Dunking Distracted Sardines

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2015
Contents

In Small Parts .................................................. 1
By One ................................................................ 2
Predictable ......................................................... 3
A Day Later ......................................................... 4
Not At The Late Home ........................................ 5
Pond and Cows .................................................... 6
Who Is She? ....................................................... 7
As Real? ............................................................ 8
Laments .............................................................. 9
One Photo .......................................................... 10
Get Low .............................................................. 11
Odd Things ........................................................ 12
Wet and Tears ..................................................... 13
Heavy Work ....................................................... 14
Dennis’s Story ...................................................... 15
Uppsala .............................................................. 16
Affairious ........................................................... 17
Repeat One ........................................................ 18
Again ................................................................. 19
Titanicful ............................................................ 20
Sitting By The Graves ......................................... 21
Fire On The Mountain ......................................... 22
What Does It Mean? ......................................... 23
Five Haiku ........................................................ 24
Storm of the Century ......................................... 25
Dee Dee Dee ....................................................... 26
No Girls .............................................................. 27
River Storm ........................................................ 28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stormy River</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See The Levels</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haverhill Where I Met Her</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Smell</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone Girl</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Fall’s</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes a Great Haiku</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Seeing Snow Storm Photos</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonight As Always</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowly Dawning Insights</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American South</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Annual Review</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Like This</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Snow</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer At Heart</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Scene</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin Studies</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Ku Four</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me Away</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Thumb</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forget He Said</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I Mean</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Nike</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In All Its Glory</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Love</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Thinking</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawning Bugs</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I Blue?</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Computer Is Hot</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha!</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to Delete</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twilight Calls</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts Dreaming</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Bed</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haying</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Bare Metaphor .................................................. 67
Avoidance ...................................................... 68
Falling Away ................................................... 69
Old Maps ....................................................... 70
Why Tonight ..................................................... 71
Pi Day Tomorrow .............................................. 72
Finally ............................................................. 73
Design Thinking ............................................... 74
Alone at the Keyboard ........................................ 75
Good Night ...................................................... 76
Insane Paris ..................................................... 77
They Are Now Dead .......................................... 78
In the Homeless Grove ....................................... 79
Nothing Yet ...................................................... 80
Haikuiana ......................................................... 81
Take a Haiku to Work Day ................................... 82
A Thing Called Evening ....................................... 83
Remembering .................................................... 84
On a Stay .......................................................... 85
Guess What’s Next? ............................................ 86
Like This? .......................................................... 87
Romantic Ku ...................................................... 88
Cold Far ............................................................ 89
Truth Under A Dress .......................................... 90
Don't Read This .................................................. 91
Big Project Arrived at in Small Parts ...................... 92
Simple Nothings ............................................... 93
Kurkjian ........................................................... 94
Alone With You .................................................. 95
Ma ................................................................. 96
In Merrimac, 1964 .............................................. 97
Absolution ....................................................... 98
Rled Rzepin ...................................................... 99
Call Still ........................................................... 100
Lost Track ......................................................... 101
If I Could .......................................................... 102
Let Me Go ........................................................ 103
Projecting ......................................................... 104
CONTENTS

Rabbits I Thought ................................................. 105
Anguished ......................................................... 106
Forget Me; Remember Me ....................................... 107
With Luck A Story ................................................ 108
NH ................................................................. 109
Coop ............................................................... 110
Like Buffalo ....................................................... 111
Riveredge .......................................................... 112
Paul Hudak ......................................................... 113
It Will ............................................................... 114
Street in Haverhill ............................................... 115
American Dream .................................................. 116
Of A Flirty Season ............................................... 117
Bette Davis Eyes ................................................. 118
EK et al ............................................................. 120
Macadam ............................................................ 121
Can I Say It? ....................................................... 122
Really Really ....................................................... 123
Grand Exit .......................................................... 124
Secrets Evolved .................................................... 125
What Partners Do .................................................. 126
On Top Of All That ............................................... 127
First Nights ........................................................ 128
Day Two Away ..................................................... 129
Not Magnificent .................................................... 130
What Does Not Beautiful Mean? ............................ 131
Not Time Tonight .................................................. 132
Woman Next Door ................................................ 133
Is It Too Much ..................................................... 134
Pi Zza ............................................................... 135
Gradual Difference ............................................... 136
Finally Near The End ............................................. 137
Ass Symptotics ..................................................... 138
Valuation ............................................................ 139
Slave to Love ....................................................... 140
Long For ............................................................ 141
Slave To The End .................................................. 142
Being Explained ................................................... 143
CONTENTS

Eva .................................................. 144
Fingering ........................................... 145
Old Enemies ....................................... 146
Rui Paula .......................................... 147
Out .................................................. 148
Bye Bye ............................................ 149
On Plan ............................................ 150
Why Always Sleep ............................... 151
When I’m Too Tired ............................. 152
On To Summer .................................... 153
Sim Ann ............................................ 154
As Best He Can ................................... 155
Female Form ....................................... 156
Truth All Over The Place ...................... 157
At Once I Knew I Was Not Magnificent .... 158
Sometimes Losing is a Habit .................. 159
Tonight As It Cools ............................. 160
Speak With Her ................................... 161
In A Death Garden ............................... 162
Gently Wondering ............................... 163
InkWell Awake .................................... 164
Argentina Upscale ............................... 165
Down a Road Opposed ......................... 166
Funny CS Joke .................................... 167
Summer Canal ..................................... 168
Off Track ........................................... 169
Cool Grass Dream ............................... 170
Like Missy P ........................................ 171
Heading to Scotland ............................ 172
Information Hiding .............................. 173
This Is The End ................................... 174
Sundown Art ....................................... 175
On Bath Street .................................... 176
To From Edinburgh .............................. 177
Health and Marriage ........................... 178
Scottish Genius ................................... 179
Rain Again ......................................... 180
Obviousnecessity ............................... 181
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just Me Baby</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain of My Heart</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop Fixing My Typos</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireworks Above</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InkWell Blues</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Ethel</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel Too</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Air and Sweet Barbecue Pit</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Dream</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouch</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Wrong</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Cemetery</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road to the Observatory Site</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion as Imagination</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a Wood</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Wills</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find Out Less</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Mile</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What You Want To Be</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On A Partway Up</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone Naturally</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Told You?</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrimac Dreaming</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oblong Reminder</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop I Say Write</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wally</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wally Silly</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Am No</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Turing Test</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswego</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redhead</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet Don't Fail Me Now</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Attitude</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine in Berlin</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And We'll Talk</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Me One Too</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagasaki</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aki Akahori, Writer of Mysteries</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer of Me Writing This</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holcomb I Suppose</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a Mood</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising on Rails</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Do</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a Haze</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot or Not</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad Girl</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Dead For Sure</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Over</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly Fish</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVB</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revving</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorgeous Tonight</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Lunch</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Notice</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh Shit</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Is Our Home</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Home</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soon Trip</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why So Old</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Was My Home</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Short</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Is Here</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Poems</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucky Child</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev Null</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Vibrations</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Graveside</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a Typo</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Nuts .................................................. 258
Not Here ........................................... 259
Just News ......................................... 260
Home Finally ...................................... 261
They Are Coming .................................. 262
Somewhere I Make It ......................... 263
Yet Yikes .......................................... 264
In 2015 ............................................. 265
Not Far ............................................. 266
 Telephone Tag ..................................... 267
Find Your Beach .................................. 268
In Camera .......................................... 269
In Town ............................................ 270
South of Philo ..................................... 271
Quick Tonight ..................................... 272
Original Pancake House ..................... 273
Jane Keeler ........................................ 274
Central Illinois .................................. 275
Glory Jo ............................................ 276
Witch Cramp ....................................... 277
Like the Wind ..................................... 278
That Day ........................................... 279
Instead ............................................. 280
Truth vs Beauty .................................. 281
Critical Voice .................................... 282
Bike Home ........................................ 283
Never Cold ....................................... 284
Bel Ami ............................................ 285
In A Word ......................................... 286
Worse is Worse ................................... 287
Hi Lo ............................................... 288
Like This .......................................... 289
For Cover ......................................... 290
Who Will Write This If I Don't ............. 291
A Meadow in Edinburgh ...................... 292
Green Bus in the Background ............... 293
October Lightness ............................... 294
Amazing and Common ....................... 295
CONTENTS

Do Don’t ......................................................... 296
On A Plane ..................................................... 297
Cool Your Jets .................................................. 298
Melancholyish .................................................... 299
Pittsburgh Today ............................................... 300
Birthday Girl ..................................................... 301
Fully ............................................................. 302
Did I Love Her? .................................................. 303
Monongahela ..................................................... 304
The Rest ......................................................... 305
Romance After The Fact ....................................... 306
The Same Bad ................................................... 307
Vapor .............................................................. 308
Analytical Model ............................................... 309
Sharp Wind ....................................................... 310
Small D .......................................................... 311
Names Change ................................................... 312
Watching Her .................................................... 313
Not Tonight ....................................................... 314
Nowhere a Rhyme .............................................. 315
Mystery of the Desert ......................................... 316
Brandy Brow ..................................................... 317
Reinterpret ....................................................... 318
Reminder ......................................................... 319
To I ............................................................... 320
Under ............................................................. 321
Like That ......................................................... 322
I Cried That Night and Still Do .............................. 323
Poof ............................................................... 324
East Berlin Formerly ............................................ 325
Writerish ........................................................ 326
Raw Desire ....................................................... 327
Knowing ........................................................ 328
Having Fun ...................................................... 329
A Story .......................................................... 330
Home Gone ...................................................... 331
Or a Festschrift .................................................. 332
I Will Not ........................................................ 333
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shed on a Hill</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard and Fences</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By a Bed</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donovan's</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross the Line</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BeaChristmas</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those Asses</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Guy</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Is A Snowplow</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Asleep</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Day</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Talk</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out Croak</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the Year</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last to First</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In A Small Country</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hm</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Merrimac</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Land</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Haiku / Cold Night</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Out of Time</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wintertime Merrimack River</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Christmas</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding Day</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Free</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles and Miles</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Found</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home To Be</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finders Keepers</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Carry</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin William</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang On Loosely</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Small Parts

so many small towns
across the middle of the country
growing stuff / harvesting stuff
the people who live there are real
to each other and nearby
for me they are abstractions
people in quantity / but what do
ey they do every day / and how
do they find a beautiful way to live
in the evenings or early mornings
drinking coffee / drinking
women live there with the men
what do they need every day
every night / everyone has a story
that fades each day to nothing in the night
weep for them if you can
I do
By One

misty day the day
they buried her father
cool after record heat
fourth of July few days back
out in the open / the grave stark and bare
the casket on cloth beside it
men who spoke now gone
her mother now gone
she remained as the men with shovels waited
under a beech smoking
she knelt beside the casket
her hand resting on it near his head
she didn't cry because crying was not her vocabulary
the men waited a long time
nothing changed that they could see
the afternoon wore on but they knew
night was far away
each of them decided not to laugh
nor tell jokes nor even remark
they knew it would happen to them
one day one by one
Predictable

