nowhere without anything going wrong
 Love the middle of anywhere once you've found the middle
 Love being mistaken
 Love seeing someone else love your lover
 Love anything in the key of E minor
 "Love it baby, well, you know it's true"
 Love being mistaken about seeing someone
 else love your lover
 Love whatever it is you put in whatever you
 keep it in
 Love sharing, love outreaching, love being
 supportive, love networking,
 Love being a good person
 Love the sun shining on the nothing new
 Love logic
 Love coughing
 Love every single living thing
 Love the United States from 1843 to 1887

NO SECOND BETHLEHEM

My love had returned.

Being six weeks gone,
she had come a long way
when I met her again.
She stood blushing with love
looking far away.

And as we walked along
the lake's great elbow
where the rocks are piled,
the birds drew close
and bright braided their feathers
with our mobile words.

I, being a martyr to a seed,
I walked with a woman
who carried another man's child.
And not being a Joseph,
I cared not whether the father be
man, god, or beast.

ZONE ZERO

Ten years of talk traded for 6 months of silence.
This is part of an equitable settlement.
There was always more than talk.
But—even now—all is not silence.

Giant foxtail, pigweed, fall panicum and other broadleaves
won't shatter this unplanted field.
Savings and loan, soil bank, library, septic tank—
all create the illusion of a stored past.

I'm looking down a waterless well—
not for water—nor the past—
just a little reflection.
I'm drawn down into an endless stare—
gawking at my increasing absence.

Something here can neither come out
nor go in
I shall have never moved from this spot.

THE DANCEWRECK PROGRAM
XII

A.

Entropy Warlock,
the unborn troubadour
throws it out
goes to find again—
some confusion—
turns his shield to the sun.
Noon other leaf is worth a bean.
Tree stripping bark stretching out of tree.
This the shadow
and that the reflection.

Something moves—
No.
Is there a cloud to swallow
or some other nearby source of water?
No.
He takes the water with him in his skin.
His catch echoes from deserted granary
to the deep, dull-red, broken-firebrick road—
a constellation in the cinders and soil.

“Tack is a spongemagic lighter
and a door natural marker.
He’s been to the top.”

Cave lifts
 sun open
Turns inout past the stormrise.

So oleway neem noeta tura
own dair smaeta ferta.”

Entropy leaps on a log
 with blue paint
or fungus
 splashed on it.
An earthquake swallows
 his eyeball—
The only one outside
 a loony bin that can.

Into the tree—
 he thinks the seat part is tub
but sits trap—tease O.K. —
make ready came echo-eater’s intake
and shouts down more voice noise.

B.

Some men keep their women with their purse
Some with their love.
I keep my women with my verse.
Lolly-tu-dum lolly-tu-dum-day
as I go dancing along in my dancing along way.

A cat is a cat.
Can you believe that?
I can't.
So why should you?

Why should I
Burn ice-white thighs
from time to time?
For variety, I suppose.
No, not really. I merely love the light
that leaps to meet my eye.

Ursa, she bears me one night bird
against the sun.
Her shadow casts the moonsmile
and the dancing
can not
I do not care
if I can see no more.
My head full of feathers.

XIII

The sky is on fire.
Love me with bubbles.
Tackle my Petunia
You've got to get it wet
to make it work.

Sat we back on slim haunches —
thin for want of food and love starved —
rocked in highground heel hollows —
deep tone chanted our less than half hold on self
and watched the water roll our provisions
out the open Mudbranche river.

I know you
more than I are mine
and for this
most love and abuse you.

These fingers line cheek and jawbone
draw soft and earthrust.
Prairie holds open the sky.
The sky pushes back the storm.
 midnight missing.
 thumbend strings.
Nailsketches lost in a forest of thorns.
Streams dry down,
down,
desalt the sea.

COOK PAINT

Well, it's not there.

Well, it's not there.

Well, it's not

in that folder.

Well it's not in that box.

It's not under this either.

Nor in there, it's not in there.

And it's not on the table.

Is everyone seated?

When can I start?

Which fork to use?

It's not under my plate.

THE BURIED LANTERN

*Opening out a mountain,
the tunnel brings forth
a world of air.*

Your shadow grows into nothing
as the sun goes down,
a lantern in the earth.
The moon floats on water
in an opening well.
The water fills with fire.
A bucket of hair
yawns
into morning sunlight.

DID YOUR MOTHER COME FROM IRELAND?

Did your mother come from Ireland
with her hair as red as hate
and the greatest pair of snowflakes
that Jesus ever ate?

