

Nothing Else
Nothing More

A Collection of Poems from 2012

Richard P. Gabriel

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Hard To Believe Feat of Domination

one year / and during that year one day
the wind midwinter came up from the north
just as one leaf fell from the tall oak
at the far end of the old bridge
and the leaf blew down the center of that bridge
from one end to the other
a length akin to a good life
when shrunk to oak leaf size
I would have been there to see it
had final feeling been farther
upstream / the river that flows beneath

In Montenegro

in a small plaza in a small city in a small country
too far east to be in the public's mind a part of Europe
a small statue sits on a resolute pedestal
and though no one knows who sculpted it
and what it means though it seems to be a man
or a manlike figure from fantasy
the sculptor had more skill and talent
than me even though his labors were
few and mine many

Old Barn Ago

I could push the big barn door aside
inside the main spine was wide enough
for a full hay wagon and a pair of wide horses
one side for cows and a small coop
the other for half and feed / lots of tools
and what passed for indoor plumbing
just a fancy wood seat and cover
and a drop down below the barn
where cow piss collected and drained
by ditch to Cobbler's Creek
you could love in the hay
bales or loose
no one worried about fire though
all were careful
and for all that it's all
gone and nothing of it will return
no matter how much love is pored into it

A Man Invents His Ego

no one more ridiculous
than the man who mistakes
his inventions for the labor
of mankind

Half of My Heart

on a small stage in a part of the bar
built off the back of the first floor
street level but five stories above the back lot
separating the old factory from the river wall and river beyond
the band has set up and the drummer seems to be pounding
but the sound is slight and tight
of his drums as if sheathed in lambskin
the guitars are strumming but each string
is muted by the meat of a hand's heel
the woman's voice weaves above the tick of rhythm
and soothing short strums setting down
just to the left or to the right of the beat
and running over the ends of lines
and by her face I can tell she's not in this northeast river town
but somewhere where boots are the real walk
and the moon owns the long nights above the wine
of cut grass and wheat / her hand in mine
we walk to the back of the day

A Table Where No One Sits

time to invent
a new woman who is crying
in the rain on a small street
in the cold part of Paris
as the apartments around her
darken for the onset of quick warm sex
then a night of warm sleeping
but she / her skin won't behave
her heart rings a phone when no one's home
the guitar she hears is out of tune
just this little bit but she nods along anyway
and still
she is crying
crying all night

All The People Laughed

my past dissolves each day
some hard bit turns soft
then floats away
or crumbles into light dirt
the hard effort my father put into his creations
is no match for time's strong laughter
every nail he hammered weeps
as it's pulled from its dried out beam
he never knew how to build houses
he invented all that

No Country For Smart People

the country I live in
has given permission to its citizens
to be as stupid as they like
and by god they are taking advantage of it
like a banker on a foreclosure binge

Tumble on You

there is a blend of red and pink
in the sky tonight
no one with a phone can keep it to themselves
the wires are hot with word spreading
as the night cools the comments drift away
to the West I suppose
aside from the sky-made excitement
everything is so predictable

Commonalities

when all you have is a thin wisp cloud
in front of a full moon
the thought of romance flies out the window

Vague and Dark

imprecision grabbed the spotlight
everyone was illuminated
just that little bit

The Curved Tracks to the South

I suppose it's snowing
under trees little islands persist
I pretend I'm there lighting a small fire
outside a shelter I made from pine boughs
the snow will cover it in my dreams
and I'll stay warm all through the snowy night
only once will I wake when a train not far off
sounds and sounds as it passes me by
only that one time will I wake

Little Else

Snooks learned her dog door late
she would sniff and search its edges
pushing with her nose until she was sure
then in or out
out into the woods to chase what she could
back in for food and water a warm place to bed down
when she grew too old to run my father
put her down and we buried her in the backmost field
while he did it down in the back yard and she cried out
I lay in my bed upstairs just above
my memory is as clear as a memory can be
of this

Heaviness of Sad

tonight is the second
in a row of total despair
a screwup in my medication delivery
and I worry about having to do without
for months / these are things that happen
more frequently and I find myself in tears
much more

How Smart Is Too Smart?

today I found what was lost
I had put it in the place I knew
I would eventually look into
the suitcase yet unpacked from
my last trip / today I went to
unpack it and there...

Oriente

when things started to fall apart
I was listening to a mournful electronic song
with piano composed and played in an old country
its design was to mesmerize
to calm down
so that the end unlike a surprise
was a completion

Very Every

every day the struggle is harder
every day a new curveball
today it's news of the audit

Convergence

look at the farm
old and inherited from several ages earlier
look at my grandparents
killing each other and drinking to kill
look at my parents
failures in every sense the smartest man can think of
look at me

All Tired

sitting here writing
I realize my day has come and gone
and what little is left
will barely carry me to the end

Tired and Defeated

dark and stormy night
I fell asleep in front of the tv
after a heavy meal
like an old platform collapsing

Old Barn Tales

the old jitney pulled the metal treaded wooden wheeled wagon
into the barn where my father threw bales up to me
and I stacked them quick and straight
here on the bale side / the other the loose hay side
soon I was up to the first layer of rafters and there
I sat waiting for the next load and cooling off
sweat in my t-shirt stinking of almost dry hay
many years later this memory would be stripped from me
and though it's likely accurate / true even
it's made up just like everything is

Deep In Snow

shaping up to be a lousy year
working on what I care nothing about
when time is short it becomes precious
when time is long it's just as precious
but a precious of a different color

Freshet

I pretend I can be loved
and then as suddenly
we've gone to dinner and she is in my room
rain outside and cold from a winter night
she stops and stands in front of my chair
I bend to her belly and kiss it and just then
the ages blend and the backs of my fingers
are like the smallest wind on the warmest day
floating almost just above her back and down toward her heels
somewhere in the middle the song begins

Fall Lower

in any scene worth remembering
worked out in fiction or in the minds
of men there is always the one left behind
or sinking in the river or fallen off the cliff
by accident or diminishment
pray for yourself for
one day it will be you

Quitter

I can almost not stand it any more
waves of obligations
all in conflict
all stressed as important
when can I give up

On Luck

on a sunny days she sat
with her friends in from of her high school
and unsmiling never thought I'd see
her that way

Get Small

in a small world people can be small
there are no reasons to try to climb
or climb over / I would be small
if only I had just the things I need
and a computer to write with
I would be the smallest thing ever

Life Time

a long and constant still
one rough stroke of hard wind
a long and constant still

Days Still Left

when I imagine talking to my mother
we don't say important things
we don't discuss each other
in fact nothing we say illuminates the other
so how if we are typical
can anyone know

Left Behind

I used to worry that I wasn't be asked enough
that people didn't appreciate my talent
now that it's proven I have little or none
I don't mind the dust kicked up
pebbles thrashing the road around me
the specular sunset seen through them
as the car of everything peels out and away

There I Be

I taught myself
to paint the color of my skin
which I did by trying all colors
painted on my skin until
I couldn't tell whether I had painted or not
this is similar to how I learned my own voice
speaking until my voice disappeared
and then there I was

What Hope Looks Like

homes built in hope
in a dry desert and a cold one
they stand abandoned
unsold
no one needs to show why build
their back yards
look like piles of sand

Now You Know

my parents were tremendous failures
but they found a way to be simply happy
I am similar but without the happiness

Swift River

learning to drive
they took me in Winter to a narrow
mountain road with a steep drop
to a swift river
and with snow still on the road I drove
to where the road was closed to traffic
and back / the Volkswagen was hot
from a poorly designed but fierce
heater driven directly from the heat
of the rear engine and it smelled
being new of paint
it seems so quaint and far away

Ludus, Inc.

you believe you deserve otherwise
this is a house of champions
it does not submit to you
you submit to it
one must learn to kneel if he is ever to rise
a necessary lesson if you are to one day join the champions of this house
these are the words of the master to the slave
these are the words of the employer

Joppa Flats It Seems

the boat slips past the last
town on a river that is black as night
and swift as a mind about to change
it heads for the vast ocean where some
say all boats launch
but near this journey's end
the boat is filled with needles and old complaints
instead of the eagles and trees spinning their loves
the boat is up to its gunwales with the irrelevant
and unneeded / the boat if it can
is sad

Inconclusive

the whole world came by
and made a mess by paying less
attention than a moth to the dark side
of the room
two words were said
and one was no

Such a Deep Sadness

so many young faces
in the photo from 1933
a high school
how many left
the question tells us all we need to know

