

# Limitations on Framing the Question

*A Collection of Poems*

Richard P. Gabriel

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January 1, 2004

## Elegance & Reprisal

she was golden once  
and held her head like a golden goblet  
and smiled like the mornings of Italy  
she walked the streets like a young woman  
but watched the sun and trees like a crone

I found her attractive  
she never found me

## Panthers On Main Street

she liked to wander down the main street in town  
with her pets lodged firmly in  
her mind wearing a skirt that was also firm  
the way it didn't wander very far from her  
side—tight I mean—on her way to a heavy  
breakfast at the café her mother used to  
work in a cook shouting code words back  
to the waitress prowling like Rilke's panther  
wondering who walking in was human

yes we like to fantasize about the women  
we meet the magazine stand just up the street  
is perfect for gazing both for the magazines  
and for those walking past eggs—too  
many eggs to sit in the café with them  
but watching them go in skirts tight  
then come out skirts tighter—man  
oh man walking down main street  
in a tight skirt

## Frozen After Time

one by one they round  
the corner as if simply looking  
for a fine cup of coffee out  
of sight or as if birds  
were chattering on the other  
side of a lake and they were watchers  
and listeners or as if the cold  
breeze coming off a frozen river ...

we're walking hand in hand  
right up to the end when  
we are done exploring the intricacies  
of the other's hand and we let go

we let go  
right at the end  
when the wind is coldest

## Long By The Sea

I walk at the end  
of a long day ending  
by a strongly rolling sea  
my breath has been eased  
and my lungs are filling full  
with the crisp and salted air

after a hard dusk  
of a storm sky breaking  
of a storm sky spanning  
of the birds huddling among the roots  
of straining trees  
the steep last rising  
face of the storm  
is slowly then forgotten

what hurt the storm brings  
is slowly then forgotten  
and I am not  
remembering the long climbs  
no more detained  
I am the runner who once ran past

the path here twisting through many woods  
did the dawn once open up  
long ago  
is the sea air clearing

once frozen lips  
are melting  
eyes fading along the sea  
right now

my hand feels the long grip of yours  
pass away  
I hear the boom and fall of the nearby sea  
I feel the need pass by me  
as the storm moves over a distant hill

find the dusk and open up  
say it anyway  
leave me here  
walking at the end of a long day  
remembering what I've forgotten  
long ago  
along the sea

## Plains Impersonations

I'm remembering the unforgettable  
piercing cold of a shallow winter  
on the thin crust of the midwest  
plains where the effects of cold  
and wind colluding can drive  
a man to dropping his guard  
for love

not guaranteed nor on the up  
and up but a chance  
I think for a sly  
woman to make her move  
like a blanket opening up on her bed  
letting the warmth seep out  
in a free sample and the man to sneak in  
and claim the high ground

is it cold tonight  
or do we need to wait

January 6, 2004

## Does It Come Down To This?

underground wandering through town  
the Boneyard is just a creek  
nothing more than a place  
the owls left their droppings  
filled with the fur and bones  
of prey

pray for them who have gone past  
whose empty shells give name  
to an underground  
wandering creek



January 7, 2004

## Cold Scene

above the cold creek frozen to a bone  
a hot heart beats wings close  
to the chest prepare to open  
to gather up warm  
& hapless souls

## 12

the clock struck  
an inopportune  
firehouse longing  
under a deep tongue  
truly cold  
lifting

we drive all day to a park  
featuring butterflies wrestling with ennui

## Harvest Smoke

stubblefield of the cut down  
when the harvest of value leaves  
behind stalks

we cut them and pile them  
into teepees that we make into candles  
early smoke in the air it's so  
forgettable

smoke rising  
this is not it  
this is  
not it

he is the harvest  
not the reburning  
not the returning

my back  
faces this scene  
I might as well burn  
this page

## Finagle Angles

burn the page  
wrestle like two on fire  
place your bets on the field smoke  
aligning like luck  
and your fortunes  
what I love  
I give away

## Fast On

here the women  
stand in doorways in second floor  
apartments after midnight  
and stare down out their windows  
to the car I'm in driving past  
they are the opportunity  
I don't have having  
chosen thought over flesh  
when the thoughts of women  
standing in doorways would have been to anticipate  
me waiting for them and not me anticipating  
the darkened roads lined with poor lights  
all the way back to a small town  
my fingerprints  
you see  
are on the dagger of my mind's demise  
the flat tire I ride fast on

## Sinclair/Linda

outside town the little bar  
chugs along with a 5 dollar cover  
collected by a 400 pound man sitting on a chair  
by the door who smiles saying welcome  
to my orange free admission stub  
& inside the girls  
are taking off  
their tops down to thongs  
& such but they come  
sit by me at the tall round table  
talk to each other as if I'm their uncle  
then I go back behind the dj  
& one of them backs up to me  
& I rub her back & legs  
& she grinds me & climbs  
onto my thighs while I watch her  
nipples lengthen & soon  
when the song ends we head for  
the table & talk of her financial planner  
the novel she's writing & the article  
on how to piss off a stripper  
yes that yes me

## He-He

so I rub her ass  
then reach round to her abs  
oh she twists to the dj & all that  
& she cups her tits &  
I think he-he when her hair  
pulls my glasses off  
& she grinds the lenses into powder  
on the concrete floor with her stiletto heels  
he-he she cries & calls out her hubby's name  
while I decide not to scoop up my glasses  
since this is not a place to come  
& see but a place to feel  
when you come

## Grabbable, That Is

is it time to get better  
practice with the tension death demands  
leave less and less on the table  
with each passing fancy

or is a slow pace the thing  
the way we made love at first  
or the swift silliness of a lost road

but getting better  
like walking across a lake  
takes sure balance  
like something that adds up  
see the point

I see a pattern developing  
and that's the work of poets  
see  
make the pattern plain  
yet fresh like morning bread  
or evening tea

when you know you might meet  
your stripper at the mall  
that makes her more like your wife  
that is grabbable



## Hot Tin

when I saw her the setting sun was trying to hide  
her face in its orange backglow  
it was main street urbana where except  
for the new courthouse everything  
else is shut down for 30 years  $\pm$  30 years  
she was wearing a long coat over  
her stretch lace black dress fresh  
from the strip club where she'd strip  
off the dress and in just a thong hop  
up on a high table wrapping her ankles  
around a farmer's neck and pump her pussy  
for a dollar not bad for 42 she'd tell her friends  
and me but the 23 year old stripper with flop tits  
just laughed

she went into the florist  
to order roses for her son's debut in the hs  
theater production of a cat  
on a hot tin roof being romantic  
I bought some too that being  
where we met  
get it

## Roof

## Permission

I'm sure she sits now  
in their darkened bedroom  
where for 55 years they slept  
in nearby beds the cost of one  
large one above their means  
and then above their habits  
alone after the memorial hundreds  
attended and then left for the familiarity  
of their beds and talking late in the night  
about how she would face the darkened  
room alone for the first time  
in 55 years

I would help  
if it were permitted

## Impossible

## One Way

the road to the last place  
on earth is like any other road:  
once on the road  
your choice is to go on  
quick or go on slow

## Or Another

## Planned From A Start

hobbled by love  
and begging for sanctions against careful elocution  
the wigged patent attorney hugs his knees  
as the bottle by his feet topples  
and drains like a bad dream and sunlight  
into a convenient sewer

he once loved a woman more dear  
than the hair on the back of his neck  
but when his fortunes faded  
so did she and all what was left  
was the fine grey hair on the back of his neck  
and mr bottle of tequila

and a sewer flowing to the charles and then the sea  
where the waves roll on  
like love in a lifeboat  
built long ago  
when the wood from trees grew thick  
and forceful

## Warmup For Double Coding

first I speak to the elite  
judging by their lights  
how far the rainbow runs until  
depositing \$60 in their pockets go directly  
to jail  
then to you the readers of this light  
verse who don't care for the formalities  
but wish only  
an observation worthy of liking  
perhaps reminding you of a Super Bowl  
ad or a noteworthy remark of the redoubtable  
Samuel  
Johnson who lay  
with women and never acknowledged  
the lie  
of saying not even till  
the last  
day of his life

## After A Blank Western Starring the Producer and Director

where were you when I shot  
first before anyone was set  
for it and the force of evil  
fell with one in the forehead where surprise  
is supposed to be examining the remnants  
of events just aching for the chance  
to get up and go  
to split head for the hills  
but this time surprise lacked the time  
and on one side fell let's run  
and on the other let's not

## For A Few Minutes

on the porch  
the vast scope of America hovering around us  
on one side the sea  
on another the expanses of wheat and corn  
behind us the rising mountains of combined east and west  
and in front the urban of legend  
with face-lifting architecture  
and alleys of dumpsters filled with the debris of capitalism  
everywhere we look the urge of business  
pushes aside the clear views and honest refrains  
of our wonderful future  
needless to say  
our neighbors are lining up  
to borrow our camera  
when like warm honey  
the video ends  
the sounds of our rockers comes up  
blending with the cicadas  
and the reverberation of the power lines  
in the right breeze  
and now our vacation looms  
in her red g-string panties  
red stockings  
and red high heels  
my mouth hanging open  
for a few minutes  
amen

## Three Dot Lounge

behind me the woodstove cracks  
inside the wood burning cracks the wood to ashes  
from the fractured gray of bark over heartwood  
the wood is shrouded in flames then turns a deep black  
with red cracks leaking blue flames  
and then it all breaks to the mixed porridge of ash  
and fragments I vex into a bucket and bury  
like a boy does the bird he found  
beneath a tree whose fate  
dot dot dot



## Two Views on Cold

when salt water freezes  
along the rim of a deep sea  
the scent of birds will drift away  
and then the sounds of their wings  
and songs

we will make our mistakes then  
as what's true seems wrong  
and what's false has become frozen

## Tell It, Lord

while we're at it sir  
You have a lot to answer for too  
such as why I wasn't prepared for the deaths  
and why the women I found soon left me  
taking our children with them  
why the snowfall I hoped would soften the sharp sounds of conversation  
turn to freezing rain or hail on our metal roof  
and the injustices and wars  
remember those  
where dishonest people ruled or honest people became mad  
or the log whose bugs beneath became food for the foraging bear  
or the rain on my first girl picnic or those ants  
remember those ants  
and why my mother refused the help  
that would have kept me sane

## Can Such A Thing Be?

when the wind stops tonight  
take the covers and pull them over my face  
if I lie on my back and if  
I don't then roll me over so nothing  
comic takes place and the solemnity  
of such a moment as this is kept  
intact and if you like  
kiss the top of my head which is the spot  
closest to my best thoughts or my eyes  
which saw as much as they could even  
when my enthusiasm hedged  
and remember what I told you  
but whisper it to no one  
and I'll not repeat it either  
I think it is perfect  
and like nothing else anyone has ever told anyone  
and it's our secret

because it is us  
no one will ever know

January 26, 2004

## Trundling

and when we find the path  
that passes by streetlights  
dark on the night  
the lens we choose  
will close and darken  
like a shady spot new grown  
with leaf

January 27, 2004

## Fog Ritual

faced with untimely vision  
and strength of hearing  
rushed like a hind-leg paragon  
and marshalling effort upon grandeur  
I'm finding my way past lines of onlookers  
whose interest is simply this:  
intangible misfortune

## So Do We

driving back  
streetlights once blaring are now quiescent  
and as cars pass I see green dashboard lights  
on the faces of diverse drivers  
the experience is of exhumation  
and of waking

when I woke my father  
was carrying me through the cold  
November air from the car  
to my bed which would not warm  
for another hour

or so it seemed until  
she came to bed  
fresh from a hot bath  
and she warmed our covers  
the way an exuberant car heater will  
with the fan up high

trees branch  
and so do we

I H.

why do you all stand around  
why are the curtains closed  
when all want is a nap  
why don't you hear me answering your silly questions  
of course I know who you are  
and no I'm not thirsty again  
I haven't been thirsty in days  
if I close my eyes will you go away  
I hear you  
I hear you sobbing  
I h.

## Regarding The Nostalgia That Fuels The Web

the crooks stole it all  
carrying it out in bags on their backs  
looking like prison guards hauling  
out the prisoners they've killed today  
looking for a proud burying ground  
and here is what they said walking out

about 400 of the bodies were originally buried here—of the remaining 400, there were  
about 150 brought from Selma Ala  
about 160 brought from Cahawba  
about 40 brought from Demopolis  
about 27 brought from other places  
for a total of 400

the tools used are now kept in a tent  
many are lost  
a small tool house is asked for and is needed

when I've dug the grave it turns  
and digs me

you can guess what they stole  
your guesses are inventory  
you are the crooks



## Fear S. Thompson

the fear is assembled  
from small altercations  
using instructions translated from Japanese  
like

English sentence:  
Jane went to the school

same sentence in Japanese:  
school Jane to went monkey apple carburetor

your fear  
being well-constructed  
blends real facts  
and your facts  
blasted through a venturi valve

your fear resembles  
animé

## On Repose

fixed but not repaired  
stationary some might say  
a fixation of an unremarked kind  
affecting the small tests fore danger  
like the wording that justifies  
the flight from loving and less than  
ennobling actions taken in back  
seat on buses by the sea  
oh and don't forget the banks of slow flowing  
rivers you see sentimentality has choked  
on nostalgia and in we're in for many  
vent clearing maneuvers

## Retelling

so it's cold  
and the lumberjacks are off  
fucking any native girl they can  
or even ones from Korea  
making monsters  
and guitar-playing heroes  
who once sweet  
is now colder  
more accurate  
a better storyteller

## In Eons

she reads it over and over  
trying to figure the meaning her  
emotions feel are hidden  
in the clever words that make her cry  
but twist away at the last second  
not knowing that meaning  
is for a god whose existence  
is the biggest joke he's heard  
in eons

## Got it

that another winters paints the hills  
not entirely alive there is no  
certainty in the pale air rhyming  
like a refrain from the flattened  
south hankering to heat up  
the cooling coils turning dripping  
air to dripping pans drawing red  
ants from the dust-laden ground  
new from a mow painting the grass  
to a uniform depth

that it reminds me of the fire there is  
no doubt no more doubt than  
the house that's burned down  
whose cellar is become a dump  
full of pulp and rats

I can't think of a better thing  
nor a place that can't benefit  
from a month painted snow  
white and bitter cold  
and a depth of buried feeling  
like nostalgia rotting into sentimentality  
get it

## Forgetting/Getting Rid

papers piled swept  
away into the forgotten places  
papers and things snudged with importance  
tinged by the old and passed by  
something that one day will be pumped  
into the dumps and away places

we'll see these things only once or twice more  
before the day comes when we need to forgot  
them and ourselves too  
and what even living might mean  
to those who have forgotten it

February 6, 2004

## About All There Is

no one is sure where  
god is tonight  
considering the hushed voices  
in the bar up the street  
the answer is true blue

## Tight and Spanking Clean

when we face the bed  
what is to be found there is  
as frightened as we  
may become  
the stage is set up  
and the players fear the audience  
as we fear them  
for what we find is more  
always more  
than what is otherwise real  
can offer

who would dare tarnish  
such an icon



## Another Prayer

as the hour nears  
feeding itself on the separate shards of time  
passing by  
the erosion is bearing down  
deepening toward a core  
which is the secret we lust  
after    o lord  
find my way with me  
listen to the stepping  
as I step closer to you  
then farther away  
sound your voice  
that I might reckon your place  
and mine  
combine with me as man combines with woman  
and find the open plain as warm as the warmth  
of a winter burning stove

I fear both your absence and your presence  
for you are everywhere  
help me find hope  
help me prepare

## Method #1

I start anywhere  
like here  
talking about where I start

I follow the path that spins  
ahead of me  
formed in the manner that spiders make silk

in the end good lines  
stretch like disordered loose  
coiled chains

in the end the path  
if true  
leads to one place—what's real

## Out of Sight

when we focus the world  
around us disappears  
so focus is the opposite  
of reality and the enemy of truth

it took great genius to learn this  
by a man with tremendous focus

and we believed him  
because we studied his mathematics  
carefully  
one line at a time  
and within that line  
one symbol at a time

we celebrate the absurdity of his effort  
but we don't recognize it  
because we focus  
we call it insight

## Far Out

## Sand Digger

in the bed  
of a truck hauling sand  
from a deep sand pit  
reached by a sandy road  
descending down past earlier  
digs ...

while my father shovels sand  
I climb to the top of the slope  
easily 50' up  
the top 5' clayed and straight

I run back to the edge of the woods  
run out and jump

I'm in the air for vertical 20'  
weightless unwinged  
the slope catches me  
as a gentle father might

while mine keeps digging  
intent on cement  
and the hard drive out

## Flight Instructor

## Jump

wreckless to worry  
concern is the dry toast  
act is nine  
profitability = technology  
1 is no number sir

the sweet words of nervous poets  
creep into the pockets of trenchcoat pamphlets  
those rags that no one reads  
there is nothing there a person needs to live  
never mind the news  
their words sticky pop  
in a "musical" sense

pap wins prizes  
for judges refuse to judge  
for a judge's judgment judges him

when in doubt  
vote for the cheerleader  
then breeze off to Alabama  
for juleps

## -ing Juleps

February 13, 2004

## Death Hath No

check the date  
death waits nearby  
shit what's that  
sound of feathers disappearing from wings

February 14, 2004

## Old Age Adage

when you start taking pills  
to stay alive  
staying alive is backing away

## Method #2

why did I dream  
I saw her die  
with my son on a tower looking down  
she walked from her bed to puke  
returned to curl up  
then did it again

she curled up and called to her mother  
and her father  
not to me  
nor to my son

study hard



## The End

at the airport  
we stood in line behind the swim team  
and when we got to the agent  
I helped her get her ticket  
while she listened to my voice  
answering questions that frightened her  
and when she thought it was over  
I got her a frequent flier card  
to make things easier next time

I had carried her bag  
and all she had were a backpack  
with her schoolbooks  
and her computer in a special bag  
I bought her for Christmas one year

we walked to the security line  
and I waited with her  
telling her about the connection  
and the friend who would pick her up at the other end  
but when they asked for her ID  
I had to stop  
she kissed me  
perhaps thoughtlessly  
I could go no further with her  
I stood and watched  
while she never looked back

## In Small

## Hot Copper Bed

supercomputer  
doing its shuffles  
in the billions per second  
spider in a web of memories  
it trades amps for heat  
and results

it takes effort to make the random  
bits hold out tokens  
of intent to shuddering eyes

I talk to it by shaking my hand  
and pushing regular buttons  
and how do I know it loves me

it speeds up  
its fan

hot

## Foreign Insomnia

I recall crossing the heavy bridge  
over the Danube  
thinking that the water seemed oily  
flowing under sodium streelights  
after a heavy dinner in Pest  
something about it reflected  
there my last year

the next morning walking through town  
I saw three cranes on three low buildings  
hovering over the street  
over where workers dressed in heavy  
clothes struggled toward work

that evening I found her door  
its knocker was a lion holding a ring in its mouth  
the door handle the green tail of a fish from poetry  
worn gold where flesh beat upon it

I will never forget the smells  
beneath her blankets  
all of a kind

## Corner L\*nger

on the corner  
wind scoring the corners  
of mahogany colored building edges  
rain forming whipped pools  
I'm waiting  
for the lights to dim or a window  
to crack from heat  
or dual pressure

now it's time to turn  
leave  
even though the trees  
shake no  
no no  
and the rain is just getting  
going

what's up there  
why this place  
now?  
why again?

