

Nothing Else  
Nothing More

*A Collection of Poems from 2012*

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## Hard To Believe Feat of Domination

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

## **In Montenegro**

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

## Old Barn Ago

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

## **A Man Invents His Ego**

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

## Half of My Heart

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

## A Table Where No One Sits

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

## All The People Laughed

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



## **No Country For Smart People**

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

## **Tumble on You**

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

## Commonalities

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

## Vague and Dark

imprecision grabbed the spotlight  
everyone was illuminated  
just that little bit

## The Curved Tracks to the South

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

## Little Else

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

## Heaviness of Sad

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

## **How Smart Is Too Smart?**

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



## Oriente

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

## Very Every

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

## Convergence

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

## All Tired

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

## **Tired and Defeated**

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

## Old Barn Tales

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

## **Deep In Snow**

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

## Freshet

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



## Fall Lower

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

## Quitter

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

## On Luck

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

## Get Small

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

## Life Time

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

## Days Still Left

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

## Left Behind

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

## There I Be

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



## What Hope Looks Like

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

## **Now You Know**

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

## Swift River

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

## **Ludus, Inc.**

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

## Joppa Flats It Seems

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

## Inconclusive

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

## Such a Deep Sadness

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

## Regretful

just one more visit  
timing of curiosity  
and exploration



## Not Tonight

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

## The Main Thing

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

## Alone All

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

## By The Time

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

## Andrej Pejic Loves Them All

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

## The Pessimistic Reading

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

## Futility

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

## PDX

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



JMC

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

## Singing in the Wires

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

## All The Leaves Are Brown

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

## Not Mine Any More

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

## Decreased Accuracy At Small Scale

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

## When Your Butt Answers

To, hello, hey hello hello.

Okay bye.

Hello.

Park.

Hello.

Yo.

Bye.

Okay bye.

Bye hello.

Bye.

Hey, here, hey.

Yeah, bye.

Hello, hey.

Prosper, everything is okay.

Hey.

Thanks, call alright.