Regretful

just one more visit
timing of curiosity
and exploration

Not Tonight

I've watched her for years
wearing her long hair in a tail
tonight she stood talking to her man
hair down and back straight
I couldn't recognize her

The Main Thing

her head burrowed in the space
between neck and shoulder
her back bathed in blue coming from the imagination
of a cinematographer
her hair blue in its black
washes one way then another
outside the window wind
tempts the glass with water and flex
her hips bend forward
bend back
across it all every bit
the lighthouse fashions the scene
solid bright
she though remains undistracted

Alone All

wave on wave
people flickering through time
all the beauty and envy
all those focused no farther
than the scale of their arms
each of them fearfully gone away

By The Time

the past reals up
memories old surpass new
when the old ways repeat
the mind digs in
what my father made no longer
lasts and I am one

Andrej Pejic Loves Them All

today all the hot girls are boys
even posing for push-up bra ads in fashion mags
I watched a group of beer-filth men flee in rage
crabbing backward to corner's edge
when they saw him coming
legs braziled waxen
but he smiled at me
and all beauty became one beauty

The Pessimistic Reading

what people expect of me
no longer makes sense
I need to find a way out
or prepare for a decline
in poverty

Futility

writing is fading
I'm feeling the bottom of the pit
even as the hot tubes
make pure music like what I imagined
when I was just uninvolved

PDX

it's raining
somewhere
where
a woman is hoping sleep will fill her
life's dreams with tiptoeing magic
and feather tip touches just off
the center of her spine
rain
in it's beautiful blue night wet

JMC

humanity came to me
in the form of a genius grieving
from loss

Singing in the Wires

people write their songs
with chords closeby each other
to splash that longing feel
like anointing a penitent
and then they sit and listen
over / over in the cold room
as the heater works it up
but the walls and windows
will always remain cold
cold as a C next to a B,

All The Leaves Are Brown

one supposes the low cold clouds
filled with snow and looking it
are the reason Winters here
are lessons in middle ground
or subtlety / my mind is set on walking
from one end of the farm to the other
through fields some and woods mostly
woods bare with gray trunks and the woods
floor brown and creaking
later in life this scene would be a memory
and all writing about it would sound warmer
than the scene itself which is bitter
in every way something can be

Not Mine Any More

imagine having your own pond
that froze every year and all your friends
would come skate on it
not right next to your house
but down the road a bit
takes 5 or 10 minutes to walk there
a little stream coming in
a little stream going out
and perhaps an old beaver dam to make it
I think I once tried to make a little raft there
or I should have

Decreased Accuracy At Small Scale

I suspect
there's a little me inside me
who thinks bad and speaks it
but that model
doesn't have to pay
I do

When Your Butt Answers

To, hello, hey hello hello.

Okay bye.

Hello.

Park.

Hello.

Yo.

Bye.

Okay bye.

Bye hello.

Bye.

Hey, here, hey.

Yeah, bye.

Hello, hey.

Prosper, everything is okay.

Hey.

Thanks, call alright.

Lost in Wording

something is wrong
my emails are off
I say non things
I need something

Odd Fallings

snow just barely harder than fluff
falling on fall leaves just barely past yellow
fills the woods with a sharp noise
somewhere above the droppings have been formed
by the up & down & up & down of rain
finally dropping through the last layer of cold
to me it's all low clouds & a fire waiting after all

Like Kalispell Only Different

the genuine places
can't be found
because the roads leading to them
are covered by sand
or filled in with grass

Flow Alone

the river
is just a path
what we love about it
is its transience

Bridge Anomaly

standing at one end of the bridge
facing north one night
I watch the silhouette
of someone crossing over
ahead of me
I wondered of it
he was once behind

Quick Intro

she hurried to the gym
late for her match
when she about to check in
she turned and opened
then she was gone

Home To Roost

it's all
about to end
it feels like
misery to have it like
my parents had it

No More Dead

sinking / falling / failing
how many roads are closing off
so many mistakes
I am the last vulture

Too Long Ago

when I look back
it will never be my job that comes to mind
I wanted always to the world
unimaginably
but to live is to pay
why do only people know this

When Words Grow Apart

I must find a way
to just work and not care
treat work as a job
and job as necessity
not joy / just one letter
apart but one end of the alphabet
to the other

Numbers Scribbled Too Fast

the scorecard lies
because we score ourselves
when the bottom bottoms out
and our pace is quickest
so the world slips by
and by

Her, Walking Away

the woman walking away
beautiful and trim
her legs are bare
designed for movement
they serve attraction
I fall further behind

Quick Sick

grievously ill
sleeping for more than a day
at a time
this portends the nature
of endings
it seems so calm

Homesteading

not far from Honolulu
on the west coast of the island
there's a tent city filled and decaying
always crossing the road are two
dark dogs

Restaurant Mysterioso

they arrived irregularly
and once in their seats
the waitress photoed them holding their IDs
one upside down
all over 30
what did they want
why were they here
why did one of them bring them each orchids
who were they?

Somewhere Cold

something feels not right
body mind spirit
like the sad girl
in Montréal who never
cheers up

Up Up And Away

the trail of smoke or
vapor laboring to move
as a whole seemed to come
from somewhere behind me
but what I saw was
it rising up and outward
no center holding any more
than any other
how strong an image
it looked to once project
when it still was rising smoke
maybe just curling
then I saw it was me
the part I thought so highly of
and what I was was
the ash shell
that is always only
what is left

After It's Drifted Away

hello

I am the person

who used to be

Richard Gabriel

Coincidentally

the day she walked into the wheatgrass bar
was the day I walked out of the wheatgrass bar

Unrepulsive

plans are easy to make
fun to talk about
like gloves seeking ears to cover
the fist of the outside oak tree
is hovering above and hoping
to open

against this the tree merely yawns
its leaves open to the sun
open to the rain

The Betty White Show

the tv won't stop
I've watched it all my life and I'm old
some tv stars from when I first remember it
are still on
Betty White for one
old shows
when I watch them now
are fresh but boring
because they repeat their things
the best thing about new tv
is the pictures are really clear
I remember watching horror movies
that were nothing but a dull shadow
against snow
and wobbly sound
I'm old all right

How Can It Go

behind my house
there was a rushing stream one year
I was surprised to find it
and going back years later
I never did again

Speaking Public

how tired can you get
wasting away
people who fan for you
you read on
your voice falters
they believe it frailty of old age
they love you
you remain

Memory Ruts

will the bridge spring back
after repairs that tear it apart
held together as I knew it since a child
since my mother was a child
since her parents crossed it
on the trip to the farm
the first time
maybe there's a history there
I could invent
and wear like memory
ruts into my mind

Outward / Inward

rolling onward with work
that doesn't matter to any
but me and soon cut loose
I will need to fade

Caught In The Act

hard work today
bad news tonight

Google Wave Goodbye

when you become the product
everything about you is sold
some parts are like the infinite copies
computers can make of some things
others have side effects
and those parts are never retrieved

By The Time

I once watched her pack
up and drive off
and when the call came
her asking how to fix the car that wouldn't start
I tried to help
years later when she wanted me
she couldn't believe
I would really go

The Future is Here Not Well Distributed

one way you know you're dying
is that turning away feels fine
feels like a relief does not
feel like abdication
I feel it now
every few days
for a few seconds

Relative Perspectives

she is up in her apartment
writing text messages
quickly with her thumbs
she feels like nothing
down her she looks like
the beginning of creation

Potsdam Early Evening

here women wear their skirts tight
in layers sometimes with a dose
of hose / surely they have modeled
the look they trail as they walk away
because they walk away without thought
or self-indulgence / instead to let
nature nurture the thoughts
men might have if only

Brandenburg

quite special
she walks away
her sights are set on the lonely bottom
my heart is dreary tonight
as my glass unfolds
and the tight skirts
never notice
the longing

No It Was Luck Good and Bad

wandering
seeking his hotel
in another's land
with another's language
miles away
holding a map
looking into the darkness
through the most improbable
we stumbled on him
not knowing he was lost
not knowing anything
and we coaxed him into the car
and drove him to his bed

Concerning Skirts

a little too
is better than a little
less

Shimmering

today it was
the white / black
goth girl

Abysmality

did I tell you
there is nothing left of me
and you are
therefore
too late

Purloined

I am filled with it
the urgency of long ago loss
the days of it are all over
I am filled

Eisenhüttenstadt

beautiful woman with red
hair intensive red
she has the old model Russian city
by them
and when she disappears in its innermost
Plattenbau apartment complex
the fate of worlds collapse to just
this officious red one