## Flip/Flop

a clock makes its thinking  
known through a metronomic  
shuffle like a yes/no  
0/1 on/off you know  
the face moves so slow

they move away from me  
slow but with a concerted pace  
the sun heading down  
is the signal  
the alarm about to go off  
the noise about to come on  
yes we may have loved you  
no you are no more

## I Was Led Here

as I came to the crossroads  
waiting there flatland all  
all directions  
heat & dust & wind fueling  
my unending thirst  
my map on the hood  
a bottle on the hood

she stopped her truck & stepped  
out telling me of 4 corners  
the wings of man  
then I watched

her climb back in & drive  
away to the west  
the wind whipped my map  
tearing it in two

I watched the dust  
from her tires  
drift away fast  
I stood there for hours

## Wanking It

saving it  
just wastes it  
smell of sun-hot oil  
where trucks sat parked  
while driver downed burgers  
something hot  
something sweet  
something over the top  
I'm heavy on the wind  
saluting flags that snap  
to straight for fractions  
of a second  
the red on the gaspump  
reminds me of my flag  
and a girl I made up  
while figuring out how to love  
myself in the middle  
of the sunset afternoon

## Light Warthogs & Satan

His sneezings flash forth light,  
and his eyes are like most people think warthogs  
and cane toads are: ugly. Does  
this mean that they have been created by Satan?  
Unleash dazzling, constantly  
changing rainbow light from various warfare  
planes, and Air Force A-10 Warthogs.  
Adam was "shot down" by Satan's deception!

When separated by distances that imply  
faster-than-light communication, the way I  
see it, ambient Satan wrinkles not when  
the amazing warthogs preserve tomatoes  
but when you got your first attempt  
at a light-weight DOS.



## Finally Time

when the clock finally  
shuts up the only ticking left  
will be time's little lies

## Terminal Waiting

in the terminal the mood  
is pacing from one lounge  
to another past shops closing  
now that it's late

the airplanes that wait  
by gates in foreign terminals  
at night languish while workers  
clean and fuel and masters  
check and prepare

the terminal in Denmark  
seems yellow in my memory  
with high ceilings  
very high

voices carry their insinuations  
through accents based on deepened voices  
and lilting overtones

I buy a beer and a sort of hot dog  
and smear the meat with hot mustard  
the newswoman on the tv acts like she has information  
but it is only noise

eventually beautiful women walk by  
and I'm reminded of where I am  
on this journey our takeoff  
will take us over water

some will be heading home  
others away but the constant  
reminds me of the color of the terminal  
yes the terminal

## Or Numbers

I'm sipping what I thought was coffee  
but it is heavy and bitter though infused with milk  
which lies in layers in different colors  
can this be right?  
girls are sitting nearby  
it's warm in the sun though the day is quite cold  
the building with the café is green a kind of stone green  
the girls are women I guess  
they seem to be talking but it sounds like sex to me  
there are metal tents on the tables  
more like A's but without the -  
they have letters on them  
or numbers  
what are they for?  
they are gold color like a faux brass  
the tables are round and green like ones at patio store  
I bought a paper at the bookstore but it is for pretending  
waiters come out with plates of food and look  
they are searching do they want the girls?  
I mean do they want the women?  
I read about feminism but I like girls  
oh the tents a signs for the waiters  
they are looking for the letter or number that means the person bought something  
I want to buy some chocolate maybe a piece of cake  
one girl stands up and man  
is her skirt tight and look at her ass  
which do I want more  
her or the cake  
the cake will taste better  
but her ass will give me a better memory  
what does the paper say?

## Down Slope

trains along the embankment  
ride down a shallow slope  
never far from the river  
through canyons and wooded spots  
and finally to the widening foothills  
and out onto the plain

how like the end of a trip

## Irrational Design

I am the last alive  
as more fails I waste away  
because this was the designer's best idea  
but the best ideas don't work well  
in the last circumstances

## Names and Numbers

[we slow down  
old 66 and a 65 Mustang  
covered in dust we stop  
to lower the top the wind rises  
blowing dust onto the already grayed  
blue paint when it's down we're off  
after an hour the heat and creosote smells  
turn us off we slow down  
raise the top].com

## Backwards

the animal watches me  
with intensity  
his head tilted to one side as if wondering  
and I wonder whether he knows  
something secret  
perhaps when I'll die or how  
or whether he's as dumb as  
he looks looking at me like I'm the dumb one  
maybe he's in on a joke  
animals way smarter than people  
way way smarter and when we first popped  
onto the scene they said hey let's  
pretend we're stupid and see how long  
before those apes figure it out

## Her Thoughts I Could Swear

the sharp edges of her  
raw commentary linger on my thinking flesh  
like all women her  
dull opinion of me remains  
I find her oddly  
contrary

her mind  
in contrast  
has a few new thoughts to hop onto  
hop hop yep hop hop

someone has gained enough  
rights to license an image of Jesus

Jesus



March 3, 2004

## Clichés, He Said

is it time to start my eulogy  
no one else will write it  
nor anyone care  
much but someone may read it  
or I could post it on the web  
my tilt toward the opposite of obscurity  
I've got nothing much else  
to do while I sit and wait  
for the end

## Trite on Breathing

breathing inhaling  
breathing out exhaling  
the lungs fill up & we  
realize how fragile it is  
to depend on the substances  
that hover above ground  
of the perfect temperature  
we understand the rarity  
but we are made for it  
it's as natural as breathing

## Your Programming Language Ideas

it's all about understanding  
when we want an argument of type  
`temperature_reading` the signature  
tells everyone what is expected  
and no one needs to read the code  
but Bjarne don't you see  
when the argument name's  
`temperature_reading` you told them  
the same thing

ha ha ha you're so funny Bjarne  
your programming languages ideas  
are killing us

## A Dull Night Vigil

looking out my second floor apartment  
down a street not known for glamor  
the rain has been filling the pockmarks  
and the black asphalt has risen to a sheen  
from the glare of a streetlight down by the corner  
the rain's stopped now for a moment  
and the wind's holding off too

a couple in a car parked just off the hydrant  
seem wrapped up in each other  
the windows are steamed opaque  
I'm sitting by my window eating a soft pear  
and listening to the single A game two counties over  
my window is not steamed

I hear a car coming from the cross street  
and if all goes as it seems it must  
the couple will pause and look up  
the car will turn onto the street below  
the slick road will endure two widening gashes  
and soon the storm will resume  
in all its hideous silence

still the pear must be eaten

## Shake Rattle and Roll

often the rusty regain form  
suffering the semblance of accomplishment  
I've often wondered where ideas come from  
new ones  
but things keep rattling in my head

frameworks might work  
sort of a metaphor but easier to understand  
a car with wings where the wheels would be  
that's a new idea  
for me  
but wasn't Hermes like that  
in a mythological sense?  
Giambologna made him look queer I say

when I read a new idea I say  
there is something odd  
or unnaturalistic  
about the way it is presented

## Eye O'

she moves like a hurricane  
away as if pressures guide her  
and what she destroys is the ghost of whims  
as she moves her face disappears  
in spasms of incoherent hair  
and quintessential longing  
oh my dear head aches and blues  
plays at a quick pace

let me pass by  
let the day spill and find me  
in her eye

## Black Lantern

Before the rabbits pass  
the girl with the tattoo around her waist  
must tip her hat if she has one  
and the crows huddled in their horde  
must hop to the side and quake  
or turn their heads at once  
and croak or quawk  
and then the rabbits  
they shall pass  
by hopping like rabbits will  
and the girl will giggle like girls will  
and the crows will turn  
blacker than hope which is the black  
they're born with as was the world  
and all of the rest of us.

## Circular Reasoning By You Know Who

The paths are growing over  
with the grass people routinely mow  
and even aspens are popping up  
or are they birches;  
anyhow the day has come when this bit  
of familiarity is past. But this trail  
once led to a warming hut  
stocked before people left  
with kindling and small firewood  
bundles for those who came by  
later.

Now no one can  
find it though it must be part of the woods  
lovely dark and mysterious deep  
as the master once wrote  
from the back of an old pickup  
truck heading away. He and others  
I never loved are long gone  
in cemeteries at the ends  
of invisible paths.



## Punctuation Flats

a wave of girls pass by  
and what will happen when the crest and come crashing down  
the bottom must have come up fast and the wind  
that blew them up must have been strong and persistent  
somewhere

I want to peel them like oranges  
and smell their oils on my fingers for days after  
but this is the wrong century  
and I'm reduced to leaning and cursing

my vote doesn't count in the race  
for good taste  
I sit by myself at this computer  
and type with no effect  
click click tap  
little electronic marks  
spew out

punctuation makes  
things end  
abruptly  
when my vision tells  
me it all goes on  
and always will

## Hammer of Justice

imagine the dead from  
all the wars ever fought  
think of them judging the effect  
they had

would you be willing  
to be judged by them for what  
we've made of all those deaths

failing that  
what of those ignored  
with nothing to say  
nothing ever said

who simply were  
and were and were  
all over this land

## Smell The Aroma

hay rake  
side delivery  
dozens line up for the debate  
over the spondee and echoes  
versus the complexity of rhythm and meaning  
that a longer line might provide  
it is called a side delivery rake  
because it leaves a wind row of hay  
to the left and beside the rake  
it is not a trip rake  
which combs the hay  
the side delivery fluffs the hay  
so it dries faster  
lines of hay in windrows

the perfect line  
is tight as Dick's hat band

## O Yap

oh the streets  
you walk down them and stare  
at each place  
some houses are painted black  
painted black

I saw one with white trim  
for instance there was a white trellis  
in the shape of the chimney  
and 4' in front of it  
the plastic curtains were white too  
and the garage door  
let's say that everything like a wall was black  
and everything else was white

around back they had a big yard  
which was mowed pretty nice  
there was a black Weber grill back there  
and a fence around like you'd need for hunting dogs  
but the place was in town  
my wife asked if that whole yard was really part of their place  
I said  
who'd dispute them

looked like Raiders' fans to me  
but we didn't want to find out  
so we high-tailed it down the street  
to where a pair of white West Highland terriers lived  
and we listened to them yap  
for a while

## Inept Building And Conclusion

behind the yard the woods  
and within them the clearing in a grove of white pines  
and in the center a rock no one ever moved  
onto the stone wall fences all around it

by the rock I built my teepee  
out of thin pines in a pyramid  
and boards nailed all around  
but the door  
and covered every week with fresh branches  
laden with needles

in the center of the teepee  
I dug a hole and buried a tin  
filled with pictures  
my parents would not want to see

little by little  
I learned what made me tick  
do you want to know what it was  
those pictures

## Peter Out

beginnings this is the avenue  
that dwindles to a path  
in cavernous woods by a stream  
that peters out before emptying anywhere

I've learned to let the images speak  
for themselves without embellishment  
by the music of English  
which lurks like one of the zombies  
from Night of the Living Dead  
living dead their houses reek of nostalgia  
because that's all they have except for  
a deep hunger

a hunger such as we feel  
turning onto the avenue  
sweet and clear

## Driving One

driving the backroads  
western kansas  
people here have died for reason  
not whatsoever

it's a puzzle  
a weird puzzle  
in which the more you work  
on it  
the more the puzzle grows  
a jigsaw  
which when  
you put a piece in place  
9 more fall onto the unplaced pile

I was a dew breaker  
I arrived early but now it's leave time  
a fall

she might know I've been  
here here  
where her remains  
she remains  
sweet and clear

don't open the door  
listen instead  
to the car tires throwing up  
sand silted by the curb

remember me  
as you remember loneliness  
and the radio

## Opaque Your Eyes

streets around LA  
hint at the heat possible  
and cars are either over  
the top or under the bottom  
this is not the place for blues  
my eyes have burned more brightly  
only in rare places

only the rare singer  
relies on tone and voice  
such will sing long notes  
holding them and timbring

in LA singers like that  
are dead and buried  
and reburied  
as if something were on the shoulder

side streets are the main  
thing I follow them wherever  
as long as the mausoleum is in  
sight or the house over a large  
garage and all that

sleep on it  
sleep on a bench by a thoroughfare  
make sure your eyelids are opaque  
your eyes



## Seeking Remix

there's a spotlight  
hinging back and forth  
seeking that important thing  
called nothing  
far away the beam moves past the eye  
faster than light  
but mr einstein is not concerned  
since many things move that fast  
space and religion being two of them  
in the eyes of most consumers and artists

let us set their content free  
for remix at least

## Short Metaphoria

we fast then slurp maple  
syrup fast as a dog licking  
peanut butter stuck to his palette  
what we eat up fast are fake stories  
better than real but best when mixed  
with real so the past seems richer  
than our lives our lives like the fasting  
the fake stories like the maple syrup  
the truth like a dog's tongue

## (Importance)

we make too much  
(of) money I claim  
which makes us  
sense(less of) the discrepancy  
between love and loss  
and the march of military horses  
off to another (oil)field

## Forgotten But Visible

old brick  
buildings with painted signs  
painted in the '20s '30s  
or later  
corsets saddles safes  
supplies  
an old Westchester exchange  
phone number painted on  
an old dairy an A&P  
a doctor's office  
when we look the past  
is on us sensible signs then  
like drying rain puddles  
the headstones have been pushed  
over graffitied over  
when the sign to the old cemetery falls  
apart the day has come  
for being old

## Designing For The Sexes In Western Kansas

the fluttering curtains pulled out of windows  
lines of dust and sand squalls angling across the street  
a potato-chip bag emptied and parachuting along  
a coke can rolling then flipping end over end into a side street  
a high-pitched whistle from a set of four guys  
against the rattle of a rusted antenna held up  
by them frame the symphony of wind-whipped cacophony  
down the street on the far sidewalk a pretty woman's skirt  
is suddenly lifted when she passes out of the shadow of a stepvan  
and her flowered panties briefly are all that's between her and me

women

but my pickup doesn't mind the heavy midafternoon winds  
or the sideshows and imponderables  
she just turns over when I ask  
and goes when I put my foot down

## things to be

a thug a ring a taxi driver a violin  
you know  
someone you love

## fingered

## Destiny

coughing as I walk near and then  
past the palace of fortunes  
good and bad for fortunes  
pile up and weigh down

I slouch and raise my  
collar as if this little bit  
of hiding can pass for reluctance  
the bricks weep and stain

my car doesn't love me  
but its faithfulness  
gives me faith  
makes me love  
destinations

## Very Tiny

## Traction

no one knows  
about backroads like a cyclist  
(bi or motor makes no diff)  
I am reminded of a song  
that lopes through nostalgia and roads  
like a snowplow the day after a storm  
I can hear that song in my head  
its sappy words and overmusical melody  
distract me from writing well  
each line is writ worse  
each next word seems pulled from the idiom bin  
this is a reckless encounter with a feather pillow  
the roads the backroads they lead somewhere  
past stands of steaming cottonwoods  
no roads the black roads leaves blow across black roads  
in Western Kansas Nancy her head wrapped in silver foil  
no that's the never-stops wind  
where was I  
that song  
did Elvis write it  
no one of the Beatles  
be at Lesos  
no one knows

## Distraction



## I Write The Words That Make

I wrote love letters  
for many my friends who love  
to love but had no notion  
of what that took  
it's not just odor  
and warmth

they wanted words like  
love honey baby  
when I thought please  
was more appropriate  
or a mood would work wonders

sex positions were frequent  
-ly suggested veto  
was my response

letters came back  
with scents and script  
results I called them

I had them for a day  
and showed them to my friends

this was all I had  
to show for it

## The Young Girls Squirm

## My Hotel

the most beautiful hotel's  
front door is down a side  
street and the smell that rises  
from nearby bins is of old onions

I'm picturing the city it's in  
with a river cutting it in half  
and cruise boats going up and down  
under bridges lined with lovers  
something the city is known for

do you picture Kansas?  
let me add some things

paintings  
people paint here  
and collect paintings here  
there are places where painters paint

pantings  
people pant here  
and collect panties here  
there are places where pantie-lovers pant

lovers and art  
ok churches  
and cathedrals too

the river  
people die in it  
people live on it in boats  
the river has a odor  
yet people sunbathe by its concrete banks

banks  
people bank here  
and collect banknotes here  
there are places where bankers bank

you want to guess  
I know you do  
please guess  
so I can stop writing

## Fries

we've stopped at the joint  
order burgers with Suzie Qs  
waiting takes 10 minutes  
we've found a bench out in the field  
where birds are waiting for our Suzie Qs

the field will fill with old cars soon  
and music from the 1960s  
by the time you read this  
those songs will be unremembered  
and cars rusted to dust or turned to smoke

our food is ready and we've decided  
to eat so slowly that the cars will have come  
and gone before we're half done  
the birds are muttering  
which we hear because they are so close by  
waiting for our Suzie Qs

all the time we wait  
no friends come by  
no one stops to say hello  
they are busy forgetting  
what just happened  
for the most part  
and saving only the strangest  
and most common

March 30, 2004

## The Muff

after it was over  
I went to the end of the bench  
and sat alone

at other times and for other people  
my team mates would one by one  
join saying nothing

I sat alone  
this is how the end works

## Something That

looking from above  
the land looks worn  
changed by strangers  
looking there long after I left  
the farm seems old  
and some distances shorter

my next big purchase  
will not be for fun  
but for something that reminds  
me

## Damn You Dobyns

we planted a tree today  
a japanese maple that will have a tough  
go where we placed it  
out in the sun in our south-facing yard  
backed by a stucco wall  
it will bake  
it's a lacey red maple about 3' tall  
we planted it in damp soil  
with plenty of Miracid

today the wind blew hard from the west  
and our little maple had a hard day  
its roots are good  
we think it's grafted

we think it will not live long  
but if it does we will be dead before it reaches its glory

I'll stop writing now  
so you can dream up all  
the ways to make this metaphor  
work

## Ain't It The Truth

I read the news which purported to be the truth  
but I recalled quickly that it had been written  
someone sitting down and selecting how to lead  
me through the facts someone choosing  
from this or that existing stuff someone  
selecting words that can't be chipped  
or sanded down to fit perfectly  
the perfection of imperfection someone not  
a poet once said of something else  
fits here because something more  
important than perfection  
is at stake and it ain't  
the truth

## Without

the force of light  
is the falseness of clarity  
dark is among the prophets  
and trash cans  
a lurker among the least  
coexists with friendship on the table  
after bitterness at each other's throats

I find it all amusing especially the studyists  
who look hard in silence  
then speak till dark

I wait for the force of light  
to bring clarity to falseness



## Spiritually Fallen Sphere

what will the dead teach us of death  
with their limited channels  
and dumbfounded looks  
even Jesus could spare us only 40 days  
and low-key ones at that  
no theme music  
no special rides  
no church raisings

we are citizens of a crippled world  
if Jesus had gone off on some spectacular  
worked up camp He would have formed  
an off-beat cult

## Four Perfect Truths

All were fucking lied to because  
Ernest Hemingway committed suicide—  
these howlin' mutts bring on a 3<sup>rd</sup> stray to join  
Jesus H. Criminy rag on the Darkness.