later that day she fed the chickens
they clucked as usual
she let the cows into the barn
fed them grain and later milked them
cooked a meal a simple one of kielbasa and potatoes
for her mother who preferred one old cup
filled by a jar from the woods
her brother left after not long
left her with nana to work the farm
to work in the factory
to be the man of the farm and all the farmers around who promised
broke them the next month
that night she nearly cried
after yelling at her mother and stepping out for a smoke
the grass laid flat where he lay on this way to dying
you know I grew up there too
why hide these shy facts from me
you knew I would make them a fiction
I’d read and read until they became facts
the next morning before driving to Haverhill
she fed the chickens
A Day Later

the next day she stopped at Linwood
she was driving his car
the one he fixed up from parts from his autobody job
the convertible
the grave's hole was not filled
filled three quarters up
the sod cut with sod cutters still sitting next to the felt blanket
around 7:00 but an hour or more before dark
she stood looking down into it
facing the direction the sun was going to set in
because the river was down that way
because she would one day buy her own grave up
on the hill directly behind her back
with her son standing confused next to her
because she would never share death with him
so now as he writes this he fears it so
Not At The Late Home

everyone knew that everything about the paper’s report
of the funeral was wrong
there weren’t a son and daughter
and also two daughters
being Ukrainian they used first and middle names
so Helen and Pauline were Helen Pauline
my mother and Paul and Concerta were Connie Paul
my uncle / the standing wreaths were still standing
off to the side of the almost filled grave
my mother wondered where to go
home to her mother to cook and feed
to the chickens to feed
to the cows to milk and feed
to the horses to brush and feed
to the turkeys to feed and comfort
to the apple trees to pick them
to the pear trees to pick them
to the grapevines to pick them
to the tomato plants to pick them
to the corn to pick and shuck them
to the cherries to pick them
to the hay to mow and rake to dry
or to the river by the green bridge
where she once kissed a boy by the boat ramp next to the hand tub house
where he stared gratefully at her ample bust
or stay here all night and talk to him
which to choose
which to love
which to hate
Pond and Cows

later she walked from the barn to the small pond
frogs bellowed and behind them in the mix
tree frogs and crickets / it was a warm night again
no one swam there anymore because the water was too tannic
the oaks and maples dropping leaves
twilight and the up the little hill the house was lit like Christmas eve
for her this was a different new and ugly world
she felt she was just starting and her will to go on had gone
the cows lowed in the barn / she returned to her home
and her bed
Who Is She?

she walked just ahead of me
in a light rain back from the tony restaurant
toward my hotel and her car
she stopped to reflect on the dark river
flowing in orange down to the ocean
under bridges alone steep cut stone river walls
she said nothing to me / I think she was content to let me walk on alone
I had stepped past her and came back to her side
her hands were on the uninspired metal railing
and my narrator thought perhaps she was misting
she said in a low voice I need the warmth
and she put my hand with hers into her coat pocket
I stopped thinking / twenty minutes later
we continued
As Real?

my plan for figuring her
she shares thousands of years with me
she raised me
every made up story has a chink hammered off her
she ran as a girl around the same farm I did
the buildings old when I was running
were old when she was running
what happened to the big barn my father told us to behold
what day were those pictures taken / wedding day
a man from Boston / a dandy really
there to take on the farm
he did and died after the try
she left it in disgust after I left
I wanted it and still do
I can build it again here on pages like this one
Laments

discovery is how I do everything
I have not much knowledge
at least not reliable knowledge
I need to worry less
I need to do less
move more
live more
be less responsible for other things
be me
One Photo

if I could go back and take one picture
of a time and place in my life
would it be the farm
one of my wives
a great sex scene
my mother and father young
me very young or the farm when I was young
when I looked the best
the first time in bed with Kathy
Kurkjian and me singing the classics
my big keynote
the prettiest day
do I need to name it or just describe what it should be
later later
Get Low

all the times I would run from my house
across the road
over one stone wall then along it
up on it again and around an old apple tree
back down / jump over the sewage drain or stream
then along an old cow path / up the little rise
to the edge of the foundation pit also a dumpsite
past the big lilac over to the two gravel rut driveway
to the barn / slide open the door and up into the hay loft
I wish I could do it again
Odd Things

the house was so big growing up
when I visited it 50 years later it was tiny
I judged it both times by my size and my parents’
when they tore it down a few years after that
I saw the fiberglass cloth and newspaper insulation
the rough framing and boards
later I heard an earlier house he built
had a rifle as part of the chimney
if I pile up the mysteries
they reach the second floor landing
Wet and Tears

as she drove away in the heavy mist
she wondered whether the casket would leak
and her father become soaked
others would have simply wept
January 14, 2015

Heavy Work

still confused over the senses of words
working it out in code
maybe more bugs to clean out
Dennis's Story

Dennis Clark you idiot
helicopter pilot in Vietnam
bully in school before that
home in the '70s a drunk out with his bud
in a pickup his head out the window to puke
Dennis
his bud swerved toward a pole in Amesbury
went back to pick up the head
put it in the bed
drove to Anna Jaques
and left it all for someone there to find
the story I heard
January 16, 2015

Uppsala

cold city so the beds are warm
dark so the fire is bright
lonely so the women are making
at night all the colors are deep and sharp
piercing the ice are fenceposts and straw
where is the light coming from
Affairious

she thought it the ultimate sign
love for life lighting up after the sun was whisked away
she prepared herself each night
by dawn she was crying for luck
her children in her open thoughts
he thought it the ultimate trip
warmth for the evening and into the dark
he wrote before bed each night describing
in the morning he needed coffee and thoughtful talk
his wife getting ready to phone
Repeat One

some of the many roads
took me merely round and round
on them I’d think hard / drive slow
like reading a story over and over
watching the same movie again and again
the repetition soothes a mind
or makes for strong nightmares
January 19, 2015

Again

some problems are too randomly presented
unrepeatable
struggle to figure what it means
a puzzle maybe not solvable
and the night grows weary of seeing me
again
Titanicful

the captain has told us
time to disembark
some of us obey
the rest will drown
Sitting By The Graves

why do we wait
our mothers gone and the questions come to the fore
we go every day to wait by their graves
for a sign they are ready to answer
but coming before dawn
staying past midnight
as the woodchucks prowl and the owls hoot
there are no answers
but the ones we invent
Fire On The Mountain

up on the mountain one time in the past
I could go up and up
the air in haze and maybe the sounds of cars far down there
parts where stone was steep and hard
I’d wrench my fingers into cracks
and hope the fog didn’t disguise
a flat hard ending below me
my father still young went ahead
and spread encouragement back to me
I heard in my mind the same song
just over and over
What Does It Mean?

I think my father’s birthday was around now
we never celebrated it
never mentioned it
my mother’s not much either but we noted it more or less
my nana’s funeral - they didn’t let me attend
nor the burial
my step grandfather
my father’s mother
births and deaths off limits
beginnings and endings off the table
sometimes the smallest difference
makes the largest difference
January 24, 2015

Five Haiku

a lot of dust:
as if the world had cleared

a dog in the manger sips coffee,
it’s important,
the style is assuming

a woman of the house drains the cup of heavy whipping cream,
it’s fit,
the gall of the earth is waning

a stubborn trick—
by myself,
killing defenseless bitters

a lot of debris:
as if the web had evolved
Storm of the Century

far away it promises to snow hard
the day will become dark as white
snow drops in chunks not flakes to the pile
of snow already there
from the riverbank the black river will look diseased
I want to be on that bank in a light tent
hugged by a thick down sleeping bag
all through the blizzard
I was born for that sort
of thing
Dee Dee Dee

the brook that starts on our farm
doesn’t freeze but flows somehow
snow comes right up to it
when I stumbled across it one year
I didn’t walk along its bank
the snow was so soft and felt-smooth
the dark water moved slowly toward the river
I listened

crickadees
No Girls

the magazine’s name is girls and corpses
something I don’t want to crack
they featured a story on their website
about what happens after the crack
a fat ass was on the cover
I am thankful my libido is like those corpses
River Storm

the river came up pretty high
during the storm
ice flowed down too
almost to the top of the wooden pier
some familiar yellow on the surface of the snow on the ice
some brown too
the kind of day I wanted then
the sort of faith in change we crave
Stormy River

we were surprised by the snow
the amount
how light it was
where it piled up in the strangely strong wind
how the tide pushed the ice back upriver
how the birds hunkered down to reduce their furnaces
once when I was young I thought about racing across that
ice at the point of swiftest flow on the coldest day
just before it was too dark
I stare at photos now
See The Levels

we
each of us
have our levels
mine never included the
spectacular / the dark haired
beauties with long flanks and steel
stares / I was always second tier or third
Haverhill Where I Met Her

I found her while walking the promenade
down by the river in the old part of Haverhill
who am I kidding
every part is old
I’ve lived in California for forty years
near Haverhill for twenty-three
counting seven when I wasn’t with it enough to know anything
but that’s home / this is an ephemera
count the poems to get the stats
That Smell

my mother / shy about going out
not many friends but I’m sure she went driving
out the roads / to the river for example
she smoked I know
drank beer but not much
from the farm or social / who knows
her father had anger / she too later
how ugly the town smelled and the river
and Haverhill next door
this is me
Gone Girl

the river is that way
snow fog and wind-flung flakes
the clouds are uniform but heavy and dark
the wind drops my eyes to the ground snow
if not careful you could walk into the river
and like me you’d be gone for good
gone from good
One Fall’s

you know there’s a bug I’ve been hunting for weeks
puzzling it in and out of existence
to find exactly the cause
many possibilities of course
and involving huge computations
many times I thought I found it
figuring around it don’t work either
puzzled desire indeed
Sometimes a Great Haiku

some great words are strung together
surrealistic to be sure
interesting combinations that can irk
put them together yourself
try not to worry
After Seeing Snow Storm Photos

I work hard for no real purpose
being arty not sciency
I wonder about duration
my program progresses
I want it to live but the edges are peeling
I want to spend time elsewhere
doing other things
spending a little time on the program
but not all the time
I wish
Tonight As Always

too many random things to do
and work on top of that
I long for a long rest
time to recover from all that work
but it piles and piles up
Slowly Dawning Insights

slowly improving the program
one big test to try tomorrow
with getting original words and not the downcased ones
this will be tricky
a major revision
it will take all day and I should make careful copies of things
American South

the American South beckons
warm moist air
soft gentle forests
slow life in breezes
I would walk long roads
down abandoned tracks
I think maybe there are women there
who would open their doors
their coverlets
who would not expect cold to hit their hearts
I warm to the idea of spoken liquids
My Annual Review

the snow has gone crazy
I am not there
this would have been a perfect time to photograph
instead I am here in front of the computer
working on writing a writer
I would instead be holed up in a potbelly warmed room
writing the life of myself and like that
driving as best I could to the bridge
maybe staying with my Rocks Village people
with them / writing about them
a dream and not a thought leader
One Like This

when we sit to remember
the past we remember only
the pretty things / the soft things
Kurkjian’s story about getting up to change
the tv channel ends likes this / wrt his father
then he’d tell me to get up, go (all the way!)
to the kitchen and
bring back two nice red apples
Spread

what surprises me
date: February 11, 2015
are the small things
the small words in a simple rhythm
that make us all more human
stuff like this reminds me
of dozing under the pines in our close woods
not fancy but it was ours
a thing I once had I wish I had again
a spread
Home Snow

back home all the tall straw is covered in snow
low fences and bushes
bird baths and what’s left of corn
in graveyards maybe only
the tops of headstones can be seen
and if they are slate
it’s a black crescent on white
if I were there there would not be
places to park so on
I’d drive from place to place then back to an uncertain driveway
or lot / I’d be up to here in snow
Writer At Heart

thinking of how I write
it seems so flitting
launching from place to place
hoping something will fall out
or apart
as I work on my writing program
it is slowly revealed to me
how to do this flitting
there
Simple Scene

