

"[Bill Knott's] poems are so naive that the question of their poetic quality hardly arises. . . . Mr. Knott practices a dead language." — Denis Donoghue, *New York Review of Books*, May 7, 1970

[Bill Knott's poems are] typically mindless. . . . He produces only the prototaxis of idiocy. . . . Rumor has it that Knott's habit of giving his birth and terminal dates together originated when he realized he could no longer face the horror of a poetry reading he was scheduled to give."

—Charles Molesworth, *Poetry Magazine*, May 1972

"[Bill] Knott's work tends today to inspire strong dismissal. . . . [He's] been forced to self-publish some of his recent books. . . . [B]ad—not to mention offensively grotesque—poetry. . . . appalling . . . maddening . . . wildly uneven . . . adolescent, or obsessively repetitive . . . grotesqueries . . . [His] language is like thick, old paint . . . his poems have a kind of prickly accrual that's less decorative than guarded or layered . . . emotionally distancing . . . uncomfortable. Knott . . . is a willful . . . irritating . . . contrarian." —Meghan O'Rourke, *Poetry Magazine*, Feb 2005

"[Bill Knott's books are] filled with venom. . . . Knott seems to hate himself . . . and he seems to hate his readers."

—Kirk Robinson, *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)*, date?

"[Bill Knott's work] consists almost entirely of pointless poems, that say disgusting things. . . . [His poetry is] tasteless . . . and brainless."

—Michael Heffernan, *Midwest Quarterly*, Summer 1973

"Knott is making capitol on poetic fashion, attempting belatedly to enter the canon of the Language poets by reviving the idiom of Ezra Pound. [His poetry] so successfully defies communicating anything that one wonders what [his publisher] had in mind. . . . Knott, it may be recalled, "killed" himself in the early 1960s."

—R. S. Gwynn, *The Year in Poetry*, *DLB Yearbook* 1989

"Bill Knott's poems are . . . rhetorical fluff . . . and fake." —Ron Loewinsohn, *TriQuarterly*, Spring 1970

"[Bill Knott's poetry is] queerly adolescent . . . extremely weird. . . personal to the point of obscurity. . . his idiosyncrasy has grown formulaic, his obscure poems more obscure, his terse observations so terse they scoot by without leaving much of a dent in the reader. . . . There is a petulance at work [in his poetry]. . . . [H]is style has grown long in the tooth. . . . In fact, [at least one of his poems is] unethical."

—Marc Pietrzykowski, *Contemporary Poetry Review*
(<http://www.cprw.com/Pietrzykowski/beats.htm>)

"Bill Knott's [poetry is the equivalent of] scrimshaw. . . . [It's] either self-consciously awkward or perhaps a little too slangily up-to-date."

—Stephen Burt, *NY Times Book Review*, November 21, 2004

"[Bill Knott is] incompetent . . . " —Alicia Ostriker, *Partisan Review* (date? 1972?)

"Bill Knott . . . is so bad one can only groan in response."

—Peter Stitt, *Georgia Review*, Winter 1983

"Bill Knott [is] the crown prince of bad judgment." —Ron Silliman, *Silliman's Blog*, June 26, 2007

"[Bill Knott is] a malignant clown."

—Christopher Ricks, *The Massachusetts Review*, Spring 1970

"Bill Knott should be beaten with a flail."

—Tomaz Salamun, *Snow*, 1973

THE BALLOON THAT
LIVED ON THE MOON
AND OTHER NEW
POEMS 2005-2010

/

BILL KNOTT

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The poems in this book are fictional. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used ficticiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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This selection of newer poems doesn't include sonnets or shorts,

they've been placed in the Lulu volumes devoted to those forms.

These were written approx 2005-10 (a few earlier may have strayed in). I haven't included verse that appeared in a 2007 book ("Stigmata ...").

Some of these poems appear in the other thematic/genre collections that I've published in this series of vanity volumes via the POD service of Lulu.com,

but I thought it might be interesting to bring them all together here.

*

The order is random, neither thematic nor chronological.

For me, every poem is a "one off"—

I don't care where the poems are placed as they follow or precede one another in my books (with a few obvious exceptions).

No sequencing or positioning within a book will make any of them better or worse.

Each poem will stand or fall by itself, of itself.

*

SECRET PLACES

I bite the screwtop top of a
bottle of naivete steady in my
teeth and slowly, by
rotating the bottle's body in
my hands, open it.

Christian crap, jewish junk,
moslem muck, buddhist bullshit,
the days all begin and end.

Pain is the absence of repetition.

Eventually the soles of the feet
will infect the palms of the hands
with their hiddenness.
Their remoteness.

Until then
I remain a door-deep animal,
embracing every room
shy of welcome.

