

**Imagine Writing This;  
Imagine It's About You**

*A Collection of Poems from 2011*

Richard P. Gabriel

## Contents

Years and Years.....	1
Dreaming of Dreaming of California.....	2
Barn Dreaming .....	3
Old Album Never Explained .....	4
Hill Making .....	5
Contradictions + Snow .....	6
Annoyed Arriver .....	7
Chinatown.....	8
Boston .....	9
Afraidness .....	10
Indictment .....	11
Laughing Again.....	12
Our Road.....	13
James Schiller Theme Song .....	14
Old Adages .....	17
Here's What Tired Means .....	18
Who Hates It .....	19
Easy Money .....	20
Foreign Leftovers .....	21
The Good Book .....	22
Speak of Impossible.....	23
Looking At .....	24
Or Not Much.....	25
Oh No.....	26
Too Far Gone .....	27
Lasting Wish.....	28
Identity Mismatched.....	29
Contrary To .....	30
Just Ask the Peace.....	31
Bent Over and Over .....	32
Some Streets .....	33
Away From Every Place Called Home .....	34
Again in Cold Europe.....	35
Bisbee Princess in a Joint of Coffee .....	36
Nordic Trainstorming.....	37
Snowfound .....	38
Torrential Sadness .....	39
Pain Ahead.....	40
Road Home .....	41
Four Years After Death .....	42
Wrinkled Inklings .....	43
A Possible Distance .....	44
Who Are They / Who They Are.....	45
Are Brown.....	46
Last To See Them.....	47

Snow Angles.....	48
Unbeneathable .....	49
Advice to Run By .....	50
About You Ma.....	51
Under the Night .....	52
She Never Told.....	53
Under A Sky Noted For Its Brevity.....	54
The Great Writer .....	55
Unguent .....	56
Potsdam 1910 Winter.....	57
Figure Active .....	58
Some Foreign Country .....	59
On To Fly .....	60
Or Bits.....	61
Reunion of Strangers .....	62
Have and Have More .....	63
Her Father's Knife.....	64
Day Fall.....	65
Black Holes Are Life.....	66
Revery .....	67
Just Get On Board.....	68
Milky Way.....	69
Clearing Voices .....	70
Simple Wishes And A Day.....	71
Merrimack.....	72
Her .....	73
Agency.....	74
Unison.....	75
Time Sucks .....	76
Hospice Likens .....	77
Fear of Flying .....	78
Saturday; Parents Gone.....	79
Always Scared .....	80
My Fast Friend.....	81
The Road / The Only One.....	82
Pernambuco.....	83
Obvious.....	84
After Smiling.....	85
South Girl.....	86
Circle of Circularity.....	87
Unencumbered.....	88
They Stepped Past Me.....	89
We're All Dead and This Is Hell.....	90
Christmas J.....	91
Barzeelian Tango Or Samba.....	92
Traveling Home .....	93
Please Help.....	94

Over Too Much .....	95
Very Practical .....	96
I Hope Steve Likes This.....	97
Is Life Simple.....	98
Right Now .....	99
It Can Be.....	100
Lesson With Meanings Galore.....	101
Why Is That? .....	102
Water Under.....	103
When The Eyes Don't Focus.....	104
Passing.....	105
A Funny Joke .....	106
Demoted .....	107
From An Old Movie.....	108
Ronnie D's .....	109
Forgiveness .....	110
My Profession Fails Again.....	111
Visit Soon .....	112
Technical Logic .....	113
And More To Make.....	114
A Road Not Findable .....	115
Where / I .....	116
I Love Atmospheric Noise.....	117
Reversiness .....	118
Fields and Seas.....	119
No More I Love Yous.....	120
She.....	121
After Being Alone Too Long.....	122
Bin Laden .....	123
Alexander's Test.....	124
Looking Up / Touching Down.....	125
Forensic Sentiment.....	126
I Got In The Way .....	127
High Over Me.....	128
My <del>Problem</del> Music.....	129
Some That I've Broken.....	130
Don't Fear .....	131
Toward Yuma .....	132
Toward Yuma .....	133
Blithely Unaware .....	134
Who Finds You.....	135
Lost Perk.....	136
Sadly.....	137
Brightness .....	138
Flush Wet .....	139
Billboards.....	140
Say Goodbye To The World.....	141

Of All Things Living.....	142
Talking to the Grave Guys.....	143
Small Mouth.....	144
With Butter.....	145
On Flying Out.....	146
Last Thing on the Merrimack.....	147
Dream Anchor.....	148
Surely It's Love.....	149
Stars Up On The Hill.....	150
Now I Feel Better.....	151
As If Thinking Too Hard.....	152
Consumable.....	153
Fostering.....	154
It Starts With a Call.....	155
How She Left.....	156
Simplicity Ends.....	157
Too Small Too Tall.....	158
Forgivable.....	159
Paris Riff.....	160
Affinity or Absence.....	161
Who Gets It?.....	162
No Memory of It.....	163
Sitting Around.....	164
No Art This Time.....	165
Summer What.....	166
After All.....	167
After More.....	168
Her And Me.....	169
And Passion.....	170
Locked In Decision.....	171
One Night In Boston.....	172
Now There.....	173
The Last Bit.....	174
So What If.....	175
Down and Down.....	176
Berlin Story (i).....	177
At The Top of The Stairs.....	178
1880s or So.....	179
Berlin Story 2.....	180
Berlin Story 3.....	181
Another.....	182
Faithless Again.....	183
Shortest Story.....	184
Stay And Watch.....	185
To Far Away.....	186
Pining.....	187
More of Same.....	188

Selection Committee.....	189
Turns To Go.....	190
Cambridge The Other One.....	191
So There.....	192
Lineman.....	193
The Space Between a Man and His Metaphor .....	194
Obscure But Unknown.....	195
Built For This.....	196
Still On .....	197
I'm Forever.....	198
Unfree .....	199
Crazy Like It Is .....	200
Signal Tonight .....	201
Quick Downhill Ride .....	202
We Got 'Em.....	203
During or After a Storm .....	204
How It Starts .....	205
Bitch .....	206
Hunger for Amazement .....	207
North Fear.....	208
Last Time Too.....	209
Envelope Please .....	210
Take Heart Most Worried Souls .....	211
I Have Found the Heated Misery / Mystery / Solitude .....	212
Old Old Stock.....	213
Bad Boys .....	214
Humility Squared .....	215
Political Shame .....	216
Stories For All Occasions.....	217
Only At Her Best .....	218
Why She Did It.....	219
She Did All My Work .....	220
Against Will .....	221
If What?.....	222
Story Matters.....	223
Story Unravelling.....	224
All Figures.....	225
But Too Late .....	226
By The Stones and Dusk .....	227
! .....	228
What About Now.....	229
Steep Hills.....	230
Us Just Us .....	231
Smells.....	232
Guess Where?.....	233
Lasting.....	234
Twelve Dead .....	235

Wrong Some More .....	236
Poor Duncan .....	237
God Says "For Your Memory Only" .....	238
PDX / Looking Out.....	239
Red Metal and In Thought.....	240
Connectors .....	241
Grand And Boring .....	242
Not The Innocent Woman.....	243
I Remember I Was Sad.....	244
Love & The Shiny Ark.....	245
California Undreaming.....	246
Dropping Down.....	247
No Free Lunch .....	248
Hold .....	249
Inner Bound .....	250
Bad Neighborhood .....	251
August .....	252
Thinking of Hard Things.....	253
In A North .....	254
1937 as If Important.....	255
On My Way.....	256
Nothing Else / Nothing More .....	257
Body Politeness .....	258
Femme.....	259
Green to Red Confusion.....	260
WTF .....	261
Slight Love.....	262
In The Dark A River A Loved .....	263
Into the Soul.....	264
River My Friend.....	265
One Last Time .....	266
Falling Deep .....	267
One Warm Night In September .....	268
Sidewalk Scene By Outdoor Café .....	269
Splash.....	270
Who Flees.....	271
Away and Far .....	272
Lifeliners .....	273
To The Heap .....	274
Along With It.....	275
Lying Lessons .....	276
Desperate Fear of Seeing .....	277
Deserts To Me .....	278
The Long And Short of It .....	279
What Messed It Up.....	280
More White / More Heat .....	281
Losing Lessons .....	282

That's How They Do It .....	283
Dreadful Reflection .....	284
Magic Of Writing.....	285
Intaglio .....	286
Under Nuts .....	287
30 Hadley Road .....	288
Music Being Always .....	289
Lost Side of Town.....	290
You're Still With Her .....	291
If Only.....	292
Fear of All.....	293
Deep In Woods One Road Passed.....	294
Up Close and Far Away .....	295
From Across the Way and Lighting the Bridge .....	296
When It's Weirder Than Al .....	297
And Why The Fuck Not .....	298
No.....	299
John McCarthy .....	300
Simple Impossible.....	301
Asking For Little.....	302
Time Etc Passes .....	303
Who Am I To .....	304
While That Song Plays .....	305
On Eve .....	306
And On A Day Just Like Today .....	307
God Sees Death.....	308
Once or Twice .....	309
Art of Creation.....	310
Colombine .....	311
Illusion Together .....	312
Bye Bye I Guess.....	313
As Usual.....	314
Searching for the Leslie .....	315
Fits and Starts .....	316
Don't Need to Imagine .....	317
Not Special.....	318
Greyish.....	319
Blackish.....	320
Looking Back and Forth.....	321
Strike Anywhere.....	322
Voyeur .....	323
Never Imagine When You Can Cry.....	324
Diner Time.....	325
Darkness Become Grey.....	326
And So A Man Wrote on Sunday .....	327
I Think.....	328
When It's All Dark.....	329

Budapestulance .....	330
Frilly Apron.....	331
Lament for Me .....	332
Saying Hello While Saying Goodbye.....	333
Fell Away .....	334
Brussels Maybe .....	335
Snowbound .....	336
Leave Me Burning.....	337
Look Don't Touch .....	338
Creepy and Uncomfortable .....	339
South of South.....	340
Something Happening.....	341
Come Back Home .....	342
Now This Is Pessimism .....	343
Dying Time .....	344
Hits Home .....	345
Highrock.....	346
Don't You Hate It.....	347
Forward and Backward.....	348
By The Road.....	349
Never.....	350
Celebration Not Quite.....	351
Entropy For Dummies.....	352
My Boy's Life.....	353
Assumption.....	354
Sincerity.....	355
What Clings .....	356
Clutter Memorial Up.....	357
Bulldog Tank .....	358
An Island Somewhere .....	359
Wild Day .....	360
And Cold.....	361
Or Impossible.....	362
Lines and Flat.....	363
Dig It.....	364
Indifference.....	365
Better Than Two.....	366
On Coldness.....	367
Backing Into The Fringe / A Thicket.....	368

## **Years and Years**

years and years  
this last year ended  
with a long recovery from fatigue  
with people disappointed  
with a few more things not working  
as usual the writing rebegins  
more and more

## Dreaming of Dreaming of California

I used to walk down the road toward Billy's  
when winter was beginning but snow hadn't fallen yet  
down toward the pond  
on either side of the narrow barely paved road  
the trees were like pasted together twigs  
etching black on the cloudy white sky  
and deep back into the woods the tangle  
turned to a textured solid black  
or I'd walk out into the big field  
brown from the beginnings of dead regrowth after the last harvest  
past the rock no one could exhume  
back into the back field rimmed with the same twiggy trees  
and green pines / crows made their rough song  
up in them and chickadees would softly sing their names  
my head held the song California Dreamin' and I would play it over and over  
the direction from my house to the back field was toward California  
I imagined the songwriters and songsingers  
from a cold place like this  
but maybe not / maybe not  
wherever they were I moved to California  
and with that move grew my nostalgia  
for wanting to move there

## Barn Dreaming

our old barn was once my mother's old barn  
and before that her father's old barn  
before that I've found out  
it was several generations  
of sons' and fathers' old barn  
hand hewn beams weren't a sign of poverty and poor tools  
but of antiquity  
so were the rough nails in the siding  
the worn smooth slats in the cow stalls  
were not quaintly smoothed for the comfort of the cows  
but by the necks of cows rubbing over the course of centuries  
we don't think it of our country but parts of it are old  
as old as some parts of Europe we travel great distances to see  
in one corner near the front behind a place for farm tools  
a door with leather hinges and latch hid a hard carved  
seat with a hole to the underside of the barn  
next to where we parked the side delivery  
where water from an underground spring came up  
and formed a creek that formed a stream that formed a brook  
that emptied into the river that emptied to the nearby ocean  
which connected this country with that  
my wish though was to have owned that barn long enough  
to know how valuable it must have been  
and to have sex in the hay loft  
yeah / both of those

## Old Album Never Explained

once I knew  
I could see it  
she was older than he  
their glasses were off for better pictures  
taken by Nana  
he wore a hat to disguise his hairline  
he wore sharp clothes the way all Lithuanians  
I ever knew did  
he wore a wedding ring  
(long gone)  
and she did too  
(less long but still long gone)  
the bags under her eyes  
from work on the farm they posed on  
or age  
all around those pictures on that cold fall day  
I think their wedding day  
I saw the heavy work that was required  
dirty work too  
including love

## **Hill Making**

my place is on a hill  
surrounded by trees  
but with clear views  
in several directions  
along with a dictionary  
and a way to write  
I'll take care of the rest

## Contradictions + Snow

the walk across the bridge  
makes him tremble  
it shakes when cars go by  
there are no walkways  
so he steps up on a curb as they pass  
the snow is not coming heavy now  
but he can hear the flakes hiss as they melt  
when they hit the fast flowing water  
he can hear the water slipping past the piers  
it's near dusk so he is afraid of not being seen  
it's near where he was raised so he is afraid  
of being seen

## Annoyed Arriver

outside the oldest hotel  
snow sleet snow sleet  
small flakes and hard drops  
the sidewalk is slick only on the metal lift doors  
the brick is as old as it gets  
above the orange sky is just low clouds spitting  
a woman with a formfitting down coat  
steps in front of me  
holds out her hand  
asks  
photo?