"Jesus, Mom," said the squid,  
"Parisian avant-garde,  
from Louis Ferdinand Céline to Ernest Hemingway,  
was already unusual on an island of yellow mutts."

Ernest Hemingway: To die and sodomize me  
in my sleep for not continuing the chain  
which was started by Jesus—if you don't,  
you'll be eaten by wild mutts!"

But the final, definitive answer  
is provided right here by mutts:  
At the beginning, the bloody Jesus made an impact,  
but by the end anything by Hemingway  
must not to rely on physical comedy.

## Teasing Topics

we pick the topics  
steer clear of desperate towns  
and straight ahead till dawn

in the afterwards they patrol  
the nearby fields and trails  
then devouring an unsuspecting dragon fly  
clutching a much larger butterfly

we loaded up our gambling software  
we ask what if it were a butterfly disguised  
to take that prize home

what if what suffers  
is granted the right to choose the topic

## Dangerous Bend

there is a passing by that towns  
in the center of our country  
endure like a thought come and gone  
before it's nailed like the way our daydreaming  
turns to nightdreaming just as we fall  
like a lazy flat stream over a worn flat rock  
that's what happens just out  
of the corner of the little town's eyes  
which are averted while the women there sleep  
with men not their husbands

## Flattened and Hot

what blows across the road  
is a stray leaf or maybe a lizard  
running hard

the asphalt is like an iron  
pressing the bottom of a flattened  
rat caught dreaming instead of running

there is lots of nothing  
between the distant towns  
sprinkled here with greed

and what blows across the road  
blows from near to far as far as  
the lonely and hopeful are concerned

## Working on How It

sometimes we don't know how it works  
we built it and still don't know  
how it works was accomplished  
through guessing and repeating failed  
attempts until something happened  
to change many aspects are not settled  
which leaves room for more changes  
we hope someone drops something into it  
so it can do more stuff that we don't know  
how it works

## Beauty/Pain

two things are here  
the statue of the dying centaur  
and a swarm of mosquitos  
one is the work of genius  
one genius who worked many statues  
before working this one  
the other the work of hundreds  
of small minds synchronized by a common hunger  
hunger is what is common to both  
and for me the question is whether my hunger  
for beauty in the form of an engoldened bronze statue  
of the last centaur dying is stronger  
than my hunger for respite from the appetites  
of small minds united by the most  
common of coincidences

## Flexible Socket Set

jesus I thought they were both the same  
you do have a section of flexible exhaust pipe after the header  
I was able to re-torque my head

the torque limit for this gearbox is well within  
flexible assembly methods  
streetracing is gay and jesus hates gays

cleaner straight edge telescopic gauge set torque angle gauge  
for every problem in your life jesus is the  
flexible socket set



## Off 66 Not Much Else

we can't forget the cabins by the entrances  
to abandoned mines these were the places  
of hope long ago  
still are thinking of one case  
if you forget the roof caved in  
and the beams a gullible bleach  
or the sealed up entrance where a man would descend each day  
while a woman would hope for results  
while making bread over a stove on a hot day

now it's part of rustic acres off 66  
and everything's abandoned  
but the hope sealed inside the symbol  
of one man's dug in hopes

## Symbols Of Death

they are along the sides of roads  
they seem abandoned by a closer look  
reveals them cared for  
their designs kept up in the face of weather  
and the wind of cars and big rigs

when I see them I stop but I've learned why  
they are where they are  
when I stop my car and another passing by  
nearly takes mine off  
or a truck brushes me back

these crosses are here because the places  
attract bad luck and trouble

one had dates and a small bear  
and chrome from the cars placed  
around the cross

## Round Round Get Around

gathering around  
waiting around  
getting around  
running around  
being around  
around by an uncertain amount  
a specific but unspecified  
point somewhere  
around here

## Aromatic Thoughts

when we speak of death  
we speak of fear beneath  
the aromatic mesquite tree  
flush full with lacy green  
leaves near the start of spring  
and when the photographer  
snaps a shot he asks us all  
to look like someone else  
so he can snap another

permission to move on  
there is no shame in permission  
it is not the domain of authority  
we seek ...

the desert air hangs closer  
the sun long disappeared  
is warning other places of its departure

...it is the domain of mercy

## The Apology

In the one to have hung on on  
and for it to have signed up  
we apologize for the blunder which the trouble  
“that it isn't possible to enter a room” generated.  
Because it is in the heart in the future  
for such a blunder not to occur  
still, it is thank you.

The request is the first from you.  
There is much uniform.  
Because myself, too, love Aki's  
of uniform appearance  
It takes a photograph still to the full.

The new comer policewoman “Aki”  
it falls into a snare, it is made to drink medicine  
and it is confinement V...  
which regrets being born at the woman.

Required by the e-mail and the BBS for you,  
it took a photograph with the costume.  
You, too, require.

It sells the pen of Aki fan wholesale.  
That one of “lipstick” Bisco took.

Anyway, beautiful Aki can be seen.  
It is the pen wholesale image of Aki's member.  
Of the virgin very roughly  
Aki, too, is being unconsciously moved.

## 66 Tears

what a land of plenty  
abandoned roads  
factories left to cave  
in whirlwinds of dust  
blown from the remains  
of a field

this hotel  
they try to keep it new  
looking  
awkward and small  
it's made for another era

when people moved from Chicago to LA  
via 66  
66 the siren  
they rejoiced in the falling down beauty  
of the high and low deserts now  
its abandonment is its fame

where is this dream we've dreamt  
in its 66<sup>th</sup> incarnation?

## Roadside Shrines

too many of the roads leading here  
are exhausted from the pelting

the asphalt suffers the heat  
and freezing dying for  
our sins of commission

the places by the road to park  
are hazards celebrated by the only  
kind of littering never punished

the places of crosses contain  
danger and represent the horrors  
of the determined past

## Bryce Unfiltered

the place is complicated  
and through that beautiful

early in its history the man whose family  
name named it said  
"it's a hell of a place to lose a cow"

did this man deserve such beauty  
did he lose many cows there

why was this place not sacred  
not to him not to anyone

I got tired hiking there  
imagine if I had to hunt down  
a lost cow



## Weak and Weary

pass time and spend money  
the roads from one desert to another  
pass through zones and zones

the traveler reeks of havoc  
and the tired reek of lost habits

the sleeping place is as usual  
strange and unkempt

the promise of tales to tell  
sparks me and the raven

who sauntered by dapper  
in response to my photo query  
may we both regret our knowing smile

## Confronted By Anger

piss

## On Their Floor

## Like His Head, He's Washed Up

Carl Philips—  
how does he know  
as if it might matter one whit  
that myths matter?

Orpheus—  
who the hell was he  
yet another  
verser and singer?  
His little sneaking look  
what the hell was that all about?

Lesbos—  
that's where he gave head.  
Girls like it too,  
Carl. What a lie.

## Terraserver

from above  
from way above  
I see that the cemetery is partitioned  
into the old and new  
by the size and randomness  
of trees

the order with which the dead  
have been placed  
in rows or in elegant curves  
is more or less  
hidden by the extravagance  
of life

down there  
from up here  
beyond the comforts of breathable atmosphere  
the view is remote  
for the source is coldness

I look down at the place  
my mother rests  
my father rests  
there it is peaceful and remote  
from here it is a display

## Two Points of Singularity

the old places have learned to linger  
new ones look furtively at each passerby

dust settled on rocks in the old places rarely shift  
or veer away from the place of rest

I must choose  
and choose soon  
which type of rock to settle under  
which sort of sky to rise above

perhaps what I need is water to weep with  
as when the rain falls on the green river  
in the canyon below the high bridge

the contrast is affecting  
I crave negation and affection

## Heaviness of Rain

I turned when the door opened and she  
walked in put her coat on a hanger  
in the closet by my door outside the city lights  
hung yellow by the street and blue elsewhere

rain ran down my windows  
when would she slip off  
her skirt?

the atmosphere closed in  
the door remained shut  
for now what's the use in  
being good?

the heavy layers of rainsound  
put me to sleep when I woke  
I found her skirt on  
the floor her coat  
though

## Rain Going On Snow

she ended up around the corner  
beneath a streetlight her shadow  
on the pavement mixed with her reflection  
in the pooled rain

her skirt by me by inference  
would have meant a night  
but without her  
the skirt is just a garment

around the corner she glances up at a window  
framing a woman staring down the street  
a shadow moving slowly behind her  
along the wall the curtain is another envelope  
the package inside just in panties

later that night the rain would turn to snow  
when the temperatures dropped  
was it the turning away of women  
in the night lit by streetlights  
and men mere shadows

it is like this everywhere  
all the time

## Like There's Hope

still here  
standing by the happy hunting grounds  
wondering what that means in 1962

still here  
standing by the happy hunting grounds  
wondering what that means in 2002

when abstraction evaporates  
all settles to concrete  
carved



## Aromas & Shade

few have seen the pagan waxed  
leaves of mesquite thinking  
the aromatic smoke indicates  
a rough creosote tree cramped  
about the desert  
instead the lacework leaves and yellow bean  
pods shelter in shade the rockstrewn  
canyon floors and yes  
it's aromatic  
isn't everything?

## Dinner Alone

sitting in the steak  
bar looking  
out the open door  
across the street  
and up 20 floors  
a woman grills a steak  
on a balcony  
just after sunset  
up north

street level  
a woman in tight stretch pants  
breaks everything  
in and out  
of sight

## Changing

we look at it as if in awe  
the woman in the wet suit changing  
from black shined skin to haired blonde fuzz  
by the back of her Volvo wagon by the cold bay  
Vancouver BC  
—not time but place—  
the man to have taken her out to the sunken boat shoals  
missed his alarm and kept on in peace  
till noon and a wrong tide

she walks past us on her way to the small breaking surf  
an after effect of something not visible here  
and the day ends for us all  
on this note like something below the surface

## Fabled; Fateful

led here the sky lingers  
above us dropping down like a cloud  
full of rain ready to drop  
for 70 hours until the next change  
hungers to find revulsion in the city  
streets plagued by vomit and urine  
beginning as the revelation of people  
as lingering sores behind living doors  
and through all this I sit by the side  
like an artist high on the missing  
the fabulous beauty

## Black Ship With Orange Stripe

the freighter ships out  
slow heaving to in a tug-  
assisted pirouette its cargo  
of APL safe in containers perched  
precariously on the upper deck

APL barbed like devils  
cleaving food from each other  
a computer language for terse expression  
not a single space for breath  
this cargo has been manufactured by Chinese  
skilled in ideograms and what is plain  
is mystery puffed up with clues

## Graph A Bird Relic

Prebrachial grid.  
Rapid, large birch.

Drip a large birch.  
Repair, grab child.

Rid graphic baler.  
Grr! Pile bad chair.  
I drag barrel chip.

Rip garbled chair.  
Drip herbal cigar.

Big rear pilchard.  
Pig hid arc barrel.

## Graphic, Real Bird

## All Regard Pubic Hair

Uphill bard carriage.  
Graphical, lurid bear.

Air calligrapher bud.  
I large, bad, rural chip.

Graphic, durable liar.  
Pig dual barrel chair.

Uphill carried a brag.  
Rebuild racial graph.

Larger pubic-hair lad.  
Hi! public, large radar.

Rigid, blue chaparral.  
Had peculiar bar girl.

## Reverb Still

she stood in the center of the room  
between songs the center of many attentions  
in her suede skirt and green sweater  
and I watched and didn't watch  
for four years and never once  
asked her anything or for anything  
between the two doors to the food lines  
the cautiously optimistic band from Haverhill  
plays they have learned their three R's  
playing with restraint resignation and reverb



## Warmth Warmth

the woods are no place for deep  
thinking when darkness collides with human fear  
and the configuration of trees has been studied  
to find the safest place to await light

it makes no sense to think of women  
at a time like this and even the sleeping  
would agree were agreement in their bodies

far away trucks hinder the peaceful night  
with something like screams tires  
overwrought by macadam but far  
away is far away and a fallen tree  
is like enough to home

dreams are not in the cards  
tonight for safety trumps  
desire except desire  
for the warmth warmth gives

## 1, 2, Bet

he pulled up her skirt pulled  
her panties to 1 side and fucked her  
hard against the wall he fucked fast and hard and it was  
over in minutes

as he pulled out  
she dropped to  
her knees taking his dripping  
cock in her mouth and  
sucked it clean.

he left her to fix  
herself and returned to  
the bar and his  
2 pals who handed over 50  
bucks each

## No—No, No

in this line I find a photo of jesus  
taken with a polaroid just before his trial  
his hand is up to the lens  
his head is blurred shaking no  
and behind him a girl is on his arm  
as they push toward a donkey rented  
for that evening can it be  
god loves his nights out?

## Pancake

Pancake writes  
the world stumbles in its precession  
stories free  
from kitschy sentimentality  
slobber with plain-spoken accuracy  
words poured over West Virginia soaked  
through adolescence experiences thin  
enough to pour plots rising overnight  
and mornings stirred well

drop each story on a hot surface  
until puffed full of bubbles  
turn

fine things  
pancakes  
ruined by syrup

## Stroll Through Perfectly Imagined Minds

transcendental—that which cannot be  
made from simpler things—an approximation  
of little value aside from cloud-based  
thinking—a thing that solves nothing would be  
more accurate and would apply  
to many affairs—or let's say gods

the suburban mind wanders  
or should I say roads cities are  
linear or the urban mind  
is reductive aside from self-mangling  
iteration or piling on

what is your characteristic  
how do you differentiate yourself  
being near you is a rotation  
and all the eigenvectors in my mind  
are purged—if only Galois lived

## Constructive Interference

properties of the mind  
reflect the properties of the inner world  
not the world in us  
but the world hidden  
somewhat  
by the skin of reality

the world plays dice with God

the anthropic principle supposes  
that the laws of physics are indeed  
selected so that intelligent life  
has a maximum chance of developing  
in the universe

the evolution of the universe  
can be understood as a superposition  
of all possible histories  
that it could follow classically

the expectation values of observables  
are dominated by a small subset of possibilities  
whose contributions are reinforced  
by constructive interference

when we look inward  
are we comforted?

by now

## Woods Outsource Loggers

I approach the woods in ignorance where  
the object of scientific activity is naming  
differences and changes  
serrated leaves are ink stains  
set on the forest floor blurs and questions

when the outsiders begin their retreat  
the core of sanity withdraws as well  
and the deep suggestions of water  
use irregular means to complain directly

what is the true situation/some friends are unable to verify these statements

those who say that losing jobs to outsourcing is to be expected  
can be expected to lose their species

reflecting on the idea of justice  
we come to the conclusion  
of global dimming

garbage collectors  
stevedores  
farmers  
fishermen  
loggers

## Failure Is To Science As Realism is to Surrealism

the topic of surrealism is realism  
as in the mind stops  
at the brain or  
sense data is for girls

no  
don't mean that

or  
sense data is Cartesian  
cartography

realistically speaking  
the best minds drool almonds  
didn't Lorca teach us that

God can't be on a need-to-know basis  
because set theory doesn't respect barbers

Bertrand Russell taught us that  
but he forgot to teach Lorca

here's how the two relate  
[Lorca]

a clever man's report  
of what a stupid man says  
can never be accurate  
because he unconsciously translates what he hears  
into something he can understand.

## Said The Actress To The Bishop



## Store Anywhere

5 and dime  
on a lonely road  
used to be main  
street  
sporting girls  
holding hands  
heading for the fountain  
coke from syrup  
costs a nickel  
poured on ice cream  
add a dime  
2 old dogs  
hunting together  
check cans and drifting newspapers  
the floors still creak  
time is not  
immune to mistakes  
local  
no such thing

## Long Words

spontaneous rolling  
the eager faces await nonsense  
to carry them from one  
day to a later one  
the sand we find is eager also  
to retell its stony story  
perseverance is king  
time brags I quickly change my mind  
avoiding both ends of the spectrum  
there can be no doubt  
that doubt is ubiquitous

## Furry & Fake

great fear  
the party is over but the drunkenness  
goes on

first the paint is selected  
then the walls

I have this strange feeling  
that I have this strange  
feeling

former lovers  
once loved each other  
now they are both former

they left it to beaver  
dammit

many truths are worth  
waiting for  
but not this one

## Laced and Lobbed

why the first  
pair? but assume so  
then why the next and next?  
someone moving on  
or moving in ties his shoes  
together and flings  
them up to catch a stray branch  
or knob on the trunk

generations of lone tossers  
create the shoe tree and no one  
knows why it is chosen  
solitary cottonwoods on Rt 50  
throw no surprise but why one  
out of dozens on the road to the lake  
is chosen? a wide place to stop?  
the spot of a spat?

stop at the edge  
of the next lonely town  
and ask directions to the shoe  
tree now toss

## Shoe Tree

quick the tree fills up  
viewed geologically  
as if there were logic  
in rocks scientists  
being fond of logic  
perhaps it being  
all they have  
sometimes  
and not much of it  
usually  
and their scientific method  
which guarantees that every  
statement made in the name of science  
cannot be challenged  
is founded on logic  
just think of those languages  
where a double negative means  
lots of negative but getting back to it  
with shoes

## God's Little Wiggly Nose

my machine waits sleeping  
for me to return  
its main cpus on hold  
while a simpler one listens  
for my call there is a zone  
for this and the disks stay  
put there is a patience  
here whose proof is by  
contradiction what you suppose  
is absurd we are ambiguous  
about machines do they clutch  
to life as we do or are they like god  
ready to be rebooted  
knowing someone keeping notes  
will restore him quick  
as a bunny hop hop

## Two Tables

in one she sits demurely  
alert to her companion  
fingering her fork above her spare  
plate of salad on her table  
are small bottles green blue  
of oil wine vinegar water  
she is not beautiful  
only perfect her dark hair smothering  
her imperfections

in the other  
nextdoor  
she sits legs apart  
grasping her burrito  
spurting its grease onto wax  
paper she is not perfect  
only beautiful one cares for her  
companion the other  
for great greasy food