HITLER YOUTH

If I mispronounce ourobouros as Oral
Bore us (from the mouth we emerged) or
You rob our O's (to repay our A's), I am
Simply saying if there were a line painted
Down the middle of this line, a poem
Inscribed down the middle of me would see
How many pens Medusa can hold in Her hair.

Haven for revisionists, the future
Excerpts itself from us, an anthology
That shows what we were at all moments, wholly
Representative, but which opened sheds a me
Hoping that somewhere past this surface the rim
Of your horizon has causes to know the sky
Is a sequence, with intervals of eternity.

Because form's faithlessness is oblivion
Tamed by hand, from my eye fringe I cry
Surround me facile, you 1940s infancy:
Because Nazis are not Z's, therefore they
Are A's. But even this poor report-card
Intends to let the alphabet be less lost
Than the shine off a trigger toad, my skin worn
By mud-mannequins. Ah Adolph's dais has
(Chattel chip/slaveblock splinter) softened since:

Like a fountain, my libation reprimands pavements.

(CRIBSONG)

can the dandled infant sense
when time's tall animal
will maladroitly spill
his frons of innocence

shall butterfingers shun
that fall whose one mistake
makes each baby brain break
its meek fontanel eden

was god the klutz that let me
land headfirst splatborn splayed
today's adult once prayed
beastlike on his fat knee

what clumsy bungling rage
as Rilke trained beware
in his poem Der Panther
runs evolution's cage

which creature cuddly come
bids parents lose their grip
and every cradle's urge to tip
rockabye your cranium

so try to be like Rilke
the lucky little bastard
the kid who oops was daily
dropped not down but upward

OBSTACLE-ISM

heaven is tired of stepping
on me and hell of bumping
its head on me and I am
fed up with both battered
by all this inbetweenity

every earth path impending
over or under me until
all site is lost or foothold
in such a stringent merge
I span their wild subplots

each compass raises lowers
its binary state of terror its
contemplate where the two
pass each other in opposite
directions home for some

all of them it seems can
half-palliate imprecision
with place but I'm nowhere
unless this always being in
their way is somewhere

GOING MY WAY

The one boy who died of polio in our orphanage in the early 1950s was such an important icon that even now I remember his favorite movie since that's what we do with the famous, retain some anomalous fact that quiets them in our mind. We, I say, but was it everyone—did all of us shed that kid: did a thousand child incarcerates replace his name-and-face with an actor's mask and cast it as star of the waste disease whose cause was always doubt, germ caught perhaps from local lakes prohibited. Who thought of him those summers we could not swim until a vaccine came, too late to amend lackwarm days, to change our fate/our film to his. That movie—"Going My Way" featuring Bing Crosby as a young priest, kindly, loveable, unreal—Tommy, Jimmy, whatever he was called, he probably knows still by still now every camera angle and closeup, every cut we living are allowed to forget.

APPEARING NIGHTLY

Spotlit—assisted in mid
prestidigitation by the wind—
I wield a shishkebob of heads
whose tongues hang swaying,
saying what the wand wants.

I point out the birthmarks
of alias and conjure the plethora
that sugars our footprints
and dusts the sunset—
that ancestral-tao, that benefice

bane, that grim grass which
overgrows each reach, each
alms our road groped toward.
Here is the majesty and moss
of another grasp. Another loss.

Here is the world, exiled.
Its tidal stage-curtains close
or open, it grows or wanes,
its actors lose and gain
their personae per the moon.

HARVEST

clouds which stand still
to pose downward
their event

in the church
a cookie is wedged
up the Virgin's plaster skirt

now days attend the sun
and all the other futures
before they crop our feasts and wither

the four points
of a pitchfork
become harder to define

eyes measuring to means
the distance dust
plants along the sill

chasing each other the children
combine the wisdom
of freckles and fire-engines

in the end we flow
like thirst above stones
like hunger above air

POEM IN THE CARDIAC UNIT

Time-charted, nursed, I let the meds
dictate this verse: *roomriver rounds*
take my pulse down stairwaves of stairs
scan my aches in chairbanks of chairs
and wake me on bedbeds of beds.

Multiplicities, pre-scripted;
metaphors bled, already dead:
what wouldn't be a cliché here—
paranoid mirror, bathroom sink,
flowing over with normal fear

as I squint at what I might mean
if I poeticized this scene: age
LSDs my chin; my once-lean
profile spills profilefiles, page
upon page rippling to see

even their prolific output
data can never sate the spate
pathoscopes that hardrecord spot
surveillance of what vital signs
remain in these veins, clotted lines

whose parse usurps my sleep. (Forget
how literate you hate this surge,
absurd, heartbeat creation; your
necknoun must stet its tide-edit
now, to quiververbs, wattlewords.)

What would my peergroup say, could they
modify this hypergaud gush,
advise my florid veinflushed flesh
stop pouring forth such images,
euphony beyond me. Sweet excess.