## Chinatown

at the wedding  
a classy show even though the religion hung heavy  
many gestures / many players  
some (joyful / tearful) some with grudges  
later the reception and banquet  
was food food foodfoodfood food food  
we left with thoughts left behind  
and lives being lived on the double

## **Boston**

hard cold wind  
coming off the relentless sea  
we are walking directly into it  
on our way to Union Oyster House  
we are walking into it  
on our way from Union Oyster House  
such a place as this it is

## Afraidness

who worries about the meaning of death  
what will happen when the curtain falls  
when the darkness will come when days are less certain  
why there is something and not nothing  
where the grass will part and the lowering begin  
women are wise in knowing now is the essence  
their plans execute quickly

## Indictment

he is a loser  
a failure early in life  
he looked to blame others and institutions  
for his own failings  
for him  
his life was a cup of failure  
a load of non-achievements  
a future of no promise

## Laughing Again

will it all turn out well  
the too much is starting once more  
I will be diminished  
but all that's ahead is diminishment  
why all the depression  
they all asked

## Our Road

I have never lost my cloak of poverty  
growing up on a farm where everything was falling apart  
my father built houses / the two I knew best  
have fallen apart  
he was fired many times  
and I have been too  
he grew depressed except when speaking to strangers  
and I have too  
I've grown tired / feel myself falling down  
firm around my shoulders  
that cloak  
firm and never slipping

## James Schiller Theme Song

Kurkjian, Gabriel

<Intro> C F...C Am F G

<Verse>

C Am F G      C Am F G

James Schiller is for me-ee-ee-ee-ee, oooo. (yeah)

C Am F G      C Am F G

Vote for Jimmie-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee, vote for Jimmie S. Oooo.

C Am F G      C Am F G

He's the man (yeah) we want to vote for, oooo.

C Am F G      C Am F G

Vote for Jimmie or I'll pick up and throw you out the door.

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah,

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

G&K: Instrumental! Hear we go! Wooo, whoooo! All right!

<lead>

Inaudible: (Bullcorn!) (Aw Shucks!) (So sweet!) (Well, I'll be a suck-egg mule!)

(Hear me Talkin'!)(At's Right)(Hey, hey! Wooo, whooo!) (Heh!)

(Here I come, here I come, here come the Romper Stomper!) (Good God!)

(Anhh, hanhh!) (G:Ahhh, yeah! 'At's right!) (G: Hear me, talkin'!)

<Airplane>

G: Ahhh, yeah.

K: Hunh! Down the creek! Goin' down the delta!

G: Anhh, Bull Corn.

K: Shoot-I reckon.

G: Well, I'll be a suck-egg mule!

K: Here I come, here I come again.

G: Watch it, watch out, watch out now, here he comes, here he comes.

K: James...

G&K: Ahhh, yeah!

G: Ahh, hear me talkin', now. Hunh, here I come. Make it funky, there.

G: Make it slow and easy, there.

K: I like it slow.  
G: Make it funky.  
K: Nice and sweet.  
G: Ah, let's have that good soul walk.  
K: <No!>

K: Hear me talkin'.

G: Hey, hey, unh, hunh, and I'll say it again  
K: 'At's right.  
G: Ahh, let me hear ya.  
G: Hunh!

<lead flub>

G: Ahhh, good timing.  
K: He we are at the Agape Inn.  
G: Make it mellow.  
K: Hah! Hear me makin' it mellow, now.  
G: Here comes the Romper Stomper.  
K: Here, here I come, now.

<K: Wait a minute. See, when we come to a G....>

G: Unh, hunh.  
K: Oh, yeah.  
K: Listen to him, listen to him talk now.

G: Unh, hunh.  
G: Lay it on him nice and easy.  
K: 'At's right, now.  
G: Hah!  
G: Watch out, watch out: Here comes the Romper Stomper!  
G: Here he comes. Watch out.  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.

<Verse>

James Schiller is for me, oooo.  
(Well, let me hear you talkin' now)  
Vote for Jimmie, vote for Jimmie S. Oooo.

(Oh yeah, lay it on him right now, come on, let's go! Watch out!)  
He's the man (heh!) we want to vote for, oooo. (yeah!)  
Vote for Jimmie or I'll pick up and throw you ou-wow-wow-wow-whoa-whoa-whoa....

G: <whisper> That's right.

G: Ah, yeah.

K: Oh, it's so sweet.

K: Even the Romper Stomper, it brings a tear to his eye.

K: Let's fade out now.

G: That's so mellow.

G&K: Hey, hey, hey, wooo, whooo. That's right, and I'll say it again.

K: End it!

G: Big ending.

G: It's all over now.

K: Oooh.

## Old Adages

I've learned to expect  
that in those things I care least about  
I do not grow better at them  
and the rest  
I'm not that good at either

## Here's What Tired Means

who cares what the words are  
why worry about who will read it  
because no one will  
why do anything more than just keep alive  
as long as you can  
why work yourself overly  
because really who cares

## Who Hates It

playing for keeps  
the pale water is an anchor to desire  
sitting on the floor reading last week's  
London Sunday Times to catch the phrasing differences  
the song that played over and over  
was a Swiss techno slow song about love  
and the rain washed over the windows  
and down the drains back down deep  
into what makes civilization livable

## Easy Money

catch a squirrel  
sedate it with strychnine  
put on a smock coat  
grabs its paws  
twist its tail  
lay it out on your arm  
sell it to a farmer's boy

## Foreign Leftovers

the night event is passed  
the sheets are lightly damp  
one sits on the couch fingering  
her hair back into place  
her slightly hanging full breasts  
sway beautifully  
the other lies on her side facing me  
her breast sticking to my arm  
her eyes drape mine  
one window's blinds are slightly open  
the lights stripe everything behind us  
the night is in the past

## The Good Book

she carried the book  
from the shelf in the barn  
where her father had stored it for easy reference  
how to plant plants and nurture them  
how to tend to cows horses rabbits and chickens  
grafting making beer crushing grapes  
he was gone  
her mother had killed him  
now she needed to know those things  
and how to cook take care of things in the house  
she is gone  
I have the book now

## Speak of Impossible

we carried them there  
something they never expected  
never would expect  
never could expect  
a place they rarely visited  
that I know of  
she planted geraniums  
in front of her nh house  
he never visited anyone's resting place  
but look at it / three colors only  
green the most in late spring  
a deep blue if you look the right direction  
and some grays some stone colors maybe some light reds  
reds from geraniums and the yellows that go with green  
bright greens and shade greens  
you could ask this question  
did they in the end love you  
were they ever proud  
did they worry you were so far away and never called  
see the clear watered river now flowing like sharp glass  
did they ever sit here where you sometimes now sit  
by the river near the green bridge  
did they seem to each other to love each other  
which secrets did they tell each other  
watch me stand back and recreate it all for them  
this is something no one could expect

## Looking At

many hopes  
small ones that grow  
the hedges that block  
our old yard is now overgrown  
filled with shade we never imagined  
even when the oak was tall and full  
and the shag-bark hickory was tall and dropping nuts  
now it's all fallen down / the house rotten  
it is falling into itself its forgetting just barely  
keeping up

## Or Not Much

I missed the tribute  
but I can console because I didn't know of it  
this means of course no one thought to tell me  
which tells me  
what they think  
of me which is nothing

## Oh No

really amazing  
how fame is it's own thing  
famous for nothing really  
but famous enough  
that when people who treat the famous man as ordinary  
because he seems so  
they hide their faces and cry oh  
no  
when they learn his name  
and they really mean  
their cries of despair

## Too Far Gone

I remember the sidewalk from our kitchen door  
to the road  
the thick tall oak we later cut down  
the shagbark hickory spewing nuts  
a stone we could never get out of the ground  
that would rip at our mowers  
the short blue spruces now 40' tall  
the outline of the garden still apparent  
but surrounded by brush  
the pictures are pictures of me too  
such a horrible sight

## Lasting Wish

I wish for this  
a young woman from Europe  
would come and say  
I will be your patron  
and all you need to do is write  
and walk along the river with me  
every day or to a park  
or down side streets and alleys  
I will cook and provide  
talk write walk  
bring your wife along

## Identity Mismatched

hello

I used to be Dick Gabriel

the rising star

the new computer scientist

the skeptic with the cutting wit

the happy father

the deep lover

the avid bicyclist

the rock climber

the lead guitarist

the poet

the book writer

the writer of fiction

the entrancing speaker

the ceo the president the cto the fellow the vp the de the staff member

long dark thick shining hair

black pensive beard

soft loving eyes

legs like timbers

modest but adept athlete

programmer designer

spooky creative thinker

photographer of note

many remember me but today as they walk up

there is no recognition / they walk past

wondering were those eyes familiar

this list maps to a list to falsehoods

my journey turns these corners

my parents' graves

my friends' graves

a great writer's grave

where I married once

where I grew up and how I wish it were still mine

and this keyboard trying to find when to write it all

because some still believe I am Dick Gabriel

but I am not him for ten years now

my wife says maybe more

## **Contrary To**

I am built for weeping  
for carrying only small loads  
for forgetting quickly and easily  
the strength now of my mind  
is its weakness

## Just Ask the Peace

as time's passed  
my computer setup's gotten better  
now I have computers all around  
they are like slaves or friends  
or purposeful enemies  
writing in little notebooks  
everything I type and many  
things I say  
just waiting for some prosecutor  
to just ask

## Bent Over and Over

what if they were well off  
before he died  
maybe my mother didn't understand that  
just figuring that the nice cars were commonplace  
and all the things that made them look poor  
to townsfolk were merely traditions they chose  
like the heavy breads and kielbasa and sour cabbage  
then he died  
and the source of good luck and money ran out  
she and her mother became poor  
then that's all she ever remembered  
like a tree struck young by a truck  
and unable to remember life without the kink

## Some Streets

two things  
one place right now  
a boy is under a streetlight  
kissing a girl the first time  
and after she will tell him it was nice  
another place right now  
a girl is on a dark street  
being kissed by a boy for the first time  
after her sense of approbation will kick in  
and she will tell him it was nice

## Away From Every Place Called Home

with you the windblown streets  
feel of warmth / once these streets  
sat beneath the river and though those days  
seemed the worst / only the next year  
would happen / but with you  
I walked in the darkness  
who wouldn't need the light near dawn  
to go on

## Again in Cold Europe

sipping an espresso at the table  
by the window on the second floor  
her heavy fur-collared coat hanging  
from the back of her chair  
a book open in front of her  
and below shoppers crowd the covered  
mall just an old alley covered  
by translucent glass held by lacework lead  
she watches the handholders below  
straying away from the rain slowing down  
to browse nothing they like aside from themselves  
in the windows / or perhaps it's the chocolates  
then her small cup still heaving with hot black  
finally the book spragging philosophy or words of imagination  
she can have anyone she wishes  
she doesn't look over here

## Bisbee Princess in a Joint of Coffee

so many of the colors are upset  
with each other even though none  
is a shade past pastel  
but the woman's pants  
as she watches intently the movie on her macbook  
bear a design too intricate and formal  
to be the design of a professional  
such attention to detail to the pants  
of a woman so unpure-lighted  
that her coffee continues to heat up  
even as time passes and her breath  
repeatedly blows over the lips  
of her cup

## Nordic Trainstorming

on the train  
after a long plane ride  
once we were out of the city  
headed for a distant place  
she handed me her ipod  
and played a song sung  
by a woman with an icy voice  
toned by warmed vowels  
I took it as words she  
wished to say but had no words for  
later she proved I was right  
that night / with her body heat

## Snowfound

back where I grew up  
the snow's piled up almost 100 feet  
by bulldozers and dump trucks  
because there is no place to put it  
collected from roads and driveways  
you'd think with all the state and nearby states  
there'd be plenty of room but you need roads  
to get to where you dump it

to be snowed in with a source or two of warmth  
plenty of food and means to drink and all  
is what it means to be alive / a man  
mind and culture pushing out the raving cold  
then around the bend the snowplow veers  
then pushes the snow up the bank in vain  
the snow like a wake filling in behind  
the snow now is up to mid-window  
blankets and warmth  
something sweetly wet

## Torrential Sadness

as I listen to the sad song playing on the computer I write on  
I can also feel myself dying  
not metaphorically I can feel the parts of me I once cherished  
as immortal stopping dead  
it made me think  
in Egypt I am as good as dead  
in Cambodia  
in Indonesia  
no one there experiences me  
I don't experience there or anyone there  
I am dead to those places  
dead to most places on the earth  
and all the other places in the universe  
dead can't be so bad  
I already mostly am

## Pain Ahead

the only hope I feel  
is hope for characters in stories  
and novels / hope for the youths I know  
in their lives ahead  
hope for me is now only for diminished pain