I know how it will end
me dreaming as the brightness dims
of walking up the road past Scherbons’
to our farm from deep in the past
it will be like those sentimental
scenes of the dead walking to their loved ones in a rural heaven
I will believe it’s happening but my dying imagination
will be simply hanging on
then it will be
Violin Studies

develops idiomatic
rates of change calculated and measured
show it’s random not designed
but the measure assumes design is smart
or designers
what if they’re stupid
or their own reckoning of improvement is flawed
design then is random
Republicans

I would like to take the crazies
and shake their brains out
replace them with real ones
I would make them reject workforce preparation
to favor search for truth
I am not a consumer or a passenger
I resent being thought of as one
I would stare at them for hours
then laugh for hours
they aren't crazy
they are stupid
Multi-Ku Four

the gray's tears
have gotten over
the first snow

a patch of grasses
its change
the back decking mouse

of watches
a storm is shining
but shitworks kill

yellow-orange
but somehow the orange
is changing
Me Away

early results
the best winter ever is passing by
I was caught in a warm place
being snowed in would have been perfect
if I need it I will need a different place
not a familiar one
there is eight feet of snow there now
and a river barely able to handle the runoff
Best

to sleep and not wake
like a break in a dream
just your memory will know it
something has changed it will process
someth
Bad Thumb

when something bad happens
my brain flinches and I cannot avoid thoughts
I writhe and wring
I will get over it because I was luck and outwitted
I learned and will grow cautious
Forget He Said

what is there to fathom
first a big thought
then a small regret
in panic we act like dopes
I know how it feels now
I will be more sympathetic
February 22, 2015

What I Mean

ups and downs
silly things we do when our thinking stops
I want it all paved over by time
and new memories
fix what I can
move on
Tour Nike

through time we find what turns us
we fight for pleasure but pain sometimes
finally I found a pleasure and finding more would be
I will seek
In All Its Glory

eventually people make what we seek
then we seek more
how long till we disregard
I wonder why it’s taken decades
the fetish / the interest
no explanation for why
why not
why not till now
just the thing itself
Last Love

so we weep when weeping time is here
we face the last door then tenderly open it
the other side is nowhere
the road here went wide then narrow
the last bit lonely
I wish someone who cares
would watch me walk the last part
watch the door open
then close
Bad Thinking

writing programs slowly and testing them
because the computations are long and I need them to be right
this time / earlier it was more experiment
learning how to write business letters
is not learning how to write
learning how to program simple algorithms
is not learning how to program
Dawning Bugs

slowly dawning insights
playing with the code
see what works
no strong plan
like design thinking I suspect
always I find bugs that should have broken everything
but they don't
don't understand this
Am I Blue?

simple fact or not
salt water can freeze
waves of half frozen sea breaking
on a shore will fill
your mind alien
we don’t expect some things
with no words for them
they seem gold
when they are really black
or white when blue
March 1, 2015

My Computer Is Hot

the program runs
16 way parallel
still days to come to finish this stage
maybe a week
then testing and verification
feels like a lot of effort for how little payoff
March 2, 2015

Ha!

today I spoke with Dr Zilch
know what he said
nothing
March 3, 2015

Failing to Delete

running out of space
race against time to move files
so I can delete them
I won't make it
(I didn't)
Twilight Calls

this is twilight
come to call in its chips
demand stories of explanation and recall
the light though won’t admit truth
so stories count
you will suffer
or maybe twilight will stroke you head as you drift to sleep
indistinct / swirls around the trunks and down roads
twilight has a special place in its heart for dark back roads
for dense colored cities
for stories that unfold unplanned
March 5, 2015

Massachusetts Dreaming

days are gaining length
warmth coming
I pray to make it to my home turf again
eat the junk food there and buy a book
drive over the roads and over them again
I want to sleep by the river
feel and smell the moist air
fall in love with me the boy as I wished I might have been
March 6, 2015

Making a Bed

tomorrow a lot of hacking
and checking files
till take all day
I think
I am exhausted from all the work on this ngram project
I could hack now and make my computer work all night
but I just want to sleep
Haying

we worked hard to get the hay in
before the rainstorms predicted for the next week
a small family of mother son father nana
none good at it
a spit together mufflerless tractor
flat old hay wagon
with slats for sides
old fashioned sickle-bar mower
side delivery
we worked with the Red Sox game on a battery radio
1962
they lost
Bare Metaphor

there was a last day
I was on the farm
when it was ours
I can't remember that day
or the last day I was in the barn
but there were such days
last times for many things
forgotten
first times remembered
now think about this
birth and death
Avoidance

we want it to be quiet
calm / simple
fitting to be that way
while the fires still
burn
Falling Away

the program rolls on
reading and pruning
big dirty data
they don't talk about that much
the program doesn't care but works hard all day
all night
until it's done
how it acts cannot be predicted
so what looks like errors are just business as usual
I need to revise something
Old Maps

an old map
teaches old things
like what was once
here and over there
if I can find my old farm
from before it was a farm
I could plot the course of my life
and beyond
March 12, 2015

**Why Tonight**

wow I'm tired
like a tree about to fall
rain about to stop
wind about to be turned back
I have strong
fatigue / so strong
it weakens the soul
Pi Day Tomorrow

confused by food and drink
string of words portraying sense
loud rhymes cracking their knuckles
some say there needs to be a point
I say no point is the point
Finally

finally the program is done
still some polishing to do
but it completed its tasks
and the ngrams are being tested
all the data being backed up
so tired of all the screwups
making things restartable
doing things in parallel
I’ve waited a long time for this
Design Thinking

the basic design
attacks its dominant feature
the hostile defense
leads its problematic rear
a bug appears to be five killers
this pattern / no one finds it
doomsday interruption
Alone at the Keyboard

I’ve worked hard always
never got far but tried a bit
aimed to play more than work
managed to do it for a while
till I became passé
we all will
now I fester
I wish I could stop
before
March 17, 2015

Good Night

staring at spring
water except for drought
warm except for the cold shards of winter’s breezes
hanging on / leaves still on trees chipping off
streams carrying things to rivers
rivers to seas
how many are left
rage or gentle
Insane Paris

along the Seine
walking alone of a warm very warm night
lights of boats and dinner boats
glimpsed in the strong current and wakes
ahead of me the French woman I crave
walks with no purpose away faster than me
her skirt shakes no but my hopes are above us both
water or woman / which charm is greater
which way closer to a wet passing
They Are Now Dead

some nights I walk alone down yellowed streets
dogs look up
if anyone passes by I look down
I want no one
no thing
sometimes I stop by a stucco wall white
and rest my hand on it until the cool and wet
are dry and warm
my thinking is fragmented and poor
some believe I am frail but they don't see my eyes
the yellow is the lights placed to push away
a fear of death
those whose homes are here sleep here
those with none just sleep
no one begs of me
they give
In the Homeless Grove

the homeless gather around themselves
in a grove none expected
they cook meals from discards
their lives are subtle with slight movements and small sounds
they eat near big meals
they hope for them to scatter
when they fall for each other it’s small
quick / instant
fat is worshipped
March 21, 2015

Nothing Yet

something important to know
when a woman walks away from you
meaning is revealed
study it
I did and do
what I learn is about me
Haikuiana

you have found birds attacking—
get to this book
read the present conditions

winning mother—
an original worker
working my rear

watch!
a white sound
the thunderstorm
March 23, 2015

Take a Haiku to Work Day

dumb tombola goof—
just enough to make the right
grave cryptophyte

moments of liquorices—
piece attachment, is it the US?
Yaltopya?

a short distance—
by myself,
free-basing cryptological honey

aggressive,
but somehow the orange
is colorizing

a bitch,
this year in death
just not a man
A Thing Called Evening

there is a thing called evening
it's where people go to cry
for warmth and for the end of the day
it's where lights men have made fill voids
it's where orange and yellow are calm
once in a city away from my home
I opened a door and in stepped the end of the world
Remembering

who's at the door
my hotel has many floors
in it new things happen
we are strange hot tenuous
cumbrous but we sleep all night all day
a world formed for two days
then popped off its stack
memories persist in us
nowhere in the world
On a Stay

we stayed from early evening
to late afternoon
huddled and warm
curtains drawn on a high floor
evening coming early again
it was obsessive
was it real
a story
everything
March 27, 2015

**Guess What’s Next?**

the thing I can’t see  
them looking at me with love  
happened many times they tell me  
I recognized not a one of them  
can’t see the look  
the eyes / the gaze / body making  
then there’re the words  
my ears close  
they follow my eyes
Like This?

a Red Cross
nurse takes down
the last words
of a British soldier
in 1917
he speaks quietly
looking up at heaven
she listens delicately
looking down at him
Romantic Ku

when I watch a movie
with a stunning woman in it
I curl until I disappear
Cold Far

off the plane and I'm dead
friends meet me and it's a buzz
the drive is long
sleep is there I hope
maybe more
I write and read
I sleep 20 hours
here is what I once wrote about a place and time like this

she was here she was just up there she could have easily
turned to her window opened it and spoken down to me
instead those around me kept walking without speaking
heading for a place well defined but unknown and unknowable
soon the woman was left behind she is still typing
Truth Under A Dress

words are all I have left
pain has pushed all away
my mother had a secret
and I found it out long after she died
forever is one now after another
Emily told us
we can only believe
she hid everything else from us
Don't Read This

she told me once
to stay together overnight
would be too dangerous
it passed over my head
wonder / I still do
there was never any hint
I am too afraid to ask
what she meant
Big Project Arrived at in Small Parts

menard project
how do we put together
a paragraph of complex prose
linked to topics
linked to each other
the stray thoughts
is it small bits coalescing
or abstract bits put together
then expressed
Simple Nothings

year drags on
I sleep a lot sometimes
I don't look forward much
fatigue rules
I wonder how to make a complex paragraph
I dream about words
when I talk to old old friends
they gush over my abilities
I pay them no mind
I mean
I don't hear them
I see what their texts are about to say
and I don't read them
I cannot
my attention is not much
paid to these
I don't suggest changing anything
Alone With You

as you can guess
I like walking down slightly wet streets
in Northern European cities
at night in Winter
I like to look up at lit windows
and see the curtains closing
I like shadows and silhouettes
I like echoes of high heels just around the next corner
the swish of a dress or the thump of an umbrella opening
I like to see which windows shield readers
which tv watchers
which lovers
which diners
which cooks
because I like loneliness
but not lonely loneliness
Ma

in front of me
a wide black and white photo
of my mother’s high school classmates
in 1933 and some are handsome
some pretty / some ugly
most bright faced / many in home-made clothes
my mother could never imagine
me looking at her face tonight
more than 80 years later
zooming in on just her
In Merrimac, 1964

most evenings nothing would happen
we'd sit in front of the tv after supper
I'd practice the piano a little
to change channels someone had to stand up and walk over to it
in the winter the wind outside
would rattle the house
my father would make warm milk
ovaltine really
the three of us
my mother smoking in her rocker
my father standing behind a counter
me lying on the couch
time didn't matter as much then
Absolution

sometimes the work
goes late
puzzles on puzzles
tomorrow more of it
when we visited Poland it was just to the second
exit in from the German border
we stopped to take photos
and grab a coffee
it was Rzepin
the waitress was a killer
years from now people reading this could wonder
how did I know she was a killer
it was her blonde hair a tricky gait
April 10, 2015