Is that not the gist this critic
monitor that beeps down its *sic*
keeps vying to brightly display
while I lie here less than what, what,
watched all night, till more's the day.

FIRST WARM DAY

When the world belongs to toss-up.

Balloons whose footprints
sting the air with soft occasion;
clouds, whose streamers strain for
the horizons denied them now
by these new slow winds.

Even children relinquish the stoicism that
kept us safe from the cold, even they
succumb to a sudden cuddleness, weak
as the first spindly crocus. Seneca
is sent once more to silence.

Two plus two begins to crack before
the picnic logic of Summer.

The reign of the same. Difference
is banished here; outside and inside are
made equal in temperament, doors
left open declare armistice.

Winter's wars wane. Vintners verse their vines.

PICTURE

Meadow of matchsticks,
soon to be rekindled
by Spring the incendiary.

The exact flame of your blossoms
will ignite the passions
happily sapped by time—

Dripdrop their excess went
and now miners' hats
light up like love before

your vein, the frame of which
is there to depict the drift,
the waste when I painted

all the review copies
they sent me. But those books
open to polar pages where you

and I weigh the ends of this
teeter totem down, you
at the head and nadir me;

there where postmortem is
the aura of self-portrait,
its other half regained at last.

BEACHED

Thaw, summer, melt from pastel to pastille—
a fruit's sweetness warning the greatness of death
to back off: hornbeeps, skidmarks so new, so fresh.

Cars, go and surround each beach.
Where drowned armpits flower toward the word.
Where even the sun refuses to be an icon.

In my room stand two razorpoles. I rub
back and forth between them. I vacillate
love, hate: it's exhausting continually

wiping the spittle off your face,
though the spitting itself is of course
quite effortless. Simile for waves.

A BRIEF ON THE GREAT PYRAMID

The Great Pyramid has been spared the ruining
incursions of storm, rain and winter (imagine it in
Norway or Brazil). But some say its interior is filled
with millenia of showers, snowmelt, hailstones in
flood. And that if that granary of water was ever
released it would inundate the desert. An ocean
would occur. Formless endless waves, enveloping
and barren, the sole exception being the GP's peak,
that lone, irreproachable island. Others say this sea
inside is simply the sweat of the slaves who built it,
hidden teardrops repressed in the daily cloud of
submission, sobs that ebbed before they were born.

PITY

inside his pane
the window is a man
like you or me
at night he walks the ledges
at night he walks the sills
restless in his frame
veins full of glass
at night he walks the sills

at day his head rises
and shines through his body
and soon he worries
that the coming night
will undecapitate
that the homing night
will rejoin him whole

inside his pane
like you or me
fulgent full of future slivers
fallen whole
foretold and free

at night he walks the sills
his head rises
his head falls

held together by none
his jaggedy slitted body
glazed and gone
his beauty putty

DUMP

I seem more in this poem than
I am. It covers me, icons me,

I hide under its knoll.
A knoll, or as

the old English word KNOTT
means, a small hill.

Sanctified, whole—
it was my bent led to this bind.

It was my own,
puckered with similarity.

Kaput in a canoe,
done-for in a dogcart,

does every demise
suit my sangfroid.

Cease, I wither, I curl up, I
shroud in shrivel to make

disposal easier—
a packaging handy for death,

Santa's bag.
(Slag, not swag.)

A QUESTION OF LEVELS

I must find the prayer-step on
the endless stairs he said. Stop
at any of them, I advised, each
stratum from which one petitions

emptiness is equally false and
fatal. Climbers who gain the peak
think it speaks to them, that it
puffs breathclouds back at theirs,

exchanging exhilarations. So
therefore listen you may in fact
have reached your own and found
its landing waiting there and see—

but he left me like a new belief
in ladders or an old apostasy
of toes. Unfortunately either
requires I be above or below.

SUBURBAN PASTORAL

If all the way you believe is beside,
skewed and unaligned to the great faiths that
guide others on their propitious courses,
if your guard-rail gives to the gorge they all
avoid with digital ease, car-carpets
sweeping them home. Their path is like a spear
whose tip gives birth to what it pierces; their
wound configurates whatever flesh is,
stalemate of space, pale unmeant moment in
the moon's phase when every owl attains each
speck of sight it needs for the night, the hunt.
Only the path of the predator's true.
Only you are left with no way to go,
no eye to see the prey they endow with
that brevity heaped upon lives before
their cease, brave dispersal into air or
bright inversion which delays the day by
the global habit of turning over
in sleep's subsidence; your bed orbit caught for
a pause abide in which your dreams contend
with siege weapons snatched away by those once
shunned: past sunlapse, past the semi-earthen
yield of relics flying released from hands
that have not yet forsaken the normal
verities your merit refuses to
acknowledge. Until you are scorned or like
a sacrifice being racked in heaven,
bound upon churn altars the heart ripped out,
dumb and certain to what those desires bring;
tickled teaspoons in backyards, where the tree
ties wheels to its thanatopsis toplessness.