THE FISHERMAN'S JOURNEY

i

Deep in the winter dark woods
out of the apple boughs
I rounded my heart.
I squeezed it tight to bait a hook
and fished and fished
till time was torn from off my cheeks
and the bait was all but split apart.
Then a woman stole my hook and ran
with bleeding punctured eyes
until morbid waters formed,
and rocks turned into hands.

ii

What a watery world is with me.
By what shall I count the melt
of time upon my brow?
By the string between my teeth?
I live my fate in what I do not know
and all these things
by which I mark my separation.

I'll gather my bones in the clouds.
Light, light, ring with me.
I'll knock my head against the sun.
Can she see me through the ripples?
Such fallings
rise.

The smoke explodes my brain.
The cracks in my bones
suck in fire.
All my cells in instantaneous unison
burst into flame.

IF THOU HAST EYES GO THY WAY

Now it being that he proclaims
a time of great joy should one
listen-hear.

Now this time sounds of soothing
music and is pleasant to the ear.

Now this time tastes sweetly
it being flavored with sweet herbs.

Now this time has an appeal to the eye
such that if one does not blink
he might look at what he sees.

Now there are also detectable
peculiarities about one's energy
and perception of another's energy.

Now this time has a certain vibration
which one can feel inside.

Now there is a great moaning
of the frogs, their being extremely articulate
about matters of this nature.

Now he will show the crucified serpent
and speak through the mouths of fish.

Now this time may feel absent of motion
but not be afraid,
the sun has been eaten
and still the rivers flow.

Now it being that a wave of great joy
sweeps across the world.

Now fish being good for eating
and looking at both.

Now one mustn't disregard lamb
for lamb is very tasty.

Now:
His gates can be seen
opening into wells, the depth
of the water being no matter
for fear. The darkness hides
the slimy creatures that go
quickly and bump in the dark.

Now:
His shaking for his life
is the only shape he wears.
His human shape being found only
by those who love him. He lies
down in the woman's lap
and she offers him her breast.
The hunters of the state
capture him but they cannot
take away the joy.

Now this joy starts at the earth and
rises into the air.

Now there is no falling.

Now the earth can rise up also
which one must be alert to.
Now it being that Pope Illegible III
is surely a fraud.
Now it being that no man can be
completely without malice but
can render it harmless and playful.
Now the movement being from
the womb of the fish to the
lap of the ram.
Now the name is of the lion
and dark angle and other
things also.
Now the light and the joy
being the same thing or nearly.
Now the joy always seeks new
information, so is always near chaos.
Now the joy is a fine
celebration of itself.
Now the brilliant colors
have a notable energy.
Now the strength of this joy
is in not spitting before the fire.
Now the joy is a luxury
of perception.
Now the joy is not genuinely
related to a woman's touching
your privates in thought,
word, and deed but this does
not detract from the beauty
of woman meddled or unmeddled with.
Now this joy somehow being
in spite of a filthy economic situation
and the violence which repairs
nothing.
Now the wren being the finest.
Now the morning and pigeons being all that we have
left that compares with the
plague.
Now each man dies serving himself
to the worms.
Nor can this take away the joy.

A WOMAN LOVES AS THE MOON

A woman loves as the moon,
A fire crying the night,
colored cracked glass falling through water.
For what is to be learned
of her intently mobile position
now that she has arrived
to break my cadence
and take away me
from whatever I am doing
to do
what is she being?
Something not very nice.
So gaggy gummy baby buggy,
now take off the clothes.
Through the tub water runs
then down the drain
it goes, it goes.
All gone!
Rowdy-dow Rowdy-dow
Rum dee dum dum dee dee.

INVITATION

Then nothing.
No thing there.
Dry season—
The river fills with parched air—
a bed silent,
unwaterswept—
the cut and cast off tongue
of an aging eunuch.

Air rushes in
to be
where you have been—
losing you—
that muffled thunderclap
you draw through life.

The eye glides like a tongue
across horizon's lips.

ANITA HILL CLARENCE THOMAS

Race is thicker than honesty
ideology is thicker than race
gender is thicker than ideology
class is thicker than speakable
power is thicker than anything

America is getting thicker and thicker.
Monopoly stagnation is just one example—
newage and the homed is another.
SO why DO farmers hate daylight savings time?
Well, they go to feed the cows and the cows has already lef.
They get up early and it already late out.
They go to feed the cows and the
cows is still asleep—
The farmer gots to getup an hour before he goes to bed.
It put too many hours in the day.
The farmer goes to feed the cows and
the cows has already aten.
You go to catch a train and you
can't tell what's happening:
you early,
it late.
Visa, versa,
you late, it early.
You late, it later.
You just right, it still late.
Train been canceled—
train been terminated—
train been defrocked, disenfranchised and disemboweled—
no cooks,
no conductor,
no baggage car,
no baggage,
no baggage master,
no passengers,
no tickets,
no ticket master,
no train,
no rails.