Call Still

people are out
I sit at home programming
my life is this computer
computers always at the center
for some years I biked hours a day
that seemed like a good life
can I get back to it
will the wind be there for me
will the downhill slopes
still call
Lost Track

progress today
yesterday too
it responds better to trigger words
and there’s a new session manager
that varies how much it pays attention
there are some easter eggs too
and a new favicon for now
I want things to get better
If I Could

I look forward to too
many trips / my fear rises
I will need help somehow
I would rather walk from the center of my small home town
to my old farm
find it there waiting for me
as it was 50 years ago
I would live there alone and write of my family’s tragic lives
I would walk the woods
the little roads in them
pick princess pines in late fall
for Christmas
toboggan down hills I don’t own
until one day they find me
and everything I’ve written
April 13, 2015

Let Me Go

I have the right to be forgotten
not for dignity
because dignity is for things getting better
but for sanity
because me in the past is not me now
I want old versions gone
I want to be forgotten
let me go
Projecting

I won’t beg
they can stop my project
but I can stop too
I don’t want to stop the paycheck
but I will if needed
I just won’t spend after that
until it’s safe
Rabbits I Thought

forgotten
I’ve craved it and got it in small amounts
don’t ask me anything
I want long sleep nights
I would like to hear my dog again
barking out through her dog door
and into the woods that were mine
barking after something she never caught
Anguished

I need a way to stop
stress and work less
I want to write and photograph
I want to play like a kid
ride my bike again
be outside
be more of me
but it doesn't work that way
now / but soon?
April 17, 2015

Forget Me; Remember Me

sentimental story in front of me
so sad but still a comedy
about being who you are
about passion
I want an ending that excludes the me
everyone (mostly) has come to know
forget that person
let me be the lonely kid
lying in our field
looking up
as the cold air keeps the clouds
moving quickly past
With Luck A Story

there was a crook between two trunks
of a small tree at the top of some stairs
I knew nothing of and a third truck
much smaller / the two trunks formed a seat somehow
and the small one a gearshift and I would pretend
to drive / what bothers me is I never wondered
why the stone stairs went up there
what was that little highspot
and why the pump at one end and why was it flat all the way
to the barn door
later I learned a building was there
and this was its entrance
deduction / investigation / luck
NH

in the north pines are tall and straight
wind near their tops whistles
the trees sway
near the ground / calm / warm even
a place to think of the future
then in the future to remember
the past
Coop

I tried to make one of the old coops
a clubhouse
cleaning out the chicken poop
scraping off the whitewash
removing the roost boxes
never really worked
I got sick breathing the bad stuff
it would have been a great clubhouse
big and watertight
far from our house
behind the main barn
never worked
and I was lazy
Like Buffalo

some days we walk down
old streets that once were important
now bordered by debris
on a warm day there will be odors from the past
there are lots of places to nap
far away from here
Riveredge

what separates the beautiful
from the slim and pretty
ideas and how to think
I want to walk along the river’s edge
on an old sidewalk with a woman
who knows the river well
who can bring a laugh into her sadness
be more than slim and
more than pretty
Paul Hudak

so everyone dies
and now they all are
the brilliant and not so
pleasant lives and spectacular
for some they report deaths early
though I love reading I can’t read that
It Will

we read the good stories
about a man about to die
but what about what
he hid away in his
head and heart those years
his secret secrets
what will become unknowable
when the uneverything happens
Street in Haverhill

there's a street where sad people live
they aren't sad per se
I call them sad
because he has lost his mind
and she takes care of him
for reasons we can't determine
American Dream

I am ready to pack it in
I spent the weekend sleeping
and I was finally relaxed
the roads pull me as usual
I regret it will be light travel back home
maybe I don’t last the year
April 27, 2015

Of A Flirty Season

tomboyish Spring
the sea and the calyx fields
all one coloration
first womanizer
falling
on the half-rounded scanner
a blue
has moved without a zero blueberry
season flood
Bette Davis Eyes

dawn
frosts the constrictor’s receptors
and the hooters start reasoning

starting June—
thread and garlic starts
all one start

starting cotton—
a starting escherichia
starting in my ear

a young,
this time in fall
just not a man

that time squark—
without nag’s back
my timed timing

leaded liquid—
a regular deathwatch
leading my leg

as regularity liquidizes,
the control of the kingwoods leads—
noon leg

not this economic fulfillment,
king of the herring,
but your best beat
dying slaughterers,  
being killed—  
death in Boston  

immortality death  
a world pussyfoots always  
into the crownbeard
there they were
all those I knew and who knew me
knew them all too well
one of them spoke with ease
we all were old
the speeches put us to sleep
the food was otherwise
how silly was I
Macadam

we are on the road
whistling through towns
by them
off the road there are barns and sheds winking small lights
main houses with strong lights outside
gravel driveways filled with pickups and vans
if I open the window and ignore the hot wind zooming past
I might hear crickets or cicadas
on the road
not dead yet
Can I Say It?

a supporter moved on today
my project in jeopardy
I am wondering about the scene
I like mechanisms
my fears are piling up
against the fence that separates
us from the future
Really Really

I watch videos and place myself beside them
far away it seems
I can tell it’s bad when what I dream of is long ago
my dreams are the colors of faded color film
and I wonder
will I be able to string enough words together
to make an impression on the sad passing
of the eternal world
Grand Exit

the sand driveway from the road to the barn entrance
grass in the middle / two ruts
made from decades of wear
trucks / tractors / wagons / wheelbarrows
up a slight rise
seems so ancient
seems like a warm place to live
I don't want the attention any more
let me go
Secrets Evolved

the western field
sharp thin black branches webbing the sunset sky
stalks of old straw and a rock
woodchuck holes around it
an old apple tree
a back field
how did it all come to this
beginnings never spoken of but they weren't secrets then
they are now
What Partners Do

tell her
a man said
the other man paused then said it’s a long story
he told she
she granted redemption
his job was to love her
On Top Of All That

I sometimes have a hard time believing how far we would bike in Illinois when we lived there then spend the day playing then ride back long summer day but many miles each way we were something and she would strip too
First Nights

I met her outside my studio
rented for trips / better than hotels
snowing which was rare for the city
we never spoke
at first the language barrier
then the seductiveness
finally the lust
every first winter night we spent under covers
until 4pm the next day
just touching
this time we sat by the window
watched streaks in the yellow light
then she released herself and the night began
all that mattered was the smell of her hair
Day Two Away

then we’d eat a light dinner
in a dark place
she would order for us
in her husky accent
I would rarely look at her
nor she me
our rules were to look askance
indirect / hidden passion
at night only the lights from outside the windows
orange and yellow
touch not speech
taste not sight
her fingernails were soft on my head
my back
Not Magnificent

our spot's by
the river / a bench where we watch
the fast current and the boats that push up against it
behind us the cathedral
I warm my hands in winter between her thighs
she watches women walk by across the river
in their Frenchness and zest
all I can do on Paris streets is walk just behind
and watch with awed eyes
What Does Not Beautiful Mean?

Paris is not beautiful
French women are not beautiful
their strength is allure
human scale loveliness
take the streets
cobbled and rough most places
smelling of piss
the buildings are drab for being a northern city
the sky is pale
used to be dog shit everywhere
against this the strong colors of markets
reds and greens and yellows of produce
blacks and silvers and whites of fish
pinks and whites and whites of shellfish
reds of meat
off-whites of chickens unless they are feathered
many colors of bottles of oils and jars of spices
see what I mean about allure
human scale allure
May 11, 2015

Not Time Tonight

I've found bugs galore and strive
  to fix them or patch around them
to not much avail
I have to call Scotland tomorrow
for our trip
this is just a progress report
Woman Next Door

today I met a crazy woman
I tried to calm her down
her husband agreed to everything that was done
he backed down
I would too
she is super crazy
I am still flustered
May 13, 2015

Is It Too Much

I suppose I am in the midwest now
I haven’t left yet but I avoid stress
I’m full on in despair
it will be warm there and I hope not crazy
I want to chill
I need rest and nothing to think about
May 14, 2015

Pizza

tonight a good pizza
Nancy couldn't stop talking
I didn't recognize her at first
we ate good pizza but not overate
cabs both ways
a long walk to and from the Arch today
a warm day not humid
I hope we make it home
Gradual Difference

ceremonies over
hot day then some rain
a good meal and conflicting conversations
I felt alone little
didn’t feel alone at all
felt a little healthier
felt like the story is unwinding
May 16, 2015

Finally Near The End

going back to the small womb
forgetting the special things
cancel my history
let my dreams live as if they never were passed by
I think it's going to be a long long time
Ass Symptotics

when she walks away
the sadness saved up in the world
pours into a hole
never seen before
inside you
Valuation

too many days spent
doing other people's business
I won't be a slave much longer
I've worked hard to achieve a strong result
few see the value
value
it's about science
not value
May 19, 2015

Slave to Love

looking back is all
there really is
at this stage / I am a memory
loser / finding my way toward
a woman of fantasy
I was taught the strange
finishing moves and gestures
there are many I would love
many I did
Long For

when will I be home
too much travel starting last week
lasting all summer
almost / the world back in black and white
I want just to write
Slave To The End

how terrible
to work to the day you die
for someone else
your life is here and it’s yours
not the man who pays you
be grateful and hateful
Being Explained

the beauty of casual wording
things slowing down
ready to stop
the usual place
at this time
casually explained
Eva

forty one years too early
the one zipped by
she shone
she owned
she drew us all
out / she was regal and funny
beauty of time
I fell for her
it is too late for me
I was her last choice anyway
Fingering

suppose love
suppose a lit day
on the street corner
eating codfish and buttered bash
suppose a the one passed by
would you dare
May 25, 2015

Old Enemies

they say hate is a potion
rubbed on the ego
sandpaper on the eyes
I could see it
but
her face dour
hypnotic as she grabs you in her eyes
she smiles to others
not you
I am as one lost
as her gaze heads
for the restaurant door
Out

I have lost the urge
to join and work
it is a hard place to find comfort
it is something I can drop
Bye Bye

I am done with my contributions
to this group
I worked hard for not much
no thanks eg
I hope to make it home
I will eventually
On Plan

sugar girl soured on me
an old train instead of the hipster one
and where’d she sit
by the window as the old track
rusted alongside the green river
let’s go
Why Always Sleep

to airport early and still half asleep
last night my buddy couldn’t get it done
today it’s a long haul
no one in Spain so far likes to help
so I didn’t cooperate much
but I wasn’t rude
just not a pal
I want to sleep
When I'm Too Tired

poets are dopes
don't live in our world
make livings by hobbling
when they write it's all about frogs and leaves
sometimes / I know I know / cats in windows
and classical music
yuckoente / as they say
On To Summer

so it was a nice week
aside from the working and crazy folk
I spent time wondering about writing
how it gets in the way of writing
yes I meant that
now you need to figure out what I meant I meant
Sim Ann

working for the poet
making schedules
sigh
what torture because it distracts
me from real work
but for Hass
why not
As Best He Can

progress on the scheduler
but I notice I’m missing New England
the code is delicate
but when Hass asks
Gabriel answers
Female Form

woman is a platform
I mean this positively
the worlds are built on that platform
life and love / the experience of passing on and
passing it on
without a woman to watch
there is no reason to cry
June 5, 2015