ANNUAL

after leaves make fall their mark
I enter the polarbear of aliases

white hibernates while I wait in
gardens mendacious with bloom

new tenants for goliath glue their seed
to puddles of pennies and the call

the call comes to plea
the allmoan rises

time is a book without quote
it reads your hands by rote

gloved intervals dog-ear where
I opened my signature to the wrong page

now I spoon the drool from Frankenpoo's sex
or start to whack my ammo

and yet some lumpenführer think
they think I don't care

I care alright I care so much
that I sluffed off saying it

anyway diaries detest the present tense
so naturally naturally

the all in all corolla of it faded though
aired on the vids senseless violence

the defence
the defence of one's private Hollywood

WALL

In the end I was deceived by particulars,
fingers offering themselves as examples
of what I could exist of at the finish of
the fruit of the bricklayers' melody if
only it would allow its accomplishments
to stand for the hands that set it forth
brick by brick, whose purpose was
the displacement of the local, the sole—
for unless that space could be placed
in one spot, what good was it. And so
propped up to wall in or wall out what
should have buttressed me either side,
I felt myself slide with the shift, the twin
transition of stone on stone until the piles'
stoppage put a posit to its incipient
rubble, built by patient inches height
might climb to see one sun rise above
the sheer monument of—the measure would
be there, and the distance, though both
would retain their mean-sense, their
cramp-game of home, toe-molds, headhods
and all the other tools that are rare now,
whose use was owned pure necessity once.

CANDYCLONE

Because I'm not small enough
I must grasp the long part
of it to begin with, which
means I bite the shorter half—
(I say "half" only to indicate
the horrible horseshoe shape
it might attain in the mind)
first, in other words, I eat
the limp. Or bite at it, rather:
for candycane in the theater
of sweets is hard to the teeth
that try to crack its handle,
to take it tip-whole in one's
lips instead of one's hand
which, as I said, must hold
the cane by this bottom leg
—leg implies dancing, but Fred
Astaire debonair used tons
of canes though never a candy
one in the rigor of his prime—
if I invert it then the handle
could be his foot. Or I could
swordswallow it and leave
the toe-tongue hooking out
of my grimace like a quip or
the horn of a meersham pipe,
a tail's repartee in air, sharp
serpent that dreams of apples.
I guess it could be devoured

(no stanza break)

from the bottom up, but then
I would have to hold the cane-
curl in my hand too large for it,
the fingers too cumbersome
for this small candycrutch, maybe
I could bribe a child to dangle
it towards my snapping jaws—
all this, and god I haven't even
got to the red and white stripes
that coil up and around its bole
pole which like all such objects
in my poems are the phallic
sublime, a substitute for that
virility I lack, a simulcrummy
cast I must kiss and lick and
mouthmasturbate until it wears
the sleek salt that warps its
saccharine inch, limp defeated
tongue, sour-body effluval-angel.

I HAVE NO HOME

I follow the road
nowhere goes to,
the one somewhere
comes from.

If I passed here before,
wore a path into the stone
other than my own,
ignore that fetish form.

On the staircase
each tier vibrates as
the desire to descend
contends with the urge
to awake.

In that same dark
where the groundfloor gets lost
the upper story
may find its way.

AUTHORIAL

to leap off a diving board
and land on a divining rod
is out of the question

to hope for petite glimpses
of smoke-tipped throats
in the streets below Help Murder Highrise

why did I try to rub my thoughts
on vocab-zero
on word-none

oval toes
toes are sort of oval aren't they
I trust they're not cyclical

to wish that stones had gloated at my birth
and flowers and firstbooks fell
from snowcliff avenues

I was probably in session
watching my face contend
with someone else's closeup

laborious syllables what
inverted bulleyes line
the mime's white cage

WRITLESS WRATNOT

my flaw can't find its fit
am I an anomalous llama
or a truncate of death

a horsekerchief
a motionless hope atop a propjet
a prophet stream

an instrument
for cutting cheekbones out of ancestral portraits
ephem-human or rodent-endless

will I die clutching in my hand
missives all meant for myself and
yet somehow never sent

my plow can't plod its pit
my knots all miss their knit
without its slot the rat rots

TO MY PLANETARY CO-OCCUPANTS

How would you prefer to meet your fate—
by Nature or Culture?

(Nature: snakebites lightningstrikes cliffslides etc.)
(Culture: nukebreaks pesticidisms ethniccleansings etc.)

—If an alligator swallowed you
would you consider that demise purer

than if freedom fighters blew up
your commuter flight?