So the farmer comes home
from the no train no nuttin
and his fambly has done ate their dinner
and hissen too,
warshed the dishes
and is watchen reruns on TV.
He sets his alarm clock for one time
and it goes off another time entolley.
You've got a really nice thorax there.
Money is thicker than labor.
Let nothing you dismay.

“What this is,”
he says with smile so big and
eyes so glazed you’d think no one
had ever said it before.
Sit trap tease in the seat part of the loop pool.
Through this holla gassa,
he must come.
You’d better not pout;
I’m tellin you why.
Goin down one language
coming up another
for no good...
for no
forn.

Who plays the right changes to “I Mean You”?
Every pile’s got its pit—somewhere.
Every pit’s got its pile—sorta.
You can’t make a silk purse from a sow’s ear.
You can’t make a silk ear
from a sow’s purse either.
Who wants a silk purse anyway?
Who HAS a sow’s ear for that matter?
Has anyone ever tried?
Let’s drop this line of inquiry.
“A black snake will bite you just as quick
as a white one.”

Let nothing you dismay.
Canned is never as good as fresh.
The farmer gets up an hour before he wakes up.
By the time you start seriously studying,
you realize you’re never going to have
enough money to graduate.
By the time you have children, you realize it’s too late.
By the time you reach puberty,
it was too late.
By the time you get to the auction,
all the good stuff is gone.
Slander is thinking someone else did something
you done did.
But it too late.
How do you know when it’s high tide
in Woods Hole?
Slander is when someone does something
and you don’t get it.
Libel is writing it down.

THE NIGHT BIRD FLEW THE COOP

Mishua Kahn [his friends call him Mish]
sits at the bar in the
English Graduate Seminar room reading
James Funnimore Cooper. He is
white. The room is a nauseous green. This
is not the virgin
wilderness but the next best thing. Mish is doing his thing —
consuming himself. He is, with all his middle class self-annihilating
fervor, consuming himself. He respects the upper class because they
ARE there and identifies with the lower
class — imitates and mocks them — because he is not THERE. Mishua is eating
his fingernails
and cuticle as he plans a route out the
window.

There are no Indians in the vicinity. There is a water fountain
in the hall. Charlie Parker didn't
make it to the gig that
night or the next two nights. He was hung up. The riders strike
the horse and ride off, leaving the man dangling from the tree.
Nearby there is a meeting going on. A large Indian is giving a
poetry reading to a number of fellow Indians and some honkies
who have gathered at the trading post for this weekly diversion.

At all cost he must be made certain of what
he is not. Natty Bumpo has dug the scene
and split to catch the rock band
at the local farout discotheque.
“They sure ain't brought no rocks back from
rockville,” he chuckles. “This must be the veritable place.”

The Indian makes several points in his reading.

1. There will be a war between the Indians and the Honkies in
which the victors will be human beings.
2. The Honkies will totally wipe out the Indians.
3. His wife and son have died many times.

Prince Hello Yellow was the name of the big Mestopi Indian Prince poet. You know how Indians are about
those funny names. This poses real problems for the serious translator. He doesn't know but what the
Prince will be offended by the sound of Hello Yellow. The yellow part doesn't really offer itself for
exchange. What should it be?

Greetings	Yellow
Howdee	Yellow
Hi	Yellow
There you go	Yellow
What's happening	Yellow

At least Hello	Yellow rhymes
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The big Indian is obviously a passionate, sensitive, sometimes right on target poet. He doesn't read his most brilliant poem "Elvin's Blues" in which he deals with:

1. His white squaw.
2. Drugs.
3. Sexual impotence.

The other Indians leave the reading with no clear sense of where Prince Hello Yellow is at.

They don't like that.

The white trappers

think they dig like where he's at and are overjoyed. One trapper stands up to applaud and he drops some papers to the floor, one of which is an advertisement which reads:

Hudson Bay Double Coil Spring Trap.

Made to the design of the world's most famous trappers not by white collared big town business men. These conventional long spring designs are old standbys used by professional trappers the world over. Easy to conceal because it lies flat. A trap for the serious trapper. After these traps are snapped, a heavy, sturdy, specially shaped wire form flies up around the animal's leg, absolutely preventing the animal from turning its body and twisting off its leg. There is nothing worse than going out to your trap line and finding only legs. There just isn't enough fur on a leg to make it worth while.

By then we'd gotten to the burned down part of the gravel pit where all the rope was neatly coiled and hung along the walls like genuine Arctic toothpaste leather dressing. Then we all got back in the raft and left. The windeyes were open so things got pretty breezy. We could hear the voice of someone singing in the night.

"I dreamed antique America,
I heard the cowpoke say,
Stretching out before me
Like a wildass in the sky."