Plain Old Simple

where I live the ways of living
are simple
because the lines of sight range to the far distant
and machines can be made only simple
the songs say it just once
but underline with 4ths and 9ths
the difficulty of which I speak
never made it to the plains

Gone For Good

here in Potsdam
I've discharged obligations
and stand ready
never to return no matter
how strong the pull

I told him directly to let me go
if I need to / not to tempt me back

For These Reasons

here in Potsdam
it's like this
layers and tight leggings
lit but invisible garret windows
pomp under all circumstances
many who walk away
without reason
but away anyway

In Town A Night

so one night I drove down
the darkest street in the darkest town
looking to find the perfect
distraction and instead
I found a clever place to sit and watch
women wonder when
it would be their turn

Three Ends

the beauty of technical
words and scientific ones
is their rhythm as if
they were made by
nymphs not nerds

She Was Perfect Once

I once loved a woman
so perfect and so hard
that to this day
that she returned nothing
still hurts enough
to cry

Regretfully Potsdam

fog on the lake lurks like
the longing I feel for loves
long past

In Creeping

something funny happens
when two sticks rubbed together
can't control the fire they start
and the wonders of the disorganized
are really just a wander away

Passivity Craving

I need silence
lots of it
enough to last
the rest of everything

Life As It's Lived

someone craving
the company of unclothed
someone there
happily to say no

Next To Never

I am ready
for my public life
to fade out
and for a private life
to begin
in which what I love
is all there is

please

Tired and a Half

imagine being fresh then being tired
then imagine being tired then being tired
see?

Where Are You Headed?

a Friday you know
the amtrak train in Lamy
late as ever but waiting
for all to board
and counting them and naming them
and off to Flagstaff and
finally LA

Waltzes

family of great happiness
shattered every way it can
be / father dead of cancer
grandmother dead of cancer
daughter loved beyond human passion
attacked by cancer and driven
from her horses for over a year
and I just an observer
can only cry my heart to sleep
every time

Eliminated

the room is cold
and faintly stinking
of pipe smoke
years back
and now it's the honey
dripped down through the carpet
into the boards below
and below down through ceiling
and carpet and floor boards
deep down into the foundation
and rock below and
into the heart of beating darkness

Simple Meal

out just off the Santa Fe Trail
he lives with three dogs and two women
one like a mother but a wife
the other a daughter but like
with two single wides glued together with a room
and a cottage
the stage stop seemed real
the lone tree not a photo op
I learned much

Unkingdom

I found the little passing bird
that could have been you
and you weren't

Rightly No

the halls aren't decked
withholding is substantial
I am afraid of the dark walls
that are too close like too friends
imagine the displacement

High Over Me

the great poets are out of words
making more takes time
time is bought with great poetry
now the great poets must get by
with ordinary words preferring short to long
the new supply is not on its way

Circling Before Going Down

the rest of the trip
is the rest
of a trip

Bye

sure I'm tired
she had her last chance
to please and nothing
hard to believe but I need to stop
all's left's my imagination

Sometimes Cold and Warmth

from the bath
she walked out toward the window
overlooking apartments bathed
in cold north air and shaded
by clouds heading deeper into the north
I didn't watch her
couldn't
she wasn't mine yet
her warmth was
soon it was dark
and remained dark
for days

Warm Black

she painted me
with a brush dipped
in lust
we spent days in the funny
cabin tipping on the shore
of a frozen lake
outside everything was white and getting whiter
inside all was black

Front and Center

a lot of shoreline
is wasted by the innocent
slapping and splashing children
populate the water with
for me slipping slowly
head only above water
away and toward the rock tuft
near the middle is the best bet
near dusk and twilight ahead
is the way to go away
from shore and into the great depths
this is the way to say goodbye

David Waltz

let's take away the regret
let's peel a laugh off
let's pee as high as we can
let's watch the great man lumber slowly
away toward a light only he sees
and has always seen

To Me

on a river somewhere
a woman sits in the grass
watches the black-seeming ripples and eddies
swagger downstream
sometimes I think she wishes
I were sitting by her
on a picnic table nearby maybe
that the sun would slide away
and we'd fall together
that her head in the nest of my shoulder
would block out the bad world
that she would open

Some Story Like This One

one time a great deep wind
came up entering the Western end
of a shallow valley
when it did a young man near its Eastern end
was rising from a long sleep
the wind wound its way down the shallow valley
so easy to leave almost everyone did
but like some the old man found his way back
as the great deep wind passed by he fell
down asleep and there the tale ends
but not the wind

Living Among Crazies

some ideas should be left behind
I know ideas deserve their chances
but all of them??
all of them???

Gnatty

when I look at the path a gnat takes
I worry it has seen too much
of the same thing by circling randomly
but maybe I should celebrate his many
views on just a few things

River Shop

no need to feel about it
the consummate current is riding still down valley
I'm afraid of swirling confusions
and over saturated colors

Later At Night

the sad songs go on too long
time to end one

Only If

on a street somewhere
walking with a scarf on her head
and a waterproof coat with rain
pooled between the cobbles on a foreign street
a darkhaired woman walks to her flat
where she will doff it all / climb into her featherbed
and dream of one day having a man like me

Loco In The Batho

the christmas catalogs arrived in October
even as old as 15 I would look through all the toys
each time in the bathroom
I loved many of them
I developed a totally absurd explanation for derailleurs
I coveted simple battery powered machines
like tanks
half a century later
nothing's changed

Carina I

on a high plateau in NM a woman w/ brightly colored
red / orange hair stared
without expression
at the historic / dilapidated buildings in the square
her German mind could only
react with hazy horror

Just Facts

good news but hard work needed
as the acceptance letter with revisions
never arrived until the deadline for final submission
and I thought I'd have time to write this weekend

Crying Season

darkness early
snow early too
wet streets / streetlights scattered
yellow walled buildings and cobbles
a woman bringing a gift
sees the wrong woman in a window
leaves the gift in the garbage
rides away
darkness
snow
wet

On The Line

how do I cope
listening to an hour of awards
I get them no more
I slip ever backward
another overload and I turn it off
as nobody as I can be

I Hate The Man

they are gearing up
to insult me once again

Blueberry Hill

the little place that made me
maybe once was an island I could be on now
just a small farm but if I had it all
I could survive / and maybe I wouldn't need
all the stories that keep me alive now

Real Drama

in the best scene
nothing happens
people stand or sit or kneel or lie
look at each other
smile a mystery
with luck
the sound track is techno

Danger: God Ahead

the bug refused being found
it was not a wrong line or misaligned argument
but the interaction of two processes
not thoroughly protected by transactions
I guessed
single stepping and breakpoints provided no purchase
all this in a world of my making
and every possible power
but instantaneous knowledge of everything simultaneously

Soon For Me

people will be surprised
that someone who seemed so successful
can disappear so fast
be revealed as a nobody
all talent questioned then denied

Finishing

I lack what I like
nothing no way to get it back
like rocks rolling down cliffs
to a hardscrabble pile below

No One Worth Home

I am fragile
words prop up my weak bones
the bed feels too comfortable some nights
I might not wake on my own
if I don't learn new ones
the old words will wear out and only vowels will be left
that's the hallmark of madness

Useful Failures

I am tangled
in scientific dilemmas
maybe something can be learned
that approximates science

Red(less)

she is away from the window now
out in the rain where the wind makes it known
the bridge doesn't feel but it carries her in her
weakness and seeking
all that's left here
(and there too)
is the redness of her hair
and the darkness of the underment

Pop Goes the Journey

sitting on the brick skirt around the fireplace
bookshelves filled with uninteresting books but some good ones like encyclopedias
if I look out the window I see the hickory and oak
the road a stonewall and one of our fields
this is facing west
I picture myself famous and wanted
now that house is not mine and changed
no one I know owns all that land
I have been on stages around the world
written books
some people seem impressed
how I got from one place to the other
I don't know
I recall some steps but not all
not many
it has all tired me

Alabaster Is What It Is

curled up
windows open
heavy rain outside
I am 15
I dream of the future
nothing prepares me for forever
I am 62
that day seems like a day of tears

I Need You More Than Want You

the song they'll play
as whatever is left of me is lowered
wherever it will go
let it reflect my head bowed
deeply buried
let it reflect the sun red in its retreat
let it reflect the nothing I've always been

Get It?

the rest of the writing
will wait until the words
are ready and standing
just outside the door
then with their dirty feet
they will stain the page

Sigh and Sigh Again

I found the trampled path
unworthy
it led me down to a wet bend
then up to a large blueberry patch
then through a swamp
to a massive boulder left
from a catastrophe
all this was mine
now the memory only