Or would you go vindicated re your belief in
human sovereignty

when a virus broadcast by the the CIA
got you (maybe it already has)—

If it were up to me, I would take
centuries/eons in deciding this question,

but since it isn't, since it's a question of since,
and since the number of options in

the category of Nature
seem to be getting extincter and extincter,

I ask you again to choose—
In fact, I beg you to make your choice

and make it quickly,
especially if it is to die via me.

TEA-SAT

The hand is a cup
that must crack
open to be filled
with that which
saves but can't be
saved. Garbage for
instance: the pail
overflows to show
why our nation's
weapons are high
in the sky, why
they need a lethal
laser up there with
its unbearable
purity, a perfection
saints reach rarely
if ever—that killsat
crystal concentrates
the state. Deadbeams
shoot everywhere
it aims. The earth
must part to let
them, split fingers
rudder the result.
The body always
can spill more than
it holds. The pail
overflows to show
it was alive until
hot rays came down
seeking the dross,
the loss our rockets
rose to redeem.
We pray their
crockery will bear
up this aperture.

SITE ECHOES

Circling a tree with people
to protect it from people,
to add another arc
to its years may not suffice.

Hold poems up as the bulldozers
come, claim your lines
are rings nearing the core
of a word for wood,
for all the earth lifts.

It will not suffice. Far
from its aureole bole
your whirl grows whole
only in ground,
in groundbegone seeds.

Weeds.

STANDARD

I was going to poem
our lack of patriotism
our treachery toward
the land that port-arms us

to type it out onto blank
spittle with my teethkeys
but then I noticed the flag
that always wavers above

traitors like me the flag
that always fluctuates and shifts
like any lone allegiance
in the wind and then I saw

sewn upon the flag as its emblem
a depiction of a flagpole
so at least one thing is loyal
to that which bears it

MOONSHOT

Stalwart Gagarin's
(or is it stout
Cortez's)
cosmonautboot
quashes
the tender
rays that engender
Selene's
poetic praxises and
phases—
Yuri, what you do
imposing the siberian shoe
on its silver sand
just to be
the first man
to land there as John
Keats said stranded
on his peak in
Darien may ruin
our poems' home.
Please leave the moon
untouched
by any voyage but
our verses.
Bring
that Soyuz spacebus
back to earth and sing
quest-else to come—
'Tuned lunar time
how pacifically
we'll praise
the usual discoveries.

POEM

This slobbered-over virus of the visible,
The living, the seen, what antibody cures—

Echoesque whose draped torso of rain on
Taunt's panes was flung for cry sakes, for crime X,

Loud as a ball bounced off a statue of Zeus.
The mania for scintillations fills your mind

Or else on stilts will survive the folio hero
Wielding a cage of umbrellas to capture it.

Strongbrow shelved for futher thought: more patterns
Examined by a selfportrait of one's own

Pores, exposed as they are to icy nemesis
Plural, to spelling out its false names in sweat:

Where elsedom do they welcome open as
Often as this door does, quench-map that mires

The path from our left nipple to our right
Where, bisected by itself, the heartguise dies.

EXHIBITION

the canals a-swish with big ships

lanes I wander without cause as
my tongue bathes in my necktie
to show how exhausted how often
I have felt the doorknob drain

my hand of its urge to enter then
in this way I may chance at last
upon weapons trained to sleep
or maybe where the depot drops

the canals the lanes the streets
how often I or they have reached
for my pocket in the face trust of it
although one can't exaggerate

one's beggarliness in an age of
mechanical reproduction it seems
the museum where pale corridors
zoom through room-Moreaus

floor-Magrittes ceiling-Sages
mirror-Finis and other frames
hushed curtains reach to the floor
which probably needs excavating

static their flesh throws slow volts in the air

DUNCE RHYMES (FOR THE MOMENT)

and if this poem
has made you a hearer
of ghosted voices
that fade when you get nearer
and everytime you look
into the rearview mirror
you scream and clutch
at your hands in fear
at what those futures show

and then will you cry out
for all to hear
the cripple the promqueen
and the seer
don't you think that now's
a good time to be freer
than you were
a second ago

NO/YES

N is for open; O is for now.

We ought to have been here forever,
adding the necessary zero to history's account,
regarding our origin as insipid/inspired;
long ago outliving any locale that might
have demarcated these boundaries

that so oppress us with the present: they should
have established their stock as gods, hollow
coin passed among the multi, separate
exchange units for a commonhold—
dispensing shares of continuity to each

enquiry; while, like a mast that weaves orbs
of knowing we stammer beneath a fort
lost in willowtrees, half-listening
to an impetuous wheel shriek. 'Thus the "we"
dwindles toward singledom, the own-diminished I—

Though gosh if I know what's earth to me now,
curtainary tree I twigged too late to blossom from.

Oh
rind around the end, stymied-ground, soil
that extends one grave too far for me.

YES is anybody's guess.