## Lost in Wording

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

## Odd Fallings

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



## Like Kalispell Only Different

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

## Flow Alone

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

## Bridge Anomaly

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

## Quick Intro

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

## Home To Roost

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

## No More Dead

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

## Too Long Ago

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

## When Words Grow Apart

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



## Numbers Scribbled Too Fast

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

## Her, Walking Away

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

## Quick Sick

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

## Homesteading

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

## Restaurant Mysterioso

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

## Somewhere Cold

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

## Up Up And Away

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

## After It's Drifted Away

hello

I am the person

who used to be

Richard Gabriel



## Coincidentally

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

## Unrepulsive

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

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

## The Betty White Show

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

## How Can It Go

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

## Speaking Public

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

## Memory Ruts

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

## Outward / Inward

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

## Caught In The Act

hard work today  
bad news tonight



## Google Wave Goodbye

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

## By The Time

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

## The Future is Here Not Well Distributed

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

## Relative Perspectives

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

## Potsdam Early Evening

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

## Brandenburg

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

## No It Was Luck Good and Bad

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

## Concerning Skirts

a little too  
is better than a little  
less



## Shimmering

today it was  
the white / black  
goth girl

## Abysmality

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

## Purloined

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

## Eisenhüttenstadt

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

## Plain Old Simple

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

## Gone For Good

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

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

## For These Reasons

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

## In Town A Night

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



## Three Ends

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

## She Was Perfect Once

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

## **Regretfully Potsdam**

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

## In Creeping

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

## Passivity Craving

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

## **Life As It's Lived**

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

## Next To Never

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

please

## Tired and a Half

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



## Where Are You Headed?

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

## Waltzes

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

## Eliminated

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

## Simple Meal

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

## Unkingdom

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

## Rightly No

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

## High Over Me

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

## Circling Before Going Down

the rest of the trip  
is the rest  
of a trip



## Bye

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

## Sometimes Cold and Warmth

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

## Warm Black

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

## Front and Center

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

## David Waltz

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

## To Me

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

## Some Story Like This One

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

## Living Among Crazies

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



## Gnatty

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

## River Shop

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

## Later At Night

the sad songs go on too long  
time to end one

## Only If

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

## Loco In The Batho

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

## Carina I

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

## Just Facts

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

## Crying Season

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



## On The Line

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

## I Hate The Man

they are gearing up  
to insult me once again

## Blueberry Hill

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

## Real Drama

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

## Danger: God Ahead

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

## Soon For Me

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

## Finishing

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

## No One Worth Home

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



## Useful Failures

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

## Red(less)

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

## Pop Goes the Journey

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

## Alabaster Is What It Is

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

## I Need You More Than Want You

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

## Get It?

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

## Sigh and Sigh Again

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

## Glass Around Me

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



## Unbroken Cane

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

## Sail Away

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

## Bye For Now

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

## What I Learned From Pictures

when I die  
film everything  
using a warm filter

## RV Bridge and Me

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

## My Sad Thought Tonight

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

## Open The Door

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

## Love Story

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



## Away Enough For You?

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

## **Not Me, Boss**

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

## The Rest For Us

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

## Warm Time

give me a blanket  
a new one to pass  
time in

## Prayer Against

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

## Look Away

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

## Differences

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

## Chances To End To Start

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



## Filled In

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

## **Her Warmth**

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

## **Who Needs Forever?**

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

## Wish

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

## Bad Song

always something  
there to remind you  
of entropy

## Rivet Whore

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

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

## Jiggling Wheels

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

## George Takei Put It To Me

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



## Days Still Left

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

## The Honking Horn

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

## All My Troubles Seem So Far Away

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

## Feeling The Bad Day

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

## And It Was Loud

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

## **Paris Thing**

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

## What?

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

## Like Me

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



## Optimism

is it possible  
my run of happy poem writing  
is ending

## Optimism 2

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

## Optimism 2

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

## **In The Wires**

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

## **What I Learned From Failure**

the opposite of clarity  
is all encompassing  
whiteness and acceptance

## All I Needs

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

## Under Long

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

## Strikes

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



## Someone Sick At Heart

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

## Metaphysics

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

## Places

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

## Paradoxicalness

the question  
how to outwit  
my own  
stupidity

## First Then Second

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

## Paradick

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

## Draining Her Joy

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

## Fear

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



## Great Pains

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

## Bad Films

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

## Dietician

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

## One Two Three

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

## Fiery Innards

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

## Big Words or Lots of Them

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

## Paradise In Blue

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

## Savage Speech

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



## Night Listen

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

## Just One Nail

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

## And Cold And Wet

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

## In Paris Once

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

**yes of**

course everything  
changes / wills  
change / will  
you

## Vision Very

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

## More Than Want You

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

## Who Huh?

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



## Into The

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

## Stop and Stare

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

## My Father

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

## Pentucket During the Day

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

## The Guest

and who asks about me

no I'm not doing fine

## Times Silly

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

## Anyway

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

## Top To Bottom

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



## Hoyt's Hill

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

## Torment

who would think  