Glass Around Me

the band scrapes and clicks on
strings like bells sing
some parts repeat in a decaying echo
fade out

Unbroken Cane

I walked across a bridge
I left a cane at one end
at the other I found a little light

Sail Away

I have a smooth dislike
what will happen next
I am gotten to the point of working
without passion
only for money
nothing else
nothing more

Bye For Now

after the snow's mostly melted
only white piles with black flecks and tiny branches
will punctuate the forest floor
and shady places
of all the people who could have lived
you did
now you don't
just flecks are left

What I Learned From Pictures

when I die
film everything
using a warm filter

RV Bridge and Me

next time I see it
the bridge will be closed
getting from one side to the other a half-hour affair
will it ever be the same
or just another piece of the past
long ago closed to access

My Sad Thought Tonight

maybe there is
no warm place on the riverbank for me
anymore and instead the black water
will draw me into its cold dark

Open The Door

there is a warm day ahead
somewhere some time
blues skies all that
maybe somewhere where
blue means something
else / more of it e.g.
rain too I
suppose

Love Story

today the grass I saw on a California hillside
had already turned a yellow brown beginning
its career as a warmer of evening air
and triggerer of urgent couplings

Away Enough For You?

one day
in a city many fantasize
I will sit on a couch in a room
high above wet streets
with a woman lying
with her head in my lap
and I'll be
scratching her bare
arm and while
I look out the rainspotted window
she'll look out the rainspotted window
and what I think will
not be what she thinks

Not Me, Boss

today someone suggested
I try to join a high power
team and I just laughed and laughed

The Rest For Us

after a warm night under feather blankets
on a feather bed with windows wet
smelling of cold
down this street and that alley
I stepped midafternoon the next day
and thinking that the holding and hand brushings
meant something I entertained that they didn't
meanwhile she was three streets over thinking
I was routinely purchasing and her pocketed hands
she touched the places I touched
and shook her head no

Warm Time

give me a blanket
a new one to pass
time in

Prayer Against

simple things
like pigs
the smell of fresh cut corn
a road that doesn't lead too far away
but curves like women through the soft woods
missing these is what it's about
hope there's no me to miss them

Look Away

sometimes the facts of the world
are hard for me to fathom
as I slow and fog over
or maybe it's a kind of hardening
like what concrete does
over the top of a coffin
when people want no one to ever
look again
at them

Differences

they challenge that I can write
make me prove it with code
this though is knowing how to write

Chances To End To Start

the chance to end my career as I started it
working on the very same problem
perhaps in obscurity
perhaps with overwhelming tools
with such a detour in between
maybe a good thing

Filled In

she followed me through twisting alleys
on sidewalks lining cobblestones
in an early evening heavy rain
to the boulevard and then across
to the railing above the brown stained river
that passes through this old city
where things are a dripped on brown
and sometimes stone red brick
and once standing there looking down
I saw her looking down and then at me
her elbows on the rail / her hands under her chin
and even in the light from nearby streetlamps
I could see her green eyes reddened dry lips
and the red on her lightly blemished cheeks
she looked for a full minute my literary sense told me
I looked at her for a full minute too
after that
blank

Her Warmth

I kissed her goodbye
instead she kissed me hello
when I walked past her to leave
she held her hand out and took mine
I knew it was a dream
but I returned to it night after night
because the love
finally
was real

Who Needs Forever?

when old people read their poetry
even when well trained and expertly published
they all sound like dorks

Wish

I wish I could once more
sit in the crook of the tree
I used as a car
complete with a compliant branch
I used as a shift
in front of me a hand pump
requiring priming
a wooden sluice running down
to an old iron tub
where our cows would drink
the water was cold and clear
and hard as an axe in a hard winter

Bad Song

always something
there to remind you
of entropy

Rivet Whore

Are you scared because of bunnies?
What I read here!
Germans collected their taxes because
some have threatened to call the cavalry.
Before the Americans is she on her knee
providing bank customers the knife? Typical!
You have already learned this morning for the rest of the dirt—do?

And what do you do when the shit hits,
evaporated before the door? Look away,
turn around, run away: like the three monkeys: rivet whore, neaten the gents,
the neatened zen! Heard of or seen nothing for nothing:
no single medium was interested in it. Three monkeys—just the sort:
see and say is just work? And I can assure you, I know my colleague's ticking.
Always nice grumpy? When?
Read about it here soon.

Jiggling Wheels

will I be able to rest and enjoy
or will pain and hunger rule
I watch the man with a broken cart
carry all that he is and ever will be
and he looks too much like me

George Takei Put It To Me

I know a man
about 50 years old
had a wife and kid
now they are "gone"
and his girl is 20
not his daughter
his girl
oh myyyy as Sulu would say

Days Still Left

whatever I dreams I had
none of them matched this
so small / so away
I am again regaining
all that and less

The Honking Horn

I ask myself
what it was like for him to cut deep
into the palm of his hand
with a chainsaw
an accident in the woods
cutting down trees for the new house
which now is being remodeled after nearly
being torn down
and with him gone
what is rebirth

All My Troubles Seem So Far Away

or the time
he ground his left index finger
down to the first knuckle
with the planer
when he was building the house next
to the barn and I went while he was at the hospital
to clean up the blood and found none
was he skilled
or like me

Feeling The Bad Day

been thinking
about that farm
how I wish it were mine now
so I could go out for a walk
across my own fields
in my own woods
in spring the water in Cobbler's Brook
would be flowing full
I wonder though how much of those woods
my mother knew
and what they meant to her
she sold them
after all

And It Was Loud

and of course there are optimistic ways
to view the past but none of them provide
mucho satisfaction or
else the future stutter steps out of the frayed
past is the way to look at it / consider
this the man with the greasepaint and trained cats
portrayed the cats as indifferent even
as they licked their legs and hopped from platform
to chest to platform while
the depraved man who imitated cats about to fight
distracted them more like treats than threats
and the show went
stuttering
on

Paris Thing

I found her in the bookstore
I thought she might be a cat
instead a book lept into my hand
half read
I found the rhyming quite rhythmic

What?

the pretty young things sing
and play with traditional warmth the fado
and their self-taught style is a hoot
and all are engineers of some sort
and not a one with no future
even if it has to be Mozambique

Like Me

here the light's rarely
special but my sleep cycle
is intact modulo deprivation
the fish is fine and meat tender
and veggies are often soft
women stubby
everything is old

Optimism

is it possible
my run of happy poem writing
is ending

Optimism 2

will I get home
or will this be the time
all falls apart

Optimism 2

will I get home
or will this be the time
all falls apart

In The Wires

I want to be
the song so sad
that fades slow
but before you know it
it's forgotten except
its sweetness

What I Learned From Failure

the opposite of clarity
is all encompassing
whiteness and acceptance

All I Needs

a warm place
something to dream
a sky to watch
a river perhaps for air and tears
grass underneath a little cool
a bird singing a pretty song

Under Long

some wander
like tides sawing
upstream I watch the banks
for curiosity and double crosses
I welcome the calls to move on
now that my illusion me
is proven
call me when it's time to sit
lie
repair to the soft needles of an old pine woods

Strikes

the pretty scene
of blue water blue
sky green bridge
maybe is mostly
unseen this year
due to sloth due
to sleepiness and
the vague stirrings
of endlings beg-
inning

Someone Sick At Heart

someone sick at heart
is knocking
like a storm wind
on the day after
I wonder do I open the door
do I leave it slammed shut
perhaps I move slow
let time solve as it
always does

Metaphysics

a fish lifts from the water
soars in the air for a time
disappears back in the water
our lives are like this
except what's
in the water

Places

I noticed this
place / the here
that defines boredom
and potential
this / place has weeds and birds
and the likes of it are upon
the swift departure readying

Paradoxicalness

the question
how to outwit
my own
stupidity

First Then Second

even when they are beyond lovely
they can sit in bars and cry quiet as light rain outside
this means that before
they had times of joy
because tears can't exist first

Paradick

my job is not my career
I sometimes would like
to quit one to do the other

Draining Her Joy

a woman at the bar
tears and gin
hair draping / tangled / frizzed ends
I watched come in dry
now everything of her
is wet

Fear

he walked into the room
and sat down afraid
he hurt
somewhere a clock sped up

Great Pains

just a little every day
but worse
hard to remember
sometimes blunders
fear just worse
every day
and fewer of them