TERMINALSTAGE PASS

Shadows are more indigenous to summer than other days; in sunless winter they may appear as friends from a former season, companions for an endless cold—because you need a certain percentage of Bishop Berkeleys if life is to consist, the sun rise, the coffee boil. But does this consensus include those in transit, at the bus stop patting their pockets automatically, statistics decide we don't all die at once, breastbraving uniformity for 6 Muzak eternities. Simple wounds could hatch your winglessness. Bruises when tiring times fall and evening secures an after-lag of it, when mermaids keep their stomach pumps handy, each doorway pried from adamant guilty portraits. What pane bears the unseen edge of its imminence over that sill's tense anarch of candles, while the frontbell is ringing a little something, whose wording has not come down to us, we call it confluence or Cincinnati, some home at random under the habit of a snowpeak, pure alp up which the gaze drowns all hands lost, indigenous it wells with grass, with settlements.

NOTE

The directions one takes
in a computer
are not those of the compass,
that normal needle's paths are
null here. Here, routes
roam downward, backward
through the ego superego id, seeking
infancy. Birth permeates each gesture
addressed to the keyboard, the
commands that create
the never-deleted screen seem
to come from a stethoscope probing
the pelvic region, peering
into the recessed bellybutton
of the expectant mother
whose navel is a hole around which
live flesh masses, a gap whose absence
is obvious. The navel is a shaft
into the mind of the subject,
but the subject evades itself
by the clever use of screenupations
and games: icons converse
across this schizoid
void. Each new program provides
a further diversion, a rhymescheme
to be defiant of,
a stanzaic requirement one can flaunt
with impunity, no crime
or shame, since forgiveness
is packaged in the save option.

HEATINGPAD

If every valid absence points to one thing
that shucked the cornsilk out of my ass's reaches,
an object presence has overlooked unless
the none-scape guilt I clone so quickly intervenes.
Is it the synchronicity of a ferrous whore or
the fear such insignificance baits that makes us
lock the sermon in a drawer till Sunday morning
when, dashed by the stripes of a snake's parasol,
it trips a step. Do animals proceed to extinction
via their hindlegs or fore? The mind restrains
this project for the sane, their unquarried energy—
that god grounds us in gloves I guess. They keep
our omnihands from touching flesh with flesh, they
prevent the relapse, the desire for one's kind,
the prophylactic response: similarity haunts
the ruins of every fingerprint which bears it,
which partakes patience to outwit identity.
Aftermath's a studio of mirrors, a curt salon
where prudent heirs sweat in overcoats, sure
their profiles can disgrace our art-dartboards.
Ego nature finds its quickest aim in beginnings,
a naissance to obliquely punish yesterdays with.
Cradling an antenna's unripe fruit, your gusts incite
the white apartment, its darksome rooms where
derivative jars filled with conked nudes ripen.
But all in all, the central event will not relent.

MEDLEY

A sunflower follows chessmoves
back and forth, but the minutehand
hates the hourhand, that big bully—
I myself long for tiny pushdoors, a
terrified via, whose keyholes I'd use
to bleach matchsticks in hope of
paler purer flames! And sometimes
across my strums, in madwallow
sprawl I lie, or else I'll escape,
pelted by sculptors' raisins. Aboard
the meow express or the purr local
I flee, trying to forget the White
House ear, to hear instead my pancakes
collapsing in laughter. It is perhaps
my fault entire that I cannot sham
their humor, that each day solder-rotten
me to a glassy voluptuousness of
avoidance, of irrepeachable calm
which some critics call suburban.

SIGNALS

my smoke-signals all
claim to be drowning
though perhaps
I'm simply reading
them wrong
how many other
messages have I
misinterred today

I continue to fly although
I know the salvo as it soared told
me to fall and its shells
mentioned something
on their way through
maybe I misheard

each time
my hands try to fill
the abacus its numbers
empty them
in exchange
the commerce
of our encounter
equalizes further
with each caress

verse like mist
measured not by its reach
but its inpenetrability

(no stanza break)

its blindness to bump
and break my womb's
earphones clapped
on the void

my teacher was echo
she made me stay after
and write her name on
the blackboard over
and over and so

my ears gave arbor
to endless infants
drunk on coifs
the pigtails of their parents

I grope in the dark
with all my else and ouch
I enter the testament hole
where shroud embarks
I clutch a licenseplate and rub its
scenery of bitemarks

ave sister ave triste
save me have me

cig-ember gemming
my navel
burn me when no one is looking

dig blisters like sugar eyelids
around my anat

(stanza break)

plunge knives to my ticker quicker than love

let your clarity
dilute my drool

my hair done up in pitchfork tines shines
and I cleopatra the cows until
they rameses

the zero that regulates my one
is angry at me

ave sister
ave triste

THE ACT

If love can be cornered
in the four arms of the act,
its room squared off
by equal exchange,

a cowering animal
whose back's to the wall.