Afterwards we spoke with the Prince,
whom we'd never met before,
but we knew it was the Prince anyway.
You ask how did we know it was the
Prince if we had never met him before even
if it doesn't have anything
to do with the story. Well, it does and the
fact that it does does

too because we were taken to him which answered the question of
how were we to find the Prince and posed others. One question
it did not pose was did we know him from photographs which we
did not so the question is a no and so is the answer.

There were no survivors.
The whole party made it through safely.
The line was busy.
Here are some of the things you forgot
but not all.
Thank you.
Thanks for coming.

CONFESSIOAL

Because I am lazy,

Because
I am lazy,

Because I am lazy

I'll never amount

to a hill of beans.

Whap whap.

Whapwhapwhap.

Turris eburnea, ora pro nobis.

TOO MANY CHIEFS AND NOT ENOUGH INDIANS
(A Brief History of the University of Illinois)

The chief is a jinx.
In the last 5 seconds of the first half
the wolverines (species *gulo luscus*, meaning:
blind glutton)
score a heartrending 7
promising more to come.
The first half ends.
What a drag. What a let down.
What a bummer. Shit.
42,000 fans didn't pay big bucks
to see this kina crap.
Where's the chief, enaways?
I need the chief to bring me up.
Where is the fucker?
Can't find him when you need him,
the son of a bitch.
Hold it.
Here he come,
a scootin
outa
nowhere.
What beauty, what grace, what virility.
I'll bet he has one huge pecker,
the mother raper.
Everybody stand.
Good old chief.
What dignity, what reverence.
8 little, 9 little, 10 little Indians
coming riding out of the stadium
tunnel on horseback, dressed
as the 7th cavalry mind you
gunned to the teeth.
What the fuck?
9 little, 10 little . . .
The chief is a jinx.
All symbols are a jinx.
Why should the chief be an exception
or a rule?
Open fire.
Hey they're shootin' the chief.
10 little Indians—
crackshots—military trained—3 vietnam
medics finally find the enemy—
Oskee Wow Wow, Chief—
Hubba Hubba.
24,000 biting Illini football fans
shit and piss in silent,
stinking,
horror—
in unison—
a back handed applause.

Just when you need some of that Chief
Illiniwek Toilet paper, they don't make it anymore.
"This'll mean NCAA sanctions for sure," screams one fan in giddy hysteria.
On to the next symbol.
The next jinx.
The next *Cui Bono*

Cui bono is a phrase used by the Roman Poet Cicero in 50 B.C.
to explain the inexplicable. He suggests we ask, "Who profits?"

Mascot—a person, animal or object believed
to bring good luck; especially one
kept
as the symbol of an athletic team.
From Provencal: *mascoto*, meaning scorcery;
from Late Latin, Longobardic: *masca*, meaning witch or specter
or ghoul or zombie, as in,
"Vous êtes la grande zombie."

If not for athletics and other manifestations of popular culture, our society should not have achieved the present level of conformity without the use of terror as in fascism.

PERMS & COMBS

**poor fucking me
me poor fucking
fucking me poor
poor me fucking
fucking poor me
me fucking poor**

TRAVELING TERRA INCOGNITA

Whenever Mark Whitecrow leaves town,
he is beside himself.
His memory stretches like a rubber band
across
unkown territory
stalling a return to the cranial abode,
catches up in about one week,
snaps an audible
thunk
at the anterior base of the native's skull,
propels him to the telephone
3 nights in a row.

SNAKE EYES

By the way, I was born androgenous.
An hermaphrodite to be exact.
Actually somewhat more female
than male (hence the poet);
the male organs being
underdeveloped and in need of
some encouragement.

I chose of course,—as all of
You have chosen—to be
as male as possible—
given the circumstances.

A bird should have three nests,
a snake three holes,
a monkey, likewise;
So as to recover more quickly
from a cough
or other manifestations
of inner heat.

NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

Why don't you write some funny poems
like that Hal guy from New York
and make some big money?
my mother asked.
Because I don't want to write poems
with my mother
in them
I said to her.
And why don't you
do something
on death
and cemeteries?
I knew this wouldn't work.
I said so two years ago.
I've barely gotten past sex.
My soul hasn't resonated with the death thing
yet.
O yes it has. I've read your stuff.
No you haven't.
And why are the dead buried
lying down and
not standing up?
Why do those tall,
oldfashioned
urinals
look like coffins?