torture would be fun  
hard to say

## An Instrumental

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

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

## By A Wet Road

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

## Only Stop

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

## Farm Fresh

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

## 1+iI

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

## Sullenity

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



## **All The While**

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

## Merrimack Overflow

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

## In A Hole

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

## And Then Gone in the Tiniest Move

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

## The Last Thing You Read

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

## A Certain Kind of Sadness

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

## Here Some More

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

## By The Time

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



## Ambig

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

## A Trip to Skip's

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

## Like Women, Sometimes

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

## Memory All After

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

## Tidal

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

## Too Many

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

## A Certain Kind of Sadness

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

## Number 1

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



## Number 2

two

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

## On TV

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

## Fight No More

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

## Puzzlish

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

## Why Not That Far Away

the blue changed  
noon to dusk  
changed everything  
weeping

## Wherever There Are Stones

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

## Framework

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

## Facing Bad Choices

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



## Streaming Description

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

## RIP

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

## Soon The Two Are Gone

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

## It Was

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

Lotsa Helping Hands

news email can be sent and to help

the subject is set like this

[Lotsa] <subject>

today it was sad news

[Lotsa] Sad News

## Dull I Know

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

## Foo

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

## Secrets of Art and Science

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

## Nobody...Nobody!

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



## An Important Bed

I want the lies  
to include morphine

## **Rocks Village Bridge**

Span 1: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built 1895

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

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

Span 4: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

Span 5: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built in 1914

Span 6: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

## Adaptation

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

## Long Aside

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

## Finding In

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

## Tired More

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

## Home Of Sorts

a long trip

a drive

a good meal followed by a lousy bed

a drive and then who knows

in the end all will be upended

## A Myth for Us

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



## For Now or Ever?

the verdict is in  
career is over

## Day After

when the photos are too blue  
better watch our mood

## Small Job

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

## Today At The Symposium

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

## Downstream

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

## Drive Tonight

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

## It Stares

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

## Work & Just Work

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



## Writing 201

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

## Left

the most unsettling  
poem ever written  
simply has  
something out

## Here But Not There

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

## Hermeneutics, He Said

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

## Photographic Memories

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

## Over I Suppose

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

## Word Display Case

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

## Went Away

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



## Woods Soliloquy

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

## We Laid Down That Night

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

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

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

## Finishing Fall

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

inside her warmth  
has been poured into a hot cup

## What Is It?

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

## Anytime

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

## Fortune in Two Directions

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

## Tears They Said

work work work  
I am finding it hard to excel now  
except for just a few arenas  
I feel so alone

## New England Scene

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



## Looking

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

## Apartment

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

## Eastern Germany in Late Winter

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

## Foggy Falls

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

## Unbalanced

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

## RXN

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

## In Desert

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

## Slumbering Toward Bethlehem

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



## Curiosity on Hold

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

## Well Tired

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

## Rustic French Toast

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

## Done 4

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

## Support Puns

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

## Born Today

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

## Bye

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

## In Her Apartment Near Water

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



## On a Night Before

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

## The Night

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

## So Sweet

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

## Farewell

gone too far and filled with hurt  
she is probably lost

## Of Some Sort

not any better  
I am spinning  
it seems  
down a drain

## Subterranean

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

# Hip

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

## Politics Is A Small Horse

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



## In The Night I Wish

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

## East of a Dry Spot

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

## Sick Sad

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

## Solid Retirement Plan

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

## Recall It

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

## Sick Love Sick

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

## Stories Not Enough

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

## Funny

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



## Muresco My Love

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

## Stairways

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

## Sweet Snow

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

## Past Time

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

## Bowl of Dust

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

## Finally A Love Poem

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

## Getting Better

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

## Mush Blocks

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



## A Bad Desire

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

## Their Heads Craned Up

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

## On Fire

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

## A Rock and Fear

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

## Light Up

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

## And A Story

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

## Writing As Usual

as usual  
irrelevant concerns of the moment  
interfere with this

## I've Said It All

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



## Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu Revision

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

-=-=-=-=-=-

Google translate:

((

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

)))

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

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

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

## Nothing Electricity

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

## How I figured It

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

## Fortunate Cliff

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

## Riviera Sunset

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

## Found Out

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

## Listen To The Radio

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

## In A Church Near Poland

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



## Somewhere North, You Think?

10 below

35 mph winds

whatever you do

don't let your dog go outside

# Fear

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

## Trash Talk Day

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

**12/12/12**

too many twelves today

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

I make no comparisons

I am the null case

## Blue and Snow and Tree

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

## Under Tree

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

## It Works Anyway

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

## High Over Me

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



## Merrimack, The River

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

## Chunking Progress

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

## Deconsaturation

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

## Lose Your Faith

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

## DDR Is Simple

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

## A Novel Without A Book

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

## Up There Alone

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

## Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum

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



## Weeps

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

## **Nothing Ever Built**

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

## Remember This Or Write It Now

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

## Splatt

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

## Chauvet

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

## Oh La La

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

## On The Last Day

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