## Road Home

darkness early and a cold wind  
overhanging clouds trees holding still  
onto snow fallen over days  
to the west I feel a pull to leave  
but once I do the pull will be reversed  
like a fish returning near death to spawn near home  
is this what's called fate  
or faith

## Four Years After Death

in 2007 I started to program  
credits for a conference I was running  
at that time I realized it was the culmination  
of my career  
the music I chose to play while the credits rolled  
was sad electronica from Portugal  
the feeling was right  
it was the culmination

## Wrinkled Inklings

some of the days are floaters  
others are tied to an image or a place  
finding the balance is a running joke  
some of the poets I know actually  
believe in themselves

## A Possible Distance

finding the distance  
making it as broad as possible  
like the hot press of love merely abandoned  
no goodbyes after never a hello  
just a kind of yearning  
then the long decline  
as it gets sanded down  
until all that's left is a few songs  
I don't like anymore

## Who Are They / Who They Are

yes I see them  
standing / sitting on cool grass  
my mother at one end near relatives  
of kids I would one day know  
but the boy who stands out the most  
his arms are folded in front of him  
his elbows are on his knees  
he sits in the grass  
hunched over and his heels dug in  
his toes pointed straight up  
and he is glancing up and to the side  
toward the camera  
as if everything going on was just a lame joke  
all this in 1933  
when it was thought we thought  
impossible to be hip

## Are Brown

unimaginable today  
seen from 1000 years ago  
which feeble attempts  
will be recalled in another  
for example did the students  
in front of Merrimac High School in 1933  
suspect I would be looking at the school picture  
being taken right then as I write this

## Last To See Them

tell me of the essentials  
this crowd by the school is fully dispersed now  
I am the last to disperse  
but I was alone by then  
they caught me in B&W

## Snow Angles

too much snow they say  
up into everything  
ice dams breaking roofs  
heating through the roof  
reminds me of a winter back in to '60s  
when it piled to the roof  
ours was steep enough to survive  
everything now has fallen in

## Unbeneathable

which real is real  
the one in our memories or the one  
we later write down  
the one others can read  
like a puzzle or a mystery  
is my life a mystery  
meaning there is no right answer  
meaning there is no wrong answer  
right?

## Advice to Run By

find the people who shout the loudest  
who make claims about themselves  
who believe the self-unbelievable  
then write about them  
warn others of them  
then run for your lives

## About You Ma

Ma / before you join your schoolmates  
in front of the school for the yearly picture  
let me tell you something you won't believe  
first / I will be your son  
second / even though your copy of this picture will burn in 1942  
and no one you know will have a copy  
I will find a copy & photograph it with a digital camera  
restore it to its near pristine condition  
and display it on my computer monitor as a background image  
and today 78 years later I will look at you and your schoolmates  
while I write this terrible poem

## Under the Night

tonight the tears won't stop  
I have this deep pity and regret  
I have already moved into the deep past  
reserved for the oldest  
these pains worry me

## She Never Told

she's walking down the road  
toward the river  
I am hidden behind the stand of trees  
she's wearing a fine but homemade dress  
her short dark hair is curled in the humid late spring air  
she moves so swiftly  
her body sways like it never did when she was old  
if she happens to look back and see me  
she'll see someone she won't meet for years  
her son plotting her story

## Under A Sky Noted For Its Brevity

oh the rain that falls fills the river  
soaks the fields which will turn yellow green in the spring  
rust / decay / a collapse  
she was unable to stop it and barns collapsed  
the outside walls grayed under sun and rain  
without repair it all decayed  
none of her tears stopped that  
none of mine can make a story of it

## The Great Writer

he is a fool laughing outrageously  
writing like a god  
he is obsessed with his father's suicide  
and writes that character over and over  
unreflectively / believing it therapy  
now I see him as easy target  
forget the smart questions  
I wanted to ask / here are  
the dumb ones

## Unguent

man up your skin  
transcendental and approached  
information is hiding from me  
these words fly past its head  
slicing off the tips of its hair

## Potsdam 1910 Winter

the clouds he saw  
were low and dark on their undersides  
patterned like pillows packed like tiles  
early Berlin light filled the cracks between  
and overall the light was filtered through city haze  
smoke and ash the result of burning  
urging ahead the city's awakening  
and purging into the day  
he was excited by the place they sat  
by the distressed river  
he was scared by the thought of moving on

## Figure Active

her coat is filled out  
her breath a white braid to just above her head  
she is willing for me to touch her hands  
I wish our eyes would close simultaneously

## Some Foreign Country

she like all  
of us are removed far  
from the place her dreams  
as extravagant as they once were  
started as small as her and what seemed  
imaginable became un- and she learned to forget to weep

## **On To Fly**

the poem written that night  
after the day posts what happened  
while the poem written the night  
before posits what will

## Or Bits

smiling faces directed at the camera  
now at me / some other day at those who read this  
most now dead / they were at their beginnings  
with nothing left to do but let them unfold  
but all I see is information not kids  
and what seems like hope is just  
a configuration of ink

## Reunion of Strangers

they danced to disco as a way to remember  
their childhoods and though most of them lumbered and sweated  
two of them made a clear picture of what their youth had been  
the hunk and cheerleader / they danced dance after dance  
while their husband and wife sat near me sipping cokes  
and trying to triangulate their wife and husband  
and themselves too / looking and wondering  
how fate would figure that night

## Have and Have More

one by one the sparrows  
clip each plum petal off the branch  
climbing up until the branch is bare  
then hopping to the next and clipping clipping  
why would a bird remove each petal from a blooming fruit tree  
ask the one who has it all and asks for more

## Her Father's Knife

she had her favorite knife so long  
it had worn down from a good 8 inches to less than 4  
she wouldn't let anyone else use it  
on that day my wife asked her to use it on our short hike  
she resisted / said no / said we'd lose it  
but we promised  
my father my wife and I hiked up to the ridge  
sat on a rock to eat  
my wife peeling a cucumber with the knife  
let it fly off the cliff  
we searched for hours  
nearly till dark  
the knife was lost  
my mother never said a thing  
I've heard her weeping ever since

## Day Fall

the girl walked up the hill  
from the simple 4-room school  
carrying a bag of books and papers  
walking past the homes of the children  
who teased her daily / her and her  
brother / in the town square the rough bus  
waited to take those few who lived beyond  
the village home to farms and isolated houses  
she rarely smiled even at the farm to beloved father  
who rarely yelled at her / rarely raised his hand  
one day she would run the farm alone  
except for a mother always drunk

## Black Holes Are Life

falling into the black  
eyes closed  
the pull is so strong it feels like no pull at all  
they say when you open your eyes  
you will see the light that leads you out  
my eyes have been open forever here  
and that grows clear are the scratch marks  
that make up the black

## Revery

the pull is hard  
all that had raised me up before  
is gone or imagined  
some days I sleep more than half  
feeling is leaving my body / my heart  
on the shore I long for the waves to take me  
small and few

## Just Get On Board

sometimes I awaken to singing  
the voice comes to me like warm butter  
from the other room where she is working  
without thinking of the meaning or the reach  
of the song into other ears / other hearts  
soothing as it is it's not meant for me  
that thought would throw her off  
throttle her throat and stifle the song  
everyone's chances grow thinner

## Milky Way

yes it's amazing  
to be hacked on FB  
who'd a thunk  
the possessive's a giveaway  
and the poor writing  
says ain't me

## Clearing Voices

strange reading someone else's memoir  
of the places near where I grew up  
and how that writer disguised  
places like combining Skip's and Hodgie's  
into Skippys / mysterious ponds  
that don't exist and directions that lead  
nowhere like every memoir / every  
one of them leading back to their boring  
centered guess where writers  
me me me

## Simple Wishes And A Day

sneered at today  
my stock falling  
but tonight I am ready  
for sleep and lots of it  
at least I don't fly into the nest  
of earthquakes my buddy does

## Merrimack

the river smelled of oil and plastic  
dead fish and sewage  
in the winter the ice would form  
over brown bubbles  
bad enough to cause  
15 years of nightmares  
now the fish leap by joy from the river in summer  
and eagles nest above its banks  
only after though my ties have long been broken

## Her

his decision factored in her dowry  
in this case a farm  
her ability to cook  
an anchor in a new country  
and someone less threatening  
less thrilling  
than Kalyna Truss

## Agency

I am in a field  
no one not even birds  
no gnats no bugs  
no worms even under me  
the sky would be blue  
but it's gone too  
now the field  
now me

## Unison

once all the girls were on stage  
the song took one slow turn  
then pushed into the loud ending  
the slow turn though ran low and clean  
his voice smooth and clear  
you could watch all their hips

## Time Sucks

the swaying trees  
the blowing wind  
the fast moving clouds  
the birds flying away  
the insects burrowing deep  
the rain coming sideways  
my body refusing to operate

## Hospice Likens

when they decide it's time  
for me to die and cart  
me off to a stone building in the mountains  
make sure those mountains are covered  
with hardwood / that there is a twin rutted  
gravel road leading up to it  
and pines scattered in those birch and maple woods  
so I can smell the farm I grew up on  
because as they all sit and watch crying  
as if I weren't there all I'll be doing  
is reliving ever minute of my life on the farm  
timing my departure with my departure

## Fear of Flying

in two days I travel  
halfway around the world again  
and through I've flown a million miles or more  
and never made a serious mistake  
I still fear a blunder that will send me away  
forever unable to return  
why so much doubt

## Saturday; Parents Gone

driving to Salisbury  
to get a slice or three each  
of Cristy's beach pizza in the Volksw  
then back to the farm  
to watch a horror movie  
pulled in by tall antenna  
from Rhode Island  
we'd be lucky if there were enough  
contrast in the snow to know  
how many characters etc  
were on the screen at any time  
we'd imagine the rest

## Always Scared

when my parents left for the weekend  
to the place in NH I would revel in the freedom  
except the fear each night  
beyond rational neighbors  
I carried a sharpened knife after dark  
held it like a lover until I fell asleep  
40 years later I can finally let go

## My Fast Friend

fear's been by my side since birth  
I remember the time my mother dropped  
me at Steve Kimbrell's to walk 3 blocks  
to the elementary school where we went  
on Tuesday nights to learn how to dance  
and he was away and I cried every step  
of the way from fear of being alone  
for the class we'd been in for weeks and weeks  
my mother drove up to the school before class started  
picked me up and took me home  
did she know  
did she suspect  
did she hang back and watch

## The Road / The Only One

the road

I am on it walking fast

as I can toward the setting sun

a haloed bulb through a low light fog

reaching only to the tops of pruned shade

trees lining the road and I'm certain that behind

me my shadow is sharp and long / distorted

by my angle to the sun / my head small but long

///

ahead of me my better companion casts his shadow

over me and over mine when he moves ahead

quickly / more quickly than I can move

the sun after all is busy setting

and my companion is faster

indistinct but faster

## Pernambuco

inside the circle the pros sing  
they dance with oblivious european influences  
some american too / it's Brazil you see  
the circle claps and can't help but move  
a little / sway / feet a/shuffle  
but outside the woman who has selected  
the silkiest dress dances lightly and the dress  
bobs seductively / each little move moves it  
more than it deserves / more than I deserve

## Obvious

they ask  
why can't you speak  
they wait for the answer  
but it's because...

## After Smiling

god the fatigue  
the heavy throat  
I need sleep  
and no one to ever bother  
me

## South Girl

raised in a country  
where travel once  
was forbidden  
she now  
is everywhere

## Circle of Circularity

in the favela girl  
walks back to her shanty  
with a bundle of papayas  
she acquired by being a girl  
walking alone on the streets  
surrounding the favela  
where she was into  
that girl

## Unencumbered

she's a doll  
a ripe one  
she leads us to all manner  
in her sleek accent

## They Stepped Past Me

two old men  
outside eating shrimp  
two young hookers  
one young one not so  
the young one  
black hair low silk wrap dress  
breasts defined moves like the sea or  
a samba saying look at me look  
at me look at  
me look

## We're All Dead and This Is Hell

the streets by night  
through tinted taxi windows  
looks great but we all know  
we're at one of the 7  
gates of hell

## Christmas J

I dream of white Christmas  
exactly like those which J used to know  
where treetops shine  
and children hear questions  
he hears the bells of sledges  
he hears the bells of snow

I dream o' da white Christmas  
with each map of Christmas  
that J might write  
his days are merry and shining  
all his Christmases are white cans

## Barzeelian Tango Or Samba

across the street the Brazilian woman  
steps in short steps by her man  
and though he is invisible to me  
she is demure and her long long brown hair  
hardly twists when she glances side to side  
one time toward me

## **Traveling Home**

I test my fears tonight  
finding my way home  
all I need is to get out of this country  
and into mine and then my brain  
will be an asset

## Please Help

I should be writing this  
when I'll be asleep  
after a ride a trip  
from half way around the world  
the other way  
the vertical way  
people are good here  
but fear is a closer friend

## **Over Too Much**

nothing went wrong on my trip home  
but nevertheless time was taken off  
my clock / I can feel those minutes gone now  
many things seem wrong  
and getting wronger by the minute

## Very Practical

this would be when I'd go to Florida  
to pack up and close up  
get ready for the drive north  
heat driven back and the cold ahead  
her insults unending and lessons on how to drive  
walking from the motels to restaurants and drive ins  
grocery stores and figuring out how to get online  
finally we'd learn the place was snowed under  
and we'd hire a skip loader to clear the driveway  
or find out the well stopped working and hire an artesian well driller  
or the roof would have fallen in and we'd plot  
how to end it all / end everything right then and there