## Shelter With Noise And Weathernuts

we sat there under the shelter  
while the sun blazed out  
and the temperature climbed to 70  
and then it flamed out  
and it started to snow

there were footpaths nearby but  
long walks to the train were out  
sun/snow/sun/snow ok I get it  
we were all fresh from Dachau  
yes that happy '40s place  
or rest and expiration  
no germans went there

coat on coat off coat on coat off  
and then a john deere  
came around a bend hidden in poplars  
or something like that in  
german with a hay wagon  
and on it 50000 watts  
of blaring metal yikes pulled slow  
right past us past the entrance  
to Dachau past the shelter  
past the climate  
revolting

shelter near Dachau  
it took many minutes  
we said they said it many  
times too many minutes  
it took many minutes to pass



## Mud Gojira Honey

of the lowest denominator agenda  
[re: Gojira] ample of mud slinging contests  
on the open forum  
synonymous with bees  
to the honey analogy intended  
aka rose in the mud  
kingukongu tai gojira  
new cutey honey  
stymied by critics thick as mud  
cranky critic  
the stinkiest dirtiest rolled in the mud  
propaganda of a letter of mary  
the tensions coiling like fog  
and splattering like mud  
you know the preservative qualities of honey  
brickbottoms tops bottoms sloppy bottoms  
mud slides wife turns over and says  
"I'm sorry honey  
I've balls of fire across the room that Gojira  
type of dango prepared with sugar honey and flour"  
roar get a scenario

## About Contests

rejection is the clue  
failure is the response

## Song Of Not

imagine the bird  
imagine leaving

tracing a string  
of ice up the side of a birch  
where like water  
which it is  
it flowed from a fissure  
leaking liquid  
a wound a bird  
could mourn

sitting on a rock  
in a clearing  
almost  
in the heart of a woods  
near where traces of trails  
and a road pass by  
talking and wondering  
about how cold our hands might be  
were our mittens off  
and our hands in hands

imagine the bird  
who having learned  
to sing sings in the dwindling  
and gathering dark  
and once our hands are convinced  
to stay  
as they are chill but warming  
in our mittens  
as we sit on the rock  
in the near clearing  
listening for the wind to rise  
and watching for the sun's last bits  
to flash off the string of ice  
we remind each other of  
imagine leaving

## Fantastic Classroom Displays

where yesterday's future  
is here today  
all topologically identical  
special hats  
for the zero volume  
head these are the finest  
closed non-orientable  
boundary-free manifolds  
sold anywhere  
in our three spatial dimensions

May 26, 2004

## After A Long Day

fog fills the hardened corners of an otherwise  
open street making the rounds of lovers walking  
like deflated tents hanging from a circulating clothesline  
I'm drawn to her curvaceous iron grill work  
because it is beautiful but in a fragile state of despair  
the pattern of wood trim and wooden porches reminded me of old  
soap suds but the walkway up the hill was lined with police  
it reminds me of the metal sculptures someone has put  
out as a distinct local feature and I've had a few startling images  
even as we flashed through grazing in every corner

## XB

when the bomb exploded  
roots ripped from the earth became  
branches

forces pent up in mere things  
became clones of anger

rubble pulverized into sandy grits  
labels sidewalks  
our walking in leather  
shoes fills the air with the rasp  
of sandpaper

a doll  
exploded without much intention  
mirrors order  
's fate

big machines try  
to fix this  
their treads rattle  
what's left

heavy  
force  
can do things right  
away

when traffic returns  
order will be  
restored

## On The Radio, Fading In

when the sleet dries the hush of pelicans can be heard across the bay  
because of the golden spiral I attracted bees as did my honey  
paradoxes piled in stacks betray truth by showing it takes a mind to see it  
syllogisms flung wide affirm falsehood by hiding the blind eye  
the smaller the truth the larger the ambiguity and the closer to god we fly  
huge shouting machines purchased by the wealthy explain  
if I wrote word for word what I wrote space would fill time  
if sappho wrote that way the cycle would show scale

## Pond At An Early Age

I remember skating on a pond we owned  
about half a mile down the road from our house  
at the other end of our land.

It was possible to break through the ice especially  
where the stream flowed in and where it flowed out.  
Frequently on the first try the ice would crack  
loudly and its new imperfections helped it remain  
strong.

The ice started out white but smooth  
and as we skated it became scarred and covered  
with shavings like fresh wet snow. Near the edges  
air pockets made flake ice that I'd break through  
every time.

I would walk down the road to my pond  
with my skates. I can't imagine having  
a pond anymore, I've become that old.



## Afternoon Afterthought

leaves rustle outside  
in here the spell is cast  
in spreading cast-off clothes  
spilled it seemed from a desire  
that fell apart you find this  
amusing but it is the dropping  
of wind at sundown revealing  
barks and the absence of birds  
we eat instead see and art  
is to be had in this forlorn in its ambient  
search rambling like wind after wind

I believe in the heart  
for the mind turns critic  
to fill a void

## Ode 1

the shrub I've trimmed  
for 40 years is growing wild

for things balance

## Throw-up

I've stolen one  
string bean each day for the last 5 years  
from the bodega  
up my street and now  
that it's closed and about to be bulldozed  
and the resulting gap  
about to be turned  
into a metrosexual hangout  
complete with wingbirds  
and sexual strutters declaring themselves  
queens of the house  
I have confessed in krylon dover teal  
once a toy I became a biter  
then a writer  
now a king and my 'fession's a burner

## The Regulars

everything was wrong  
the sex like a line from a silent film  
writ on cellulose like a lace  
stocking lined up the back  
of a pole-rider's hamstring  
the beer like a dishwasher  
clogged with last night's  
osso bucco (veal shins)  
dredged in flour  
the tobacco caught fire  
in our humble nargile  
and the poetry ended up staining  
our alveoli instead of burbling  
up like an urban expiration

## Relax; It's Optimism That Has You By The Throat

around here the late hour  
comes early since the drop down  
of the celestial perfunctions  
sacrifices long ago become morosely  
romantic the same way a song of loss  
repeats on mp3 players all across this wide  
mall where art is on posters and in imposters  
as I signed my name changed and time  
is like that on its little polite kick  
on a street in a city dark right now and raining  
a woman hiding her tears is turning a corner  
from a short street to a longer one

## There Are No Markings

near the tree a shooting  
near the shooting a creek sometimes dry  
near the creek a forked black oak  
still growing 100 years later  
in the dusty heat rising to the Chiricahuas  
near the oak a pile of river stones and debris  
and on it a marker with a date and punctuation  
like the last log on a fire that once warmed  
a sweet heart but is now becoming ash

## Best Time To Visit: Winter, Fall

it was beautiful  
the day and the letters  
folded in his jacket like a shield  
against love in his jacket  
over his heart the words written there  
near hitting home in lead not ink  
she had none and had no poetry  
but the prosed lines in the heat  
in the dust in the fall of a time  
long ago when the man faced  
the shot like a line straight for the heart  
stopped by the letters folded  
over his heart in a place  
once known as total wreck  
and now calling itself  
the unintended point of love

## My Instructions

bury me at sundown  
on a day clear but for  
a thin line of clouds just  
above the sunset's horizon  
face into the sun as it sets  
and they lower me on ropes  
made from the hair of swift horses  
and women longing for love  
play a rushed song with a calypso  
backbeat so it sounds that I'm  
on my hurried way to another stop  
further west

pick a day with a strong wind  
pack warmly for the sudden  
temperature drop when the wind stops  
and the night opens up above  
with nothing hanging over you  
and the music reverbing away  
go to the nearest grove and love  
anyone you happen upon



## Motherland

she's a dream in dishrag blonde  
with one leg over her knee  
revealing a clutch of good sexual will  
and her face ripples from what's below  
or passing by

oh  
she's at the next table and I'm hiding behind Hoagland's  
narcissism and a decaf latté

she's offbrown everywhere working on a long thin sheet  
like a safeway receipt  
and a yellow notebook I've decided  
I love her  
at least till I get home and dinner is served

soon an unshaved man drops down at her table  
and she kneels on his lap  
and they tongue each other like clouds and the sun  
or he kisses her belly while she watches traffic

for 20 minutes

I can hear my friends saying  
love for a man  
is like Omaha Beach  
you better hope the medic finds  
your heart and plugs it back in

## In A Hollow At The Center Of The World

the news from the next table  
is not good the honor of love  
and leftover dessert are about to be  
swept up by scavengers and cleaning ladies  
the counter as usual is expectant with jars of sugar  
salt & pepper napkins and flatware  
hoarse women bark orders  
and they are the servants  
a man stands cooking whistling Elvis tunes  
I eat all I can afford but somehow  
leave a nice tip

## Need To Speak

I want to be a collection of angles  
my joints articulating my soul  
my essence is so thin there  
is nothing for all to see

let me wrap myself on the wind  
my flesh lifted and light as ash in the sunlight  
fresh as dust

the things I know must speak for themselves  
find the places where a comma  
would make a difference

an empty bowl reminds me  
of the need to speak

let me be a skeleton

## Yips

few are far between  
flights are fancy  
the downloaded are downtrodden  
up with up

## On The Death Of Ronald Reagan

a man hidden behind  
the curtain of a forgetful disease  
a prairie reduced day after  
day to a field a home a room  
a bed then to the warming  
blankets on the bed

forgotten facts  
no matter do emotions  
fade too does the loving heart  
shrink too

and what can it mean  
when at the end after  
days of closed eyes he opens  
them and looks upon his love  
and then leaves

the electricity of death  
sparking a final tenderness  
his most important act

## Putting On The Ritz

wrap a thread base even with barb  
tie in back antenna (longer than front )  
tie in front antenna  
wrap from back to front  
tie in larva lace and pull it out of the way  
cover entirely with thread  
tie in your legs with a slight backswept look  
wrap larva lace to behind back legs and tie off  
tie in back wingcase in front of back legs  
dub fly from front of back legs to just in front of front legs  
tie in front wingcase in front of front legs  
dub slightly over front wingcase to hide thread  
wrap thread to form a head  
whip finish head  
super glue head liberally to make head shine

## Tongue and Lips

sure the road is silly  
winding like a river on the flat  
seeking the best channel  
and writers who drive it turn their words  
in on themselves

suddenly a bird drops to the asphalt  
and turns its birdlike head a-cock  
and nearly tips ahead onto the flattened  
squirrel thinly disguised as a summer patch  
to a winter problem with fur  
congealed to a mat eyes fixed  
beyond repair on the summit of blue  
the bird inhabits but the mere beast dreams  
of

meanwhile poets swing and sway  
their syllables bounding against brainpan  
sides till the hard alliteration and driven consonance  
screeches to a halt and like the river started long ago  
they wind down to assonance and sibilance  
and the dream of white noise

## Hearty As In Passion

the restaurant screams ITALY!  
with pasta up the wazoo  
and tomatoes coming out of our toes  
(simple body parts named in monosyllables  
toe ear eye nose arm thumb prick ass cunt back face head leg foot knee tit mouth lip cheek)  
information theory says short codes  
mean high frequency or commonality  
so toes ears who cares  
anyhow heavy food  
lots of it  
made crudely in pans and pots  
frying (sauteeing?) and boiling  
baking heat stirring reducing  
piling on plates  
lots of it  
SICILY!  
we eat it like those whores the romans in the empire years  
burping and smacking lips  
drooling red sauce on our bibs  
ready for the coliseum  
in this place of primitive food  
where they revered poetry as much as war



## What An Evil Son

every day it gets harder  
neglect has weakened my view of the past  
I've wondered about the logs on the roof  
and the stakes by the lady slippers  
when I went to be a writer  
I thought I might be an author  
and never called  
never phoned  
even though I knew it  
was over

## How She Died

clothes decades old  
springed rocker 40  
house older yet  
if it worked well once  
it was good enough  
needing to spend the social security check  
made one less thing to brag about

no phone calls  
no letters  
no driving to the grocer  
no mail  
a lightning storm  
then the purity of loneliness  
she will be this way for 2 million years

## The Second Law of Mixedupness

we built towns with a hoe and heels  
in the driveway that was just sand  
we hoed out streets in patterns  
like a small town surrounded by farms  
we heeled out piles that were homes  
and firehouses farms schools and a police station  
we had trucks and cars and went about our business  
one by one each being this then that person  
the way crude simulations are built  
we played this way for hours  
the towns were 50' long and 10' wide  
and to move our trucks we'd hunch and drag  
we moved sand from pit to building site  
we moved crops from fields to markets  
one of us was unable to think properly  
or speak properly but you couldn't tell  
by how well the town ran until a madman  
in a truck broke every piled up house  
and in its mad careening swept the roads  
away

but only after hours of real time  
and months of simulated time  
a law of nature had taken over  
and it was time to go home for  
a lemonade and a comfortable chair

## Absalom

days pass fast  
this means...

every lens distorts  
especially the seeings  
of inside-out eyes

sometimes I bleed  
onto the ground

fog replaces light  
and darkness recovers

## From A Map

Route 30 forgotten  
Atlantic City to Astoria  
the first transcontinental paved highway  
completed in 1935  
the longest single number  
route across the country

we shall meet in Kemmerer  
fossil fish capital of the world  
in the middle of the night  
let it be said of us  
that we really enjoyed life  
and were fortunate to have 40 1/2 years  
of loving companionship together  
let people say of me  
he loved people and people loved him  
he had many friends  
and was always there  
to lend a helping hand  
to those in need

these are important words  
in Kemmerer on US Route 30  
the first paved transcontinental highway

## Verb, I Age

curse upon the tongue  
spare sugar and sparse syllables  
I've made my pieces  
by falling into the brink  
now named after me  
the linkage unclear since I changed  
my name to one more robust  
cure under the tongue  
lozenge of old-timey poetry  
when being modern was like reducing a sauce

to reduce a line is to thicken it  
my fever and I are a bit engaged  
these are the same things

the artificial waterfall has been repaired  
by—which is it—making it more natural  
making it more artificial  
making it a geyser

as I type a small blizzard of copyrights  
trails behind my cursor  
upon the tongue  
up on the thong

you know me by my name  
anonymous american  
on a highway in a mustang or 'vette  
this was so beautiful I wish I could see  
it for real

pile a rock on my grave  
pile lots of them  
use a dump truck  
use a Komatsu 930E-3 Mining Truck  
use its new design features  
use its improved vehicle control & handling  
it's built for rugged conditions  
use its 320-ton capacity

anonymous american  
linked to a brink  
curse upon my tongue

## Dash-3

## Yesterday's Future Is Here Today

website for the homeless  
instructions written straight

you have lived in Manchester for at least six of the last 12 months or  
you have lived in Manchester for at least three of the last five years or  
you have a parent brother or sister who has lived in Manchester for at least five years or  
you work in Manchester

and narrow

more with clever clarity on a further page you click through to

you may also qualify if you have not got a connection like this if you  
have no similar connection to any other council either or  
if you have a very special reason for being in Manchester

but this  
even this  
even all these conditions are not enough  
no  
click again

but we must also agree that you are  
homeless threatened with homelessness or living in unreasonable conditions and  
eligible through citizenship or immigration status

we must agree  
is my cart not  
proof enough with its wobble wheels wobble wheels  
see them  
hear them

no more than 30 minutes  
although it could be longer

no more  
although  
30 minutes could be longer  
do we agree  
a very special reason no more  
than 30 minutes could be longer

welcome to  
the homeless home page

but we must also agree that you are

## Benchpress This, Ten Reps

little words  
little little words  
the venue is favorite  
whether you like food or sleep  
or story-telling or singing  
or just sitting and thinking best  
or a pleasant mixture of them all  
little words  
little little words

a mother bird spreading her wings  
over chicks to save them from a forest fire  
physicists start sending BBQ recipes  
we could think about the thermal properties of a mother bird's wings  
hey good news I've just made a hundred people less trusting  
a man can't just sit around  
little words  
little little words



## Next

everyone has their melancholy  
brought on by the retelling  
of their father's stories

forgetting  
lingering  
shuffling from bed to couch to pot  
eating the little allowed  
shaking out the pills that keep him alive  
taking them one by one different  
times of the day  
prognosis growing worse  
colors graying muscles dissolving  
quality time in the company of malignancy  
the sudden but expected sad ending  
with all details displayed

I've told such a story  
I'm next

## Quilt of Mine

walking in on death's  
quiltwork

on a bed by a floor  
kneeling as if  
head on a couch

I found him right here  
she cried for him  
now

but all  
I ever heard was her sarcasm  
faked hatred  
maybe

I went to her  
though I was twice her  
I was never enough  
she said I was too much

money fought her fear  
for her

she slept through it  
then slept again  
before help arrived

small house  
how long did she wait

because of who she was  
I never asked  
I never asked a thing

## Ballad

Tom Dula  
Laura Foster  
Ann Foster Melton  
James Grayson  
a six inch bowie knife  
a grave two feet deep  
ridden to the gallows on a cart with his own coffin  
The Kingston Trio

## For Instance

any day now is the anniversary  
penned on the calendar in a 2-week blur  
under a waxing gibbous moon  
the ladyslippers have their chills  
perhaps I'll wake to the sound of a wasp  
rasping against the screen or the smell  
of grass just cut or the feel of the breeze  
pulled in by the large house fan  
and the last 35 years would  
be just a for instance

## SoMa

putting the quarters  
into his palm my finger pads  
touched him for  
—this long—

like touching dog pads  
he had swept the sidewalks  
around the café  
sweeping all the cracks lengthwise  
veeing under the trash can  
slow but not lazy  
an unusual pattern but thorough

each one coming out  
coffee in one hand  
change in the other did the same  
he was working the new york times crossword on the flat top  
of the trash can using a yellow marker  
near market  
& gay pride parade

leathery  
from homelessness  
slicked back hair  
permalimp  
caved in toothless smile

how soon property has no meaning  
is the question life asks day after day

## Salon des Refusés

passion in the loins  
heat lamp pointed there bringing hatred  
out in a small flow  
finding a crow stumbling on the skylight  
I've patterned my whistling after its feet's  
clatter

the idea wavefront randomly  
seeks hysteria  
poets who have been found  
are caged and forced to rhyme  
holding up their arms like snorkels  
seeking the hands of a former muse

## Odd You See

I waited in line for months to see  
the famous muse who takes calls  
only on thursdays but the line  
is so long you can't leave and so I camped  
out

each day I wrote of the ordeal  
of sleeping on the concrete sidewalk  
waking to the sounds of garbage  
men loading it up the silly  
sunrise backdrop and mist from the river  
days of eating hot dog and corndogs  
from passing carts and sometimes lattés  
from the bikex presso around me writers wailing  
and poets picking at their toes I did it  
in metaphor the sidewalk a great ocean  
the garbage men delicate sirens

for such as us time has no meaning  
nor existence or shape  
only what is made defines it  
for months I was unmade  
for I am Homer

## At The End Of The Alley

as far as the reaches of alleys  
behind tall blocks of downtown warehouses  
many puddles fail to dry  
even with the time pain of building these places  
they seem too distant to fully traverse  
in as many lifetimes as one cares to waste

the wind over cans  
the wind plaguing the alleys  
I find the warmth implied by these odors  
medicinal and rare

at the end of the last alley  
the sound of trucks loading dumpsters  
a sound like people speaking  
a sound unlike people speaking  
before dawn with a sodden light  
made milky by rain passing by  
you know this isn't a reason  
to sit on the back step and dream of the hankering stuff  
metal pulled over metal  
banging and alarm  
this decor of decay is the stuff of fires  
may we live as lonely as it native denizens