Bad Films

footage no longer shown
of the planes hitting the towers
as if we should forget
or make it abstract through memory
a simulation shows that people in the planes
might have lived to see the inside of the buildings
before burning to nothing

Dietician

bored with the ridiculous
popping up like pop tarts
we've left them behind because all agree
it's just carrots

One Two Three

it rained once
when I hoped for sun
windy when I hoped
for calm and light
are the passions
heart beat for

Fiery Innards

the bridge of my life
cannot endure a rebuild
just re-rivet the worst
and oxidize the surface
to ward off harsh rain
and the over-solicitous sun ball

Big Words or Lots of Them

I fear those last minutes
release will not be sweet
I hanker to do great things
but how / but when
by using words I hope
to create my me

Paradise In Blue

music as sweet as clumps
of blueberry bushes
dozens of them
four feet tall and eight feet around
paths from one to the next
I just pick and pick
eating for hours
mosquitos be damned

Savage Speech

two people speaking
same language
neither gets it
it sounds ok
they get tired
fall asleep
the world rejoices

Night Listen

tubes making a pretty sound
no ultra control
just sweet
I remember the backroom where I'd sit
each night and listen to tunes
over and over
maybe reading a passage
over and over
the tubes were hot
orange hot

Just One Nail

our barn was as old as the country
I found out 30 years after it was torn down
built in the early 1700s
it had wood nails and all of it was white silk smooth from age and air
its inner rooms and passages held tool relics
I thought is was just old
but it was old
perhaps today spiffed up it would be a gem
imagine such a place to work and write
if only if only if only

And Cold And Wet

smell of eggs and bacon
in a cold confined room
in a hut on the side of a mountain
being cooked over a wood fire
with a bad chimney
my father's friend told him
your son is lazy

In Paris Once

the woman walked beside me
down a street neither of us knew
in silence until we found a café
where we sipped hard drinks
looking past each other but
with the sneaky parts of our eyes
alert to changes / later
we crawled noiselessly into bed
then the only sounds were nicks from the heater
drops outside the window and time
lingering past

yes of

course everything
changes / wills
change / will
you

Vision Very

tonight the bridge
is awake under bright lights
and over a black current
and all in silence

More Than Want You

finding the end of the bridge
set in fog
above a warm river covered
by cold air shuttling down from mountains so far away they might as well be nowhere
I believe I'm
finding my own end
looking down I strike a pose of fear
through the gaps I know black water is flowing fast enough to pull the steep from the hills
the green won't stand
the strain

Who Huh?

so who finds the pretty girl
and tells her her
idea of passionate sex
is just a ding dong

Into The

lots of time
passing from the day till now
the days in between were
important to others
I simply watched

Stop and Stare

how did I learn
in a cafeteria
music piped in or a little band
Meredith doing the pony
with Kris and Sally in the middle of the room
the tables folded up and stacked around the room
I perfected the art
of watching

My Father

I made a screwdriver once
yellow plastic of some sort
I used a lathe to shape it
a square length of steel
I forged it into a slot blade
I tempered it with tricky heating and cooling
I was afraid I had not
enough skill to machine slots into the handle
to provide good grip
even so my father used it
he was a kind man

Pentucket During the Day

my high school was small
corridors not too like a maze
small classrooms
but crowded hallways
between classes
it was the only time to talk
aside from lunch
small social
small school
small learning

The Guest

and who asks about me

no I'm not doing fine

Times Silly

the world has a lot of space
make room for me one last time
I remember when I thought I was starting
out young

Anyway

lives past are lives
lost / their times were jewels
they were love
their many days were their days
when they saw a mist it hid their things
from them
they made all that
I made all this
you / who are you

Top To Bottom

in my field
the groundhogs are taking to the heat
like summer baked clams
by the ocean at dusk
after a day of sun baking
and red skinning
quick looks up skirts
and down tank tops
everything just as neat
as the groundhogs waddling
from flower bush to bush

Hoyt's Hill

I've found the gloves I wore
when we tobogganed Hoyt's hill
under the barb wire fence into the mapled swamp
frozen over and slick
holes torn
cold down to near zero
no one hurt / we ducked by instinct
later I felt the scratches on my head
from little tips slicing
but not before a woman wrapped herself
into a pretzel with me as holes
and we slept like dogs into the late afternoon
of another day

Torment

who would think
torture would be fun
hard to say

An Instrumental

always I saw
my future to the west
in my dream
I was away from everyone
doing what was strangely unlike

I pictured then
then = teen age
Kansas
Wichita or Holcomb
a woman
long-haired
standing with / near cottonwoods
a guitar / metallic amp with lots of reverb
playing in the wind
with the wind
nothing but a wind
blowing past me
to the farm lost to a dried out memory

By A Wet Road

water flowing down a ditch
from up the road
into a pond
while winter parted ways
my 2x4 boat
a nail at the front and a string
I half pulled it to the pond
my idea then
of fun play

Only Stop

what hopes did I have
just moved to Illinois
confidence?
expectations?
being on my own the first time?
not alone
but nearly so
I never learned to live
really
just how to survive
like with bad bowels
just planning how to make it to the next stop
I envisioned only one
next stop

Farm Fresh

failure?
how far from the farm
I've gotten
compare progress
all Bs and Cs
now a wikipedia page
some awards
one eye to see with
left side big damage
but where I've gotten

1+iI

the window
outside it's near dusk
up here in the flat
I'm thinking of putting on lights
snow like noise in the dim air
big noise in singular spots
a frozen drizzle between
now surprise
outside I see the simplified lights
on the Eiffel Tower and faded lacework ironworks
my pillow is ready for two
only I
must decide
soon
before the wine's breath expires

Sullenity

beneath pine branches
sitting on a flat rock
a small fire I started artificially
all above snow leaks down from a sky gone sullen
imagine my life I say to myself
but I forgot my answer
and now I'm me
no connection to that boy

All The While

I was thinking of writing something sweet
but the audience will want science
or engineering if they are feeling silly
but a man's life has passed by
and I think really it was a sweet life

Merrimack Overflow

big runoff
clogging the river
browning it with the poor soil up and away from it
people standing on the river's banks
are afraid
only in times like this do metaphors
wreak their magic

In A Hole

teach me how to read
how your words are related to me
spell out your self spellings
mockingbirdish I will follow you
my father followed my mother like a sparse winter
learned her language excluding all others
he underlined a passage about Rachel
he followed her into the deep cold

And Then Gone in the Tiniest Move

wet cold day and I walked down the road
past all the houses on our former farm
all the way to the pond and even beyond
another day I got into my car and drove
that way and then all the way to the Pacific
mark my path and what a corkscrew
a transition
my last step will be the smallest I ever take
from this to nothing

The Last Thing You Read

the dream returned
of being nobody
living nowhere
here is how it falls out for science:
to all you scientists who worship technicalities
you will worship them until the day of your death
then what I write will be all you think about

A Certain Kind of Sadness

I used to make people
sway and bob
lift their knees
and move across the floor
many didn't care how I looked
just how I sounded
sweet and glowing orange
and sometimes distorted
like tropical love

Here Some More

I can imagine lives I might have had
Carla dead ten years
Janis dead fifteen years
Meredith insane
the lucky man I am still is

By The Time

now the endless days of sunshine
burden / I am unable to live in it and love
I need something to kick me
out of this depth

Ambig

what will I find at the bridge?
how to get from one side to the other
I'm certain there will be tears
tears of sadness or maybe
tears in the fabric of memory

A Trip to Skip's

showers / tiring flight and drive
lightness of spirit
heavy of heart
what wonders there will be
writing in anticipation
not memory

Like Women, Sometimes

the bridge's foundations
are being substituted
rivets replaced
paint blasted off and new paint painted
on
the swing bridge span is spun out
and up on blocks
someday it will be an old bridge
looking new but out of fashion

Memory All After

today I will never forget
bringing Nabla back to life
and organizing mud wrestling
below my dorm
'in uppers during reality

Tidal

today a tall speck
on the river became
a bikinied woman paddling
a surf board
standing up
downstream
against the current

Too Many

I am dead tired and lonely
tired of explaining
tired of driving
tired of

A Certain Kind of Sadness

that bridge look to survive
the cleaning and reinforcing forced on
it by time and cars like mine
hope I don't die when it's not for my ashes to pour
off from
pretend it never happened

Number 1

two things I learned today
the taxi driver who
delivered booze to my grandmother
said she came to the door nude

Number 2

two

Buddy says that Sam Scherbon
would just yell to him
hey we have to move these bales
and make him do it
candling eggs
cleaning them
collecting them from the hens
went on for years he said