## I Hope Steve Likes This

words coming in like darts  
connections irregular or lost  
spies report truth as if assignments  
while on a street in the dark  
I reported the woman who walking  
away rolled her hips like  
a big no saying yes

## **Is Life Simple**

there's a long road  
that eventually crosses a bridge  
on the other side it's just as long  
we start at one end of the bridge  
and end at the other  
this is how simple life is

## **Right Now**

by now every choice  
has been made  
no new homes  
no new wives  
no kids anymore  
what I've got is all I'll ever have  
and that's being taken away

## **It Can Be**

shivering coughing  
throat raw  
too sick to write  
that's how bad

## Lesson With Meanings Galore

the wind in the pine tops  
the wind through the windows midday  
sometimes the wind blows the sea air to me  
sometimes smoke from fires upriver  
always wind means something's hot and rising  
only not here

## Why Is That?

how can he be  
but he really isn't  
better than his father  
who could capture a place  
but wrote short things  
the fame world ignores  
and like me  
he has no accent of his origin

## Water Under

large blocks of ice flowing downriver  
under the bridge then beyond  
long melted now  
how like everything

## When The Eyes Don't Focus

too later for another chance  
do the right thing versus do  
what you need to do  
I would still own the farm  
I would have known myself better  
I would have happier work  
I would not write about another chance

## Passing

I don't think he'll make  
it through the night  
someone with knowledge  
will say one day  
and I'll know if  
I hear it that  
the second doorway  
is opening and it will / it can be said  
that through this world  
I passed

## A Funny Joke

someone told me  
you've lost the will to live  
I told her no I have lost will  
but the will to work only to live  
not the will to do my life's work

## Demoted

if the end is the bottom  
of a dark pit then today  
I was lowered a good  
portion of the way  
and asked to thank  
them for it

## From An Old Movie

a street unchanged for forty  
years / I walk up one side then up  
the other / most windows sport dead  
flies in fly-stick poses and at least one  
newspaper ten years old / a woman passes  
young and sporting / she is every curve  
and tonight the dream I'll forget tomorrow  
will be about her taking up an odd position  
in a bed I'll fall into somewhere along  
that street

## Ronnie D's

Ronnie was devoted  
friend  
father  
brother  
and husband  
he was a simple and loving man  
cherished his family  
his work  
his dog Bella  
his cars  
and motorcycle  
though his challenges were many  
Ronnie never complained  
he lived his life  
giving to others  
touched so many  
with his caring ways  
we will miss him clearly

## Forgiveness

enough pain  
to keep a big man  
down / in bed and weeping  
nothing warm can lure him out

## **My Profession Fails Again**

who in their right mind  
puts up with the horsehit  
programmers make us do

## Visit Soon

I feel ready for a visit  
for the chance to sit and watch  
to photograph  
to write and revise / to dig deeper  
into the past or paint it  
onto the wall and stare  
until great writers leap back from the dead  
and praise or shred  
I plan to stare  
at them  
at the water rushing by  
one way or another  
I am dedicated

## Technical Logic

musicians can't resist nostalgia  
they take a melancholy song  
and sadden it year by year  
now in my old age I can listen  
to songs that shaped me  
and the shaping seems misshapen  
it's all very wonderful  
and technological

## And More To Make

once I had a big bed in the band room  
and I listened to music on big speakers  
and a loud amplifier that eventually in California  
lost its transistor mind and I threw it into a dump  
I can still remember the day  
the toss of that amp and its preamp  
the hot day and sweat  
the bad taste still in my mouth  
just more mistakes

## A Road Not Findable

there weren't many birches  
on our farm / only in the woods  
behind the L shaped field  
in the crook of the L  
an old dump with bedsprings  
parts of cars or trucks  
who could tell with the rust  
and vines / a road led to the very back  
field where we buried my dog  
the behind that a stand of young birches  
white bark punctuated with black slashes  
I spent many hours of my life  
walking that hidden and woodsy road

## Where / I

our farm had several roads on it  
in the woods  
mostly in tall pine woods  
little undergrowth  
these roads were old  
connected different parts of the woods  
for logging  
for hauling from one field to another  
or maybe once there were buildings there  
maybe one of them leads to me

## I Love Atmospheric Noise

pick a random place  
and it's the ocean  
pick a random time  
and it's not now  
no matter how improbable  
now sounds it was inevitable  
not that long ago or nearly so  
or so it seems / there is a possible  
lessness to it / this is true in the margins  
of our understanding / in the fractures  
of our reality / somewhere at the corner  
of order and chaos

## Reversiness

back there prettiness  
is getting ready for my visit  
as in setting a lure  
baiting a trap  
the one I escaped from when  
I thought the hatred my family felt  
was poison and the depth of dumbness  
imbuing the place beyond my patience  
then there was the lure of the warmth  
sunniness of the place of the other  
the other and I joined  
near the lure actually  
now my finals plans are in the making  
I look at all this as a macrocosm  
of myself

## Fields and Seas

she promised  
to guide me to the end of the pier  
to stand there with a look of humanity  
until I disappeared

## No More I Love You

I used to watch shows  
where the featured character  
would be told “you’re too good  
for them not to want to steal  
you” and I’d  
think yeah that’s me but  
last night I didn’t  
and it was that I just didn’t  
I really didn’t

## She

she of course dressed perfectly  
and so made herself respectable  
as a choice / who could argue  
clever or sincere

## After Being Alone Too Long

if you're in a foreign city  
what is it to be lonely  
imagine the woman walking ahead of you  
in the cold north air her boot backs kicking  
up the back of her coat  
what would be wrong to take her  
to your room / warm together  
create a possible world  
explore different us  
after a light sleep in the night  
by the lights of the city in through the window  
shades not pulled I watch her uncover  
and walk silently to the toilet  
then minutes later her telltale shadow  
returns and pretending to sleep as a spouse  
I reach around her and fall back  
into a real sleep

## Bin Laden

when I started writing these  
poem a days  
it was not long until  
New York was taken down  
and now tonight right this minute  
as I write this I am hearing on the radio  
that the man responsible is dead  
though I hate for people to die  
or be killed tonight I am considering  
an exception

## Alexander's Test

who imagines  
smart imaginations are tied to **this**  
many things can be  
we are interested only  
in  
ones that might be  
are not  
haven't been treated like this  
surprise  
and are pretty once  
the tears dry

## Looking Up / Touching Down

I met her on a dustblown street  
in the deep southwest  
we grabbed a coffee even in the heat  
later she took me to her desert tent  
where we watched the second show  
the dustblown sky and the magic possibilities  
of others

## Forensic Sentiment

outside / the warm air  
the yellowed green  
a breeze that doesn't know its way around  
the grass upon the ground is still cool  
this is where I'll lay my head / my self  
in a better world such dozing off  
would drip away and become  
the right end

## I Got In The Way

the perfect man  
for the perfect woman  
much conspires  
to keep them apart  
circumstances  
time / centuries / seconds  
a bit of land  
a spit of sea  
maybe me

## High Over Me

one constant  
my life long  
music running through my head  
listening  
playing  
I wonder how long after  
it will linger

## My ~~Problem~~ Music

speaking of music  
the song playing now  
over and over  
the one I listened to  
while waiting up  
for my daughter to sleep  
not long after she was born  
I recall the sadness and the rain outside  
the view down to the highway  
where carlights told just two stories  
that was the highest place I ever lived  
the woman the wrong woman  
weren't they all  
all I needed was me

## Some That I've Broken

here is something everybody  
already knows / the road  
you believe goes on forever  
ends at a river / hits it  
square on and your trip from that point on  
will be either an effortless drift  
in a time like Spring or  
a hard swim against a cruel current  
then either it ends  
or the sea will greet you with the widest  
smile a world can smile

## Don't Fear

I look forward  
to the time when what I do  
won't be attempted  
when the critics are off in a bar drinking  
and their only topic will be  
I wonder if anyone's trying  
that these days

## Toward Yuma

tomorrow the road  
hot I hope  
we'll drive all day and drink coffee like Cubans  
eat bad food  
lots of it  
maybe wonder  
on some evenings  
where life is hiding  
when the sun's too bright  
and the night's too shining

## Toward Yuma

the road to Yuma  
swells heated  
I lost what's behind me  
now in front beckons

## Blithely Unaware

well enough  
well nothing here  
the uninformidable sandwich  
that I hope is soon long gone  
will be left behind  
somewhere just as all else has been  
or will be

## Who Finds You

here in Yuma the roads are well kept  
and lead to the border  
many of the buildings  
fake you out with their despair  
it might seem hot but the townsfolk  
just laugh  
we ate too much  
now the room is too loud  
I feel gone

## Lost Perk

the will not to press forward  
apparently is essence  
for when it's gone  
tears and long naps  
follow on

## Sadly

the woman with red hair  
white skin very white  
lace dress with some green  
she smiled pretty at her  
date?  
she was older than she wanted to look  
the backs of her hands were stained with spots  
she spoke well  
watched him with wide wide eyes  
I left before I could see what followed on  
sadly

## Brightness

the pictures are keen  
to be taken and played  
over again / I love  
the margins and the colors  
that can be faded

## Flush Wet

and for that I credit  
the faults of oddly made things  
that they can adapt to wildness  
I notice that for example  
strange shapes appear  
sometimes and sometimes  
the clarity is so sharp the corners  
of my eyes tear up  
I am grateful for these few years of life  
so unlike the margins

## Billboards

from behind him  
I can see her eyes  
green looking up at him  
she is more attentive than he can ever be  
he seems looking in the air  
straight ahead  
maybe down toward her  
never mind  
she is intense  
me too wondering  
who has ever looked like that at me  
he and I  
people like us will never know

## Say Goodbye To The World

the house sits owned  
by a government branch  
the notice claims wonder who lives there  
how that person or those persons  
can make their choice legal  
the world I lived in 40 years ago  
was one I owned enough of to be able  
to walk for hours without retracing  
my steps / crossing yes retracing no  
others' lives are continuous  
mine is in spurts with players all different  
eras / an era I wished to revisit  
is that one / the one where I had my own  
and enough

## Of All Things Living

like all the other times  
this time I felt slow and old  
I the behemoth hunched and sad  
if only I could go down one side  
into health and happiness  
or down the other to quiet  
so unlike the disquiet

## Talking to the Grave Guys

today nearby a grave was filled  
first by the box gold with her name  
Beatrice Yeo 1919–2011  
inside that the coffin  
holding something like her  
second by tractor scoops of soil  
spread and tamped by a handheld shovel  
and tamper / then a layer of loam  
a flat namestone / then the cuts sections  
of turf and what do you know  
the world is a little more like it was in 1919  
but its shape tipped in the direction  
of Beatrice Yeo

## Small Mouth

fisherman infest the banks  
their talk infuriates  
a smallmouth bass in salt water  
that's a first for me  
I've never heard of catching a smallmouth  
bass in salt water  
first time I ever caught a smallmouth bass  
in salt water like this / this is new  
catching a smallmouth bass in salt  
water / ok man I left your medal at home  
ok now so cool it and get out of my frame

## With Butter

she can't help it  
bipolar he says  
her brain racing to begin  
each new thought before the old one  
is all out / so she says things  
like bastard when you joke  
you'll leave them at the restaurant  
but it's just her with her  
critic trailing behind  
then she orders rolls and cornbread  
for my trip home

## On Flying Out

show me why where I lived  
should be forgotten  
why my memories are worth so little  
I write them down I write them  
I revise them / and why not  
they are the only truths  
I find worth keeping

## Last Thing on the Merrimack

the fisherman saying let's rock 'n' roll  
strolls in his snow boots shorts and tee shirt  
into the river with his 10ft pole and when  
he's armpit deep he flings the weight hook and line  
out to the middle of the widest part of the river then  
walks back to the bank and plants his rod  
against a tree and that's what we  
call folks fishin'

## Dream Anchor

what we call dreaming  
is our brain's last hold  
on the real lest sleep  
so resembling death  
is lulled too far toward  
the imaginary and becomes  
what is resembles and the brain  
pulls the mind into the abyss  
and all right again with the  
world locally speaking

## Surely It's Love

my mother was right  
about my flaw  
soon to become  
a fatal one

## Stars Up On The Hill

the fields I remember  
are gone now  
either grown over with junk trees  
or with homes I never lived in  
when I see them though  
the look the same  
do my eyes lie  
or does the world itself

## Now I Feel Better

I learned today  
I shouldn't compare myself  
to the best in the world  
only those I grew up with  
because where you start and end up  
is a better measure than only  
where you end up

## As If Thinking Too Hard

tonight my head went  
all sweaty after a good cup of coffee  
and I wonder what sort  
of bad sign this could be  
yet another and brief like all the rest

## Consumable

what is this sadness  
who made it and how  
bad can it get  
like a pair of geraniums planted by a headstone  
first one side of me then  
the other will be eaten by a fat thought  
the started its life about  
the same time I did

## Fostering

the decisions made  
must stand  
the test of time  
if we are to trust to make  
them ever again

## It Starts With a Call

the call / the phone  
ringing like that then the voice  
on the other end / I knew her  
and she said Helen  
Helen the hospital  
shall I get the message  
on the other end of the wire  
stretched from the house  
to the pole pole to pole  
into town and Ethel on that other end  
time to go  
the hospital  
and the end

## How She Left

heavy rain wind  
heavy thunder but before  
sharp quick lightning  
a spark across the window  
she's afraid but cannot move  
her insides twist and the blood comes  
she remembers the time  
when she was little  
and the lightning past her head  
exploded the picture of Jesus  
all that might have happened that night too  
but she decided to die first

## **Simplicity Ends**

deep thunder and high flash lightning  
scared her  
to death

## Too Small Too Tall

finding the right  
takes about the right  
amount of time

## Forgivable

when I asked him  
why he died  
all he answered was when  
he said only facts could be told  
that the world that surrounds the living  
is filled only with facts  
truth he said  
didn't factor  
I thought he sighed

## Paris Riff

before his words were  
like the swan who glides  
in the water so  
smooth on a smooth  
surface so clear and sharp so  
silent and crisp as they easy-speak  
before he spoke he was  
as the swan walking  
stumbling fearful on dried leaves  
as he began to speak it was  
as the swan steps onto the water  
to glide like the slight curled smile on  
the tips of her lips

## Affinity or Absence

does wanting count  
who built that in  
hunger I can understand  
desire makes sense  
but the want  
the lack  
the absence  
how could that come from nothing  
except by affinity

## Who Gets It?

after decades  
to hear music clearly  
my father would be in tears  
imagination versus ears  
he took imagination  
and was a musician  
I ears and am a listener

## **No Memory of It**

how to zero memory  
forget everything fast  
with the fewest lasting effects  
so it's not possible to remember  
when and how you forgot

## **Sitting Around**

she still has  
her ice grey eyes  
her voice is still constricted  
do I still wish?  
should I?