By earlier harms
than mine haunted,
stalked and pinned;
yet the past surrounds itself
with portraits of the living;

prefrontal petal,
polysob sorb, a fate
hung highest arc is where
that slack-awe yawns us, a
cross of pierce-yielding hands.

Bleakkrieg eyes, eyes of wreak.

Face chewed
by drool of last dosages.

IN JEST

Always trying to alliterate Jeckyl with Hyde,
rhyme me with you, us with we,
I fail to immobilize that repartee
of twain.

All outdoors brooded upon us as
our hands appeared to pale-abandon
the sanctuary we wept
into tealeaves—

The novelist who hears noises
while removing thoughts
from a goblin
cannot banter me either.

Following a few vidludes carefully
left uncaptioned for the illiterate,
I note that virtuous arguments
tax orators most.

ROMY

Will I crawl beneath my hemline's tombs
to feel in shield with her, blessed sole
by all our subterfuge of sex has shared,
accordance that makes even the curtains
flutter a little less aimlessly in their
illusion of filmy Schneider, Romy spider I
must vent my sheath to be stalled in again;
how her forsaken handful of films are
forced to record our regimen, their words
a slow replacement of thoughts with
vowels, a slow effacement of her co-stars'
dialogue lost below the hurt of her heel,
her tread of line-readings, her face
issuing its bitten shape sheer above our
video lust to assuage the ground she
sunbathes on in Chabrol's *Dirty Hands*,
her tan eery and strapless but note how
the accolades are toppling, the toe-taps
are stepping up the staircase of the last
castle ruled forever by glances who
elude their complicity steeped in seats
tickets bring us to so briefly: so quickly
the endtitles entitle us to exit brushed
by regret we cannot linger in her aura
impetuous-throated, dusk-laden with
sighs most, a hushed singularity of
eyes marking the nose against the mouth,
inscribing the cheekbones on the lidbrow,
dashing the teeth to frozen steppes that
proclaim their princess is deep in dew:
with seep-pores fixation fanclubs galore
garbage from her amours it drops; far
her hair is solo photo, montage-reamed

limn it sinks into mink murmurs of air,
hooded in horror or instantcams or
sheersham clamor of the viewers who
read the marquee feeds that bleed the air
thoroughfare with film and fill culture
name-some wonders dear previews of
each star actor bends personally to hear
confided in constant groans and jeers
on every corner of near needs and trends
they leave us landed here with no amends
no way to leave the queue of this theater
whose opening night our day attends
but what is it it intends to grace us with
one glimpse of the briefest gift of gore
before it extends our ends and lends us
the token brochure for our future loss
of her we had hopes to depend on for
whatever projection of inner terror we
might atone the destined displacement of,
sincere exposure of slo-mo mouths
that moue and move desire one millimeter
closer to its itch-switch, its clicker, since
I can freeze the screen on her grope-gripped
lips, I can etch their gesture frame by frame
with long exhalations of my crotch area
where the remote control seems most at home
in that quare of generation, wombwarmth rooting
its phallic exteriorization of time's finger on
the TV-trigger tracing a linear content in that
c-groin, that piss-p, that cup we call lap, where
confident hands can grope up the buttons
to catch even the Olivier-est replay tapping
his ribcage for a nebulous savage while
aches of FX construct their tiers on colloseum
liontamers lacking cameras as elsewhere

focus the Empire examines each fingered
footprint led backward clones hop the gap
trapped in a pit only alliteration can free him from,
faux hero till a sulk her silk gaze roams over
the amazed consternation of the crowd, bored
background zooms, the thumbs-down
that comes on cue and slackens its mode
location daily salvation, fierce genitals surround
the atrium with aspects aversions apertures—
The apparatus is complete, is more than home
since Rome is Romy minus her wolf-son,
her fourteen-year-old boy lies impaled on
the spears of the fence the mansion railings
that guard her from us the fans who want to crush
her distance into dreams no limit: and yet
no exalted Presence alone can compensate
our lack of, ergo She must be sacrificed She
should suffer the immolation saints like us
are assigned to, madonna-mournful must
bear the cross the stats of the boxoffice in
a Chanel shift, a Dior drape, a Balmain bare
and parade Cinecitta to a traipse as hourly
her skins pass on a bus with ads for sequels
whose dread achieved empathies advocate
pain that strands its hands in applause and
then to go whole-whore it sights the hostile
sub glamor features expressed in nearer
nervedowns known as time: it spikes her son,
it kills her too age 43 OD heart attack svelte
no stuntdouble can mime end clutch self close
pinned young legend crumple bound to kiss
the sign we seek. Approaching the cinemapolis
from sea we see that in its skyline of stars
the tallest is hers: wink-tips this capital with
reign and rule, insane, pic-naked Empress

pale-annexed, pored-over by pore fingers
rupture suppurating gloved Vatican hands,
oh archived name demolishing the gone,
undressed in the interest of our purity's hell,
cat-of-no-lives but ours; and shifting if
she can that one: heel to her fate she falls.
1958, 20 years old, look, she lifts it all:
fame career life: scenes marks lines: runthrough
daily it mates no one but her and smirks at
first lover Alain Delon, her co-, her consort.