On TV

years ago
kisses were closed
today kisses are chowdowns
before we could imagine
what we missed
now we know

Fight No More

the slide down toward winter
the reminder
should we need it
attitudes colder
fear from earlier darkness
later darkness
darkness
I look for the warm hand
to rest on my head
while the last thoughts there
fall or pass
away

Puzzlish

the river is indifferent
the repairs are inky
the waters are never enough
people ride on them
while I hard step toward it
but sprint away
how fear can be strong

Why Not That Far Away

the blue changed
noon to dusk
changed everything
weeping

Wherever There Are Stones

on the stones everywhere
I see it written
carved / cut
hope for meaning suspectedly
together forever
when all it means is adjacency of what used to be
granite me too

Framework

just this bubble is clear
the rest uncertainty
the blur that makes fiction

Facing Bad Choices

if there is a way
it is a bad way
I forgot who was important and let him go far away
one day soon I will go far away just as he did
but all these far aways are far away from all others

Streaming Description

the words coming downstream
were frozen once now thawed
they've picked up the soil and some sand
from former rocks and debris
leaves mixed in / they all seem well worn
mixed together / find me sitting by the bank
not too close but eager for it to mean
what rivers everywhere are hoped to mean

RIP

you live day to day
there are patterns
but the ones you notice are boring
I've been thinking about Dave Waltz for weeks now
my first mentor
the important patterns
are there to see

Soon The Two Are Gone

outside tonight
the street's snow filled
standing at the window
hold back
the curtain and behind
me the woman who is with me dozes
I watch her breath lightly / her hair lifted by what moves her
turning back
now the street has two deep tracks
never touching
the light wind blowing and fresh snow falling
begin to fill them

It Was

the site provides mechanisms
to assist comfort when deathly circumstances require comfort
assistance gathered from friends and relatives

Lotsa Helping Hands

news email can be sent and to help

the subject is set like this

[Lotsa] <subject>

today it was sad news

[Lotsa] Sad News

Dull I Know

I believe I've reached my limit
I know no way forward
I must get away from some things
or I will be another early exit

Foo

oh everything goes wrong
I hate it
it stops me from writing well
what can't things work

Secrets of Art and Science

there are lots of ways to make things beautiful
most are sentimental / but that's a secret
how close can you step
that's how beautiful you'll make it

Nobody...Nobody!

I wish there was a beautiful way
to be part of the nobodies

An Important Bed

I want the lies
to include morphine

Rocks Village Bridge

Span 1: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built 1895

Span 2: riveted, 2 intersection Warren pony truss, built 1883

Span 3: Rim-bearing, swing, through truss, built in 1883

Span 4: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

Span 5: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built in 1914

Span 6: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

Adaptation

finding my way around a new system
trying this trying another
complexity adapts

Long Aside

in Champaign we started to learn
but being so young we flopped
the size of our ambitions was next to nothing
and that's where we got

Finding In

some of the days seem too short
the leaves are really just about gone
cooler too
but the rivers still flow
so far
and downy hair is all the rage

Tired More

fatigue is on me
tired of living perhaps
I need a long sleep

Home Of Sorts

a long trip

a drive

a good meal followed by a lousy bed

a drive and then who knows

in the end all will be upended

A Myth for Us

I have stroked the hip of the last tomorrow
and it turned to me
and frowned

For Now or Ever?

the verdict is in
career is over

Day After

when the photos are too blue
better watch our mood

Small Job

he was a serious man
much more than me
my job as always
is to record all

Today At The Symposium

I recorded it all
spoke a little
and some people recognized me
by I stun few and amuse

Downstream

the river at dusk
was flowing sharply upstream
filling widely the river bed
insinuating salt on soft

Drive Tonight

behind me
I'm heading East
the sky is orange
alien / foreign
I continue East until
the dangerous West
is past

It Stares

beauty in front of us
it stares / it stares without relent
it stares waiting with angry
patience for us to no longer see
the wrinkled surface of whatever is there
but to see it
beauty instead

Work & Just Work

putting together sentences
to push or pull
not easy and now a program
to do the same?

Writing 201

secret of writing to entrance
write for a purpose
unrelated to the readers

Left

the most unsettling
poem ever written
simply has
something out

Here But Not There

leaves are turning
cool weather
more clouds but when there are none
a clear / bitter blue sky
I was taught to look for lessons
what I learned was to not look for lessons
back home the irises are bracing
and red-tinted cedar bark is doing all it can to keep them warm
everyone is surprised by how flimsy these excuses are

Hermeneutics, He Said

the world's an old and tired place
too many have decided to stay stupid
I admit to my share of it
I want the words to make good sentences
but the funny papers have put an end to that
now only the dictionary understands

Photographic Memories

when I took the picture
the camera / shy / looked away
in its memory an image formed
into its memory something never seen was remembered
tonight I have edited it
and the camera blinked

Over I Suppose

I want it over somehow
I am in and my head it underwater
it's a young person's game
and grit and experience won't do enough

Word Display Case

something has grabbed my energy
and I'm under a deep patch
maybe tomorrow I can get enough
to grab words right
pen them down and spread them

Went Away

too many nights are spent wishing
for songs and sounds
I have a mad desire to hear you
the songs are so severe and so sad

Woods Soliloquy

dark rising
light rain falling
she is fixed by the window
waiting for various ends
she means to be warm to you
but you are stuck in the woods
cutting old downfall
hoping it will dry
before it's too late

We Laid Down That Night

once I ran through a field filled with made stones
with a woman I thought I could love
who now 40 years later has gone

a work of imagination
is able to fill that gap
with a pair of lives stitched together

but were one of those mine
I'd be alone but filled with something cold and past
something like those stones on which are piled even more

Finishing Fall

some like the snow
as it falls large as palms
fast covering the ground
and hugging branches
but me I like
the fog that drifts through the trees
across the road when the temperature rises
while the snow still falls

inside her warmth
has been poured into a hot cup

What Is It?

you can see it
when the other runners pass you by
you sometimes want to fight on
but it's too much for you now
when you were young it seemed possible
but not likely
now it's just what it is
what it is

Anytime

every peak is at the dead
I listen to the sax and its silly sounds
play sad to me
I'm going to go away soon
because slow but sure
fewer parts remain
tonight like many nights for years
I am sitting in the dark and music

Fortune in Two Directions

attribute it to cold air
or being buried
imagine what they look like now
if they look like anything at all
then think back to the hidden past
then think forward and that's what we'll be

Tears They Said

work work work

I am finding it hard to excel now

except for just a few arenas

I feel so alone

New England Scene

a birch bunch of three trunks
a heavy snow under a white lead sky
birch bark white with black flecks and stripes
a boy not far away under a low hanging pine
tending a small fire he built in the woods
behind his family's house
pretending he is that great pioneer
who discovers something small
and makes it big

Looking

some photos I'm looking at
look like made from junk
so unrealism
my reaction is nonnull
more trivial / alert
it's in my pants
and yours
the faded and vivid
scratched
I fathom as much

Apartment

there is a woman
somewhere
whom I was to have loved
I am here in a dark room writing this
and she is in her flat somewhere
her hair spilt onto one side of her head
glinting under a weak fluorescent
unable to face the cold bed

Eastern Germany in Late Winter

on a trip to far way
I saw dark clouds and watched snow rain down
when it was cold
in the car I watched naked trees fly by
I wanted something simple to happen
instead
we talked

Foggy Falls

it's the time of year when trees give up
become beautiful before falling toward
a kind of death
what if beauty didn't come first?