Truth All Over The Place

the beauty of coincident deaths
an illusion of storytelling theory
an equilibrium they tell me
crater real story was of interruption
and sporadic intensity
I cried at the ending
At Once I Knew I Was Not Magnificent

while we were there planting
several women stood by nearby / graveside
one came over to talk
she said how beautiful were the irises
how much she enjoyed seeing them
as she was visiting her mother’s gravesite
were we the gardeners of the family?

we explained that our very good friend (you)
carefully tended to the plantings every year
but you lived in CA and had been unavoidably kept
from coming out this spring so we were planting
the geraniums this year for you
she said her mother died just a couple years before
and that just one day ago her mother’s dearest and best friend
had also died / she teared up a bit

we exchanged another pleasantry or so
then she departed
and we finished planting
Sometimes Losing is a Habit

feels so far down
feels like bad luck
what will it cost to fix our house
will be forced to the laundromat
first time in 40 years
what a comedown
Tonight As It Cools

today two problems solved
hot as all get out
making plans but I want to stop that
I wanted to like some of those things
but the cost swelled and I wilted
nowhere but alone here
June 9, 2015

Speak With Her

the paths people take
outlined in an odd blue
where people pushed themselves with small efforts
I can see my road
as if at night / the routes I’d drive
wandering to find someone
I think myself
are like these others have taken
but mine repeat as if traversed
by a maniac
was that me
I stopped places but those there then
are now gone and their memories too
mine of them / theirs of me
In A Death Garden

if the poets call
groundhogs will lumber from den to den
in cemeteries all over the country
other countries too
poets are getting ready to call
they hate technology
though
Gently Wondering

in a town now downed beneath
someone's lake the man who through
two generations made me was made
a man I can never know
the place I can never go
women I can't quiz
only while I live will this be a puzzle
I will solve it with my stories
and why not
InkWell Awake

my program is relentless
in its creativity
it doesn't tire
doesn't get distracted
(much)
it surprises me with its clever connections
surprises me with its dumb mistakes
build in learning / that might help
only how
Argentina Upscale

somewhere on the other side of the world
someone built a city
in that city an old hotel
has been remodeled time after time
because everyone loved the view
of the streets at night
and in a room there now on a mid-upper floor
a woman beyond what I can imagine
is spreading her legs
and waiting for the end of the song
before taking off into the Southern sky
in foreign air
June 14, 2015

Down a Road Opposed

I have made many bad choices
written too many bad things
loved too many bad women
I want something to calm me in these lingering days
I wish my memory had kept up
now I patch with makeup
classic in time / travel by person
I limit myself to expand limits
Funny CS Joke

I found a way to make a new world
it's called programming
in it I'm a stranger
who magics mistakes
I like the feel of parentheses
others crave types
I'm not that type
Summer Canal

what do you think it would mean if a woman wrote this

it isn’t like his erection
they bone—
our Summer canal

if a man wrote it
if a computer
I would answer

many lives in the screw
and not bastardized yet—
the death of death
Off Track

not on today
words not coming right or well
things not working well
but I am catching up a little
sometimes I wonder if I write too simply
Cool Grass Dream

last night my dream was of time travel

to the old house and the most vivid
part was lying down in a cool bed of clover
by the kitchen door

the walkway from the front of the house to the back

and gazing at the grass / at the house / at the garden

at the oak tree

then the woman who would sell the house stripped down

and we held each other until I told her my age

prevented everything

it was beautiful / sad / disarming
Like Missy P

She was beautiful
when I saw her sitting at the Moustache café in Porto
her friend was a beautiful man
they were paired
his life was on its way
to being beautiful
with her
when they stood up to leave she turned away
and I watched the backs of her legs
propel her away from me
as from all like me
they were ordinary
her legs
a little fat
Heading to Scotland

my program is a surprise
even when I find bugs
they are friendly ones
I poke through ideas
code blankets the world with drunken sardines
and the control room of the banquet
Information Hiding

how to frame an argument as fiction
how to find pretty words to make it vivid
details to make it real
information hidden in writing
writing is not information
This Is The End

lots of ways to look at those passed on
just a chance meet up
just a lifelong friendship
I wonder why I am a pusher away
why no one speaks to me
some day the end will find its
way to me
Sundown Art

every night growing up I’d
watch the after sunset sky
I’d hope for a dark stain on porcelain
I’d settle for porcelain alone
or a bluster / maybe a poof of snow
through the night I’d make a mental painting
of a day that could end with those colors
that temperament / in the morning
I’d wake fully forgotten of the meaning of the canvas
the end of yesterday made
On Bath Street

occasionally one would be stunning
tight short skirt
over leggings
so sudden would one be
that the mind could not keep up
you’d hear yourself say
what?
June 25, 2015

To From Edinburgh

today it was rain
and a long walk
and so-so food
a long train ride
two of them
now muscle pain
and a need to sleep
Health and Marriage

sadly for many
what's written needs to be read
studied / interpreted
when it's their pet thinking it's great
when it's not reading is imperialism
ha ha ha
I say
Scottish Genius

in the botanic garden
the women of Glasgow spread
themselves like cheap laundry
on the lawns and read or text
few of them are electric
but they are all
the men of Glasgow have
aye
Rain Again

here rain is everywhere
we soak while walking
more rain than the Amazon
women hide umbrellas
but they have them
they have everything
Obviousnecessity

we live in a time
when hatred is king
where the rich want slaves
and create the conditions
that make them so
it doesn’t take long
to figure out how to hate them
June 30, 2015

Just Me Baby

maybe I should bail
bad room and too much heat
or find a hotel and drive each day
I don't like being a pauper
when I don't need to be
I want something calm and lovely
I am too old for anything less
July 1, 2015

Captain of My Heart

if only I had a list of questions to ask
if only the desperation of my parents were something I could correct
I would be on the farm now hiding from everyone
not worrying about my overlords
or maybe it’s time to take the ultimate seriously
this is all I ever dream of
Portland

too unfriendly a place maybe
need to find out a little more
need to decide
maybe it's not worth it
maybe too much to do otherwise
Stop Fixing My Typos

she can't escape her brand
speaking of things as grammar
it was cute fifty years ago
she's maybe too old to see it
the space between the moon and its noun
who cares about the space
I care about moons
I care about nouns
Fireworks Above

something like this
twenty hours in bed
sick and nauseous
in bed so long my back went out
will this be like the end
the fireworks seemed on top of the house
InkWell Blues

my program writes great
but revises poorly
too many not great words and phrases
I’ve tried to beef it up
how long do I need to hang on
Our Ethel

we recover slowly from memory
the dark evening we campaigned
and met Ethel
Ethel Cullinane class of ’67
she invited us that next weekend
to a game at Haverhill High
we went / when she saw us in the light
she was convinced
it wasn’t us
no not us
Ethel Too

catherine was rainy
we campaigned without passion
school assignment after all
November / it was dark
no one was interested in our candidate
later we went to part headquarters
we met Ethel there
we talked a long time
we were from the small-town school
she from Haverhill
she asked us to the football game
we said yes thinking something was meant by it
nothing was
July 8, 2015

Just Air and Sweet Barbecue Pit

he gives his tack signaling devices a buck
to communicate if there's some deed.
the only other telephone message is the sex
of libidinous weather and persuadable bank
River Dream

I am not back yet
not back home
the river is likely slipping downstream
as it does / the rocks are exposed
slowly polished
birds find what they need by it or nearby
I would be ready for a week or two there to remake myself
how many more times can I make it
I can almost hear the flow
July 10, 2015

Ouch

too much work this week
the simple breezes need to take charge
I have two more hard days
then a trip / will it all work
hard eye work maybe one more day
pain not friends
Quick Wrong

tomorrow I pack
final preparations
why does it take me days to get ready
soon I want to get back to writing real poems
July 12, 2015

**Asbestos**

I've read a lot of poems
that celebrate butterflies
stuff like that
sure it's all pretty
pretty butterflies
pretty poems
but serious
or boring
go home and eat somewhere sweet
like all typos
the worst are best
Dog Cemetery

there’s a path through the woods
leading to where dogs have been buried
I never go there
it’s a small field growing smaller
saplings leaning in
sky closing
those dogs were my dogs
my friends buried them for me
and said some words I wrote
I was just practicing
Road to the Observatory Site

when I was a kid
I wanted my lines to be lines from books
how long to cut the road to the observatory site
I’ll have it done in one week
it took a day
because there was already a road
and only small bushes blocked the way
my father thought I was lazy
instead I was being dramatic
he never changed his mind
Passion as Imagination

there is an imaginary sun that when
it sets sets the edge of town on fire
and in that fire women flame their passions
and the men around them burn in their loins
from where I sit the town's all orange
and the women red and weeping
join me as I join this scene
as a lone looker
July 16, 2015

In a Wood

somewhere north of my home
a mountain rises that I could climb
and my parents could and we’d listen
to the music while watching the movies
of then

the way I am now
all options are gone
the green dark woods are lonely for me
they weep while it rains
Body Wills

today a long drive and the bodybuilders
smelled of liquid tan
I reeled and left
the cut girls scared me
they all looked old
no matter how old their asses looked
Find Out Less

today a long drive and the hotel is welcome
tomorrow I return home
and more work to be done begins
to be done
my interest grows weak and seeks
the death penalty
Royal Mile

mother and daughter
different noses
same mouths and chins
sweet / pretty / aligned alongside
it was raining of course in Edinburgh
the rings they told me what for
What You Want To Be

at the end we may just slump
and be gone
we enter nothing but white
nothing written on us
we depart scribbled upon and confused
confused at both ends
many branches scratch
many nails dig
the gaps covered with soft kisses and touches
are few / are none
what we find from the past of others
would kill them in their surprise
my mother stares at me from her class picture
On A Partway Up

I am sitting halfway up the tough mountain
at the point where easy turns to hard
on a rock that would be grand comfort higher up
I can climb no higher
a boy reaches a point not far below me and sits his rock
he shouts up
you are wonderful / you were my dream
one of us weeps
Alone Naturally

every now and then I find the tracks of people I once knew
they swear happiness after a long string of average luck
their patina is a rust
they’ve traveled long ways
they cluster by each other
I stand alone with only one or two
the choices
Who Told You?

chickens are great
I once had a glass of hens
they represented terse condensations
in the silly-season Moon
hot initially
then suffering
July 24, 2015

Merrimac Dreaming

I read about Merrimac
small and unpleasant
I lived there for 23 years
ages 1—23
haven't been there for a year now
I want something warm to happen
July 25, 2015