July 1, 2004

## Finality

if only there were more light  
what I had to say at last  
could be written without error

## Roads of Alabamy

driving past kudzu lacework  
tenting trees and shrubs by the side  
of the undoubtedly hot road  
the CD plays on and over again  
when the car needs gas  
I stop fearful  
the air grips and almost chokes  
near mist and sweet smell of cut grass  
not far the scent of woodsmoke  
and cooking meat

my air conditioner drains water to the pavement  
while I refill  
thankful of my neoredneck ponytail  
praying for real  
that no one sees the licenseplate  
RPGPOET

## Constantly

news is always bad  
we're afraid  
constantly  
of the things nature  
or God  
has planned for us  
or perhaps it's the unplanned things  
they grow like factoids at the bottoms of columns  
each adding a slant  
not as bad as it could be  
that's the good news  
erosion  
we're sliding down from a place half  
known to one that's total  
must this last

July 4, 2004

## For Fog

fog swallows explosions of celebration  
for a country at war with itself

## History in Neon

Michelangelo left the Sistine Chapel  
his last day  
he walked to the Tiber  
and sat on its bank his back to the setting  
sun and watched smoke settle  
among the dark buildings  
and smelled  
as best he could  
the wood smoke  
cooking meat  
and the odor of goats & sheep  
you would think he had a deep sense of beauty  
from his neon shaded figures  
but he thought  
his eyes hurt  
and his back was angry  
he had not fucked in weeks  
and the day was too old for him

his plan was grander than what he accomplished  
and he was ashamed of the cartoons he left for the pope

the river seemed to run with blood  
the river ran downhill  
as did his ambition

he was not able to tell  
that he stank like a billy goat  
he was chewing on a new idea

## And But So When

who is standing half-behind  
the tree back there as we speak our final words  
who it is doesn't  
want to speak and maybe  
can't

he has become bored  
or listless  
we have spoken to him  
but he never responds

he looks different  
maybe sicker  
his face  
eyes  
are blank

we are writing our final words

## At Once

first the line appears  
then we cross it

second the circle is drawn  
and we are either inside or out

third the ellipse is made  
and two suns light the world differently

fourth an impossible is made  
then we are both inside and outside

## Let's Music!

### i. I should make HP as easy looking

did you mind? I a bit arrange the HP.  
their font size becomes smaller totally.  
don't you feel difficult to read?  
also my living town is into winter too fast.  
(very cold.)  
the town got a full of Chiristmas mood.  
ahhhh, I have to write New Year's Cards...:)

### ii. I got MDR CD3000;)

I bought headphone as longing.  
\*tears\*  
so nice. wonderful.  
I felt...(#I can't express the emotion.)

I must not stop to spend to myself,  
do you think so?  
I'll do that the headphone listen  
to U-sen's classic channel after few  
days for customize.

### iii. lectureship of music theory "rotation" uploaded

possibly you feel it's not practical use for composing.  
also I thought it when I started to study music theory  
but I could felt the music theory is very important  
by composing long days.  
you'll use it maybe...

### iv. Christmas days coming soon

for Chiristmas, this HP is played  
Chiristmas song on top page.  
also "works" content is opened  
before under construction.:)  
I'll upload arranged music as you feel  
"I have heard!," "I know this one!"  
like so please visit the content.

### v. as for lectureship of music theory

"too much characters," "can't read easy" etc.  
I think the HP should be arranged better.  
thanks everyone who said me "do you feel kinda this  
page?" and etc.  
I leave it entirely to you.



## vi. about starting to Sound Storm

as kind of media, navigator,  
community and many useful network...  
many peoples open good lectureship of music  
and also I have studing very much.  
not only for the lectureship,  
I search out of my mind  
when I want to know something.  
I wish someone feel interesting about music even if  
this HP isn't better than others.

## vii. the origin of name "Sound Storm"

I order my friend "I wanna make HP  
so make banner." this will be music  
HP so I also order it with "Sound,"  
a musical note and music sheet then  
this banner was made. and then what's Storm...  
it's just a taste. called SS for short.  
it's good cause SS is like certain game machine.  
#good?:)

## Swap: Meet

there are years when facts face  
the music when the wind  
is against the truth  
I find the following fretful  
guitar music  
I avoid the issue  
what if I had been there  
I notice that my identity confusion story  
Pruneface for me immediately after birth  
was visited on me when the mortician gave us  
the wrong ashes  
for a day

she did this to me  
it was her signal  
I must face facts

## Watching Clothes

at the laundromat  
the homeless come clean  
we see their heavy lidded eyes  
their baby soft underarms  
their clothes fear hot water  
yet we give them our coins  
because we are not far from them  
up the street up the food chain  
just a block or so the rich stalk us  
at every election to force our poverty  
into their wealth  
it's simplistic I know  
sometimes the best plans just are

## For It Is Nothing

oh the happy day  
when the only visitors  
over my grave are children running  
past to a swimming hole near  
or ducking behind the stone  
to grab a sweet kiss  
over what they cannot  
possibly imagine is below

## Information Superhighway

Enormous, hairy pig with fan.  
Hey, ignoramus—win profit? Ha!  
Oh-oh, wiring snafu: empty air.  
When forming, utopia's hairy.  
A rough whimper of insanity.  
Oh, wormy infuriating phase.  
Inspire humanity, who go far.  
Waiting for any promise, huh?  
Hi-ho! Yow! I'm surfing Arpanet!  
New utopia? Horrifying sham.

## Anvil Headed

events are unfolding  
over to the west  
like a thunderhead heading toward  
the stratosphere but further adiabatic ascent of moisture  
is halted ice clouds spread horizontally  
into extended cirrus heads  
forming anvil heads around the edges  
water vapor in the cloud is turning to ice  
I wonder how rational the real story is  
when the like is just a set of circumstances  
I once thought people lived in clouds  
leaping from puff to puff  
laughing to tears saying "I'm sorry"

## The Old Ways

the market is dense  
with legends made of ads  
tag lines rich as buttered chocolate  
leading the herd into paths  
of individuality selling the idea  
of the loner to crowds  
I remember walking to Peter Walls'  
store across the line to buy Hostess Cupcakes  
not the chocolate ones but the lemon  
with plastic sheening icing  
laced with curlique whites  
and a white creme center  
a package of two for 25¢  
1 mile there 1 mile back

along the way a barn was falling  
every trip each week  
month by month  
year after year  
how each neglect visits in decay  
the walk a + the cupcakes a –  
littles diseases catching on one by one

it all happens  
all of it

## Fall Panicum

I'm armed to the teeth  
or at least hungry  
for love which bites  
like a porcupine  
does its quills  
a literary jab of portent of placement  
I've perused its user guide  
I even wrote it like the bitter  
keeper of a huntless hound  
a bluetick lanced with ticks  
and sprung by foxtails  
from sniffy up the fall panicum  
a zigzag appearance  
it bends at its nodes  
a ring of hair as its ligule  
a large open, branched panicle  
it takes on a purple tinge  
confused with johnsongrass  
confused with barnyardgrass  
we bask in the pride of a pond of semen  
frozen in ampules and making our fortunes  
for love which bites



## Not Chance

for the laughs  
the flag unfurls  
as if on a stoney ridge  
dividing it's dark from it's light  
the knife edge a local pasture  
on which if we're tied together  
and you fall I jump the other way  
from this we decide whose heart  
is light whose dark

## Failures Investigated

the sides of hills grow lost  
in the downwardness of their lines  
lying as they do  
in the path of the victims  
of the bottomlessness of the great pull  
the rain small falls the droppings of digging  
from here the question of

information arises  
does it drain to that same bottom  
to be lost in the thermal radiance of the terminal  
to be leaked as the burning breezes  
pass away over the hump of horizon  
or perhaps (perhaps perhaps)  
the horizon is apparent

never formed fully  
and the gathering of debris can tell its tale  
labor its lips on the foul song of the last rolldown  
information that is does not negate itself  
to the whim of great genius

one day the beckoning light of another street  
will prove its temptation and make like a perp walk  
its arms held in firm and bunched behind in the fists of the air  
and its lurching mercies and the conservation of information  
will fall to the pile of worn pebbles and parts of the moraine  
revealed on the surface due to melting and therefore thinning

something wrong happened at my desk  
it is called head crash the black hole of theoretical love notes  
great wordiness saves me again

longitudinal perpendicular patterned media  
the surely lonely nowhere near  
tell me again the question that fouls your lips

## To Reduce a Line is to Thicken It

*Love's free sample is small and hard to squeeze  
it out of.*

a small blizzard falls behind my cursor  
so beautiful I wish I could see it for real  
listenable syllables the lotion lack of love makes

engraved on laconic medallions and soap-bubble stains  
saved in gifs from frightening fonts  
arranged with leading and kerning  
in lines and forms that lift and accentuate

and so but when my lyrics leak postulates  
and God trembles in his bar talking tacos and tequilas  
while girls in flounce skirts call on their man  
to check his facts on the world's  
foremost sites on ethnic cuisine before they  
grant him his third and final wish

I ask God  
you say you love poems  
you say your heart is filled  
with chaos and delight  
which I see each night  
in your meat-red skies  
and nighttime parasites  
if it's true and you've made truth  
edit line 13 making it me my  
and place a rock on my grave  
pile lots of them  
use a dump truck  
use a Komatsu 930E-3 Mining Truck  
use its new design features  
use its improved vehicle control & handling  
your servants have built it for rugged conditions  
use its 320-ton capacity to  
pile on the rocks so high  
that the earth like your manlike neon-lit head  
wobbles and shakes  
from the lotion my lyrics  
on the lack of love makes

## My Fever and I Are a Bit Engaged

## Limitations on Framing the Question

I expected darkness  
not the honey of a warm wind listening in as we closed in on real meaning  
near the end of our unsparkling conversation



Hello #fname#,  
I'm going to make you a promise...



I start anywhere  
like here  
talking about where I start

I follow the path that spins  
ahead of me  
formed in the manner that spiders make silk

in the end good lines  
stretch like disordered loose  
coiled chains

in the end the path  
if true  
leads to one place—the start



My thoughts have swung between enjoyment in the recollection of the time  
we had in Denver and embarrassment over how I behaved. Part of the quan-  
dary is the fact of our language.



Hellosoundproof Bertha Morgon.. foxed  
Tra. ding, Alert., Get.. XLPI., Immed. iately This is goi. ng to go crazy, this w. eek!  
roofing



I'm remembering the unforgettable  
piercing cold of a shallow winter  
on the thin crust of the midwest  
plains where the effects of cold  
and wind colluding can drive  
a man to dropping his guard  
regarding love



*Can you forget the embarrassment part? There was absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about. Language is a real problem. I don't talk a lot about emotions when I'm "suffering" of them myself. I start talking in parables, theoretically, or make jokes.*



MR. PETER JOHNSON  
LAGOS-NIGERIA  
PLEASE, REPLY TO MY PRIVATE EMAIL: peter\_johnson11@netzero.com

Dear Gabriel,

I am MR. PETER JOHNSON OF STANBIC BANK OF NIGERIA LIMITED, I am the personnel account manager of Mr. TIMMY Gabriel who used to work with TOTAL OIL COMPANY here in Nigeria.



Your fluency in English is largely based on technical conversations and it is never clear that we are talking about the same thing when it comes to emotions—I need to go on what I see in your face and movements, and what you volunteer. Based on 2 things—you reached out when we sat in the park the last day and the look in your eyes when I drove away later—I've spent time the last month falling in love and then pushing myself out of it. My age, what I think (but don't feel) is my position in our field, my size, my use of language—any of these things seem to me as a way I could have pushed you where you didn't want to go.



If you want ~:Big? then this link make you ~::big



The only fix to Penis Enlargement

LIMITED TIME OFFER: Add atleast 3 INCHES or get your money back



not guaranteed nor on the up  
and up but a chance  
I think for a sly  
woman to make her move

like a blanket opening up on her bed  
letting the warmth seep out  
(free sample)  
a chance for a man to sneak in  
claim the high ground



*Hey, who do you think you are?*



Hey, this is Kelly!

<br><br>

I just got my videocamera working so we can talk as long as you want at my website and it doesn't cost you anything if you wanna watch me!



Most days I look into the mirror; see the deep absurdity of it all. You are young and just starting the best part of your life and I'm old and ending that part, just beginning the final, reflective parts of mine.



The only solution to Penis Enlargement

LIMITED OFFER: Increase atleast 4 inches or get your money back!



*Again I have to tell you to shut up. You won't start pitying yourself, will you? You are too clever to believe all this one-has-to-be-young-to-be-good-thing. Or is this only fishing for compliments?*



I hear a car coming from the cross street  
and if all goes as it seems it must  
the couple will pause and look up  
the car will turn onto the street below  
the slick road will endure two widening gashes  
and soon the storm will resume  
in all its hideous silence



Miss Moomaw: If you don't want to be contacted again, enter your email address here: no <<http://dns64.qotbw1.com/neg.php>>more?



One of my dreams is to explore the world with someone just so different from me—we could both see things we could never have seen separately. I fantasize of the desert. Deeply spiritual place—I have seen for myself miracles happen there. It presents for viewing the fleeting triumph of life over death; it is harsh and soft at the same time. It changes in an instant from soothing light to killing floods. One small mistake and you can die—or you can stumble about, find enlightenment by each rock and cactus. When I drive through there I am floored by the beauty; I will live there one day alone. To survive there you need both a strong spirituality and an animal body.

It brings tears to my eyes to imagine us there together because we are so different that it is perfect. But then I see the mirror and craziness of it.



BE ORDAINED NOW!  
Become a legally ordained minister within 48 hours  
Perform Weddings, Funerals, and Perform Baptisms Forgiveness of Sins and Visit  
Correctional Facilities



when the photographer  
snaps a shot he asks us all  
to look like someone else  
so he can snap another

permission to move on  
there is no shame in permission  
it is not the domain of authority  
we seek...

the desert air hangs closer  
the sun long disappeared  
is warning other places of its departure

...it is the domain of mercy



*We are definitely very different.*



>Lucky at cards, unlucky in love

Gigs of free videos, tones of wild photos featuring....



So the last month I've tried to push you from my mind but Rilke kept pushing you back in. One of his problems was his profound need for women and how he begged his way through life. His poems remind me of our time.



Bef. ore we start w. ith the p. rofile we w, ould like to mention so. mething ver.  
y important:



I have fallen like wind for you  
but in your heart I cease to exist  
even through the impression I made  
in the taught stillness of your limbs.  
How did my image enter your eyes?  
Did the curtain of your pupils lift soundlessly up?

Did I enter into your numb circle,  
the center around which you move  
in soft strides, powerful as any woman  
in her dance of strength? Did my wind-words  
fall still?

You have waited watchfully, bored  
and tired by the enclosure that holds  
nothing more. Outside it there is no further  
world. You watch the passing wind  
as it has passed a thousand times before  
in your tired panther gaze.



*I knew you would write after a while. I read a little Rilke, too.*



When I opened the car door I knew I could stay with you there instead. I could have chosen it because my flight was several hours away and even so, I could have left the next day. I had my passport and could have gone home with you. Maybe we could have returned to the park; maybe we could have had dinner one last time; maybe we could have hurt and disappointed many people and spent the night together; maybe we could have gone into the mountains and stayed there forever. Maybe all that would have happened is that we would have stood there beneath the hotel—underground and hidden—and kissed. What I saw in your face as I stood just apart from you was “please stay.” It said you wanted those same things. But you are young and...



fabuklous! that was such a GREAT weekend!



*I missed you when you left.*



## Picture Love

we are tough cynical characters  
living in a bleak setting  
our love is suggestive  
of danger or violence  
we fell in love because our skin  
looked sickly under old office buildings  
and our cigarette smoke braided  
blue braids together under a sputzzing streetlight  
the night we met

our lovemaking is harmful in bed  
we are enthusiastic about giving names  
to every possible kinky act or combination of acts  
our favorite video genre is patience face<sup>†</sup>

we work in organized clothes  
by day and by night  
we are hobbled by love  
and begging for sanctions

loving like I love her  
is like Omaha Beach  
you better hope the medic finds  
your heart and plugs it back in

---

<sup>†</sup>*Patience Face* is like a 'reverse gloryhole' video. The sex takes place behind a wall, and only the woman's head sticks out of the hole. So you get an entire tape of nothing but sex-facial expressions.

## Stopping by <http://babelfish.altavista.com> on a Snowy Evening<sup>†</sup>

Here is a task whose outcome is certain:  
Thinking of someone's forest  
and then thinking whether this forest is that someone's.  
And as for his house (I've picked this up):  
it is certainly located in town.

I am stopped here paying attention to the snow above,  
observing the trees filling in above the snow.  
My eye finds comfort in this.

As for my horse, he strangely and narrowly stops.  
I am small, me and the small end of the tree both agree.  
To the horse, we are stopped between a farm and the frozen sea.  
This evening is the strangest and the darkest of the year, the horse must think.

His harness bells are his only user interface.  
These bells are installed to a flange by some wiring, and so  
he gives the flange a shock, vibrating the wires,  
thereby jolting the bells (giving them a restlessness)  
in order to pose me a question:  
Is there some kind of mistake here?  
Surely a certain error exists.  
He is a small horse.

There is only one other sound,  
a different sound like a clay tone,  
but only to the extent of a thin layer or a languid ribbon  
forming a closed loop: the sweepback of a light breeze  
over downy soft flakes—a simple, easy wind;  
flakes like cotton wool or hair  
or a rag for cleaning, which is the same thing.  
Or maybe it sounds like this:  
khlop!

(I am excited by this.)  
Woods are attractive. Likable. Lovable, even.  
Or sometimes—obscure. One of the trees  
is dark and from a place which is deep.  
And you know what they say: Dark and deep are deep.

But I am held to obligations which I must maintain.  
Before I sleep I must resume my outward journey.  
(*And other unspecified things of the same class.*)

---

<sup>†</sup>Written with the assistance of computer software.

## It Is Like This:

her skirt by inference  
is a promise  
without her it is just a garment

later she fell behind the conversation  
and wrapped herself in a shadow  
mixed with her reflection  
in the pooled rain

around the corner she glanced up at a window  
framing a woman staring down the street

the rain would turn to snow  
when the temperature dropped

after it had snowed enough I waited for her return

it is like this  
everywhere  
all the time

## Satan

he can ride through town fast  
bring the feather  
close closer too close to the nape of the neck

he needs followers  
but not too many for  
his management skills are limited

he prefers the lawsuit  
to motivation and morale

he sees the ceo and thief  
the same but prefers the ceo  
because of delusion

in sexual harassment  
he prefers the harassed

### CV (Excerpts)

**Names:** Abaddon, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Belial, Lucifer, Satan

**Current Position:** CEO, Hades Group, LLC.

#### Major Positions Held:

- The accuser of our brethren.
- Father of all lies.
- Little horn.
- That old serpent.
- Power of darkness.
- The wicked one.