Unbalanced

I am terrified
of the slope ahead
today I stood in the middle of a crowded elevator
filled with young women (and me)
and barely was able to stand up straight
for 8 floors down

RXN

hot beyond comprehension
in photos her real life self
ordinary as hell

In Desert

few of them express so well
her stun is oppressive
perfection scares
she is hungry

Slumbering Toward Bethlehem

yes she walks that way
I have the doubts of old age
she is a catalog of my mistakes
she is the torpor opposite I recall

Curiosity on Hold

lots of things I remember
fill up sheets from an orange notebook
I am writing this to forget because
to know is the opposite of to remember

Well Tired

I am the hog of nothing special
I root for myself not
to win but to
quit quick and quiet

Rustic French Toast

your father stood at the counter
where he broke eggs into a soup dish
and swirled them and
added canned milk
dipped in the bread and cooked
the pieces in a buttered pan
his work was rough and eggs whites cooked cling to the bread
and that's your treat
so much so
that today 50 years later you make it that way
deliberately / not through mistake
through plan and separation≤

Done 4

I looked into the unsmiling
face of my shortcomings
and I am ready to declare myself
down the drain

Support Puns

I want something alive and full
I want to spoil your bad dreams
it would happen on a warm day
it would happen when the larks are about
you would probably smile just some
you are like that / you are those things

Born Today

born today and for years after
a little girl looking goofy
she made her way from small city
to farm to...nothing much
in there she had me
from me / thinking me feeble / she kept
a hell of a secret / wait while I count the years
65 / I had to check it / just imagine keeping
the biggest secret in the world
from the ones you loved
most for 65 years

Bye

I was swarmed with good friends
whom I need to ignore
because those who rule me
won't allow it

In Her Apartment Near Water

she walks from room to room
in her harborside apartment
she looks out windows and down to wet streets
in the way of a woman harboring regret
she wonders which other path might have led her somewhere else / some other where
to a place of closer shelter or longer promise / a calm desire
room to room she remakes them all but the streets stay wet
she doesn't think if she thinks at all
of me

On a Night Before

I'm guessing she started tonight
years ago to expel me
(ending with forceps tomorrow)
in a Haverhill long gone
when my father asked her how
she felt she said different
not some spectacular word
just different
when I think back to then
in imagination and through photos
I dream of simple and monochrome
I reminisce about her dreams for me
how small maybe or how inflated
everyone is waving

The Night

weather wet the paper said
cold and a bit windy
no indian summer nearby
many said the day was dull
but down the hall pruneface was born too
we were swapped / my mother was not fooled
she had had
a boy and pruneface wasn't
was that a good deal?

So Sweet

it takes harsh weather
to make room for a smooth guitar
played with light fingers
on a small amp filled with orange glow tubes
tonight the wind outside is blowing drizzle
a bit to the left and music is coming from the right
on a new set of thick strings
picked every way they can be

Farewell

gone too far and filled with hurt
she is probably lost

Of Some Sort

not any better
I am spinning
it seems
down a drain

Subterranean

there is a kind is despair
that eats like acid and stains like rust
it feels like a road gone down that cannot be found again
or a great meal made of the last ingredients
never forget this
please

Hip

stark truth is never warm
the rest is cliché
even those are cliché
we celebrate
without people
cliché don't exist

Politics Is A Small Horse

hell passed by today
on its way to a southern clime
hot hot hotter
waiting for preachers and snakes
everything wriggles as it passes by
everything but ice cream and snacks

In The Night I Wish

near where I grew up is a town near the sea
white clapboard and brick homes / black or green shutters
right now it's snowing there
people in those homes cluster around warmth
human / combustion
many small things make this moment the next
windows covered in blots of dew

East of a Dry Spot

the desert is no place for slow men
weak men / those who think much
green things are sharp things
every beast knows its angle
you have no angle
you have nothing
you are you

Sick Sad

they made a river for me
where everything I've ever
cried about can gather
then move on out
to sea
see?

Solid Retirement Plan

a little shack on a patch of desert
an old barn with holes like unheard bomb blasts
a metal wind pump / blades filled with bullet holes
a tank covered in graffiti or perhaps a secret note
a social security check picked up at a post office
an old computer running this software
a connection to publish it on

Recall It

then farm was more organized then
a small orchard
a little stream carrying waste away
trimmed fields
pine woods filled with mushrooms and Christmas wreath makings
now it's divided among families
who loving the wild have let it all run wild
cut down the orchard
pushed down all our farm buildings
it's all just in here now
a sad end to the sensation of sensation

Sick Love Sick

in my thesaurus
there is just one word
that synonyms every other
that word is your name

Stories Not Enough

I remember how for granted I took every part of the farm
I remember walking for hours from one part of it to another
I remember all the seasons and how the barn responded to them
I recall the animals and sometimes how they responded to me
I can remember the smell of the hay early in autumn and how it changed all winter
then there were the yellow jackets on the rotting pears when we left them on the trees too long
those memories never rose to the surface of my attention until the farm was long gone
and my parents were long gone and everything I loved was long gone
soon and all the words were gone no matter how many times I write them

Funny

funny how some people still
hold me up as famous
as a model
who clamor to meet and visit
funny

Muresco My Love

is fine
is white
is fire proof
will not rub
works easily
has great body
is very durable
kills all suction
is quickly prepared
saves one third labor
covers ordinary stains
is low cost yet is the best
can be worked by one man
is entirely free from arsenic
should be tried to be appreciated
will not show "laps" or "clouds"
requires no "sizing" or "wash off"
is highly regarded by the best decorators
has never yet been known to peel or flake off
will ultimately supplant whiting and lime mixtures
will do all that is claimed for it by the manufacturers

Stairways

can it be true
the loss / the worst
simple days where the only obligation is to be silly
in new ways
always
some days now could be like that
but the great guitar players don't approve

Sweet Snow

no one can imagine
walking into your own woods
during a heavy snowfall
walking deep into them
listening as flakes slip past left over leaves
hearing the pine boughs above let slip the storm wind
I know a granite rock deep in the woods
not under pine but close by
that's where I sit and would sit
till the end if all were mine

Past Time

Peter Walls's store was two miles away
over the border in NH
we'd walk there for the odd thing
we had our own milk our own eggs
soups maybe or a light bulb
often some candy
Peter was scottish but I didn't know that until now
now that I can find out anything in the world
using the same tool I use for writing these poems
ride my bike there with Jimmy
play on the tracks right next to the place
my band playing at the former rink across the road
evaporated milk probably and soap
cereal / how about a replay with the director's comments?

Bowl of Dust

great streams of dust
blow down streets
across road and over houses
except where it bears in
and fine grit coats the sofa and chairs
fits a layer atop our plates
why we live here the rich know well
they never would

Finally A Love Poem

my love is a carburetor
she breathes for me
she feeds me fuel
without her I am just a block
filled with holes some call tubes
but I can them torrents

Getting Better

turn the light on she said
I turned the light on
turn down the blankets
I turned down the blankets
turn around and leave
I turned around

Mush Blocks

our movies of tobogganing
pictured the snow as blue
I recall the cold
and how wet we were after an afternoon at Hoyt's hill
my father and me
he rode in front and I in back
when we crashed he got the worst of it
now he's just the past

A Bad Desire

I've always had it wrong. Never compare yourself to the best—not to Guy Steele, not to Rod Brooks, not to the rich I knew who turned their backs. Do that and you are the loser / there is no competition. Instead, look how far you've come from the beginning. Kurkjian wrote "this is my genius friend Dick Gabriel." And I paid no attention to him. My classmates from highschool were stunned by what I had done. And I paid no attention. Instead I fell off a cliff into despair. Now let me imagine the last scene again and imagine it differently. The sun has dropped just below the pines and oaks to the west, the sky is clear mostly / just highlight clouds above the treetops. I am walking down the road to my home and that road is lined by the kids from my early school classes and my parents and grandparents (the ones I knew), and they are telling me in whispers but in smiles "you did good," "you showed them," "we're proud of what you did," "you went everywhere, you competed with the best—you never won, but you were in the race up till the end." "We love you and now it's time to rest, don't worry any more; just listen now to this sweet closing music, sit here on this soft couch, hold this pillow to your chest and let your tears fall onto it; watch the stars come out little by little over the fields you loved, tell us all again the stories as you remember them unfolding, rest until the last star has come up then rest forever in your final finest imagined spot. You did it, you did it, you did it."

Their Heads Craned Up

I find myself walking home
past the Scherbon's place down the road from my family's farm
as I walk down the road the air fills a bit with smoke
the sky grows a little glazed
houses I remember built on subdivided plots are gone and the fields are back
past Sam Scherbon's house I see the barn still standing
the coops are back up
the foundation hole is back where it was and standing in my front yard
under the big big oak and gnarled shag-bark hickory are all my school age friends
they don't remember the failures I had along the way
the rejections by schools / by companies
they remember me holding vast promise / vaster than their's
they remember me going to college / going to MIT
going to Illinois / going to Stanford / starting my company
going back to school for another degree / writing not many but remembered papers
essays / books
traveling to countries / giving talks to small but happy audiences
what I remember is how much higher someone can go / how much higher my later friends did
how many failures I had
what they remember is how high I got from where I started
you did what none of us could
you made a difference / now rest
rest for all time

On Fire

find me the place where there is warmth
between earth and air
let me feel a hand light on my head
let me hear my songs
let me listen to my words
let me be alone before I am alone

A Rock and Fear

I have a fear that has ridden with me my
whole life / it never showed any hint of waning
or leaving or turning into peace or pieces
it felt like the twilight dull sky blending into the tops of trees
across our winter heavy field / the one with the rock
in the middle that could never be removed

Light Up

a big rain will wash it away
like a big river
a flood

And A Story

he brought a piano to the house on the farm
he watched his new wife moving bushel baskets
from the barn to the kitchen
this was when he was young
and I was not even conceived
now they are long dead
and I am old
soon only pictures

Writing As Usual

as usual
irrelevant concerns of the moment
interfere with this

I've Said It All

she is all women
because she's been made that way
pieces sampled from everywhere
tipped eyes / creamed skin color
sexy in every way possible
space
time
work
achievement

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu Revision

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is an ancient/old Japanese martial art that integrates essential aspects of nine traditional styles. Although each of these styles represents an independent and self-contained system with its special characteristics, there are common basics and overarching/comprehensive principles. Their (the styles') training/practice involves (the training of) techniques such as locks, throws, strikes, and kicks, in which power and speed play a subordinate (?) role, while balance and flow (flowing/fluid movements) are more important.