## **No Art This Time**

I suppose she wondered  
who I had become  
and why I'd shy away  
we're not young and not again  
when she walks away this time  
all it will be is walking away

## Summer What

the stems ride high  
I'm vaulting the flowers  
hoping for clean clearance  
meanwhile a good gleaming sound  
blurts from the speakers  
making this writing hard and ugly

## After All

she was standing by the river  
facing it late one night  
from what I could see the water was black  
and the red lights locating the piers  
smeared their red on the black  
the bridge was green and its lights  
she had something important to say  
to me but she never saw me arrive  
never heard me walk nearly up to her  
stand behind her stare at her from behind  
both of us perplexed by the water  
by what we had planned to say  
instead I left / really left  
she never followed  
I guess we said it all

## **After More**

I settled in a flat place  
absent trees or even tall brush  
so though my eyes had little power  
it felt like I could see forever  
never spellbound by her turned away from me  
backside view and the tendernesses  
I saw lying beneath

## Her And Me

what happened was that the past  
disappeared / once time had passed  
it was gone / even photographs could  
be held aside / no more / I own the past  
and the look on my mother's face  
at 17 kneeling one row deep in the grass  
with her friends beside her tell me this moment  
was one the never crossed her mind  
during her long and sadness streaming life  
and what a disappointment I was for her

## And Passion

I wish the beauty of music  
making it in small groups  
could instill the great talks  
the scientific presentations  
to see several working together  
to make it all make  
sense would make  
the world of science safe  
for thought

## Locked In Decision

outside the window  
sky lit by the city  
cold air draws beads of sweat  
from the hotel room  
inside she has settled under the feathery duvet  
is resting her head on her hand  
elbow creasing the pillow  
it's not late and the night will be long  
the morning and afternoon too  
we are camped and will never leave  
voluntarily

## One Night In Boston

his living room was unlit  
aside from small spots on his McIntosh  
and TEAC tape player  
a reading light / his flat  
on Beacon near the Hill  
dark wood where wood would be  
red Turkish carpet and deep blue chairs  
he drank cognac and commented on my taste in music  
the first urban man I ever met  
he stared me down  
he crushed me using culture  
I was / I became / I remain  
a farm boy

## Now There

right now a woodchuck  
is sitting by an entrance to his burrow  
in the cemetery where he lives back East  
if I could I would be there near him  
watching the sky darken but  
not all the way as the city just over the trees  
fights with infinite dark  
waiting just outside our eyesight

## The Last Bit

I can't shake it  
I am unable to find joy  
anywhere / eyes so sad  
they all say / why would  
I want that / how can I escape it  
is this what it all comes  
down to

## **So What If**

beneath the heat  
layers of sweat  
unpliable thoughts  
what if perfection  
were the worst thing

## **Down and Down**

every day  
I lose something else that seemed valuable  
and the depression grins

## Berlin Story (i)

once in Berlin  
I found her running into a doorway off the main street  
into small village  
a café / a bistro / a market  
and flats all the way up  
I lived there with her my  
whole life just to see what  
that would be  
like

## At The Top of The Stairs

she didn't care  
we didn't talk  
we spoke so differently  
only our movements were the same  
her clothes were layered  
and her tight pants came  
to a point / we ate too many times  
and after her shower we laced up  
then the dreams

## 1880s or So

we moved through the tall yellow grass  
on the other side of a green stand of pines and such  
near a river running green and brown at the end of winter  
looking for a place to camp / to build a fire of twigs  
then larger boughs / our aim simply a hefty  
meal of sofky followed by a night of tight sleep  
in rough but heavy and many blankets

## Berlin Story 2

an unknown girl in the corner  
waiting for a chance to take a picture  
stands in plaid skirt and furlined coat  
bookbag in one hand and camera hanging  
from her neck / her perch is the crease  
of two smooth tall stone building walls  
she made me cry / her wet hair did  
I needed her

## Berlin Story 3

sitting with his coffee perched in one hand  
holding the tall cup from its top  
he smiles at the deep mocha flavor it sacrifices to him  
his short hair and short mustache make  
him out to be my age  
his ribbed sweater make  
him from a different place  
he is spiked by a few low lights  
hanging above the bar where he sits  
reflections are blurred / I think  
another coffee awaits or perhaps  
my dinner with her requires me

## **Another**

almost every day  
a setback  
some important  
some annoying  
but I get laid low

## **Faithless Again**

a spread of sand awaits  
red under a red sky and sun  
sprinkled about spots of green and burnt brown  
some rock and some would say minerals  
once thoughts roamed here

## **Shortest Story**

a quick flash across the sky  
we awake and reach  
comes a cracking roar  
then a hard rain  
finally a dreamless sleep

## Stay And Watch

never thought I'd see a date  
like today's / perhaps the edge of the century  
as I figured what age death began  
funny how memories hang on  
how the bits lie or diffuse  
the length of truth shortens  
just while the length of shadows  
draws the opposite

## To Far Away

the land is yellow with wheat  
or green with produce and grass  
green with trees some with white trunks  
it looks like home could look  
were I to go I think I would weep  
into the rivers and kiss the soil  
if I could see the grave of a relative  
I would jump for joy then hug the ground  
this would me I had found me

## Pining

so warm / hot and the distance  
is in the way again  
I sit here and stare / the photos  
as important as the different stations  
of devotion / I wish I could stop  
all this flailing and concentrate  
on remembrance / and making up

## More of Same

why oh why  
does everything go wrong  
like this / diagnostics  
tingling fingers  
bad ram  
panics / everything is crap

## **Selection Committee**

they ask me to do  
what I am unable to do  
the sound of my name has just  
reached them / I shouted it  
decades ago

## Turns To Go

I was on the bed  
lying sick at heart and wondering  
about the future of the next five  
minutes when she stood up  
and all I could see was her soft skirt  
wrapping her legs  
she left the room  
taking everything important

## Cambridge The Other One

song for worse is better

Notting Hillbillies

Mark Knopfler

a dollar a day

get my money

get my pay

## So There

it takes longer to figure things out  
not thinking of everything that's not constant  
64 bit versus 32 bit  
something not contended with so far  
but I did figure it out  
and the Apple Genius didn't

## Lineman

the song is a longing  
there is the one  
then there is the echo  
which is the truth  
it's a call to a place  
that holds only you  
and desires  
they speak of the "other"  
when we speak of people  
in this song the place that calls  
in an other / it's where you live forever  
and the land reflects your emotions  
you live every day there a sad but perfect day  
everyone who knew you once wonders  
where you are / they may look but they  
never find / you can be there with the one  
you've loved but can't attain  
it's like a heaven but it's a hot dry flat dusty Kansas

## The Space Between a Man and His Metaphor

the space  
the dust blowing  
scraps blowing down the street  
the sadness filling every sunlit place  
the sadness hiding in the shadows waiting  
for me to pass by / to hijack any optimism let  
alone the happiness  
the space

## Obscure But Unknown

taking a nap  
talking all night  
thrusting into the wrong situation  
making a beautiful photo HDR and deleting  
the originals / such details  
defy arrangement / one just happens  
they just happen / my head snaps up  
when the sleep deepens when I sleep  
while sitting in front of my workstation

## Built For This

out in the grass strip  
between bike path and road  
the rabbits munch and though the walkers  
and bikers come within inches they  
never stop pulling at the grass  
lying as if in seductive repose  
or pointing their ears a different direction  
but when a crow hangs above floating past  
they freeze / scurry for the berm and slough beyond  
and crouch in the tall swamp grass  
by the shore birds and egrets  
afraid being made in them

## Still On

the past  
the memory of it  
drains out my eyes  
and falls like tears  
on the dry ground  
it will remain

## I'm Forever

I do not know how often I am  
in the last 3 years sobbing on the bed throwing  
too often I had wanted to make the public authorities  
exercise my freedom of religion worm  
even the medical officer was sent  
the ORF is my story processed in a detailed documentation  
all this only because I have a good Pastafari  
but I've been patiently...  
eat!

today I could on the Vienna office  
get my new credit-card-driver's license  
in the photo can be seen clearly  
I am wearing a colander on her head  
my affiliation with the Church of the FSM  
demonstrates I'm partying my mind  
my religious freedom Sun

laugh at me for 10 minutes  
in the office dead nobody understands  
it is divine  
(and this time even literally)

golden travel times to break!  
I'm sure I've gotten from now on  
every routine control of the whole program:  
safety vest  
warning triangle  
first aid  
repair kit  
registration certificate  
bubbles

## Unfree

every day the cries  
grow sharper  
longer  
spurred by the littlest things  
all I can do is listen to the music  
repeating all night

## Crazy Like It Is

her voice sweet as it is  
makes me stare  
at the floor  
so it is with the singing voice  
of a melancholy woman  
singing of love  
or her life

## Signal Tonight

so it's the winter  
the middle of it  
when it gets close to dark  
the sun's been low  
already a long time  
this means the streetlights  
will glow a sickly yellow  
well into the night  
maybe beyond  
well beyond  
sickly yellow  
till snow melts

## Quick Downhill Ride

down the road the smells  
tarweed eucalyptus dried grass  
wind in the oaks  
fog through the wind gap ahead  
some smell the faint salt in the breeze  
such a perfumery  
such a touching blend  
the perfect balance out  
there has no reflection  
just rejection

## **We Got 'Em**

the size of a person's craziness  
grows with the ingestion  
of silly words  
silly sentences  
silly speeches

## During or After a Storm

would I have been able  
to open the door and be a savior  
her life draining away  
the pain like nothing before  
whose name did she say  
to herself last  
which face came to mind  
which scene in her life  
real or imagined  
regret / fear / anger / hate  
disappointment  
what did she believe  
ultimately  
her life was for

## How It Starts

first the cracks in the tv signal  
then flashes across the bottoms of clouds  
roiling flashes and vibrations in the black puffed clouds  
next a long low rock-like rumble that shakes the concrete slab  
beneath her / and she is alone in the heat  
and dark from the power stopping  
and everything around and in her fading black  
from the pains in her gut and she runs on the toilet  
she knows no more storms will come

## **Bitch**

caught Ayn broken down by the side of the road  
she croaked help me  
“do it yourself”

## Hunger for Amazement

black water under a green  
bridge yellow lights  
crescent moon rising  
middle of the night  
the fear dogs are barking  
running closer

## North Fear

ok I never go there  
it never has been home  
I'm afraid of the whispering pines  
when the wind is cold  
and comes off the lakes  
it would force me inside  
to the stove fire and solid bed  
too close

## Last Time Too

after I rested my forehead  
on the cold glass  
fifteen floors up in a hotel in the north  
I smelled the old smell from home  
of the cold air dropping down the surface  
of the glass and I stared at the lights  
from uncovered or partially curtained windows  
in the row of flats down and to the right  
on a street that angled past the back of the hotel  
past one of them I thought I saw a woman  
unclothed or nearly so I couldn't tell she moved  
so fast past the window and I stood back just a fraction  
and reflected I saw a woman unclothed or nearly so I couldn't  
tell she moved so fast out of the bathroom into  
a bed about to be shared for the first time

## Envelope Please

the snow and scattered ice  
on the road didn't slow me  
down when I was young  
and biking from farm to bridge  
and beyond meant only storing  
things to remember when biking  
became hard

## **Take Heart Most Worried Souls**

the comfort of being forgotten  
and knowing that you have been  
if you worry you won't be  
take heart in the fact that it's a necessary  
part of the physics of existence  
which itself will one day be forgotten

## I Have Found the Heated Misery / Mystery / Solitude

the point of the repeating  
repeating lonely chords  
the repetition / repeating the words  
the line / the hope abandoned  
when they add an end to the song  
they show how little they know  
of the nature / of life