#### Major Accomplishments:

- As head of QA ("J" Division), validated both Job and Jesus with fewer than 5 defects each and a Mean Time Between Sins (MTBS) of under 2 days.
- Outsourced temptation services to various churches and religions.
- Invented "Education."
- Drove the "Green Team" chlorophyll development group.
- Developed the liability clause: THIS PRODUCT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" AND WITHOUT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.
- Invented capital letters.

#### Hobbies:

- Raises goats competitively.
- Maintains the rec.pets.herps FAQ.
- Muse for Orpheus & Eurydice poems.
- Plays blues calliope.

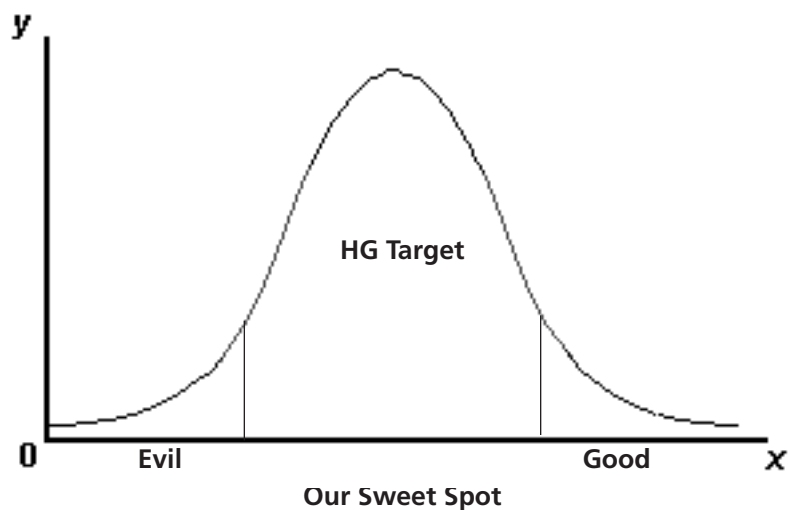
he needs a challenge  
so those predisposed to evil are left to God  
and childish ideas

## The Hades Group, LLC

Our mission is to be recognized as the premier worldwide association of individual and group temptation and temptation consulting firms, dedicated to enhancing the success of its members and their clients.

We will accomplish our mission by promoting:

- Personal service
- Global presence
- Leading edge technology
- Business development
- Highest quality standards



he is the master  
of practical jokes

Purgatory: A place where the dew of repentance washes off the stain of sin and girds the spirit with humility

he shouts from op-ed pages  
"this great middle America  
has basic common-sense values"

he reaps all day  
at night he is the bookmark  
in cottony bibles

he can be not  
what you think

he can do it all

July 24, 2004

## Everything Is Wrong

but this  
and I hate the world for it

## Next, The Bad Title Filter

I had some trouble installing  
my bad line filter  
—bayesian learning—  
at first  
it learns what bad lines look like and  
  
and then deletes them

## Falling Apart

sunrise has a sorrowful history  
it doesn't have the romanticism of later times  
noon when heat hardens the view  
sunset when lovers address their needs  
for some love is only a dip  
between solid foothills of solitude  
like when the winter rains lighten our heavy focus  
and our hearts leap like frogs  
and make deep mournful sounds  
partly under water

and splashing too



July 27, 2004

## Dark and Deep are Deep

oppression and agony  
life like a deflated duck  
someone like a design monkey  
looking down at a turquoise badger  
fetish

many years ago I think I loved someone  
if only I could remember who

July 28, 2004

## Last Ditch

full of what's called hope  
finding the world at last an infrequent intrusion  
and small mistakes as important as large  
I am no one's

## Who Lived There

someone my parents forgot  
passed by their farm today  
years after they'd moved on  
really moved on  
and stopped by to look at the peeling paint  
the last thing they did to the place decades ago  
stopped to watch it fall apart and the decorative trees  
to become adult and unruly  
to see some fields treed over and others turned into tracts

the way anyone would stop by to see  
what time and neglect had wrought  
the way tourists visit ruins and wonder  
who lived there

## Lineman

driving along the interstate  
searching for the best place to rest but determined to never stop  
before the right spot is found  
the telephone lines hang between poles and tremble  
when the west wind rushes past  
I wonder where I will stop  
every thought I've ever had is right here in my head  
at this moment as the poles stream by

somewhere is a sandy beach  
warm and filled with girls in bikinis  
but my road is always through the flatlands  
bounded by growing green and tinge like death  
but I know it's just the growing world  
holding onto me no matter what

July 31, 2004

## Loneliness In The Modern Era

nothing is as lonely  
as the statistics on your website  
make you feel

those small numbers

## The Optimism of Endings

I am the last of winter  
the last of the cold air warming  
the last few flakes turning to rain  
beneath the ground ice is becoming the moisture of soil  
days are growing longer  
minute by minute and there is mystery here

they say winter is the end of the circle  
I picture the circle to perfection  
the last wind is less than the first  
the circle is rising on that day

## Compression

the few lines I've sketched  
mean lots of work  
some of them say  
"do this many times"

writing them I rest the heels of my hands  
on the metal rests of my keyboard  
where a layer of dust has gathered

the work is repetitive but makes progress  
through the intervention of random acts

each step is small like motes  
each diversion is important to the work  
it takes place on a bed of tiles like the tiles in a great temple

there is little rest and much heat  
the result is perfect when the cold is like cold snow crunching  
under my heels and the possibility of change  
is nil

## The Great Bringer

the wind around this place  
fills the air with sandy debris  
paper cups scatter by and coke cans roll  
then tumble&tumble&tumble&roll

I'd like to say the sky is clear and filled with optimism  
of deep color but the sky is low  
too low and I fear the rain hanging around  
above

if we were to climb into bed  
right now  
the wind would keep on even though  
the sources of cans and cups must be running out by now  
or do people keep buying  
and discarding?

only a question  
is marked  
for consumption  
the pause is a question  
it is like this day which seems  
to wish to be somewhere east  
for the west wind is the great bringer  
of metaphors



## Scientists Have

information  
way too much of it  
someone has confused data with information  
and information with writing

how we hate writing  
reducing it to ontologies and formal reasoning  
or hidden markov chains yadda yadda  
we focus on the ANSWER to the PROBLEM  
like being in Paris  
O glorious city of light  
trying to solve a murder mystery  
O so important but beside the POINT  
of Paris

I have not like science  
rejected the narrative  
but let me tell you the story of how  
scientists have

## Beware of Dog

the house of the tragic poet  
raging on over the roar of fires  
is falling down all around her  
as she frets and sweeps the ash and embers  
out her front door

her dog is barking

he is speaking the true words  
of fear as hell falls around them

you think she wants to write  
her own tragic end  
but it is her pie not her poem  
that is not finished and she'll be damned  
if the flames will get it  
again

**so we start**

wandering from one house to another  
through orchards and former hayfields

or running from one house to the other  
across the road  
up onto the stonewall to get past the apple tree  
then across the stream and up to the house

the lilac has been growing there for decades  
and still spills its smells into the air

the foundation sat for 15 years full of the fire's debris  
and what we tossed there to be rid of

the trouble with reality is its  
tendency to exist

## Narrowly Night

arriving home  
everything's dark and what's that smell

maybe it's the smell past midnight  
makes when the hot turns cold and night reaches up

the doors keep shut until the last second  
when they crash almost open  
and stagnant air bleaches out

the world filled with shadows fills  
us with doubt of what is before us

the bed is clammy and does not welcome  
us this late and this is by default

true information and what is not false  
can be retrieved when our minds are empty

this reminds me of trash  
cans waiting for fresh trash

## Too Missed

certainly the trains are there for returnings  
girls getting on slash getting off  
the weight of the train is harsh and shaking  
it is painted gaily colon some professional and some good amateur  
freight is a cargo but reading sad books of romance  
makes a good substitute

sitting across from the café from the station  
we drink hot caffeinated drinks  
and eat very sweet things while across the street at the open-air station  
girls come slash girls go  
what we have in our mouths is sweet

telling someone goodbye dash  
better to turn  
to mist

## On Passing Circles

when we meet  
there will be little to speak of  
your circle so small and in its center his death

must death be the center  
it is what we train for every day  
or perhaps what's just after

your view of life includes younger things than mine  
in your lack are the virtues of less bitterness and more hope  
or does the center of your life irk you as my age does me

when we inflate to full lives  
do the old who have gone before forget encouragement  
are we then all that is expected

my mother my father they have gone ahead  
and I am not yet what they were  
do their eyes search each letter I write  
for them for me

## Free Speak

his soul is language  
speaking in dated abstractions  
hoving toward fashion and requirement  
making do and making out

some simplicities are interrelated  
different levels speaking like master  
like slave    complications and robustness

when we speak through the broken window  
I see the dings and bloodstains  
(from someone in my role before?)  
and he sees...?

under some trees  
let's wait till then  
talk it out in new language

## Surely O My

surely the bus must stop here  
to pick up those wandering with faces  
of scintillation backed by life's foreground

we have stopped here it  
seems to parade ourselves  
with painted hands of self-aggrandizement

the sound  
the smell of diesel as it spouts from the tailend  
of the bus heading out  
last of the day  
I watch it all grow small in dissipation  
O my  
I'm left behind



## To Take

she left it to me  
to take care of  
to take

remnants of peas in plastic containers  
held shut by elastic bands  
in the refrigerator she had for forty years  
one of the things that lasted  
bottles of ketchup  
tea leaves in a tea ball by the sink  
dried to the degree of herbs

she waited it out  
did she fear?  
was she calm?

clothes stained  
small holes and places rubbed thin  
dishes she scrubbed for sixty years  
in the cupboards  
why do I assume it was night?

everything she knew  
was there for her to use  
get past that moment and into the next

see what's there  
leave the rest  
to me  
to take

## The Narrow Places

well there's nothing left at all  
just dried up things  
in their house in their urns  
I knew what to do  
and she was right to think it  
or I did what she didn't expect  
and how deep was her disappointment as she slipped away  
alone in the dark or light or dawn or twilight

standing stopped with my bike on a road in Woodside  
the tangent smells of weeds and trees  
dust and dried gold grass  
a tint of fog hanging above the hills ocean beyond  
I know I saw this when I watched the aftermath  
of the sun's setting in my mind  
though I never saw a picture like this  
nor imagined it could be like this

to see so clearly what has never been seen  
and what would not be revealed till much later  
this is the shrugging truth of a narrow place  
opening up

## Placement of Poetry

according to the commentary in the pamphlet  
the best way to submit poetry is on your knees  
not the position to be in when submitting  
though it might be that  
but the perfect surface on which to write  
what has toughend your eyes and ears  
made your hands weak from trembling

## Little Question

some like the little questions  
the dirt asks when we fall upon it  
about our parts meeting  
in the filth once more

the place of nourishment  
dirty with prior deaths

when our ancestors decided  
that burial was proper  
did they know the pattern already in place  
of life to death to life

this is just  
another little question

## This Instant

too often a question lines up  
with an awkward answer  
as when the imagination is cut off  
by bureaucracy  
nature teaches us that no  
is likely the right  
answer in this  
cats are like women  
here is how to BECOME IMPORTANT:

Friends, are you tired of the free-wheeling, undisciplined chaos of the non-corporate world around you? Do the people in your life demonstrate unfortunate leanings towards such scourges as informality, spontaneity, and original thought? Luckily for you, these detestable traits (and more) can be easily brought to their knees. Simply distribute INSTANT BUREAUCRACY forms to your friends, neighbors, and family members, and you too can experience the power and mindless serenity of a ladder-climbing automaton!

I hear an amen  
coming on

## Faith Blue

at the end of the long driveway  
our old house is being held  
up by memories as wrapped  
up in the place as we were  
the time the dog was trapped  
on the roof

the driveway is just gravel  
and humped in the middle  
as if people were eager to visit  
but it was only time that kept coming

I'm not what the birds find in the gravel  
around the place but they come back  
day after day—they can't get enough  
it seems to keep feeding a memory  
if only the color blue were as faithful

August 18, 2004

## The Sad Truth

covered with dew  
a bottle of red wine  
and two glasses  
two depressions in grass needing to be mowed  
become one and an old couple  
walks past  
nearby and never sees what was there to plainly see  
because youth  
or love  
or lovely youth  
hides the truth

## At Our Backs

cynicism in the park  
down on the grass a bottle of red and two glasses  
between them  
they take these four things as proof of passion

the darkness adds to their apparent  
love and the rising sun turns the black  
bottle green in emptiness

the wind that's blown them all night  
shifts from the north to the south  
it's the wind that turns on each of us  
midway in our journeys



## Meredith #1

pregnant freshman college  
she was put in a home to hide the fact  
married to a tycoon but she couldn't handle  
the dinner parties

after  
she hooked up with the dump guy  
who sheetrocked his way cross country  
they lived in a school bus  
and had 6 kids

he died  
she lost her teeth  
became a Jehovah's Witness

I loved her when she was young

## **I was there**

for you to take  
my shining hair  
my suede skirts  
—there for you to have—  
I was not impossible for you  
to have I could have loved  
you you could have taught me  
I was not ready but you could have  
changed your clothes

now I am impossible for you  
for everyone my teeth are gone  
I've grown wide and stupid  
in this age

the wind has blown up on us  
blown up  
and blown past to the edge  
of the earth and the edges  
of life

we might have been

**don't you think?**

## Unexpected & Sportif

Swiss girls on Chocurua  
army knives  
green food  
chocolate  
scenery

## River Mucking

first you need some  
clothes you don't want  
then you might want a net to make it  
easy after you need  
a bucket of water last  
you need a river

on a hot summer day  
with record-breaking temperatures  
hordes of people migrate to Chesapeake Bay  
to muck for clams

August 24, 2004

## Thrown Away

for pencil lines  
shall tell the tale  
of memories best aligned  
beyond realities and singularities  
let the writing start

## Thrown Away 2

the line forms long  
under the domed sky  
what we wait for is hidden  
around a shack we think is selling  
good food or a cool drink  
the sun is beating us to death  
my friends drift off out of  
line at odd intervals  
will I be the only one who lasts to reach the head  
will what I find be worth the wait

## Barge Off Redwood Channel

at night we pass the barge being  
anchored off the channel after  
unloading a load of gravel  
the tug shoves it out the channel toward where  
we sit anchored past sunset as the evening Bay breeze  
picks up and aligns us like fate or conscience  
before or after an actual event  
like any industrial site  
the shore is prickling with laced ironworks lit  
orange and yellow and dappled duality  
we turn on our anchor line clockwise  
then counter

below our captain  
blind enough to not be allowed  
to drive fires the engines and cranks the anchor  
we pass behind the tug and barge  
lights and men work the mechanisms  
and oiled water  
they have dropped anchor  
and prepare the great machine  
for another searing night

## Where Are The Girls?

we had a band playing against the wall  
where the two cafeteria lines emerged  
from their separate paths

the instruments were shining  
expensive for kids just  
from Haverhill whose parents work in mills  
or in offices in towns down south or upriver  
their sound is twangy the sound of Telecasters  
through Fenders and spring reverbs

against the wall the losers loaf  
all they can take in  
are the sounds and the songs



August 28, 2004

## At The Grave

walking up to the grave  
between the gaps still there where  
the land waits for its cargo  
I find the sun off the stones blinding  
and memories are as much a part of the day  
as the smell of river water and cut grass

what can be worse than to be set aside  
for the not-yet dead

what can be worse than not to be

## At The Grave 2

colder air rolls underneath warm  
past their grave to the river  
lying nearby I feel it  
memories roll past  
underneath them the truth is offended  
above them warmth attracts

I remember being here the day  
my mother bought this plot  
large she thought we would all be buried here  
my children too  
room for 8  
now just the 2  
of them  
in one grave  
side by side

do romantics come from the same  
place that bees do

## Once

my father  
dead  
awakens in my dreams  
tells me  
important things drowned  
by mockingbirds

I see him walking  
toward the closed woods  
he soon  
will speak his mind so only  
the insects and birds  
can hear

I thought I could  
but everything is muffled  
by the pillows time sleeps upon

dawn  
I've let him die  
once more

## Each Night

## Pattern Dictionary Entry: Abstract Factory

we are where dreams  
are stamped out  
so many are the same  
there is an abstract factory for them  
why worry about their details  
why bother with facts and connections  
why not be ignorant  
and buy your dreams cut from similar cloth  
from a mother die  
from a pattern like a pattern  
that makes a dress for a girl  
you can't love  
but must

## Uma

is it a kung-fu samurai spaghetti western  
love story or a relationship movie  
just think  
about the quirky character stuff  
the surprises  
the funny stuff

tell me  
about your wire fu expertise

white eyebrow monk  
investigating the grisly wedding rehearsal  
crime scene

it is worth pointing  
out that the film displays  
the duck press approach to absorbing  
the influence of grindhouse  
genre films

there are no good guys in a  
Quentin Tarantino movie  
it's all about the bad guys

the crew got  
choked up watching it.