MONA
(the object of a lunchtime conversation
overheard in a mex-rest)

For the life of me I cannot imagine
what makes her think those pink
lilacs on her panties are going
to turn anyone on. She simply doesn't
know the very first thing about men. All that
even the vulgarist
man would have to do is get one good
look at those two enormous sweat
rings on her bra and he would just have
to leave the country so fast there wouldn't
even be a vapor trail. I mean remote. I feel so
sorry for her. I really would love to help her
with my special knowledge,
awareness, sensitivity and considerable ability
in this area;
but, of course, she would never, never listen to me.

KISSING HOKU

This buried alive, pokey, corner-sitting inmate,
when he thinks no one is looking;
he kisses himself on his hands
between the thumb and first finger.
He kisses his hands thick as thieves.
He close his eyes.
He kiss. He hand.
He table.
Sit offlow not time sweet staven chain
many never loneface.
He hand he kiss.

THE HEAT'S ON

The only cool place in
the prison is the
shift office.

The guards hanging on that
air conditioner
like it be day mamma's titty.

Won't leave dat office
fo' nuttin.

We may be hot but we
runnin free.

AGNUS DEI

“You are the Lamb of God,” says the
prison guard turned preacher
(so many do)
as he bids the departing convict goodbye:
Lambiekins, Lambchop, Lambiepie;
one foot in the pasture
of an absentee,
no sweat,
Archer Daniels Midland farmer,
the other hanging just off the grill
of a just off the golf course lawyer lady D.A.
Do you bargain pleas?
Hoof it over to the judge’s chambers?
Do you do Little Bo Peep?

SENILE FELINES

Late November —
trees without leaves —
a low sun pours through
the south window over my shoulder
and lunch.
My gestures drive the
mild cat, Sadie, wild across the room.

The cat scratches the calendar
hanging on the wall to chase out
the shadow, reflection, projection,
distorted image of the sun —
a bright, moving veil
caught between the months
and each month's portrait of Native American Women
captured long ago.
A thrice timed feline.

"Look she doesn't know it isn't there."
"It is there. She just can't catch it."
What's going on here? Who is this?
Heisenberg? Maturana? Surely Brün.
Prometheus? Von Foerster? Faustus?

The sunlight reflecting off my
watch in December brings the
waiting cat alive every noon hour.
12:20 pm she stretches tall to paw
the calendar on the wall.
"Tis time emits it," thinks this fast cat.
You can't catch it. You can't eat it.
You can touch it, but you can't feel it.
Passes the crucial test of an hallucination.
The way the living haunt a cemetery
or sidewalks mock the halls of a prison.

Is this feline feculent fecundity frothing
merely to rouse some predestined
skitterwattemass?
Hit him with a sludgehumor.
Thick line ambrosia brooding smitten,
retrotribalistic protopoetics.
Flay. Flay. Flay.
Time will not ...
Time will not ...
defer—
care—
modulate —
Stop.

OO La La
hootchie koo
twenty three skiddoo
Ow Ow

Ouchie Ouchie Ouchie
Ow Ow
Ouchie Ouchie Ouchie
Ow Ow
Ouchie Ouchie Ouchie

Fatum fatuus.
The faustus with the mousetus.
The sun had been shining and
will have shined.
Then and now and then.
The sun was shining and will shine.
The sun is shining and may
continue to do so.
For a while.
Probably.
Perhaps.
Counting, oddly, even the twilight.
And the moon?
Can we count the full moon?
No.
That is not—acceptable.
Not stars, fires, candles,
incandescent lights, nor any of
the rest of that crap.
Just the sun.
I gave you twilight.
Be satisfied with that.
Don't suck on my generosity too much.

Gray day. Sadie cat sits
on a chair below the calendar.
Paws paper.
A sad cat.
Sullen.
Waiting without expectation.
Cat got the blues.
Lunch in mid December.
Pushing acupuncture points on a
crippled back.
As if I . . .
Don't be a dog in the manger.
Was it the movement or the light?
The chaser or the chase?

SADIE

Our cat called Sadie must be a capitalist
because she always complains
that the mouse she just killed
is dead.

SISTER KEY

Above:

 against the motionless, gemstone,
green-blue sky, the sunset clouds move—
 fast and slow.

A sand-ground shell settles in a tidal pool
 like a fallen, timeworn moon—
below.

We stand between. One faces on
 shore, the other off.

At moment's notice, might someone think
 I'm looking back where we
have been

 and you where we cannot go?

Not likely.

A once wondrous, waterworld watching
 tarpon eye
lies slightly sanded;
 gazes at sand to one side,
greying, blue sky to the other
 as salt water lashes like a continent's
tears,
 lidlapping foam into the blank socket.

If this island were poetry, how nice
 to tack along its shore.

Night has been falling
 and will fall some more.

A REQUEST FOR ASYLUM

Small creatures hold things large most tender,
as joy jumping jockeys plyer astride
their steeds.