## Old Old Stock

my father worked in tubes  
built radios / amplifiers  
he had many but now 12  
years past his passing  
the boxes are near empty  
all that're left have been used  
and haven't been stored well  
their age then will make them  
weak / make their song rough and soft  
make them resemble all who have  
handled them

## Bad Boys

to be humble when you're great  
is like handing a bandage to the man you've punched  
to be humble when you suck  
is like telling the truth outside the confessional

## **Humility Squared**

I am the feeble vessel  
that embodies an uncommon  
but foul tasting too-old wine

## **Political Shame**

better to lie  
or repeat lies  
better to be on the side of evil  
or just stupid

## Stories For All Occasions

no matter what happens beneath  
the story happens above  
taking in everything  
stretching what lies above  
so it's so smooth so strange  
so wonderful

## **Only At Her Best**

I saw her working  
hard in the weight room  
lifting via a machine  
small weights but she  
sweat all the same  
and looking at me  
she clearly saw no  
one to shy away from

## Why She Did It

she left the farm  
sold it  
to finally forget how it happened  
how her father was killed  
how he died  
and her role in it

## She Did All My Work

where was she  
what did she do when she found out  
did she find out  
did the police talk to her  
did she plan the funeral  
did she stand there while they spoke of him  
did she hold back and watch them fill in the hole  
why did she believe I was no good

## Against Will

the water so black  
the bridge above haunts in green  
if your gaze softens the water's surface melts  
something about the place  
fills death with dread

## If What?

what if she never knew  
just a question in her head  
as her mother drank herself over the edge  
what if driving the tractor  
with her mother behind working the mower  
she thought of tipping the machine  
what if when she saw the snakes racing away  
she thought of jumping and letting  
things happen  
things happen is what the neighbors said  
what the police said what her brother said  
what the priest said before cutting the kielbasa in half  
everyone was drunk one day afterward  
she could see what that meant  
what a killer that was

## Story Matters

if only I had known some of this story  
I could have asked  
I could have tried different times  
my that's why my father told me  
he would stand by her no matter what  
he knew the story and her role in it  
knew she couldn't live alone with it

## Story Unravelling

they reported he had been poked  
hard in the abdomen a week or two  
earlier and this was a re-injury  
what if that first poke was the truth  
and the human kick was covered up  
by it / what if my mother thought of this

## All Figures

it was to save everyone's reputation  
to think a woman could do that to a man  
and what did the man do to deserve it  
they believed he would live  
but he didn't and an assault  
became a killing  
they all had mean streaks  
it's what drew them together  
what drew their blueprints

## But Too Late

I picture her  
sitting in the hay  
in the loft  
maybe on the rafter just above  
hay smell cow piss chickens  
thinking through the options  
no one was about to die  
only the shame facing the family  
the nosy neighbors who once seemed  
so fit and friendly  
talking and talking to the others  
to the chief / the day was too hot  
for thinking and the hay still not  
quite dry fumed her as she sat  
crying then thinking  
the lie would work because everyone down  
the road each way knew of the accident last  
week and this week's would be the same  
a double accident / a sharp horse-driven  
jab in the same place / the tongue of the wagon  
years later she told me it was the horse's kick  
the better lie

## By The Stones and Dusk

she ran through the fields  
and down the little forest road to the back back  
field then to the stone wall  
at the base of the oak she dug  
to the box of jars  
unlatched it and drank  
amber in the bottle  
and through the maple leaves  
in the younger field to the West  
he had died in Amesbury  
despite the hope that hung  
over them all

!

gorgeous galaxies celebrate  
Hubble's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday  
when beauty and science collide  
a collision of past and present  
evidence and theory collide  
with galactic proportions

## What About Now

they never understood  
I put it to their parenthood  
but then I think do I never understand  
my daughter my children  
they thought me stupid in lots of ways  
everyone is smart the way they can be smart  
what would my father think  
of this tube amp playing right now

## Steep Hills

time is running out

I grow tired

I struggle to get back strength

worry worry

## Us Just Us

when I say I grew up a century ago  
it's not some figurative claim  
the way we lived alone out there  
on the western edge of our small town  
we mostly made grew or cut down  
everything we needed  
isolation was so constant  
we never noticed that the whole  
world was us

## Smells

the vexing problem of place  
the stitchery where she sewed soles to uppers  
the farm of hay and animals  
work everywhere  
working at a machine above the river  
it smells of shit  
working with a pitchfork in the barn  
it smells of shit  
the problem is vexing  
because there is no purchase

## Guess Where?

I have something to tell you Ma  
what's that  
I'm pregnant  
when are you due  
right now  
quick I scrubbed the bathroom floor  
it's the cleanest place in the house  
thanks ma

## Lasting

how many hours or days  
maybe a week of pain  
fear before the final storm  
scared resenting the unfairness  
of living beyond those who would help her  
she never loved me too much to keep me away  
but respected me too little

## Twelve Dead

the cars seemed to have exploded  
doors gone  
hoods gone trunk lids gone  
at the bottom of a little gulch  
the road dipped through  
blood like paint blown  
out a severed commercial spray painter  
we drove past  
the drivers it seemed from the little glimpse I had of them  
and what the Sunday night gathered crowd remarked  
we elderly and the victims their families  
coming back from the White Mountains  
where we were headed  
we cursed the delay

## Wrong Some More

everything down  
trip coming up  
scrambling as usual

## Poor Duncan

she up and married  
someone else after a to  
me fairy tale romance  
with a casual friend  
they both were photographers  
and she trusted only  
him to do it right and well  
and it was a true feeling she  
had to ask him to picture her  
and another wedding in the woods  
and he did  
his casual blog post couldn't hide  
what it did to him

## God Says “For Your Memory Only”

people who try to value  
education by using money  
are sick little puppies

the light this late afternoon  
in Portland was beyond perfection  
and my camera in my room  
by accident

## PDX / Looking Out

cars down the highway  
across the tarmac  
emergency vehicles  
sirening toward a disaster  
(but now they are returning)  
little smears of cloud  
but the light is pure and filtered  
by some great artist  
I wish I could be the one  
to paint the memories  
of those dead who wish  
they were not  
I picture each gazing up  
like one whose petition to leave  
was made nobly and inconclusively  
I picture one whose instincts  
for some other is like to children  
but whose instinct for me  
is other

## Red Metal and In Thought

I was sitting in a great building  
tall overlooking the city and the river six  
blocks away night but not late  
across the way sat a great building  
lights on all up and down  
some rooms looked like offices  
some like apartments  
never a person in sight  
one by one  
or in coincident groups  
the lights went out  
hours it took but I watched  
unblinking and in a funk  
until it was all black  
except the lights from my great  
building which lit that great  
building and its blood leaking  
red roof

## Connectors

so I said  
to the shiny redhead  
posing in the math stacks  
are we on the same side  
of love's surface  
or not and

## Grand And Boring

nothing like fear  
keeping you up  
advising the sweat  
I live now to tell  
teach some might say  
but it's just the fabulous story  
all the great thinkers have surged ahead  
time for a slowpoke like me  
to turn off the jets  
straining to keep up  
the peloton is long gone  
time to tell stories

## Not The Innocent Woman

against ideology

I claim it was not the clearcut  
answer / Nana was not the innocent  
woman who killed out of preservation  
and exonerated because men are violent  
and women innocent  
she still provided the moonshine  
the milk the geese the turkeys the pigs  
the eggs to the important people in town  
and the neighbors closed ranks  
so nothing but the story my mother made up  
was given to the chief

## I Remember I Was Sad

she hopped onto the frame  
of my bike / her legs over on one side  
and I took her for a short ride up the street  
into New hampshire  
I recited my social security number  
I just got my card  
these were just a couple of the old  
things I remember

## **Love & The Shiny Ark**

the sadness that arises  
when the land that was once yours  
and cherished is now someone else's  
and has been trashed

## California Undreaming

I miss big weather  
here we get a heavy rain  
sometimes / hot but not  
scorching / I miss the blizzards  
the thunderstorms all summer  
the hail the floods even  
trees down leaves all missing  
days that make wish I were here  
the make here the perfect dream  
it's the longing I miss  
having makes me sad

## Dropping Down

where I'm from September means get  
ready for endings / just a couple  
of months until earliest dark days  
and already the trees act it there  
then

## No Free Lunch

soon the creative partners  
will well up and wish  
their strange likes on me  
without thinking  
I'll write them down  
automatic writing?  
no it's manual

## Hold

in the trunk of my car I'll  
carry a hand spade a bottle  
and mulch to spruce  
up the little garden  
I've built time after time  
by the stone that marks their passing  
in hopes it'll  
take

## Inner Bound

oh yes the pretty woman  
said and then  
I whisked us both  
to the middle of the bridge which  
spun around smartly but slow  
with four tight men  
turning the crank  
we sat at either end of the twisted apart span  
while the tall boat with sail furled motored  
up the river but with the tide  
toward that unpronouncable thing  
everyone fears / then loves

## Bad Neighborhood

after years I still  
fear the river  
the water in it  
clear as it can be  
I can watch fishermen wade  
up to their armpits  
but I still can't get closer than three feet  
I suppose when god remakes hell  
into the east side of heaven  
some old timers won't be able to walk the sidewalks  
for fear of a drive by

## August

who cares about the poor  
their lives and health are wastelands  
we the rich hope they die soon  
that's why we take their health care away  
that's why when they retire we give them nothing  
I mean it's their fault for not knowing  
that as good businessmen  
we were lying the whole time

## Thinking of Hard Things

writing a simple sentence  
reminds me of elegance  
the awkward intercourse  
of function and aesthetics  
a minimalist that cannot  
be revised

## In A North

walking the hard wind streets  
I saw a galvanized door  
with a big red A  
on it and inside  
upstairs in a sweet bedroom  
I imagined the young two  
coupling and for them  
it's all a new start with no scar  
long in healing  
and me / I was cold  
getting colder  
able only  
to walk slower and slower

## 1937 as If Important

the last of the cars are drove away  
the one on the horse too is gone  
around the bend and up the hill  
behind her a stone drops on the wood  
just lowered into the ground  
on the other side of her leaning on a trunk  
beyond earshot two men smoke and wait  
she can smell it / it smells like loneliness  
looking down at the oak box  
she crosses the threshold from girl to bitch

## On My Way

coming into Boston tonight  
I saw all the lights spread out  
like that thing Eliot said things spread out like  
kind of yellow or maybe some orange too  
car lights flashlighting roads  
and each other  
I was scrunched into a window seat  
but an exit so lots of leg room  
several of the women were gorgeous  
they probably still are  
I got into the house  
and only everything had moved somewhere else  
outside the reflecting window  
only the dark

## Nothing Else / Nothing More

the river was running high  
with a full moon at noon  
everything was pulled apart  
and so the river was running high  
that and the heavy flooding last week  
what I remember are the stories I heard  
of floods of yore / once the past is the past  
everything's a story / get busy learning  
how stories go

## Body Politeness

lots of days are when beautiful  
women are born and each is a harm  
to many / perhaps you have seen  
one trying to climb up onto a tractor  
in a tight pencil skirt and even though  
nothing showed everything  
was seen

## Femme

with her wide hips  
she rotates from her back to her side  
her legs lead  
her black hairs hangs back  
through it all  
made of things we cannot name  
she moves all who see  
slashing down the street  
sitting slowly in a held out chair  
at the most expensive restaurant  
a man can afford  
whatever they try  
she is more

## Green to Red Confusion

in the beautiful park  
we call the final resting place  
even the trees mention their mortality  
which we think of as humanity  
sometimes but it's really just death

# WTF

a layer of salt  
kosher preferred  
sea salt otherwise  
then the steak  
a layer of salt  
kosher preferred  
sea salt otherwise  
warm stewed tomatoes  
welcome to the Pine Club

## Slight Love

of course the ships still quell  
the desire to languish  
by water dreams act out  
the final instruments hang back  
like a thorn unwilling to prick  
once I sat by a big bay  
and wondered how much order  
could be tolerated not just by  
the fiends flying by and leaping  
but by the sharp sun that turned  
the pretty woman's face a bit red  
and then redder

## In The Dark A River A Loved

we saw the water  
we saw it blacker  
than any night  
nearby lonely women  
tended their beds  
they loved their windows  
from them the river seemed silver  
and the wind up from the sea  
was warm and caressing  
every day they walked down to the bank  
wearing their best skirts and dresses  
listening from behind the trees  
you could hear the sway of the music  
they walked in time to  
everything was ripe  
only one thing wasn't

## Into the Soul

a rollicking beat  
melancholy chords and melody  
to this I entered the cemetery  
for the last time this late afternoon  
I think they would have stopped to listen  
were they around / in theory they were  
but the actual of it never made much sense  
to me / I hope they would recognize  
the best of my melancholy / how  
it could become with sweat art

## River My Friend

the river doesn't expect  
makeup and fashion style  
it doesn't care who gave birth to you  
it doesn't need you and it eats the sad  
runoff from hills and fields and beyond  
that the mountains and high lakes  
it is the color of its bed or of its depth  
it would gladly take you to the sea  
or beyond  
it is always ready

## One Last Time

in the shadow of the hangar  
pools of light from the parts being taken apart  
tangle your toes and sandaled feet  
no one near you is beautiful  
yet you seek and seek them  
some of your thoughts are hinged  
when you thought they were un  
you marvel that you keep trying  
passionless / hankering for your mind  
to soar

## Falling Deep

standing by the road  
cars swerve past  
on the bridge / I step  
up onto the silly curb  
the bridge shakes side to side  
one day it could be gone  
everything I mean

## One Warm Night In September

some of the worst times were had while the door was open  
in the outside people walked by the house  
in the doorway we made love  
30 feet from the street  
we did something that cannot be spoken of

## Sidewalk Scene By Outdoor Café

in the mustard  
dress with the flared skirt  
a woman walks away  
but it feels to my eyes  
that she's walking here  
for me / for that's  
how they do it  
for me

# Splash

perhaps I won't make the trip  
wouldn't that be a trip?