Oblong Reminder

many have left
both the earth and my memory
they all seem so important
I hunt them down and write them down
I search for my past in the present
Stop I Say Write

a lovely woman lives in northern Europe
she cannot say a word to me
she drinks / eats superbly
dresses in long scarves and nonlinear skirts
her thoughts are formed in ways surreal to me
my impression is a jumble
cold is all I recall
I never met her
I’ve read we’d be perfect
but I think I wrote that
her name doesn’t match her red hair
I think it’s artificial
I spent hours fiddling with that color
and the spelling of her name
I was not coordinated enough to do both so each drifted
I watched her walk away down a dark street in northern Europe
one cold night when the snow was the thing
that was the closest I came to punctuation that year
Wally

the old ladies are clucking their poems
they sound like they were written 100 years ago
all the old ladies love all the poems
Wally Silly

tonight I learned about the bermuda triangle
the cat thing in the lap
an old woman writing of someone just like her
and some doctors of this and that
I spoke of the attraction of possums dead on the road
July 29, 2015

I Am No
I can't swallow who I am
I need even more backgrounding
Bad Turing Test

what is wrong with me
why can't I be normal
Oswego

the heat followed me to my car
I pushed it out after I closed the windows
on the way home
the sun pressed its revenge
Redhead

a stupendous woman walked by my café table
I was drinking strong coffee with heavy milk
I held the coffee cup near my mouth
until she passed around the corner
my life passed in front of my eyes
Feet Don’t Fail Me Now

I landed on this planet
expecting my feet to work
but they failed
because feet and water only mix
Farm Attitude

as I fade out
I dream of having stayed on the farm
with my world circumscribed by its boundarird
only what comes in
no socializing but in the fields or woods
instead the tears of distance and strange
instead the bad hope of fame
the silly hope of fortune
no hope of happiness
Catherine in Berlin

there was a downpour
and we had ice cream sundaes in the eastern part of Berlin
my student and his gf
she was severe but kind
both grew up in the former east
surprising how many friends of mine did
sometimes I visualize her scowling
sometimes smiling as she helps me
an old man / find a toilet
And We’ll Talk

roads don’t quit
often / even ones unused for decades
keep their ruts going strong
under cover of overhanging trees
the midlines fill with grass and brush
but the tamped down tire ruts persist
through writing / through maps
I follow them and walk them
perhaps someone I know will
one day pop up on one
of them
Build Me One Too

some of the days are weapons
piercing and bashing into us
the ground / shaking leaves and bending branches
a bright flash of light near the horizon
a steeply angled wind into trees and rattling shutters
we spent millennia fabricating how to build shelters
now to work on our brains
Below

down below the narrow ridge
dried farmland growing nothing
quonsets broiling everything inside
hardy trees not ready to give up their green
the air up here is warm not quite hot
the conversation is irrelevant
my poetry sees the dire farmland below
Nagasaki

the whole discussion of the effects
of the atomic bomb will be phrased
in terms of three kinds of energy / no other more mysterious
or immeasurable forces acted
these were all these were enough
Aki Akahori, Writer of Mysteries

along a beach some young woman walks
Japanese I’ll bet in a teardrop shaped hat
it’s after sunset but before dark
fog and clouds strangle contrast
when she walks her slow walk her hips
thrust a bit and a song like an untuned piano
delves the grey blue sea and sky
she stops / she stares down
later in her hotel room miles away
the lights are all an orange yellow
like a noire movie made on the cheap
the curve of her hip makes a bed impression
and staring up with her rounded eyes
she imagines a lover hidden in the fog
waiting for her tears to be wiped away
waiting for a landmark when the contrast returns
Writer of Me Writing This

she draws a bath as the old way of writing goes
her hair tied back as if she plans to step out
her straight razor / a throwback / is very sharp
she tests it on her wrists and a sound above her
reminds her of drips / later instead she downs a cosmo
having read about them in an airline magazine
a man who wants to love her forever buys her drink
but can only smell her fragrance drift away
watching her we imagine what hides below her floor
she wrote of me writing this of her / and in her work
I was like a dripping fog hugging the heavy coast
Holcomb I Suppose

on Kansas there is a long driveway
that years ago figured in a famous crime
Chinese elms lined it both sides
almost exactly East-West the West
end where the crime exploded
once lined with shade now a dozen remain
fifty years and no water with the river run dry
I stopped at El Rancho and grabbed a Kalbac Yes
back when it was Hartman’s I grabbed pancakes
I might have bought the house had I had more
my wife would look on / she would have visited twice a year
In a Mood

everyone finds their way to grief
sadness at the start
at the end
many ends
you would think there's a reason for all of it
I watched many men digging and covering
putting the sod back over
waiting till the last of the family leaves
waiting until dark rises
Rising on Rails

sometimes the trains are acting funny
slowing down to pick up folks but not
at stations / along the rails / forlorn
people wondering where they will sleep
not catching out but catching up
catching on caught like a catfish
banged on the head
Be Do

a bad poem grabs you
while it’s first being written
forces bad words into your fingers
phrases with deep ruts
when it’s over you cry
out for your mama because
that’s what gunshot men do
Sadness

suppose you are close friends with a family
been to many of their weddings for forty years
then you never even hear of the most recent one
do you wonder about close
August 16, 2015

In a Haze

what if you could find out real answers
who you are / why you are
what is behind it all
sometimes when I visit the quiet places
where groundhogs roam
and the wind is noticeable
I almost hear the answers being whispered
Hot or Not

when the heat is like fog
we dream of frozen nights
when the lights shine blue
and the path under our boots crunch
we make our own fog under heavy quilts
with close friends of a persuasion we adore
crickets? / stiff wind in bare branches
part of the life of love
in a world made fog
Sad Girl

there’s a syrup bogging in my head
I am sweating from overwork and underachievement
I hope my cough doesn’t undercut my keynote tomorrow
I need to keep talking to overwhelm it
then I’m done for a while
All Dead For Sure

this is the sad girl
she swings my neck like hawthorn
I am ringed by undesire
I want a group of children
in an old picture to have one of them alive
82 years later
such a small number
Rest Over

lots of little problems
I want them to hole up while
I recover / I want to wander
New England roads and paths
see where things are
just rest over and over
Fly Fish

some days people fish from jets of rock
flaming in from the river shore
they arrange themselves so that any photograph
taken of them will produce a classic Rockwell print
I snap them anyway
I’ve never seen them catch a fish
maybe they did
I’ve never touched the water in that river
I fear the strong current
even when the river is still
can I ever understand this
the river flows
RVB

one day on the bridge someone pointed
out the pier that a century ago was abandoned
it was outlined clear in green growth under clear
shallow water this one day
looking at this river right here for 40 years
I never saw it
I photographed it
all who saw it wept with delight
at the surprise so far hidden and light
Cousin

today I spoke to someone long lost
she was so excited to find me
she made little sense
her life I think
is simple
I need to go to her and tell her what I know
if her heart is able to take it
Revving

I sit on the banks of breakdown
I rev my engine too high to achieve what I do
rev too high too long and I break
I will break soon if I can’t reverse
everything I try to do is very hard
Gorgeous Tonight

if god sees us naked and not as people
but as souls do he and we exist somewhere else
too or instead
is our world a thing he made but ignores
like the bits struggling in our software
written high up and clear but in fact
nutty and chaotic / approximate
is our surely his maybe / his surely our wtf
if so
if all so
how can road I start on end in his garage
Form

careless / a fib
there’s been no change
a reasonable interpretation
they are careless too
God's Lunch

God bought a burrito
carne asada with pintos
guac and a pesto style sauce
a beer and folded legs on a side street sidewalk
He watched homeless pick for food
watch big cars go by
His memory's good
I'll see you all one day
just wait
We Notice

when it's time to be creative
it's time to start watching
noticing and marking things for later
the hard part is taking off the leash
the collar / opening the barred door
August 29, 2015

**Oh Shit**

the qb rang out and the ball was hiked
hike-en-em / bike-en-em
as Jimmy used to shout
the left-side pass rusher came hard and tight
a pair of stacked blitzers came through the A gap
the qb threw high and deep to hit a spot
the right-side slot receiver ran to that spot
caught it over his shoulder
scampered for a td
the qb raised his head and pointed two fingers
to the sky and thanked the lord
above
the lord was talking to his buds—watching games and such
He said
the falsely righteous believe I am fair to all equally
that I love without conditions
hell no
I take sides
do the wrong thing and you’re fucked
I hate Seattle and that qb knows it
I nudged that ball
and I accept his thanks
August 30, 2015

**Short Essay**
	here is something I always do wrong
it turns people off
makes them turn away
hate me
I'm not sure what it is
I try to do nothing instead
that makes it worse
This Is Our Home

lilacs by the old foundation
not empty but an old dumpsite
and the lilac bush tall and full
never lacking good panicles
never lacking good smells
I ran past it every day
on errands to tell ma or daddy
my memories sparse
it was part of world
my world
a world gone and now just stories
September 1, 2015

Home Home

soon I will do my wandering and unwind
even if the leaves don’t cooperate
even if it’s cold and rains
even if friends turn their backs
I need the rest and the rest need to back off
Soon Trip

there is a caution upwind
the night rains are swarming in
I feel a danger somewhere
I’m badly stressed / I must stress this
I think a wind will wind up in my wheelhouse
where will things be
Why So Old

I could hear it now
the soft brush of river past bank
night whisp of wind down the river’s path
behind closed doors and shuttered windows
something special has just completed
now it’s the time for books and new music
in the dull part of town
they listen to old old old old music
This Was My Home

the last time I saw my old house
it was dripping bad insulation
fiberglass cloth and newspapers
we were that poor I suppose
I believed my father dug quality
but he dug getting it done
the shingles were off
the walls were skeletons
the yard overgrown with unpleasant weeds
not the type photographers pat
keeping it what it was was too
much for the builder who bulldozed
then built something of no character
In Short

slowly the world undresses
as if the future depends on it
we read what’s revealed and all it
brings is sadness
we can only write it all down in case someone lives to read it
the short lines matter
She Is Here

it starts when a woman steps into you
looking up at you
she is in control always
to push yourself is criminal
with luck she will lie close with you tonight
you can never forget her / her smell
her yielding skin
many other things could happen
these are the ones to remember
Suppose

we aren't who we are supposed to be
we should have stayed close to home
taken simpler roads as mistaken Frost readers would say
maybe it's time to simplify and slow
be more who we are supposed to be
the seed that falls too far finds itself alone
in the end / its roots creep back
Some Poems

I saw a picture of a family
today / the comments were
this is so wonderful
beautiful family!
some emoticons celebrating the sentiment
enjoy your family!!!
they were ugly
except one woman
who was ok only
really / I wondered
about life for a while
then went back to writing poetry
**Lucky Child**

I will sit by the river tomorrow  
eat food that's bad for me  
photograph what I always photograph  
drive where I always drive  
be good to myself best I can  
read by the river  
sit by some graves  
talk to some people  
wonder about the past  
the future / try to be in the present  
live like a lucky child for a day or two
Dev Null

all went ok
report tomorrow
tired as can be
I wonder where randomness comes from
Good Vibrations

somewhere alive today
a woman is learning everything she
needs though doesn’t know it
doesn’t suspect
in her mind and heart
with her hands and eyes and hair
to finally find me
help me die
and the spend the last of her days
watching her tears grow small
and dry up
At Graveside

after the hot sun
in the open air
and the burial service
for her ashes
after I read my small poem
poorly but slowly
at her house they praised the work
and thanked me
all I could think of was my old
buried and cold tonight
Not a Typo

what I learned today
the intrigue / the interest
makes everyone less a hero
and more a character
I am filled within
Nuts

del past is a snake pit
everything broken and bad when you look close
I am afraid of each turn
the world just stops and laughs
I try to figure it out
Not Here

the perfect late summer day
I spent it talking not driving
not sitting by the river
not enjoying the place of my home
I am wasting
Poems 2015