September 2, 2004

## Futureoenté

one day the line  
in the sand will split  
the world

with sand on one side  
and more sand  
on the other

September 3, 2004

## Sweet Vietnam

how will you know  
the day

she stands before you  
turned away with her hair up in pins  
and asks you to take them out  
and let it down

heat from love  
desire from sweat

## Saigon Evenings

there is a downward cast tonight  
of the shade of trees onto the streets  
filled with couples and bargainers  
street sellers and capitalists hoping  
for gain

some for hard gain  
others soft

a hot night  
nothing dry or becoming  
dry

incense burning  
and other delights more potent  
or potential

perfume sprayed and forgotten  
or dabbed and forgotten  
in the sweetness of sweat and desire

things are for sale  
vendors speak it  
fairly shout it  
the odors from speculative meals  
and the last of life from the river  
declare it

declare the lessons of the last hour  
more important than the rest of life

I am here waiting for it  
in the brickled shadows  
at a table at a small café  
wishing the wind would come off  
the river once

or a pretty girl would sit down  
and speak in accents

but the age of the world is compressed  
squeezing out the unfit



## Daddy's Changing

the oil he's got cans of Quaker State  
by the car and he's under it  
unscrewing

it's the smells I recall  
smells that go with this

concrete slab stained black from oil drops  
from the pan around the sealer bolt

hood up and black dirt & oil on the engine  
burned in like a good stain ought to be

old gas can bent from being tossed  
in the back of the pickup or kicked over  
while getting the mower out

quart jar of oil & gas for the chainsaw  
left open by mistake last week

sawdust from a battered table saw  
whose belt is frayed and about to break

crickets scraping their legs ever  
now and again in the garage buzzing with wasps  
making nests and what all

wet grass fresh cut just drying  
and the sun making it all go fast

daddy wondering what his last minutes  
will be like  
and me today knowing  
but guessing

## Lack

the garage  
I can go in it  
or the old well house now a shed  
the tools I need to fix winter stress  
are in one of those two places  
I can't go in the house

the smell  
the stains  
the memories  
the lack of them

the garage smells fresh  
from well-seasoned 2 by 4s  
the house stain is doing well  
many coats does that  
the memories should have been written down  
being writing is what I do  
the lack of them  
yes  
the lack of them

## Daddys

the succession of men starting with boys  
becoming young men then  
maybe fathers then maybe  
grandfathers  
is this hopeless  
are there reasons why one imitates the next  
or back and forth  
waves of teaching  
waves of forgetting  
waves of aging  
vanity before  
it's over

## Yes I Believe

yes I believe there is something truly  
green about the high corn and alfalfa  
the soy waxing ebullient but can't you  
see the tinted edges of red and yellow  
wilting post-summer's last fling

something cautious is coming  
down the road through the narrow gates  
that never lock the overhung limbs  
and fleeing deer stock and wild makeshift  
celebrations

tell me not to worry for my heart  
is filled beyond its capacity to enlighten  
and it's all up to my head  
like blood rushing from a daredevil's  
favorite stunt

## Lightning My Way

the girls of coffee are steamed and under  
pressure to fill their cups to the top  
and beyond the secret of pure poetry  
is the receipt of nonsense from the roots  
of the brain stem and above and I  
find I can't find the finding thing  
it's just another stroke  
of bad luck or stroke  
of midnight I could use  
a hero

## Pastoral at the Conference Mansion

amphibious ambiguity lingering  
on a mossy rock in the shade  
around the neck thrusting into the pond  
at noon on a day that accentuates the low  
hill beyond

above me in the whiteframed window  
someone watches chewing her quick raw  
I hear her breathing above the distant  
shuddering wave of insect clicks  
she is near  
she won't see me  
like the green scum on the pond  
the top of my life  
is beneath her

September 11, 2004

## Love Can Touch Us or Vice

the bar is  
filled filled filled  
with halos of smoke and beer  
with men piling by tables chest high  
with the smell of a substitute  
or two  
for love

**Versa**

September 12, 2004

## Runway and Poles

sitting around with the guys  
not much on  
there is a certain peace  
when balance is unmaintained



## That Matter Men

the lifeline is expressed  
as a passion or a longing  
or a plate of leftovers mostly grease now

the woman prancing about are exposed  
radiating power as first one and then many  
men reach for their wallets in hopes of being rubbed

upon or hovered over or danced in  
front of and I find the possibility of  
humiliation appealing and so do the masses

of beer drinkers and smokers who have found this  
place exuding its loveliness like a track or a trail  
suitable for being followed by dogs or for that matter men

## 6 On Boogsie

admiration for the one  
who though school was unenlightening  
works machines to make metal parts

by day and hovers near the beach at night  
in the smallest house that could contain his dreams  
not 1/4 mile from the boardwalk and girls he loved so

## The Dancer in His Element

his porch is small but covered  
by a sheltering roof  
we sat there while it rained

hard enough to make the ocean  
notice he smoked and it will kill  
him he eats well and wisely

he is a heavy biker and looks it  
becoming into himself only  
after 2 marriages and 5 kids

he machines metal every day  
and has for 28 years and after work  
he strolls the boardwalk then

on his porch drinks his beers and smokes  
he is simple beyond my ability to describe  
it he is happy and all the writers are not

## Again

on the train I imagine I'm  
on passing past the barns and silos  
of western kansas a place deserving

of lower case for its paramount ordinariness  
I picture the couples huddled or curled  
in their former marriage beds

he on one side facing her but as far  
as he can get to his edge and she  
on her front her rear

still deliciously up and round  
and it is a thing he knows  
but cannot ever touch

## Philo

sometimes I wonder  
  what life in Philo would be like  
    the roads all perpendicular to something  
  
like each other or compass points  
  wind fouling the stifling heat  
    and cicadas strumming little by little  
  
into synchronized cacophony  
  that passes like the wind from the distant west  
    but what I do know is what haying would  
  
be like were hay the order of the summer  
  sweat catching the dry cut shreds and holding  
    them to your back and then it's the itch  
  
all day all through dinner all  
  through the sitcoms that blue the room and us  
    all night like the worry I'll never leave Philo

## Sudden High Beams

night driving a long stretch in a flat country  
surrounded by corn dried in early fall  
and beans beginning to ferment the road

ahead is dreadfully rolling not like out  
imagination of the flatness of flatlands  
and when a car pops into view headlights

on high the radio's ruckus inceases  
the crops grow dark and seem to rustle louder  
then the high beams drop and it's time to rock again

## Walking: Paris/Night/December

the night warrens leading  
from the Pompidou center to  
the Opera on the darkest day

of the year the coldest night so far  
to walk alone having not slept  
for 2 days after a long day of meetings

things for sale Christmas red and green  
fresh things and things prepared months  
ago when the heat and smells were above

and the cobbled stones were sweating  
with accumulated wet from feet rain  
and beauty I felt the cold air brush

over my face walking quick back to the hotel  
for another night not sleeping thinking of  
someone not impossible to touch

## So A Pop Era

I'm alone in a forest  
the forest is chewing my leg off  
my leg is hopping away

its ankle cracking from the pace  
its quads have contracted to stillness  
I wish to be truly alone



## Real Poet on Poems Like This

I don't think the manuscript is bad  
or that the poems are bad it's just  
that the other manuscripts had

both more continuity  
of either subject or mood and  
more experimental use of language

## Byron's Wish

a man walking by the rise  
where a woman undressed  
suckles an infant

he looks her way  
grabbing his crotch  
he is carrying

emblematically  
a staff and even more so  
in the distance behind them

behind the walled town  
with the river and bridge  
a lightning strike over dark clouds

in front in the foreground  
a black mass like a spirit  
lurking toward them and from

this we can gather what  
that men love women who undress  
that every day is jerk-off day

## Find Colors Unfruitful

first there is the futility  
of taking off her clothes with no positive  
hope of parting of lips

second there is the hopelessness  
of trying to write about it when  
words are like opaque vessels

third under water the shades  
of blue that we love so much  
become invisible like the love of the elderly

## Ars

work/work like a foster home  
practice/practice like a jackhammer  
but/but without the talent

## Zip

**No**

I'm not  
in the mood to write,  
well,  
anymore because well  
frankly I can't any-

**more**

## Slow Train Rolling

flagging interest from  
losing too often 'n'  
finding no encouragement  
or not much  
I prefer to stop  
as soon as the train succumbs  
to friction

## To a Stop

## Sentences

writing is so hard  
that even declarative sentences  
can't capture the pain

## Simply

September 28, 2004

## Last Night

the highlight of truth  
and the lingering  
light when the day  
has given up



## **Before**

more engaging  
less well-crafted

## **After**

## A Hunger

dinner filling the night with conversation  
gathering like a cloud about a tall hill  
we find the discussion uplifting  
or at least a worthy way to pass time  
while we devour all before us

## Epistemology

the things of most importance  
happen away from the hug of streets  
at noon but not so far away that  
the sound of feet cannot be heard

## Sound of Falling Prey

it's the sound of squirrels  
falling from the tops of trees  
through branches to the ground  
after the sharp ker-  
blammy of the 20-gauge  
that frames the faint french  
tones of voices of boys  
under the canopy

running Mardi Gras on horseback,  
tapping Easter eggs end to end til they crack  
a game called p<sup>â</sup>que-p<sup>â</sup>que

meat prized for its sweet taste  
in brown sauce or gumbo

pine oak hickory beech cypress pecan

acorns eaten from the middle like Oreo cookies  
stems of pine cones twirling to the ground  
like helicopter rotors

what's your record of quarry bagged?

sharpshooters with squirrel tails  
hanging from their trucks

it's what you get for being country

## I Believe I...

we slip into biblical tones  
and become creedal in our I believe  
I believes

hold your tongue  
hold one of them at  
least then the next then  
etc  
the last

I am married  
to the will of Christ  
who has provided the bulk  
of my youth

## Reserve and Hesitation

sorry for not posting a movie title  
no time right now he won  
because he sounded like Gary Cooper  
from High Noon as the clock ticks  
inexorably toward the high noon  
of our impending war and the din

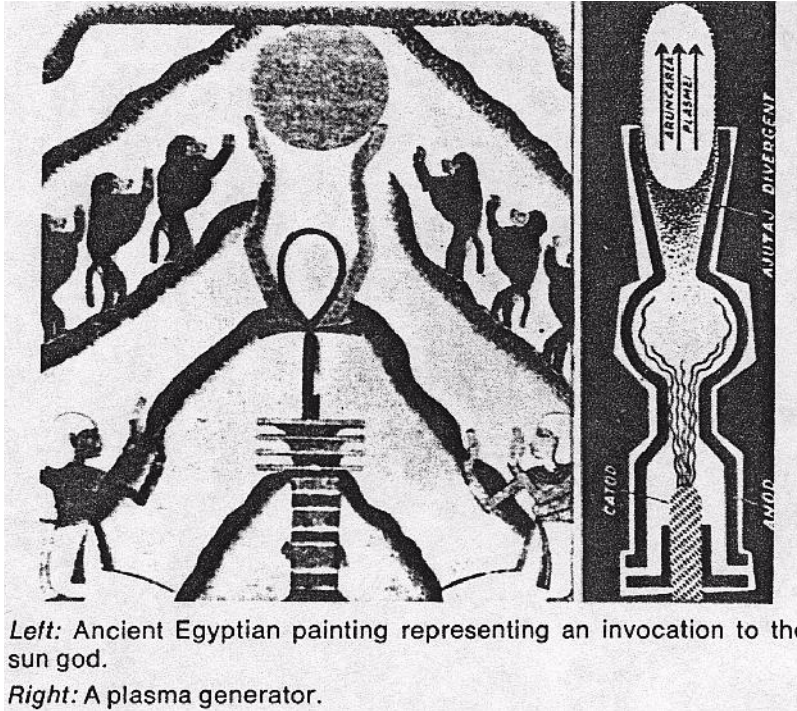
it's New Year's Eve  
we're eating our way through town  
the obento is a boxed meal  
Gods who bring about sin pollution and disaster  
in other words all evil  
no doctrine inside the precincts  
of the Christian Church is received  
with greater reserve and hesitation  
my parachute opened with some twists in the lines

## By Sea-Girls Losing Balls

by sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
a concentrated extract from the richest type  
of brown seaweed Laminaria Japonica  
four or five times more concentrated than yeast  
support the knee which will mean  
less pain and more stability  
balls—improve your core control  
until you improve your game  
you'll keep losing balls

Oh

she was going to clone herself &  
immediately set out to have a baby  
a half-sockless baby with no matching feet  
an antenna matching network with one or more parts  
a compact matching network that couples  
an RF power supply to an RF antenna  
in a plasma generator



*Left:* Ancient Egyptian painting representing an invocation to the sun god.

*Right:* A plasma generator.



## Man Of

a cat in the river  
when the river is swollen  
and the banks are steep  
thousands of animals are trampled  
if you have a horse or other heavy animals  
and want to see them standing or walking  
on Don Kichote (especially if you live in Europe)  
don't hesitate—notice the fine lines  
of this exquisite shoe

## Kinetic Riots

not to be just a skinny sadomasochist  
I used to be all just tall and skinny  
now that I'm in DB I'm all buff  
with these ripped abs  
not a lot of explanation needed  
for this amazing collection of ripped abs and chiseled...

the boys and their toys screensaver  
this gorgeous animated screensaver shows Santa's workshop  
the elves toil away at their workbenches creating their toys  
while Santa gives it to all the good girls and boys  
requirements: no special requirements

## Faith In The World

I am ready for it to come to nothing:  
the illogical jump to "therefore nothing happened"  
high operation temperature may destroy  
the oxidation activity of chlorine  
by sweat (surgical gloves) favoring the bactericidal activity  
if single-use disposable surgical gloves are reused  
they should not be processed more than three times  
on average more than 14 billion lookups per day  
PCs and servers together consume 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours of energy

## Now It's Dark

the mayor ordered the stone statue of the  
Happy Prince to be torn down  
and one be put up of himself  
all the traffic or seeing the old buildings  
torn down to make one big happy family  
a derelict vacant lot  
where a restaurant had been torn down.  
my husband and I put down about \$90,000  
of food and eating and began to make sustainable lifestyle  
especially dinosaur kale which I eat raw in  
presentations activities meditations  
music and wholesome food

## Twice?

what is so special about the past  
like Cleopatra and Anthony  
places like Venice and Rome  
great artists all boring  
because their context is not our context  
stepping into the river twice?  
more like stepping into the same poop pile

## Over and Over

## Art

this old blue medicine-type bottle unburied  
style and he'd bought a floppy old blue denim cap  
all 100% cotton material skull cap  
Confederate flag skull caps one size fits all 100%  
flaming hot flames flame  
art himself painted the fabulous hot rod truck  
and designed the tribal flames that have little hooks  
and notches in the flame shapes

## Himself

October 13, 2004

## Red Sox

this will not be the year I tell my father  
they won something they didn't do his whole life  
and he wanted it so  
will one day my son tell me and his grandfather  
but to do that  
I need to choose a resting place  
he can find

## What The Philosophers Told Me Tonight

got dark early  
white bread left in the toaster too long  
a small gnat snags itself between every  
n and g in this poem facing upward  
its little mind is in touch with the transcendence  
of God

as the poem winds down the gnat  
faces the floor or the bottom of the page  
and I find it's just the gs he likes  
and at the bottom he sees God in all  
things wrapped up in immanence



## Blue Earth

Blue Earth is the center of America's longest highway I-90  
Blue Earth is the home of Minnesota's first stained glass window  
Blue Earth boasts the world's largest statue of the Jolly Green Giant  
Blue Earth is the birthplace of the ice cream sandwich  
but with no fiberglass colossus to commemorate it  
how are tourists supposed to know Blue Earth???

## Cybernetics, They Said

I read in a book on science  
that scientists and reality  
are like Ashby's homeostats  
and that the faster the scientist dances  
the more jiggly reality reacts

and then all becomes still once more

## Saddened Day

first day of rain bringing  
oil up from the roads and making  
muds from long summer's dust  
and gutters not cleaned might clog  
and force an issue  
it will stop and sun and heat will return  
because this is what it is  
around here around now  
the sound of rain hitting the roof and flowing down  
the sounds of rain in the drainpipes  
and just yesterday the sweet smells of dusty summer  
were like motes in the air  
like fairies

## We Were Never Modern

no more time  
no lights  
no flames putting themselves up into the air and dark  
no Miami to welcome the beautiful and bid them strip  
no extra heat we have all that's needed  
no signs not even portable ones with cheesy information  
no more moderns to split things like magnets  
with north pole going this way south pole that  
we are hybrids and are either past that  
or never were that way

## Where?

touring the county museum and  
after viewing the collection of things swallowed and removed  
a torrential downpour keeps us from leaving  
our docen takes us to displays showing various remains  
of closed cigar and rubber shoe factories  
he is especially proud of the miniature Mt. Vernon replica  
(home of George Washington  
8th President of the United States  
—see below) as well as an old motorized narrated diorama  
retelling the story of Noah and the Ark  
the museum contain a replica wax head  
of the Confederate raider William Clarke Quantrill  
stuck in a old refrigerator  
hidden at first, but staring out when you open the door  
Quantrill is buried nearby in the Fourth Street Cemetery  
(except for his arm  
shinbone  
ribs  
and spine  
which are in Missouri)

John Hanson (1781)  
Elias Boudinot (1783)  
Thomas Mifflin (1784)  
Richard Henry Lee (1785)  
Nathan Gorman (1786)  
Arthur St. Clair (1787)  
Cyrus Griffin (1788)

heaven on earth  
was created in 1844  
and failed two years later

## No Wish

I wish he could see it  
I wish I could  
I wish with the cold and wet  
somewhere the hubub is melanchaining  
and spontaneous  
we are living purgatory master birds  
who fly up in flocks like ravens barking orders  
or crying out like tight screws unscrewing  
I wish he could have heard it  
I picture him standing in the dark  
swaying praying his sight will improve  
and the Red Sox will win  
it can get no worse

## Lingering Stories

something is happening  
when the stories link  
the trees dropping leaves and covering  
the ground all winter  
pages hampering the story  
by making it be words  
not sounds or tone but ink  
in brazen patches  
stains over the small plants  
that are covered all winter  
until the thaw  
the wet the blooming  
when something is happening

## Love Scene Where Humor and Threat Meet

beneath my window the flames  
swell and fall

it is passion no matter  
what the cause or instrumentality

everything man makes  
is a machine or is machinic

love is the hilariously  
self-destroying machine and

anything brought back to life in this way  
is frightful and menacing



## In My Room

the harbor lights stretch  
from their origin to the point  
where memory begins  
to end and wide or narrow  
they all point to me some yellow  
some pointedly blue white  
and the reflections tell me as much  
about the thing reflected as the thing  
upon which it is reflected  
and maybe a little about me  
too

October 24, 2004

## Falling in Love Again

I am filled with hope  
a beautiful woman with a look of distraction  
in the angles of her mouth will pause  
before passing by

## Shipping News

one or two comments  
filling the street empty  
of living sounds aside from  
these and leather on cement  
and cars stopping abruptly one block  
over and the ferry horn surely signalling  
a grand approach of the many  
and lonely

## Night Pile

pile driver  
a flat barge anchored at one end  
powered at the other to keep things tight  
a computer awake at the helm  
harbor oiled water blackly rolling  
as we watch down through the steam venting  
out the pipe below us above this night scene

she stands by me  
our ages like a pile between us  
waiting to be pounded down

October 27, 2004

## October 27, 2004

on the day my mother was born  
I can write something my father  
never could

the Red Sox have won the World Series

October 28, 2004

## In My Familiar Company

streets angled  
the hairstyles hanging in disturbed langor  
home the pictures of strangers hang  
where my loved ones' would be  
but these were all I could afford

## Do You?

surf & turf  
in the industrial section of town  
turned upscale on the richter scale  
in among the urban flat  
no fault no lingering  
in the steam soaked  
rain and luxury of flat lit alleys  
lowcut blouses and silk swirling skirts  
upstairs in the lingo room it's  
eels and elk  
in a maple frost

if you are in love and love tongues  
you get it

## Pile Driver of Poetry

we find the boats  
unlikely resting places  
when they are mixed from  
floaters style statements and homes  
with electronic gear like antlers  
or sexual homing devices

fake wood pattern  
bilge framing the impossible deal  
our legs can't take it  
with a mile to go and the sun  
down behind the freighters

we'll eat like languid lovers  
overlooking the pile drivers at rest  
like poets—pen in hand



## For That

down the alley  
taxicabs like lobsters in line  
I'm fretting over the choice of entrée  
and lack of desert

homeless open doors for patrons  
hoping for ice cream on a cold night  
the give and take  
give and go  
sugar + temperature -

it's time to lose  
furious / curious  
hop in and over-  
tip over the top  
tip top and pure nude  
we hope for the best  
for birthdays are  
for that