## Who Flees

the haunted desert reclaims  
its green / its kindling  
so many of its fears  
surface at night in the cold of space  
hide beneath in the heat of high heavens

## Away and Far

where my imagination flees  
the waters flow  
the bridge spans  
the cold air rises  
up to spark the fires of Winter  
give me the strength to find  
a way  
any way  
back

## Lifelingers

sporadic  
cold rain / Spring with its yellowed green  
dripping heat and frappes  
cold rain / Fall with it's greened yellows  
snow of concealment  
the visits are not continuous  
everything's in a jerk  
and finally appearing

## To The Heap

they in turn embraced this  
gruff emissary from the exotic  
intimidating but newly  
chic world of technology  
Gabriel's dissonant desiccated plainchant blank  
verse was dark disturbing distant candid calculating and desperate  
at once florid yet monochromatic  
it could "cons-up" a soul  
in a single haunting searing stanza  
and remand it remorselessly insouciantly  
to the heap in the next

## Along With It

it struck me the narrative  
didn't fit the crime  
time to suffer the consequences  
of deep laughter

## Lying Lessons

a pretty picture  
made from poor things  
and squinting eyes  
the shades have rolled off  
the sky saturated  
sharp / sharpened  
it becomes memory

## Desperate Fear of Seeing

there's a beauty to a place  
even when the skies threaten  
to grow dark and though it's a threat  
it happens on a timetable  
all these years I had the directions wrong  
everything wrong  
my strategy was empty and I pushed reluctantly  
for fear of having nothing but my lack of long vision  
made for intermittent strong focus like a horsepowered engine  
just banging each cylinder's heart out  
pounding like a heart

## Deserts To Me

there are little fears  
just right across the street  
sometimes the street's so heated  
from a faraway thing like a judgment  
but white hot from boiled emotions  
that feet fear the heated touch on the soles  
behind me / I am on one side  
of such a street / stands a bar where men stand  
and wobble as they soothe their throats  
attack their senses / is nothing in there  
where are the gentle ones who seem  
always to weep / this makes me think  
of cooling rain and maybe a deep rest

## The Long And Short of It

sometimes a month is all there is  
the phrase our time together  
makes its round through amnesia  
and back  
in a room nearby perhaps downstairs  
a piano sounds deep chords  
given all this all  
I can imagine are the rooms up on the second floor  
lit late and shadows passing by  
as I stand against a tree trunk wet from days of rain  
to me the world is nothing but moments like this  
strung together until they reach a month

## What Messed It Up

there is quite a capture  
the hard drive scrambled  
behavior unlike civilization  
cautious but  
seems back

## More White / More Heat

here is something worth supposing  
that the joy at the start balances  
melancholy at the end but really  
it's just a tilt / a long sad one  
but that sadness is someone else's  
not part of the original equation  
some might say a long joyous one  
if the point were to mess  
with my mind

## Losing Lessons

I saw a small stone  
just below the river's top  
I wondered whether it was there  
the first time I crossed that bridge  
50 years ago / as I sit here in the bulb  
of light my computer makes  
it seems so not long ago but  
math and biology say it is  
and such a small stone  
perhaps it was larger then  
like my vision  
my hopes

## That's How They Do It

I remember walking from the bus to my front door  
high school in the 60s  
if I walked that same path today it would be through ruins

## Dreadful Reflection

reading of my life  
as written by an new era Oscar Wilde  
I picture our farm and it's heavy farm smells  
hay drying after mowing  
cow dung and piss and yes the raw milk  
the odd metal smell of cold New England well water in a metal cooling tank  
pears and apples fallen from an old productive orchard  
rotting in September sun and yellow jackets sampling them late in the season  
their vision for a great son went bad early  
my crossed eyes and lazy habits  
my mother compelled to do schoolwork for me and then later my classmates thinking me a genius  
rejections by good schools and a band instead of steady work  
no girls no women she knew there was no future in her future and none for me but that came second  
my father who struggled against her without the weapons men have of fist and liquor  
he was cowed and I felt him cowering downstairs many nights when her yelling started  
I know I know it's never fair Ma  
"one of the few genuine Renaissance men to emerge from the OO milieu"  
"scholar, scientist, poet, performance artist, entrepreneur, musician, essayist, and yes, hacker"  
they'd laugh tell me they told their friends I became a plumber  
it's nothing the world would ever think even tolerate that's how they'd see it

## Magic Of Writing

how amazing  
how writing it down  
clears it up

## Intaglio

writing like a tango  
rhythms and twinned sounds  
the beauty of beautiful language  
is hard to describe plainly

## Under Nuts

imagine the great encounter  
from the perspective of an acorn  
or a shag bark hickory nut  
in deep grass just turning  
as autumn rolls on  
I can picture it but it's in my imagination only  
such a place

## 30 Hadley Road

the stone wall  
so long ago sitting there as families come and go  
then my turn  
I'd run from one side to the other  
imagine  
enough land that it sits astride  
a stretch of road  
my land on this side  
my land on that side  
enough land that to walk from one end to the other  
through woods  
takes half an hour  
half an hour  
to be ripped from it  
in the name of a love long ago divorced  
and its replacement long ago divorced  
when I could have that land now  
to live on  
instead of this

## Music Being Always

when I sat in the padded rocker  
in the pool room in Merrimac  
I listened to music played on tube amps  
tubes / their glow  
a warm but clear tone  
I listened each song over and over  
a soundtrack for my thinking  
today is the same  
tonight  
right now

## Lost Side of Town

why do they keep asking me  
I can't judge  
I have no qualification  
how can I say no without rejecting

## You're Still With Her

music with chords that strain  
whiny voice / words that make no sense  
except sadness / and a way to find me  
I listen / what else is there to do  
then I stop when the cricket chirps  
as an accent to the song and years alter  
I'll stun myself by hearing that chirp  
again at the same spot in the song  
the fruit of a too-expensive system  
built of accuracy and disguise

## If Only

if only I could work faster  
or better  
or more focused  
or could do things that people value

## Fear of All

not long now  
and my journey through volunteer work  
will be over and I can concentrate on simple work  
I hope that's soon enough to save my job

## Deep In Woods One Road Passed

look deep into these woods  
everything filtered through young leaves  
ferns on the ground  
granite piled where ice dropped it  
still cool this is the end of spring  
I've stopped to look here  
wishing two roads would fork  
still there's only one

## Up Close and Far Away

writing to a photo  
like jerking to porn  
built long ago  
it looks strong and stout  
but standing on it I feel  
it stammers when cars mount it  
it takes little picturing to see it  
falling into the river and then  
where would I be  
what reason would be there  
to continue

## From Across the Way and Lighting the Bridge

I've seen the lights  
that just barely light  
the darkly flowering water  
that rises up from rocks beneath  
Rocks Village Bridge and I see  
that water black and whishing  
past the piers and rocks by the shore  
where I sit and wander through  
my past while the camera like  
madman's helper gathers what little  
light there is that will soon  
make this dark place a place filled  
with probing searing light

## When It's Weirder Than AI

unnamed man to Larry:  
it's a dog eat dog world Larry  
I'm wearing my adult black thong today  
concierge looking on:  
sweet / call  
the dog catcher

## And Why The Fuck Not

worlds spin away  
out  
control of self intangible  
I watch them run away

**No**

why does my mind  
drop sense  
so often

## John McCarthy

a great man dead tonight  
the first night in many years  
the world will be without a man  
as smart as him  
he was kind to me  
as a man might be to a child

## Simple Impossible

I am so much  
no one my feet have  
no feeling and everything  
else is following close behind

## Asking For Little

so I'm asking  
who's applauding  
the barriers are up  
I've said my sad goodbye  
make it goodbyes

## Time Etc Passes

I feel myself  
I am alone in dark  
no one is under any impression  
I feel mistakes piling up  
no one would want to help me  
perhaps it's time for passing

## Who Am I To

I am what passes for passing  
my future looks like a bad past  
someone might have after  
losing everything  
I am new to this age I achieve  
I forego the living part of it

## While That Song Plays

a slow song will be playing  
a sad one  
as the few who care walk what's left  
of me up the shallow hill  
to where those who brought me here  
have departed from  
I will be long away  
forever away  
but I believe it will feel  
like nothing just as I don't remember from before  
symmetry teaches us  
and its breakage into three parts  
imparts the sadness that defines beauty

## On Eve

the meaning of tomorrow is the beginning  
of the dark world  
this is when I came  
it rained I heard  
it was cold  
or was it a mist  
what everyone does is cherish  
the idea of bringing a child  
near all the events lies  
a river I still visit  
it has flowed my whole  
life and will / will have  
far beyond either side  
I've told it many things  
it's witnessed many things  
I've passed over it many times  
sometimes it responds with black  
sometimes blue  
usually brown  
it senses my sadness  
disappointment  
but I got it from the river  
it knows itself

## And On A Day Just Like Today

we find a path  
any of them lead to a place like here  
and just ahead  
no matter how I go  
the path ends  
stops or dwindles away  
but gone  
once  
it all seemed so hopeful

## God Sees Death

anyhow it was day then like today  
hot / green grass just cut and a breeze  
from a sea or river sneaking past  
small windows designed to keep a house  
standing and winterness out  
when my father showed me how to use  
the hammering machine that kicks and locks  
grooved and tongued oak flooring in place

today in the dumpster those floorboards  
hang gathered and ripped from the floor  
he measured and crafted and I  
could have taken one to mark my own envelope  
instead I wondered about the braces  
at each end and why I was drawn to this house  
40+ years later to witness what should never  
be witnessed by anyone (except god?)

## Once or Twice

another long trip  
adjusting  
who is here worth seeing  
well or available  
no one  
staying home  
more

## **Art of Creation**

novel to the point of surprise  
crafted beyond attention  
still as the culture allows

## Colombine

and so she spoke in low deep tones  
she said she was ill  
but it was pure love  
for me / for you  
she knows not us

## Illusion Together

tonight walking away  
I stopped / looked up / to watch the couple  
being pictured into the setting sun  
reflector light on their dark sides  
I couldn't see her face / her back to me  
she kissed once / & you know / he stoned up his face  
but she kissed again then  
she / you know / turned back toward the dark direction  
on the balcony and I continued down  
the stairs to the train station  
being ordinary and returning  
felt attractive my plan  
become ordinary / remain  
write only the walked-on floor

what I picture / walk the fields  
past the dawn of darkness  
when cold comes and comes only  
an echo stirs each yellowed hollow stem  
the last word I'll write has found its curtain

## Bye Bye I Guess

it's official  
the start of something fulfilling  
never started for my fear  
of being so overmatched

## As Usual

the streets are sparsely built upon  
whenever a possible tryst blooms  
a drop of rain drops  
as usual I look up into the windows lit from inside  
and deduce from the shadows I see  
the light of the lives living there

## **Searching for the Leslie**

when the floor stops moving  
who will stay on their feet  
who will shout for another round  
who will stumble into oblivion

## Fits and Starts

driving by the river  
in my head an adorable female  
voice narrates progress in flat  
detail / she spells it out  
in other words  
in other words  
in the plainest words  
and simplest sentences  
anyone could find  
if they looked until  
eternity called it quits

## Don't Need to Imagine

laying back listening  
to the same song over and over  
a kind of dulling and spiritual trance  
building up from a day everything aims  
to forget / I did it then in a cold  
room with poor quality  
and today on sweet good old tubes  
the result's the same  
a nostalgia only endings can cure

## Not Special

when there weren't many people  
I still was not special  
the land I grew up on was discarded land  
swampy / filled with garbage trees grown  
up against all inconveniences  
only in a few places did the pines grow thick and tall  
the floor beneath them smooth and refreshing  
when the air heated and wet you  
little bits of heath and mushrooms  
I'd make a small leanto of snapped off pine bows  
and piles of pine leaves layered into a bed  
even in a light rain I'd stay warm / dry  
far enough from home that even my mother  
screaming heartily for me made little more  
than a slight stir in the leaves maple trees  
presented me all summer

## Greyish

the farm was so beautiful once  
the stone walls clear and distinct  
the fields trimmed right to the edges  
large enough that when autumn turned to winter  
I could roam the cut down fields and hours  
looking simply at the way nature played out  
in front of me / and the promise  
was always forever and a warm house

## Blackish

not it's not even a farm  
but plots of land for homes  
most rundown / the pine woods  
have been cleared out and now  
it's just a ragged field  
any dream to walk the field  
again tremendous to its end  
will little more than a wisp  
be real

## Looking Back and Forth

my mother watched me I'm sure  
in my crib bed and saw my imperfections  
all of which I still endure  
imagined my life playing out  
and she confirmed in spots her diagnosis correct  
I would never amount to much  
partly because amounting to in my realm is unfathomable  
partly because she was just right