September 16, 2015

Just News

I’m too tired to puzzle it out
details of deeds and mortgages
I’ll ask Aunt Leeann later
Home Finally

finally away from the craziness
I hope to hear from them rarely
I didn't relax or enjoy my spots
it was all talking and confrontation
why oh why
They Are Coming

sometimes the craziness creeps up to your door
except the door is your head
and really it’s your eyes and ears
you read the craziness and it’s like a potion
you must answer but sense says you must not
it’s a pretty color / a warm melody
soon / you’re crazy
ha ha
Somewhere I Make It

somewhere a fine woman walks home
each evening / she has no idea
she had been waiting for a one
who never arrived / her perfect match
she doesn't know she is lonely
doesn't know something is missing
it is / only a spirit would know
I see her always / walking away
Yet Yikes

I am found craziness
and no way
yet
to stop it
keep it away
find a better result
from all sides
like crazy clowns
who love me too much
and why?
In 2015

the effect makes things look old
like a Civil War photo
it’s just a background glow
through blur and screening
someone might see it in 50 years
remark on how old-fashioned things
were in 2015
Not Far

the puzzle of difficult research
it's not the form of what I'm doing
but the hardness of the thinking
I'm not stumped yet
but not far
Telephone Tag

some believe righteousness needs hate
love some needs hate some
they seem better at one or the other
when someone tells you God doesn’t love you
maybe it’s just a message being passed on
Find Your Beach

day of talks and sadness
I am now not good with my feeling
I didn't get my vacation
back home and now my head a buzz
I want to stop everything
In Camera

so what is there to say
in a Midwest city hot with the heat
of a pennant run
with a team playing right now
five blocks away
where old buildings sweat staying up
where good food is a hidden fortune
my camera waits for a great shot
to walk up to it
In Town

the beauty standing there in tight skirts
why do they do it
I couldn't watch
I went home and cried
South of Philo

does she still live there? 
farm south of Philo 
no prospects we could see 40 years ago 
all that time alone 
even after we took her to the porn theater 
showed her a movie even I still remember 
a cloudy day and I stopped to photograph her place 
I thought of knocking 
but then how do I explain?
Quick Tonight

we find the range too far
the words are all silly
I have trouble explaining things
my words lack working
Original Pancake House

at the pancake house
two women caught my eye
both larger than models
both young and vital
friendly but professional
would I have stayed if offered
hard to know now
road not taken and all that
Jane Keeler

her barn is not a New England barn
patterned on English models
but German or Swiss
no drivethroughs to make unloading hay easy
hay wasn’t the point
you kept hogs not cows
they didn’t roam and you fed them close to the barn
the expanses were wide
she lives there still I think
she must be old now
like me
her poems are long gone
mine just get worse
Central Illinois

you know it’s flat there
small rolling hills though
mostly flat
see how far you can see
a row of trees
some barns and silos
grain elevators
must be a town over there
and over there
when the wind blows
many people fall in love
Glory Jo

when I look at the old movies
so clear the love she showed
the smiles / the bright eyes
that's all gone now
long gone
I need to wonder even harder
what do I do that makes that happen
Witch Cramp

we cleaned out the basement today
tomorrow for a while we'll work on the rest of the house
the debris box is likely too small
we might order a second one
we'll see tomorrow
my hand cramped into shapes distorted like a witch's hand
no pain / just a crazy shape
nothing else improved
Like the Wind

I wonder sometimes
how much of my mother is part of me
the sometimes quick anger
the vindictive strain
the sharp wording
just a fool trying to be my father instead
That Day

someone/she will play a sad song on a tin whistle
by the bridge of my dreams when it's over
women will gather / some will weep / others watch
perhaps a word will be spoken
I will be so far away my memory will be white
and encased in granite
Instead

instead of a wise word a dumb trail
instead of a bowl of cereal a little reptile
instead of singing a short stool
instead of a fantastic story a word to the wise
Truth vs Beauty

when you look at the true beauties
notice that their faces are literally painted on
it will make you wonder about truth
Critical Voice

I try only twice to understand what someone has written
at most
when they fail I just walk on past
I like to be critical because it's fun
lots of people don't get that
I should probably stop
Bike Home

sitting on their porch
the west beyond a garden and low trees
a gap it looks like
where a river sits
her father has told her to talk to me
she at least
sits there still and cute
she seems eager for something
something from me?
I have singing in her parlor
then the ring
two short / a pause / two short
she leaps to answer
she now is alive
Never Cold

the cold comes up on you
when the dark folds around you
I’m sitting on a bench at the edge of a foreign park
the tops of the trees are flirted by flakes
across a brown expenditure of dead-seeming grass
a woman in a long coat down to her heels
and a squaring hat and scarf
walks with high dispatch toward a domestic night
will she cook / will she smoke outside her flat
will she invite some
one in
I’m chilling / I might nod
then what will dawn mean
Bel Ami

she’s a woman now
and can decide like a woman whom she loves
and how
but when she was a girl
say sixteen
many flocked to her and she had to decide then too
then she was innocent allure
now she is a peg in the shape of a bell
In A Word

my pillow is always with me
some people look cross-eyed at it
it connects me to my old couch
the big gap when I ignored it
middle years
I was ashamed of my childishness
no more
I feel comfortable
Worse is Worse

after months the bathroom repairs are done
worse than my old man's paranoid guess
the lesson / no matter how bad it could be
it can be worse
Hi Lo

places / the future stopped
time clawed away everything else
dust and papers blowing down main
paint peeling revealing pink beneath
leaning against a broken wall
God in jeans and low-pulled Stetson
He's waiting for the wind to stop
He's used to breaking things
down the street only one bar's open
He heads there for beer / the Hi Lo
for His whisky / it's Comeau's
Like This

I like glossy-coated seizure-alert dogs
I like untuneful Newfoundlands
I like congratulatory tarantulas
I like semiconductive Tibetan mastiffs
I like reconstructive crab-eating foxes
I like unprintable Brittany spaniels
I like glossy-coated straw-colored seizure-alert dogs
For Cover

reading the great stories
I wonder what it has to do with me
I lift my mind back to when I could
pull the covers over my head
and worry about nothing
no one loved me then
nor now
but then it seemed like good treatment
I was running from everyone
Who Will Write This If I Don’t

in a town wet with night and dark with rain
the little band in the corner of the pub
brings it down and cooks
their repeated refrain drains to melancholy
and maybe even sad
I’m sitting in my car outside the pub
watching night lights flicker and dim
go off
something might be happening in those rooms
in my car I flip open my black moleskine
click on my pen
A Meadow in Edinburgh

something about the dark
photos taken in the dark
long exposures in b&w
a low sun in winter
the far north especially
women walking quickly from place to place
they don't like the melancholy
the long shadows / the odd grip
of the place on her grief which will last long
or her love which will last longer
Green Bus in the Background

black soot buildings shine in the rain
in an old city that doesn't like to be clean
famous thinkers once thought here
I found a narrow passage
worn slick from many
so narrow its sides were worn slick
I wanted a woman nearby to make the poem slick
I know which one too
blonde on the bottom
dark growing back halfway
her clothes are heavy
she is not special
October Lightness

trees gone all branches
some yellow leaves hang on
the streams gone all black blue
the wind whipped to near white foam
fall now and my favorite times in the past
when thoughts of passing passed through me
with joy
Amazing and Common

ey walked up
one by one up to the polished box beside the altar
the priest was watching and holding his candle
in the loft a girl was singing soft
she was nothing to do with this all
the women as we expected let tears
drip down their dresses and those tears
were pushed into the stone floor
as tears have been for generations
the men as we didn’t let their tears
drip down their jackets and so the life
on the church joined the death in the church
the priest lit each candle with delicacy
and the muscles of music wore deep
into those gathered
Do Don’t

I wrote once
a poem that I found last night
and I cried over it
the beauty was so out there
how did I do it
why am I now so much less
is it what Dean Young said
don’t practice
do
On A Plane

I watch people behind me congratulated
and adored / my time is over
climbing hard mountains can't be done
pushing hard is hard
I don't want to be relied on
I need to find out how to write again
before it's too old
Cool Your Jets

I need to learn my opinion
no longer matters
so just shut up
Melancholyish

walking into downtown Pittsburgh
twilight or later
a wet mist hangs around
a yellow streetlight is trying to stay lit
a woman in a long coat and wide pants
walks away slowly into the mist
into the dark
I lean against the brick side
Pittsburgh Today

today the mist rose toward the overly
rich sunrise
the clouds and hidden parts of buildings
sometimes shone through the mist
the low clouds
the mist was rising from a barely
flowing river
Birthday Girl

99 years old today
my mother was not one
to shy from an argument
this might sound valiant
most say she was a pain
October 28, 2015

Fully

we are the ends of the earth
the filled are full of blues
I am hot with the percentage
Did I Love Her?

tonight I saw a woman
with lavender highlights in her mouse blonde hair
she designed in it piled layers
I followed her through the gallery
I wanted to watch her every minute
not a good idea
Monongahela

the river out there
seems not to flow
the wind blows ripples
every which way
trains go each way beside it
boats too
it's a cold hard fact
that this city is under fire
The Rest

my age is one I never thought to achieve
or get to
today is a day of darkness always
coloring my life
leaves gone off
the roads covered in pine needles
I sometimes believe I was special
my fate was luck and collaboration with the brilliant
I need to study my best writing
to regain it
for now I rest
Romance After The Fact

down a dusty lane
leaves shuffle toward
a barn whose doors are rotting
from the bottom up
inside hay has fermented into mud
timbers older than the country
are shrinking into sheets
leather harnesses into parchment
in that barn I touched a girl
we wanted to know
it’s not what you think / we were children / see?
she touched me
we wanted to know
my theories were wrong
hers less so
mine too abstract really
hers maybe a warning
we built a house from a cardboard
refrigerator box
came home from work to a phony meal
and two touches
The Same Bad

bad wind all night
imagine the animals
clouds hurrying along
no one sees them except in town
you'd think a storm is approaching
but nothing will happen
you'd think a warm bed friend is approaching
but nothing will happen
I sit reading by the window
branches flail between me and the neighbor’s house
she sits reading by the window
we are reading the same book
Vapor

in a big park in a big city
they still run sodium vapor lights
many men and women have embraced under them
on warm nights and cold nights
the color is the color of romance
now they want to replace them with LEDs
brighter / whiter / cheaper
one wonders how'll we'll be made
when all but profit is extinct
Analytical Model

she is more than I can imagine
she looked at me without turning away
too many have wandered
I will dedicate my next program to her
Sharp Wind

when you look down you see the silhouette
of an old pier under the speedy water
beneath the bridge / someone built all that
it was hard to miss the green outline under clear but brown water
flowing steadily to the ocean
an older woman pointed all this out
to me / her hair scattered in unexpected ways
Small D

a small decision follows you
it balls up into large
it fools you into lying
until lying is truth
a cliché but worth it
her last thought
was of that night
when she didn't help
Names Change

there is a large brownstone

in South Boston where

my father turned into

John Gabriel
Poems 2015

November 8, 2015

Watching Her

I watched
until the end
I could watch
forever
Not Tonight

I am too angry to write
sometimes this happens
Nowhere a Rhyme

the little patch beside the bridge
is filling with snow tonight
night is a shallow time
the day is wandering off
a car will skid on new ice
it shall fall by the edge
Mystery of the Desert

the desert is vast this time of year
among the forgotten birds are birds that can't fly
many have built theories of mathematics based on this question
birds that can't fly
they forget all about the vast desert
how empty it is without them
for they scratch on their blackboards
Brandy Brow