So, freely frolicking fillies ain't the only branded butt
beauties
in the too tatoo tangled,
dark angle dangling,
hot heated heaving,
strike before the iron melts,
snorting about somewhat dark follicles,
sweet something nuzzling
kind of romp across the corral,
O.K.?

Shoot, just shout out:

SAN
AN
TONE!!!

Too weird.

Request denied.

ESL

I am sitting in my first ESL class
in an old elementary school building
that is now owned by a group called
the Opportunities Industrialization Center.
Of course, I do not understand what
this title means—so like everyone
else I call the place OIC.

The desks are somewhat mildly too small
even for us teenie people from
Southeast Asia. Some of these students
are quite old. Maybe this is looking funny.
Possibly no.

The teacher is going to teach us how to
understand, speak and write English.

All about words.

She is writing “W - H - A - T” on the blackboard.
Standing back, pointing with her pointer,
she asks, “What is that?”
“That is ‘what,’ ” she says clearly.

ENZA FLEW IN

104°

He snaps alert, sluggishly hysterical
at the sound of screaming people,
crying children, wailing, wounded animals
(disoriented—heavy feverhanded)
tracks the horror down to the
rales and whistlings of his own lungs.

DANCING IN THE DARK

He's drinking in the dark
again
outside
too windy for a candle
so has swallowed an bug
recently swimming in his wine.
This insect catch crawls scratchily up his throat
but not out
necessitating faster drinking
to
wash it down
or are it now new insects?

GADDING ABOUT

It's the second coming, by Gad.
The hat mad gadder slouches till his mother objects.
Here come the Gadders and their
Guru, psychic surgeon Rubin Robin
Rueben Rubinfilter.
Gadding rocks.
And the sons of Zilpah and Jacov
are going through their pregame warmups
reading PARADIGMS LOST
and THE WAISTBAND,
forld's worst weight-loss poem.
Pastor Present pounding his pulpit
preaches
predictable parables.
The maddest gadder mutters
We for he, I for we, you, you, you
all the way home.
And they're gadding
away with it.

MUFFING IT

He slips his hand up under
the shade,
slides urgent fingers gently along the smooth
lamp leg,
fumbles around for the switch.
“I just want to turn you on,” he whispers into the shade,
his voice thick and fluttery
like the sound of a bass clarinet under water.
Click
Whoopee!!!
Thank Goodness

LAUGHING MATTERS

Into every life some humor must fall.
The rising expectations of music are burnished so—
polished, besmirched so so so famished:
eating crows, tripping bumps, catching drops,
mounting debts, slipping, flying,
knocking trucks skirting con.
Out of every leaf hum “Summer Time”
springs nattering laughs,
throwing stones,
timing flies,
making mockeries.
Tree green.
Blue sky.
White crow
against a black
moon.

PORTA POLKA SORTA

White polka dots a pig in a polka, dots for sure.
Dots a lotta polkas dot you got right here.
Mother ear polka Mothball polka Mouth ear polka
It's worse than you thought, by golly; she's in the bathtub.

Gusano Blanco Polka

White coming back as it fades away polka

Dots pearl cream white

Invisible white

The white spot

Milk white

Underwear white

Bleach white

Brighter white white

Sunblock white

White rain white

Cold white

White eyes

Honkey white

Melanoma white

Snow white

White teeth

White facial tissues

Blazing white

Dark white

Shrinking white

White racial issues

Titanium white

White right

Off white

Bathtub white

White as wain

John Wayne, white?

Toilet white

House white

White as a sheet

Egg white

Blue white

PASSING

Smoking only kills
12% of the population.
Look at all the
people dead from
marriage. Newage
takes quite a chunk.
Urbana's what?
32,000 people? Take a look.
See what I
mean. The dead;
smiling through.
Parasites do their part
also. Candy, pop
anything like that takes
3 years off your life.
Chewing gum 4 years,
driving with your eyes
closed 8. Being
married to a Jewish
woman, 10 years.
A Jewish mime 15.
Like that.

MY CHILDREN'S MOTHER AND PUCK

My children's mother and Puck, the village skiptofrantic,
Both converse or appear to do
so with people who just so
to the negative appear not
to be there. When either
addresses us we are
pronged, as it were, on the
not necessarily visible but clearly real
horns of an dilemma.
Are we not more than the mere hallucinations
flitting across their nutty
fields of view? What else?
How do we know ourselves from
their merry cast of characters? Really.
And when to respond and how?
The very idea.
I would still like to know if my
presence might not have just a little
more or, for shame, a little less
weight in this border line looney
bin vision.
Just another spook.
Indeed.

MO-TIONING WORDS

I feel just well enough to write. Strangely,
little else. And, of course, the writing
grinds down that wee wisp of wellbeing
sure as shitting sand at the seashore
scrapes the skin scandalously thin.