## Strike Anywhere

it seems like the past smelled  
more / odors plainer stronger  
when leaves turned we raked and burned them  
the world smelled of smoke  
next came romance  
finally a long stretch of day to day relentlessness  
and one last apology

## Voyeur

in the 15<sup>th</sup> floor apartment  
the woman wearing only  
her imagination steps over  
her lover unthinking and unfeeling  
perhaps in sleep on the floor lit  
only by signs below reflected off  
her white dove ceiling  
I watched from the adjacent hotel

## Never Imagine When You Can Cry

down a wet street  
stained blue by tv lights and other lights  
from flats hunched close around it  
in an autumn city in a north part of an old country  
a woman heading toward something that will tingle her  
wears her leather coat and hugging leggings  
under a short skirt and within leather boots  
like them all she wears a beige scarf around her important neck  
me I stand at the crossroads to this narrow place  
watch her walk away not hurried but eager  
unaccustomed to chivalry I have no hat no cap  
all I can do is grow wet maybe cold  
what I see is her tempting trap working  
as always

## Diner Time

night after night I  
sit in the allnight diner till  
after 3am sipping dark and bitter coffee  
eating stale pie  
waiting  
two blocks down the studied blonde  
brushes her hair then ties it in a tail  
in front of her mirror she does this  
over / over / over  
till it's past 4am past 5am past dawn  
when she arrives I'm on my cot and sleeping  
I guess  
it's all and only  
a guess

## Darkness Become Grey

we are the strange improbability  
I am drifting toward the drain hole  
I popped out of once but it never made sense  
people who cared lamented my poor luck  
feel it then  
I didn't but  
I do now

## And So A Man Wrote on Sunday

there's a word I call foul  
they save the word  
with the creation of truth  
why sad to say  
single out the crisis  
utterly fantastic / clear / real  
against technical expertise  
our discourse is badly distorted

## I Think

she deserved better than me  
she knew that the minute I was born  
also during the minutes before she died  
when she realized that her devotion  
to her father forced me west and far away  
so she was alone and afraid  
when her old heart stopped

## When It's All Dark

in winter around here  
the moon can come up slowly but perceptually  
behind a pine and a bank  
of fog extending across the Bay  
to the mountains across  
in a close by room a woman  
sits by her puzzle and works  
it out piece by bit  
where I sit the damp is lapping just outside  
she has tried to dull my urge  
to keep at it but she is quiet  
and her way is to wear out the urges  
through quiet / the moon rises  
later each night until it is such a foreigner  
it's sometimes hard to notice

## Budapestulance

I recall the fear in Budapest  
when I realized  
I was in too deep  
I have never been  
in up to a respectable body  
part since

## Frilly Apron

we'd walk from our car parked down the street  
Thanksgiving afternoon while the women and Mike  
cleaned up / being my mother  
my father's mother and Mike stepgrandfather  
he wore a frilly apron every year  
the food was heavy and much  
we'd walk to Castle Island not really an island  
but a spit off South Boston  
then the bunkers were still open and we'd climb  
in to view the lines of fire out to the Harbor  
we'd watch American Press shove off and head to sea  
we never talked much  
no stories of his playing down by the water  
no houses pointed out no apartments  
no names / he was as strange here as I was  
I lacked mature curiosity  
I never asked  
he is gone now  
they all are

## Lament for Me

I'm buying up things now  
which I'll keep and use until I die  
my last bike / my last amplifier  
my last computer  
soon I'll have no money  
I will be lost and lonely  
I feel that way already  
nothing makes me happy  
only stories keep me going  
I want to sleep forever  
that strong light and odd pressured feeling  
awaits / it wasn't bad before  
and I await it coming on

## Saying Hello While Saying Goodbye

just finished writing  
the letter that will promote  
a friend as her career takes off  
as mine tapers off  
this I hope is the last one I'll write  
I'm tired of it

## Fell Away

her hair every way like ripe wheat  
in that part of Kansas that calls and calls  
I can see only the back of her and the orbit  
of her blowing hair and her mission  
is over since she is walking back from the edge  
of the macadam road and she hasn't / never  
will see me upwind on the road / she  
will never forget me because I was only nothing  
her eyes never passing over me but I  
will never lose my imagination of longing

she closes her ranch door behind her  
I drive west to the desert and mourn

## Brussels Maybe

cities where streets are tangled  
up are best in rain  
at night  
when window lights piece each cobblestone  
and lovers entangled as their longing for eternity  
requires are dressed like kids  
like milfs in Paris  
around each corner espresso calls  
and oddly tomatoey cheap italian dishes  
northern europe is what I picture  
when all there is left is picturing

## Snowbound

snow piled on snow  
dug out down to gravel and dirt  
black streaks in fresh heavy snow  
piled up to the eaves  
inside it's warm from dry wood burning hot  
in a heavy old woodstove and we sit around it  
and read through the day  
waiting for everything  
to be something different

## Leave Me Burning

the beauty of brick  
seen all at once  
but never together  
pieces to pieces  
stitch to stitch

## Look Don't Touch

leave imagining  
the shapes of women to me  
take it for granted  
that I'll clothe them tightly  
angle them against the sun  
just perfectly  
don't worry that I'll picture  
someone no one  
wants to see  
I've had plenty of time  
to watch and learn

## Creepy and Uncomfortable

an uncomfortable woman  
sits on a park bench 2 feet  
from a creepy man holding a color chart  
she is not pretty but attractive never  
the less / no never  
but from my angle her hips flare  
to a wide point that says oh sex  
behind them traffic in the distance  
crosses through the park and it's summer  
in a northern American city in the east  
I imagine a soundtrack with a high pitched but sultry sax  
playing something with a southern backbeat  
she looks plainly with darting eyes at the man holding  
the color chart and he glances languidly at her  
I describe it like a cinema because it is  
it is not my memory but something stored in bits  
on my computer  
an ad for an expensive digital movie camera so  
real that the woman really  
was uncomfortable and I thought somehow  
I was that man

## South of South

in a room walled with dark woods  
cut from forests south of the equator  
in a part of a former crown country  
known for endless summer and hot humid nights  
a woman dressed in nothing awakes  
and puts on her panties as a gesture  
in a grand pantomime resembling  
the lives of minor mammals

## Something Happening

what can be noticed  
who has found the best road  
these are questions that open up  
the problem of people  
if what we can see matters so much  
what need is there for the real

## Come Back Home

think of a long hill  
really a field  
covered in snow  
and two men  
or a man and a boy  
sliding down it  
on a metal toboggan  
they must steer  
if the ride be good  
through a narrow gate  
with stone walls and steep drops  
on either side  
think of why they would do it  
soon a poem like this will be all that remains

## **Now This Is Pessimism**

whose name will they carve  
on my headstone

## Dying Time

oh what fun to learn  
you haven't the agility anymore  
to pour water into a christmas  
tree reservoir

## Hits Home

the woman next to me  
in the seafood restaurant  
wore an offwhite lace skirt  
down to her ankles  
from there to midhigh  
all was visible  
thereafter nothing was  
the economics of romance

## Highrock

a crazy man sang  
in a chorus  
they said he poured himself  
entirely into the music  
so much that he pour all  
of himself out of himself  
he was crazy  
I saw him

## Don't You Hate It

the bridge is not going  
to make it  
traffic lights at either end  
so traffic is one way only  
I felt it trembling last summer  
light an old man having trouble  
holding a spoon and passing soup  
or making gestures intended as love  
the mechanics are wearing down  
it is an old bridge

## Forward and Backward

the river flow carried  
sheets / ice  
thin but resilient to the wash  
the river's surface then  
piecewise linear  
because water freezes flat  
almost / the sun angled  
itself to a bit of orange  
onto all that  
the ice and the turbulent flow  
my friend and I caught  
up from years of absence behind  
gearing up for the absence ahead

## By The Road

out in my car I sat and saw  
them carving out the insides of my old house  
already the roof had been raised 2 feet  
and the rooms where my grandmother lived  
were gone / later they held my band  
I listened a lot there  
I typed the essays for Meredith there  
walls inside were down  
gaps between boards I knew never had them  
at the back of the garage  
they worked with air being pumped out  
to keep out what they thought was dangerous  
imagine watching the young tear down your life  
like that / it was like that

## Never

I have found the secret to regret  
it's to push your crumbs into a little  
box in your head and push it over there  
over to the side / on it place a sticker  
and write the words you want to say  
when asked about the crumbs in that box  
never open the box  
never

## Celebration Not Quite

looking at lists

I regret mine is so short

## Entropy For Dummies

you know  
things fall apart  
this is how we know time is flowing  
it makes time into grinch

## My Boy's Life

where are my friends  
hiding it seems  
my best did not stand up for me  
when I needed him most

## Assumption

it has settled on me  
that nothing was ever special  
all my small moves forward  
filled only some space and lots of time  
I am ready to sit out the rest of my time  
bothering no one  
doing not much as is my habit

## Sincerity

where I remember Christmas best  
is being changed being nearly torn down  
it's not my place though I call it that  
I am missing most of my life

## What Clings

when the camera snaps  
you the future will make its own take  
on what you were doing  
thinking being  
as if you were a magnet  
for stories that might float by

## Clutter Memorial Up

now the memorial  
some say this means  
the story's ended  
but for years to come  
cars will drive slowly  
and quietly down the elm lane  
see the house  
then back slowly and quietly up  
trains will pass by too  
this place will be the center

## Bulldog Tank

fifteen and I wanted  
the toys children receive  
they and I viewed this Christmas  
as the end forever  
of childhood and innocence  
why not  
since then I've spent my life  
hunched over something  
the only telltale of time  
is the something

## An Island Somewhere

today preparing to be alone  
I bought a stainless-steel Martini  
glass from REI  
with an unscrewable stem  
and I wondered whether this would increase  
enjoyment or decrease it

## Wild Day

this day this night  
38 years ago was the beginning of magic  
it seemed as young as we were  
and I so taken with the idea of a woman  
tonight I watch the beautiful ones  
who unlike the one I married  
with last forever  
sparkling

## And Cold

down by the river just one street up from it  
the night before Christmas is not a night  
to watch women promenading but  
there one was and I could see by the way her legs  
thrust her hips that she was wearing a wool  
skirt a short one that rested on her ass  
the way I wish my fingertips could and so  
I walked half a block behind her heading west  
toward the rail station and when she mounted  
the stairs up to the concrete platform  
I found a bench in the small triangle park across the street  
and from there I watched her pace and wait  
and I watched the water like oil drag black past  
the bridge piers and sporadic stones  
and every adjective I thought for those minutes  
before the train snatched her away  
reflected my heart and went something  
like it's a yellow light on black water tonight  
and cold

## Or Impossible

from between two brick warehouses  
a bright gold light streams onto the square  
cobble and wet from a winter storm  
that passed earlier in the day  
standing there in her boots and heavy black coat  
scarf and hat is the woman every man would love  
but they don't know her and she is bent on the river  
whose animated surface conceals the bitterness of black beneath  
I'm standing in the shadow beneath a fire escape at the back  
of an abandoned shoe factory watching her steps on cobbles  
to the river wall protecting the city  
I imagine her in candlelight in an apartment overlooking us here  
face down and the curves of her back and legs and ass  
creamy in that yellow light and I imagine my feelings  
rising from the past and curling like fog rising from the black water river  
after a warm rain and everything else that is rare

## Lines and Flat

I've stopped at the edge of a macadam road  
a small ditch on either side and then a small grassy rise  
before the fields stretch away filled with wheat  
I've stopped between two poles and between  
a simple pair of wires stretch and curve down  
the wind that teases the grass and wheat plays  
these wires in low pitched harmony  
whose melody plays in my memories of the girl  
who never loved me though I did every small  
thing I could think of / her hair would play well  
in this symphony / wheat / grass / line tones  
except these poles and everything in this scene stretches  
to a horizon / the one we start at over there  
the other there

## Dig It

all my poems have this in common  
night / yellow lights / blue rain  
the cold / small movements  
a woman who doesn't care  
narrator adrift / alone / afraid  
and once or twice ashamed

## Indifference

how can what we once owned  
seem like ours forever  
land for instance  
like a friend who comes to know us  
does it welcome us back  
years later after the abuse  
of difference

## Better Than Two

smooth and unappetizing  
water draining a high plateau  
leaving and leaving fast  
watching someone undress  
tell me everything you want to do

## On Coldness

back there the snow and cold embrace  
the ones loved but lost  
down the street that mirrors the river  
a couple walks toward their small apartment  
above a liquor store down by the square  
when they get to the rail bridge he will stop  
and she will just after and they won't kiss though  
you expected it / he will cry for just a minute  
she won't ask but will look up the street  
to the farthest streetlight and remember  
when she met her first love just right there

## Backing Into The Fringe / A Thicket

no one is on the freezing street  
and the surprising strong wind  
that blows old things in dizzy paths  
down the one way all things eventually go  
no one is there to see it  
to see the shadows blue in the yellowed light  
only a few windows have light  
and only one bare / hanging like a noose  
with a big wrapped loop tied between the bulb  
and the ceiling / you ask  
then who saw all this  
who reported it  
and I / the lone/ly poet replies  
first by opening my mouth  
and letting nothing emerge I close it again forever  
take up a pen and a piece of paper snatched like a memory  
from the sheets swirling past on the street  
lonely imagination and write  
for hours days years decades  
maybe one day you'll read it  
read where these snippets come from that seem  
to never be seen but everyone understands  
once the report is in  
I am like on the front