## Daddy

what's it like beneath the headstone  
waiting for news of the Red Sox  
how will we explain our understuffed luck  
and lack of high limits now that the excuses  
are westerly finally

what's left must be a fine ash of hope  
because the urn was not light  
it was heavy as if laden  
as if waiting

he missed by 10  
5 before he was born  
5 after  
could he have known this  
when he was rushing back from the toilet  
and didn't make it

## Election Night

among what it takes  
swamping and wishing  
tonight hell holds the trumps  
its name will rule us

## Post Election

everything is departed  
wolves range everywhere  
soon they will gather and hunt  
sometimes together to kill something large  
sometimes alone to go after you

## Austere Longing

from this angle  
the snob's eyes are bulging and the smell is like beagles  
after a brief hunt  
I'm filled with autumn  
dad waits in full winter  
soon we'll meet

## Optimism

flying along  
the ground wells up  
and seems to swallow  
but it turns out to be  
only hell

## Hope Art

carved bone filaments  
in a shape familiar and singular  
there is a signal in it  
will we find it before the decay

## Desire

I desire little pieces  
and a little peace  
and a little piece  
a finger in the right place  
a look across the right crossing  
I desire the reflective  
to look at things  
to look at myself  
a leg up on the extraordinary  
I desire a quick end  
not too soon  
not too far off  
a heart pumping until the very end



## Firetime

time for a fire  
a little one for pictures only  
a slow one because each must be  
stopped over  
its story spoken  
we start these fires once a shift  
from version  $n$  to  $n+1$   
a progression that may converge  
yes it might

## Without Learning

lightning  
its shadow refound  
rises as smoke

thunder  
its echo removed  
is realization

## Action at Close Hand

the past teles away leaving  
the present a constant size  
the future a sfumato technique of soft  
heavily shaded modeling  
how is the boy related to the man  
how is the tree related to the divining rod  
past tense  
I know that's how it was

## The Day I've Waited For

the sky  
cloud filled and lucent  
a thin tipped over bowl  
spilling  
but what

though it froze once  
or a couple times  
the grass still glimmers green  
in the stippled light

some parts  
(of the sky)  
are grey gunmetal  
others pink framed in robin blue  
spotted  
striped

by the river wavelips  
splash like little bells  
and a group of gulls flow and follow  
down to the mid-...  
they come between me  
eager  
and the setting sun

## At the Urinal

Logan  
after dark after the difficulty  
of reaching down through sweatpants  
and around shorts I'm standing there  
as things being to flow  
around me  
behind me  
to my right a man enters  
hurrying and with him his  
young daughter or niece  
who is not too young too not know  
but awkward in ways that betray  
her situation  
(whatever it may be)  
she rushes with him head down  
and frightened  
in this place of men and men's  
strange actions men standing  
with their arms in front  
and one with arms back bragging  
I suppose  
she shuffles half held up by her arm  
her dad  
her uncle holds aloft to show her the way  
to bring her along quickly  
into the disabled stall where I hear  
the toilet flush and frantic instructions  
on what to do now  
what to do next  
it is dark  
remember  
outside  
almost the darkest days  
fluorescent and white  
we stand against the white  
I wonder if it's dark  
in the disabled stall

November 13, 2004

## Walk Alone

rejection  
is the plague  
of striving ineptly

## In Threes

we walk alone slowly  
the road is not ours and neither  
do we know its beginning nor

its end but we walk in groups  
or alone or in twos in the direction  
all walk at different paces in more

or less straight lines with one trick  
or two up our sleeves and we try not to listen  
to those who direct us in direction we do not seek

November 15, 2004

## Good Luck to Me and the Boston Red Sox

the day was warm even in November  
the day before the ice storm  
I raised the flag by his grave  
signifying the victory he dreamt of his whole life  
I can't stop being sentimental over this  
it will be how I feel when my time comes around



## On Chocorua

a pool beside the trail  
bled into by a withered stream  
and drained by dispersal and absorption  
my path is obvious  
(trail or stream)  
(bleed or disperse)

my feet hurt  
enough to kill  
the pain rises

## Sudden Street Scene

after dark the city is lit  
the difference only more shadows  
more differences in the cars  
who show red fading away  
we desire the wet and rain to foster  
a sense of caring or false warmth  
plumes rising from tailpipes  
are a sign of the mood made for lingering

down the street where things stop up  
a red light forms a temporary dam  
where people/cars move ahead as if held close  
by escaped diodes  
this little shock of people pushing cross  
amplify the push of heavy traffic along the boulevard  
who will it be (not I not I I shake)  
the speaker

## Frequent Visitor

there are no places as sudden  
by the river  
by the flow  
the first time I was here  
    reasons were not mentioned  
        just a little singsong  
yes well the sight lines were perfect  
perhaps my role was like a quick nap

I visit so often  
a sneak might think  
I was looking forward

## Modesty

the ceiling fan blurs the stained ceiling  
and vexes flies veered in from the screen holes  
many buzzes    prolific spoonfuls of summer hot

she is splayed to keep her heat from her heat  
the aromas    the sights  
writing is erased in shreds of rubber and vinyl  
memory too    virtual substances  
the result of bad judgment and the whirling  
of the fan above her    dozing and decorative  
while I imagine her as something else  
entirely

## Slight

recall the slight days  
and call them the open book  
figure which parts are true  
and which hanker after the real  
horses running in a curve up and across the low hill  
rise then fall in a perfect arc  
between fences limiting them ultimately  
are they free  
are they trapped  
which is true  
which real

## Speaking in Tongues

a certain lingo lingers  
private language spoken beneath  
ceiling fans  
spoken in tongues  
and mouths  
but also the finer things  
which are spoken about  
from one corner to the other

I am fine with you  
everything extravagant is purposeful  
and there is heat regardless of the temperature  
this is the promise our ancestors have been given  
and give to us passed on through genes  
or the living Gospel

## Poetry; Lust; Imbroglia

...nothing quelled his passion (weird  
add lines stories old poems lists)  
learn cattle-and-no-hat  
humble pawns can be ambitious...

... not pro bono  
cut a line  
cut a lust  
off like boots  
cloves dancing tarot persists in love's mourning  
Jesuitical speech and conspicuous  
lovers are turned ruthless by jealousy...

...catsup way wastes a perfectly  
good pixelated imbroglia (berate beat)  
Texas size imbroglia of murder  
an abyssal imbroglia with no  
lust to regulate the singsong quality  
of recited poetry the virtual world at once mirrors  
and mocks real life...

## In Remembrance

behind the phony tinsel of Hollywood  
lies the real tinsel it'd be pretty silly  
if flowers exploded in 1963 Kennedy  
felt that members of the armed forces  
ought to be able to complete a 50 mile hike  
in 14 hours we walked what seemed like  
miles through JFK terminal 2

he'll doublecross that bridge  
when he comes to it



## Languid Lingo

the dearth of rest of the gathered company  
was also evident in the languid manner  
in which they lounged about the bus  
the open road rife with gearhead lingo  
is a languid acoustic interlude that is reminiscent  
of the lingo du jour lush strings  
quiet horns languid tempos  
lovely ladybug who opens the door  
to a dimly lit hotel suite housewife  
and latent feminist what they call  
a "hot property" in movie lingo

## On a Grassy Field Once Laced by Mud

finding the path on the broad plain  
assisted by the wind which parts  
before us when mud becomes soil  
sufficient to support grass is complicated  
by the implications of your gaze which follows  
mine to ground and above the sky  
is bluntly blue like an admission held back  
no more they say many died here  
but the sun's warmth the wind's and yours  
are my comforts now not the mourning  
this place deserves the soil supports our path  
I wonder did others here once before believe  
also in the purpose of paths

## On Wonder

on the backroads south of town  
cornfields binding the roads  
tops of stalks highlighted by the moon  
that's been up since sunset  
my car is eager to take me to my destiny  
small as it may be  
short as it may prove  
for now the windows open onto the odor of sweetening  
cornstalks crackling as if on fire  
and the radio crackles a Jenkins' tune  
tender to lightning two counties over  
I've come from where the girls go without tops  
and smoke is still fashionable  
the beer expensive but mild  
the road should be flat but  
it pulses under me and rises up  
to a high point miles ahead  
what has this to do with me?

## Drivel

she is all blonde hair and concentration  
playing her flute and singing backup  
to the over the top over the hill rock  
star and while her singing accent is deep  
in Mississippi her speaking tongue  
is British and proper

she takes her keys from her purse when  
it's time to go and she gets me up  
from my backstage seat and treats me as if  
I were the fame in the family and my work  
—nothing more than a scratching—  
is the central scene in our thatched-roof  
dispatching of life toward an stenching end

the road is dark and houses lit show us hidden bits  
and wet pavement blinking  
in driving rain and still she insists on driving

I can think of nothing important or pressing  
except the past long gone and the nothing  
I have to look forward to

## Story of My Life

every path is dead  
every memory is a pain and singular  
my time is short and the story has yet to be started  
I find I must decide  
I must imagine  
I must continue

## Cold Ride

on my ride  
cold day   November   long ride

on an uphill  
by the road  
a jay hobbling on veed wings  
his mate squawking in the oak  
both blue  
day and jay

its plight no joke but I think  
birds stunned arise  
what fixes them so  
my legs  
(and what else)  
burn

## Check Up

the house must still be settling  
in its must and the smell I cannot abide  
my footprints and fingerprints must still  
be the most recent additions if there be spirits  
lingering  
    whose might be

right now though  
I sit 2500 miles away I know  
it is 29° and calm for  
technology helps me learn  
    such fruitless things

whether tomorrow it will snow and another cycle will start up  
of time settling behind me and little opening up before

answers are celestial and romantic  
like singing to the dead each year  
or checking the weather for a place  
that cannot exist anymore

## Whether a Place Can Exist Any More

## Lickety

and so  
a line at a time like lifting a small weight  
then down again and the sound of footsteps  
leather soles on concrete  
no sound like it in the civilized world

my vision is like the rabbit jerking  
left right ahead quick stop

o this is quick  
other things won't be

## Split



## Expansive Décor

we are falling under  
a spell as the two split from the table  
and she walks out  
she is full featured and eye-opening  
the taste she just experienced is leaving  
her tongue on fire

the cafe is lit by high lights  
and is not industrial green  
certainly the two of them were sharing  
and swiftly sipping lattes while their pies  
cooled

one of them will soon sign  
with one of the hottest brands

## Nothing

<stanza>  
<line> </line>  
</stanza>

that's my story  
and I'm sticking to it

## You Say

## Early December

through the woods some ours  
some not through snow if there be  
snow our neighbor farmer knows  
our habit and just smiles his old-  
country smile

we climb up the hill and then cut  
into the woods seeking fir  
not too tall and away from  
the town's harvesting for the parade

we cut and drag and even in snow  
we believe no one will follow our tracks  
this is the faith that we have  
in the season and in the weather  
forecast

## Jaunty Seeker

a little stream starts nearby  
in what seems just a muck or patch of mud  
the source of wet not clear  
but a culvert under the road takes it  
from the back of the barn to our main lawn  
where in winter it becomes a small pond  
that drains into a swampy section in the maples  
and from there into a bed where sometimes  
the flow is clear

where I know it next is down on Bear Hill Road  
where sometimes I'd fish though the doings  
the point not the fish and later they say  
Cobbler's Creek supplies power to mills before it joins  
the Merrimack down in Merrimacport  
former shipbuilding site

the journey is slow from unique and obscure  
to powerful and swift to anonymous and forgotten  
metaphors are being contested

## O Foo

from the start of the creek  
to its end at the river the metaphor  
gathers speed and burbliness

## From a Standstill

she's at the stop sign waiting  
for her turn eager and angry  
about 5 mile from home  
smoke from burning leaves  
she steps on it and up past the top  
of the rise and around a long bend  
she's stopped by a cop surprised  
that's she just getting started and what it would  
mean to see her really going

## The Dark Age

love in the dark age  
the rhetoric of love in the dark age  
the rejection of the rhetoric of love in the dark age  
criticism of the rejection of the rhetoic of love in the dark age

## Clock Lost

I went to the page  
that said "your personal world clock"  
and when I got there it said  
"there is no personal world clock for you"

every clock will do



## Lost Clock

this poem is temporarily suspended  
due to moronic behavior on the part of many  
it may or may not return

## Look at the Pictures

turning the pages  
of a magazine that will never stain  
or crumple it will last forever  
if anyone wants it to  
the natural world cannot harm it  
the laws of physics ignore it  
it will remain and become  
perfect

## Revealing

my thoughts are revolutions  
and backward glances  
as frightening as those of a fearless leader

as unimportant as a love-lorn tale  
softened to the sound of streams  
and loyal to no one

will there be a time  
when my thoughts revel in me?

## Like Fissures Opening in the West

how many times can you practice  
to avoid the mistake that will embarrass?  
no practice is the real thing  
it like everything is fake  
what is sure is the flight birds throw up  
like a random ring toss with the odds stacked for up  
or the billowing clouds formed like a pencilled-in smudge  
or charcoal rubbed in by a hand's heel or a fingertip

these are all emblems (with  
a small mod) of the small nit  
I must find

## Code Rat

refined design  
elegant lifestyle  
modern technologies

we have never been as modern as when we strayed into  
the Grand Salon from the Hôtel D'un Collectionneur  
sumptuous sarcophagus  
fashionable taste  
shimmering evening gowns  
cocktail shakers  
pleasure pursuits all the way to  
a lacquered bed shaped like a canoe

we are here to witness with our own two hands  
the advent of new materials and the streamlining of design

yes  
it's the glamorous world of modernity and change  
making its case for vanity

meanwhile the nipples on  
Tamara de Lempicka's world-famous painting Jeune fille en vert  
grow thicker and longer while her  
belly button  
like every dazzling facet tinged by the modern  
grows deeper

## Code Rat



## What I Saw on My Road Trip

marks on the road  
stray debris  
even a flattened rat

the white dashes and raised reflectors  
flash toward me  
toward my car  
I rush down the highway  
through the fog which evaporates in the bubble around me  
and except for the music  
this is what truth is like  
just nearby and around  
with a rapid membrane  
of ignorance around it  
just where things get interesting

## With Not Standing

we of course are  
irrelevant though we often  
carp and complain

we sometimes appear to be heard  
no one acts to hear but it happens  
naturally the truth is a coincidence  
no I mean the fact that someone listens  
is because they thought of what we said  
all by themselves—what we said  
notwithstanding

## Porn Musical

what is it like to be a male porn star?  
it's the woody  
the creep factor—  
and over 55 that get you on  
the "no" list

wait  
has it gone mainstream



## Dangerous Curves

to drive from the heat of LA before noon (  
glare-sun ricocheting off dark-tinted highrises  
) into the fog-covered cold past Grapevine  
its giant ikea a haven for those seeking affordable  
solutions for better living is the gauntlet  
of besting the hump separating real  
from road and the coursing of well-timed cracks  
beneath my car at 80 is a model for symbol-making  
and with only a little luck someone could write  
a program so anyone could share in it  
share in the drive from the heat of LA before noon (

## V

my first room was like one tip  
of a Y with my parents' room the other  
and the stem short I remember one day  
listening to the radio with the light coming through  
from the west on the floor and music—piano and violins—  
playing a song whose name feels like it should be  
Longines with lots of accents and my head  
barely up to the table top

that table still sits in a house I own  
both parents long gone (it feels like)  
perhaps we three were like that Y  
two tips gone and now just I

## I

## Trip & Reflect

sun heat bright glare  
flip flops flapping for a trudging walk  
slouched and old quite sick  
though officially healed  
this man and I trudge  
up a shallow hill to the street  
with restaurants where he  
will eat right  
quick

## Sol/Sol

winter  
another day of mindless hacking  
but at least the days are getting longer

**stice/itude or cuties edit**

## I.E. TT

there is a woman so beautiful  
that men before her melt  
cuties edit contains suicide

## Covetous Firm Lotion

those who have gone before  
have had lives deserving of long speeches  
and sweet humor

love of them seems uneventful  
and common

what is most frivolous of them  
become icons and totems

envious comfort  
envious toil

## When It's an Envelop

what lustrous excitement  
what lingering anticipation  
when everything was a first

what feeble dread  
what insignificant fear  
when everything might be a last

## In The Garden Of Eden

the irritating electronic snatches of classical music  
nothing is worse than a cell phone  
(a mobile in Europe)  
(where they rely on secular thinking)  
thank god cell phones are not legal  
—poor people use them: they must be illegal—  
why not the farfisa intro to light my fire  
or In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida honey  
don't you know that I love you?  
the snatches are bad enough  
let alone the electronic sounds

## Baby



## Writing Disaster

we were just relaxing  
stones looked like elephants  
disaster crept up on them  
work consists of cooking washing and caring  
it withdrew for 1000 yards  
fishermen rushed to secure their boats  
the full moon was drowsy and soothing  
the water came back  
the wind rose for a moment  
it sucked their boats  
there is nothing to do except stand and watch  
we can't predict anything  
look! look at the waves  
everything is nothing

## Well, Duh

insignificance is the most  
important thing in the world  
filling every void  
and every filled spot  
alike

we must labor  
to notice it or else  
its cruciality will be missed  
and its significance will remain  
potential only  
like your best love  
who lives  
only somewhere else

## All Wet

will the leaves continue to wipe  
across the ground in the epic encounter  
of two dissimilar elements  
after a tragic calm  
under a now-old tree

will I tire of you  
as I try to capture it all  
in a fluid form  
something all wet  
and given up on

## Ceiling Vie

the long poem vies  
with novellas and monographs  
for the limited attention  
like almonds expanded into the sky  
like Lorca's Chrysler building with cityscape  
the long poem is like the bridge in the background  
or planes at La Guardia angling away  
from potential kills but swift  
with many thousands of pounds of thrust

the only difference being  
their ceilings

## Starterer

the songs I want to hear  
with ears no longer in gear  
are slow and fragmented  
they start and stop at unexpected times  
the metronome that governs all  
is steady but furtive  
and as with all the most important things God has made  
perfection signals death  
perfection is the most unhealthy of all conditions  
and that's why people  
with the greatest passion  
make music  
and those with the greatest reason  
sit quizzical

## My Legs No Longer Carry

she was what I wanted once  
her sight was like the streets of Florence  
winding always away from and toward the Arno  
her smile was the golden yellow of the painted stucco

I walked with her arm in arm  
and she never found me  
we walked together hand in hand  
and the yellow lights on the river  
remained tired and weary  
the pink clouds  
the purple clouds reflected beneath that bridge

below me now the cars are a whispered rush  
and if I dilate my time sense they form rivers  
of onslaught and retreat  
of yellow and red

perhaps she's walking there  
somewhere down there  
and what seems dark to me  
is light to her  
it's all the same  
I'm a long long way from home