CONCATENATING CONSEQUENCES

She watches out the window
silent winter winds
blowing bare branches back and forth
across a grey sky.
A black and white
movie (maybe Bergman)
with the sound turned down.

FACING LOOKING GLASSES

Are we now sharing your

setting

my rising

sun

as we raised our two sons?

Ocean tide washes

over eyes,

ears,

nose,

feet.

RED BALL IN BLUE ROOM

The wheat has been cut,
threshed,
dried upon the wagonwide margins
of flat country roads,
swept up,
shoveled into bags
and lifted onto mule-drawn carts.

Traveling north into Manchuria by steam locomotive,
the fields have been burning through the night.
Under early morning sun the rice is delicate, light green;
corn, darker and robust.
I wonder when you will again
lie in my arms
and I
may think no more
upon
other fields.

THE EMPOWER'S NUKE LOATHES

Since Reagan we see the clothes
and the ~~empire~~ emperor
is transparent.

PARADIGMS LOST
By Joan Miltown

How it is, man. Disremembering the future.
A human being thinks differently
because of what it remembers.
A computer does not.
The difference between
memory as storage and
memory as thinking.

That teachers
need not know anything but how to
“facilitate learning,” a disastrously
tragic incorrect notion emanating from
education schools, teachers and even
students across the nation,
the hideous concept that “teaching methods”
are all important because computers
“have all the facts” is the gas
that passes as paradigm shift that promises
a paradigm shit.

Hence we get the selling of education
as business repository, big and small —
the image, a septic tank.

SPAWN

Two sons: Brendan and
Brendan I mean Nathaniel.
Footprints. Melting snow.

WALKING UP ON A GREEN DOWN COAT

At the cold, damp, latewinter, first of the season,
outdoor trackmeet;

my wife is leaping around,
for her, slightly like an idiot,
more like an adolescent.

Goodness, how my fourteen-year-old son has grown
and wears his mother's coat quite well.

CATALOGUE

Oh, dark skinned brothers!
Why do you want our women?
We offered you Walt Whitman,
André Gide, even Allen Ginsberg.
And in good faith you trade
Leroi Jones and Johnny Mathis.
Oh, why do you want our women?
Let's put the eeee back in equality.
A surface is a tarmac for departure.
The temperature is rising.
All is light.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Your dussy is so strange
never ceases to amaze me
the strange way your hussy
speaks to me.
Your nussy has a mouth,
and hairs too—lots of hair.
I have noticed that also
sometimes maybe you shampoo
the hair on your pussy.
I'm certain you at least
wash your hair
and occasionally fix it.
But more important things
I have noticed about your sussy.
Your wussy has some ears,
and if I am looking just so,
your fussy seems almost like a face.
And then on close inspection,
I can see two legs,
two eyes and arms;
I'm amazed:
two breasts,
an ass, a back,
3 dimples and a face.

BUBBLES BREAKING THE SURFACE

The fallen tree has lost leaves.
The roots are speaking.
We are no good in the air.
You are a log.
You are firewood.

You are not seedling, tree, shade.
But you are wood
which you were and will be.
The earth
which holds you closest
you have broken
in the wind storm
when you broke the earth
that held you
to be closer.

The earth said,
“You can go no further away.
You have arrived.”

You did not listen to the water
because the earth held it also.
So you did not listen either to the earth
but only would be nearer.
The water broke loose also
to be not a table but a river.

It was not the water
nor earth
that tricked you but the wind.
You could not hear the wind
was all around you
and owned where you were going.
No, that was the sun.

You became confused
because it was nighttime.

The wind was speaking every language.
You thought the wind would eat itself.
That’s when you fell down.
You thought the wind spoke to you
because it was speaking every language.
You didn’t listen to the wind.
You listened to what it said.

That it was screaming
because it was eating itself.
You were the wood
that pointed to water.
You fell down.

**TO RAPHAEL, A FRIEND: ON TURNING 34 AND
DECIDING TO BE JON, A MUSICIAN**

Now that the mice are out
of your bass
and the roaches are gone
from your bed
you can finally answer the door
with a senile nod
of the head.

We'll enter, your friends;
although you chased us away
with those madly fluttering fingers.
You'll don your dungaree jacket
and pass the macaroons;
the great shaggy beasts are coming
and the bathtub's under the broom. . .
Huzza—wait—an interlude—
these things are none but their own.

We know notes won't rhyme
a cage around holes
you dig
the shape sound fills in time.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY
(The 'you call this progress?' progression waltz)

She's a groove.

She's absolutely wonderful.

She's so full of energy.

She's really peppy.

Lotta spunk spunk spunky.

Peppy spunky perky.