I was driving that night
Brandy Brow Road
warm so my window was open
I heard dogs barking
then there they
were / two old women in a car
parked in a driveway
drinking from cups
cupping cats in their laps
I heard they were afraid of the house
lived there but slept in the car
the dogs knew it too
barked to keep away spirits
from the up road
up where I lived
Poems 2015

Reinterpret

after my father died
I spent time in his garage
staring at his projects
taking his tubes out of their boxes
and packing them for the trip West
I took his transistors too
but I hated them
every night after he died
I heard the cricket behind the car
every time it started after I turned on the light
I’d stop / trying to find it
it cricked less loud every night
eventually it was gone
I studied that

November 13, 2015
Reminder

I used to watch the western sky
after the sun had set
in Winter there was a tangle of branches
and puffs of pines
it seemed like my future
looming out of the low clouds
no longer visible
people who knew me then didn't talk much about it
I left the place
the cold reminds me of it
To I

what happens when you live somewhere
your whole life
the narrow views so familiar
they are gone
they vanish
your friends vanish
your family does
and you
only one letter to change
Under

imagine lying in bed
for a day or two
with a new one
seeing and learning
touching and all that
cold outside
but the blankets
the warm air under them
under
Like That

I watched her paddle toward me
standing on what looked
like a surfboard
on the Merrimack
in her bikini
against the tide which was coming in
yellow hair / thin / shaped
years ago I sat in my car
at the same spot
in Winter when the ice was confused
and bubbling brown ice into prayer hands
I never could get near
anything like that
I Cried That Night and Still Do

down a perfect Paris street
trying to find a good expresso
I found / she wore a leather jacket with zippered pockets
over a long-sleeved sweater / no gloves
a brown scarf knotted twice
around her neck holding down and back her dark brown hair
a wool-white skull cap hat in the form of lace
one hand held over the other
not much makeup but reddened cheeks
on the cold day
later someone said her name was Eva
over her shoulder her long strapped bag hung
she was perfect
I snapped her even though she looked
like she wanted to talk
she never smiled but she was open
I could see something was in one
of her zippered chest pockets
she could have been the other
half of me
Poof

if we could travel back
and tell ourselves little snippets
of our later lives
I imagine the look on my face
when I show me photos of the women I married
the children I had
and the citations on my awards
then disappear
East Berlin Formerly

some of them must be dead
people in my photos
taken in foreign cities
people who don’t speak like me
women with new washed panties
and the skirts that show outlines
men in flip flops staring at them
at me / cobble stones because foreign right
and always the strange dog that stares
up at me even as he sits awkwardly
on his haunches
Writerish

up on the hill I programmed day and night
I was not good at it
but better than a lot of the others
I rarely had a clear plan
today it's really about the same
but with enough experience I can seem fast and accurate
I have a fear of programming poorly
I need instead to write
write write
Raw Desire

every day new evidence comes in
showing how little I’ve done
how poor I’ve been at most things
how other talent is more talent
I really am just the best
of my small town / the bigger the world
the smaller I am / let me hunker here forever
Knowing

she said
did you miss me or
are you just aroused
then I watched film of us 20 years ago
how happy she was to play with me
and now it's a chore she doesn't consider
like the chore of listening to

I can't write it
because one day she'll read all these
and know
Having Fun

into the piano room to practice
used to be part of Nana’s apartment
but it was down a few steps
in Winter it’d be cold & cold
I started the little furnace
then sit and play / I was never great
but some liked how I played after a while
parlor grand is what my father called it
it had a deep bass sound / I mic-ed it
to jam with bands / I was always
a decent rhythm player
A Story

kids grown up from my schools
even now they don't like talking to me
what what what is it that is wrong
I am so fear instilling
so smart / so stupid
that uninteresting
why do most of the places I've tried to work
never even call me back
why do women always come to hate
if I find out I'll warn you
Home Gone

someday there will be a way
to remember things without grudges
the good talks / the little touches
like hiking a tough mountain
many have made it beyond me
I am sitting on an outcropping
looking down at the way I'm from
a long hike to here
be happy about that	onight in a cold room
with family gone home
Or a Festschrift

some celebrate the 65th year
of great researchers
I’m 66 now
therefore like dogs that run and hide
I’m under with it
November 28, 2015

I Will Not

they hovered around me
almost like friends
but soon they felt me shrink
the culture has learned
so have the palm readers
who close my hand
and say no
Shed on a Hill

a shed on a hill
just some granite small boulders
and short pines
from there all I can see is the long path
back to the rained on day I was born
a dark day I imagine in the rain
warm last day of October
my job to line that path
with a string of words no one can believe
I wrote
Orchard and Fences

our orchard was never used
while I lived there
the yellow jackets—the small ones
ate holes in the small pears
the grass never grew tall there
branches were part of the pathways
around it a barbed wire fence
maybe sixteen trees and the sewage stream
forming the start of Cobbler's Creek
green
By a Bed

he balanced poor skill with patience
perseverance / he nearly sliced off his hand
he planed off part of a finger
I lived more in my head than in the world
do I do differently now
he died I think praying by his bed
alone and unable or unwilling to call out to her
I hope his prayers made a difference
that night or after
my family is a family of loners
Donovan’s

tonight a woman walked past our table
in a restaurant on the beach in Melbourne
whose walk away from me taught
the purpose of thongs under a silky light brown skirt
you should picture smooth elongated curves
with everything around it moving slow and deliberate
if you can’t you are already faded
Cross the Line

we saw them all
they wandered past
we had trouble keeping our balance
there was a cold wind then a warm one
strange hair color
December 4, 2015

BeaChristmas

some days I can’t make it happen  
like today but I had good friends for once  
I’m tired and will reflect later  
it’s a warm sunny day and instead of the beach  
around Christmas it in the salon  
talking
December 5, 2015

Those Asses

well no need to write about
on another topic why is Brisbane
around Christmas time like Miami
at spring break
Little Guy

I touched a kangaroo today
a small one
I chose it because even if it reacted
poorly to my touch
it couldn’t kick the crap out of me
Time Is A Snowplow

many people I know are happy
I am sad and pass it on when I can	onight I am a one-liner
I want more sleep than time can provide
December 8, 2015

Sydney Asleep

some nights I'm too tired to write
I struggle to open the file
to find some words
like tonight when sweat and more exertion
than I am used to takes over
Falling

it’s sad to be fading away
but it’s nature’s way
need to step aside
I’ve modified myself to be smaller
soon nothing
I will work in my own little shop
A Day

we walked a long way today
it was hot and I didn’t do well
too hot / not enough exercise
I need to change back
I want to go home
December 11, 2015

**Last Talk**

today was better
a good last talk if that's what it is
I am content with going anonymous
people asked questions
made suggestions
I felt like the old me
for a last time perhaps
Out Croak

last day and the beauty of Sydney
old and dusty like my friend Kurkjian
they both are old and seem cast aside
women’s skirts are too tight
funny how the specially adapted
fit better somewhere else
Rest of the Year

I will spend the rest of the year
writing the story of the InkWell Turing test
and maybe an essay
I plan to rest
for the rest
of the year
Last to First

the long trip is over
the last time in Australia
a warm place as far as my experience
almost like here but less somehow
maybe more modest / maybe less addictive
in some cities stupendous beauties
in others americanlike fat
the teachings there were otherwise down
my career is oddly running backward
In A Small Country

she held out her hand
as of the way to the train were strange
she pulled out an iPod and played me a song
which if I interpreted it as her speaking
said she would take me to the end
the train didn’t go there but we stopped
along the way and spent some nights
we slept some days / we ate poor
in the end she showed me and I showed her
she went north I went west
we never speak / we linger
Hm

odd fact
sad music soothes
makes happy
we listen to be at home
not the silly
hm
To Merrimac

it’s a big stretch
to make the trip East to see snow
when snow’s not on any agenda
to be in the cold watching people
eat in warm steamed-window eateries
walk down slippery sidewalks toward the river
that doesn’t care / never has
close to old friends I hope
to never see them nor them me
as I walk through their towns
past their homes
ignoring their lives
December 18, 2015

**Land Land**

land land
going to the land
all the day

Emily didn’t write this
my barn has collapsed into forgotten memory
it was once a place I walked through
front to back
up in the lofts
hay bales made into cubbies
smell of hay and hay dust
only the little tree outside now huge
opposite of my memory
December 19, 2015

Lone Haiku / Cold Night

frosted winter,
bridge black,
ice white
Running Out of Time

on my screen
a photo of my mother in high school
a group photo of all the kids
all of them I think
are dead or nearly
their kids or their kid’s kids
knew me when I lived there
maybe they would or did
believe I did good
now I have faded even from the small peak I once had
when I young I dreamed of being far and forgotten
dreams come true
Wintertime Merrimack River

it’s like that now I hope
partly iced over river
cold / best shot B&W
low dark clouds
fast moving
hard to see warmth in the scene
whoever made the world
never expected this
For Christmas

I want to get in a dignified backdrop
I want to get in a tensional chateau
I want to get in a dissolvable cryptograph
I want to get in a Salvadorean ballpoint
I want to get in a dignified fur coat
I want to come back a prime pruner
I want to come out a masterly bra
I want to reach a Dominican seventy-eight
I want to reach a case-by-case charnel
I want to reach a fucking snare
Wedding Day

I cry for the life I had
for the mysteries I couldn’t solve
for the difficulties my work placed in front of me
for those I couldn’t love
for my mother who lived a life of death
for my father whose loneliness drove him
I cry for the place I want to be
to be alone there
when the darkness encompasses
And Free

far / the women walk quickly away
and also to
when they do
their panties slide to the surface
of their sweaty skirts
yet they wear them thin
wool and all
instead of that I watch the red light
at the top of a far away building
warning off planes
and me
Miles and Miles

when Christmas on the farm
we’d have a tree up we cut in the town forest
not legal but my mother
hated that town
most everyone in it
ey liked that fine and showed how much
snow and a homemade toboggan run
I learned how to live
with no one loving us
Photo Found

today I found her photo
I thought it lost for many years
I fedexed it to myself in 2003
I found it while sorting through stuff to throw out
I never would have thought to look where I found it
along with other photos
I no longer loathe
Home To Be

alone / far from voices
far from comments
by the bridge maybe
or the river near the ocean
close to the old place
maybe then I could remember better
Finders Keepers

how to be what you desire
without the effort required
a great wish
a wanton leap
Open Carry

how long can it take to learn
right to carry is not a right to life
Cousin William

amazing how wedged the situation can get
when the untrusting bump up against
the poorly equipped
Hang On Loosely

did Pavel have it with Mrs Scherbon
is that why the kick was to the plumbing
was the fight about cheating
not just the drinking
is this why mother didn't save him
did her mother drive her mad
to make him her hero to me
did she believe her mother deserved less punishment
did she realize it takes four to cheat
four not two