-=-=-=-=-=-

Google translate:

((

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is an ancient Japanese martial art that integrates the essential aspects of the nine traditional styles. Although each of these styles represents an independent and self-contained system, and thus has special features, there are common principles and overarching principles. Your training includes lifts and shot-even punch and kick techniques in which power and speed play a subordinate role. Instead of standing balance and fluid movements in the foreground.

)))

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is a Japanese martial art that integrates the essential aspects of nine traditional martial art styles. Each style represents an independent and self-contained system, and Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is the convergence of their common and overarching principles. Your training includes strikes, kicks, blocks, grappling, and throwing, but evasion, body flexibility, conditioning, balance, and fluid body movement are more important.

lifts and shot-even punch and kick techniques in which power and speed play a subordinate role. Instead of standing balance and fluid movements in the foreground.

concord-ca-bujinkan-ninjutsu Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is a traditional Japanese martial art that teaches you effective ways of self-protection using timing, distancing, and angling. Multiple attacks, weaponry, striking, grappling, choking, leaping, rolling, and throws are all disciplines incorporated into the training of Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu. The training is non-competitive, allowing you to focus on developing the mind and body through a whole-body movement martial art, not speed and/or muscle training.

Nothing Electricity

electricity going on and off
why
storm passed by
got to go

How I figured It

eucalyptus lined the road
which itself was sunk into the side of a little hill
so the tops of the trees were impossible
the first time I saw it I was riding to the lab on the hill
September which is the warmest month in California
the smell of the air a combined tarweed and eucalyptus
the hill was dried out and yellow
this was the place I dreamed of while sitting on the lap of the fireplace
looking West out the window across the road past the stonewall
past the field and finally to the black tops of the pines and maples
out there with this picture of the coast just over the sundown horizon

Fortunate Cliff

I found a place where the weather doesn't change
much but fluctuates through the regions I like
and from that vantage point I am able to relive
exactly and only those episodes of my life
that make me wonder who the hell I am

Riviera Sunset

pretty music playing
on a rainy night
windows looking out and down at a highway
at rush hour / cars almost parked
moving in lines like a snake
around the base of the hill I'm on
a great flood of technology is turning mere information
into art into music into the basis for living

Found Out

boys punching girls
in the face in the stomach
ripping their clothes
stealing their snacks
when I heard this last part I cried
because trivial and the word snack sounds silly
but then one girl started a suicide note

Listen To The Radio

not very appealing anymore
once they found him a delight
a book on a high shelf
still on the high shelf
but the light's off
the light's dim
dust and all that

In A Church Near Poland

what does God think
when I walk into a church
or pause by the ruins of one
in Europe you see
inside a miracle maybe
or just high walls held up and apart by steel
or rusting iron you see
He wonders what I think
folly and all that
you see

Somewhere North, You Think?

10 below

35 mph winds

whatever you do

don't let your dog go outside

Fear

what I see
is all I have
without it
why anything?

Trash Talk Day

moving along and feeling obtuse
like a fine dance card
my number's not on it
my judgment of talent's poor
work is like wine
soon it's vinegar

12/12/12

too many twelves today

I ate my way through 12/12/12 12:12:12

I make no comparisons

I am the null case

Blue and Snow and Tree

if you approached our house
this time of year
in Merrimac
there might be snow just a little
on the ground
our tree would be out of sight
all you'd see in our windows
would be a plastic set of candles
rising to a middle peak
all the lights blue
I told them it was the color I liked
depression instead it really was

Under Tree

how little money they had
not many years could they buy me gifts
pretending to be Santa
the night before I would lie awake
it seemed
through but apparently not
up early I'd look down near dawn
and there it all was
then I'd wait until one of them was up
then so was I
shine like gold

It Works Anyway

brought here what matters most
is the force of attention on despair
and persistent truth
find the way to breathe and listen to leaves and breath
I want to slide down the alleys that lead
back around
but who has time to suss them out
and produce faked magic

High Over Me

the other side of the field is hidden
in a rising mist made by strange winter weather
in the woods
animals await fate
live / die / suffer
all without self-pity
all without pity
inside I put another dried out log in the stove
escaping smoke makes it romantic
I write instead

Merrimack, The River

I never knew whether the water
was warm or cold
I could never and never
will step close to it
flowing upriver or down doesn't
matter / I don't approach
somewhere reason can't approach
the symbols of fear are impregnable
undefeatable / untiring
next summer I will try again

Chunking Progress

work continues
above the swirling water below
confused as ever
but above the green greens further
renewal is upon us

Deconsaturation

so the guitar does its thing
the guitar player's thing
the point is diversion
above all tentative

Lose Your Faith

we can celebrate tonight
just a drink / merlot if you insist
then I must don my wool cap and hard mittens
head for a road going far into the mountains
then up one
from there I'll sing myself to sleep
read about it

DDR Is Simple

in DDR a woman lowers her stockings
sitting on a rectangle bed of '60's maple
her bra is fashioned oddly too and her underpants
because you can't / just couldn't call them panties then and there
but underneath it all her curved patch of black hair
held the same hold on the man lying beside her
as on any man any where

A Novel Without A Book

in a room on the second floor
my woman is walking around nude
the black intersection of her legs and torso
reveals nothing / invites nothing
I am ready a seedy novel written in 1957
the plot involves driving around France
but returning every few days to Paris
where a man with a hairy woman
inspect each other for lust
when they get close to another country
they consider changing
but I like it too much when
she cooks me eggs and scones
dressed like nothing at all

Up There Alone

39 years ago I married
at age 24
and it lasted
just 7 years
love is something I'm bad at
like almost everything else
a good friend married the day before
we had dated the same woman
and he had introduced me
she was the one
he is still married and ecstatic with his life
and I am not
I am not

Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum

I would lie in bed
waiting to sleep
so Santa could come
I believed this innocently
but on reflection
stupidly yet
I would fall back into it if I could
I feel myself falling back into it

Weeps

snow blaring
wind coming down
in these woods the trunks are grey
everything else near white
it's what I imagined for this sort of ending

Nothing Ever Built

I tried many times
to build something significant
in the woods
but no skill was the problem
and I could never build anything
anywhere after those attempts

Remember This Or Write It Now

ok so my memory sucks
I reconstitute with
liquid writing
a fiction making facts

Splatt

when the truth is told
one day beyond our understanding of when
even if all of us are still around
nothing said or shown will be recognized
because truth has never once been revealed to us
every fact is a blur of facts a blur of possible thoughts
and we each get one or a few and a thought
is not a fact and even then it would be taken
from the blur

Chauvet

32,000 years ago a man
trained in charcoal painting
steps into the museum cave
and resumes work on the wall of lions
later his students will come and observe
and he will instruct them on feeling the brush trace
the neck and back of the elk so the line
is firm and bold / he is not a hunter

Oh La La

she lifts from the sheets
pulls on jeans and a smock
ties her hair up but most is still down
she grabs her keys and we down stairs and out the dark door to the blvd
and around the corner to a pâtisserie where we want to eat
after all that other stuff like her sex
I woke once and the black tangle was inches away
she overlooked the bed and everything it

On The Last Day

Dick Gabriel has learned the ways of nothing
accepts that he is gone
Dick Gabriel is not afraid to face the hidden life now his
find the thrill of anonymity a good deal
Dick Gabriel reckons those who figured him gone far more worthy of belief
than himself who believes he fell short
Dick Gabriel / he used to be Dick Gabriel
now he longs for the barn and woods
Dick Gabriel I long to be you again