Brisk, vibrant, hearty.

Breezy, lively, sprightly.

She's quite vigorous, forceful

powerful,

domineering, overbearing,

mettlesome, arrogant, dictatorial.

In other words,

a real drag.

VERNAL OPEN KNOCKS WIDE

Wet. Wet. Wet. Wet. Wet.
As if bolting from sleep,
two (twentied) youths watch a spring sunset.
Buds push out; sap seeps.
Up pop morel as well as umbrellas
that can propell a fella down the street.
Up leaks in spring.
The sump pump pumps the mounting sump.
Humph. Humph.
The thought of winterblood hatred, poverty
and war is abated.
Summer's simmering violence, despair and
decay are unanticipated.
Now, not watching the day expire,
they stand kneeknocking swell
and damp.

UVULAR ULULATIONS

When people hear the style with which I
read my work,
they sometimes think,

incorrectly

that I'm an ass**hO**lejerk.

Your poems can't really read that way
on the printed pa**Ge**, they say.
SOomething in your reading
must **F**ill them with that rage.

PIck the rhythm up
and beat it with a **S**tick.

Beat it till it cacks.

SHake the words—flip the flack—
If that don't sing, then give your ass a crack.

Grunt—poop—plop.

The music will not stop.

Thank go**D**, it isn't free.

KENOSIS

Just as goD was compelled to relinquish
his goDness
in order to take the form of a man,
I have “emptied” myself of my maleness
to become the light treading poet I am.
When sleeping with horses,
expect one to piss next to your head
every now and again.

CALL ME CHINA WHITE

Living through a wet Winterspring:
abundant germination and little growth.
Starting and stalling.
Starting and stalling.
Starting and stalling.
Birds wheel and return to their nests.
Butterflies do not come here.
The grass is so green.
I know I will see your face
before nightfall.

WORK PRAYER

O God give me strength
to do your will
with my paltry soul as
go between

to work O God
this day with urgency
as if my last
and searching open eyes
as if my first

And yes, O, God please
fill me with the humble
balls
to find the poems I've lost
and remind me God
when I grow weak
never to take in hand again
the rotten ones I've tossed

And last of all, O, friendly God
whatever thy will be
thinking back through restless nights
the service of your sun
a brighter day will dawn
for this work day's done.

FECUNDATING FLURRIES

Just as poverty is the great ironic aphrodisiac,
(Go ahead. Offer food for a fuck to the starving.)
materialism is the world's greatest contraceptive.
Third world peasants are enthusiastically converting
from child bearing
to VCR's and microwaves.
marketing is the drive;
electricity, the catalyst;
consumer goods, the payoff.
A blizzard of babies slows
to futilely
fecundating
flurries.

UNDOING TIME

“The inmates spend a lot of time cutting one another’s hair. They seem to crave the delicate touch of the barber.”

Department of Corrections Official

Denying denial, neither gay, homosexual
nor homoerotic,
they parole out to girlfriends,
wives, hookers;
yet, while here in the pen, hoosegow,
bighouse, joint, stir, slammer,
high diddle diddle;
(doing tons of time)
they fall in love,
temporarily,
with one another;
as they fall
into religion,
fall off of
falling out with rival gangs
and fall in step
with time.

A clock stopped is correct
more often (twice a day)
than those (almost all) that run chronically
fast
or
slow.

A PERFECT STRANGER

Out of touch.

Out of time.

What a rude world without you.

Eyes. Apple. Wide.

THE MOSQUITO

The mosquito waits for us
to sleep and then
moves in
for the
kill.

I B S
IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

The asshole learns habits

almost as fast as the mouth.

Opposite ends of the same tube

flash the two faces of capitalism.

FROM PILLAR TO POST MODERN

Post meridian—
The afternoon of criticism.
A rainy Saturday afternoon.
Post office—
Academics take to the streets
In more ways than one,
Not quite going all the way.
Post graduate—
Always suspect,
Never proved.
Postage—
Time's answer to unisex.
The charge for femaling an item
From newage to sewage.
Post date—
That's later than actual.
In essence,
Virtual time.
Post diluvian—
Legendary.
See: postmodern,
Empower and facilitate.
Postmortem—
Much better, thank you.
Post toasties—
Simply delicious, those.
Post millennial—
Same as pre-millennial
only later.
Post partum—
The big part past 'em.
A life sentence.

Post script:

I have a want named wart,
hairy and hangy.

Not a want named pant, rant,
nor can't.

Now not part, not Bart, not dart.

My wart called Walt
is a chocolate malt ice cream melt.
Well, that bubble looks more like
a welt than a wart.

I'd love to weedle an "H" out of
that welp across the moat.

Miso soup needs kelp.

This kelt needs help.

Egress.

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