POEM

please don't scold
the kids who hold
lollipops up
for the raindrops
to lick at on
their way down

what a waste
but imagine the taste
of rainbow thunder
if you could get
your tongue up under it

POEM

Now there is an evil I cannot name because
its fellow evils
will swirl around me crying
for like recognition

But my mother knew that curse
and presided over it
squatting over it
with her hellhair
her pubis hiding in fear

My world was a squirt of urine
from that teem-traum-dream
in anger my belly flings
a drop of cum back

On humanity's photograph
ripples appear
smack between the sight

Unwrapped from the moment
time is born in place of
always in place of
I pause here to currycomb bygoness

MIMED

My application for the job of 'corpse, public'
was rejected, but similar employment
of private sector beckoned from the horizon,
as always it was a question of dimension,
where one stood in regard to it. Despite
the choicest forsakings I was deposed
by each strata-et-cetera, earning the scorn
of my diminished status all too quickly
to heal the breach in sardine measures that
taught me six feet deep doesn't need hell
to fill it. Flailing over the bannister didn't
help. Safetypins jabbed into my shoulders
should enable me to fly soon: until then
I'll muck up my manque like a lapidary ape
stranded at an ungainly height I can never
attain, a topiary lust can merely relate
till mimed by flowers the wind carries it.

TAROT PORTRAIT

Peeking over the fortuneteller's shoulder
Won't add a sole feature to what is there,
What your future paints so plainly in view,
So visible to anyone who isn't you—

Outside her djinn-lit storefront occult cave
The streets that steered you forth to dare this brave
Or foolish quest have failed themselves perhaps
To escape the daily grid and find some maps

Empty enough to defy place or break
The bad odds configured still in the stake
That never wins a hand against this known
Charade of chance: envision it downthrown

In the rows of her slow shuffle. And no
Hexing where you haled from or where you'll go
Next-lost round the dark town's confinements
Will augur this encounter with a sense

Salient, some savor foresight of what's cast
To come in likeness limned at lifelong last:
Occur by endless tics and whits to stare
Unavoidably clear at this picture

Urging you share its peer. Here each suit unseals
A star that arcs inward through her deals
Toward the tower you built to spy on
That distant face your door-key has drawn

Each time you insert it and twist it, a line
Is incised on the canvas: each lock-wind
Puts another brushstroke to the portrait;
Opening her arms she frames you for it.

Impersonal, of course: she has no wish
To harm. You thought that solitaire was
The only game with no intent to punish
Or hurt; thought you were safe in the menace

This tarot chose: but now you see it too
Lacks malice; its fate-cards portray as true
Across the table only that which is due
Or over. How indifferently it shows
Those oldest eyes and what they hold exposed.

HOME

on the wall a boxing-glove lactates

nailed to the wall a boxing-glove
bleeds milk

what tit is it
that drops dollops
of great sweat
that whiten the carpet

yanked from its frame the room dies

my insert eye
sigh-mates
my insert semen migrates

detached from its frame the room rises
to milk the wall
whose udderlamp
drips light
that drained the champ
of all his fist

the hand squeezes itself
for distance it
massages its pugilist part its penis

it feels up
the décolletage of its diff
and tries tries
to collate love

detached it rises to kiss this
inert heart
this welcome glove

VISION (prosepoem)

If I could only blank it out, every bit of it, all the past, all my stupidities my hapless behaviours and failures in detail, if I could forget the details of those endless humiliations, especially the faces of everyone who rightfully reproached me with disgust and contempt, who censured me with disdain and disapproval, all the people with their glaredowns and gloats, browscolds and sneers, the way all those faces looked as they made known to me how shameful, how small and inadequate I was and still am. . . . The fact that they will die too is no consolation, because they will not die with me on their minds whereas I will see a montage panorama go-round of their faces as I lie heaving for a last rale of air: their scornfrowns will fill my eyes with all.

ISSUE

All solar worlds are the same:

no inspiration
rises from the ground—
instead
it descends from above

to find secure a spot to pray
for crevice for haven.

From the land surrounding me
some sill holds firm in
its origin, and yet
how thwart all design grows.

Always the interval arrives,
sauve guillotine
honed on its air
of precedent, of accident.

Fissure to tap the well's outgurg—
even that surge
seems prefixed from on high—

Its word crowns descent
with enemies/energies animal
in nature, or

questionable as the machine
spirit crypt
that crumbles
beneath this issuance.

PARADE

The day was resting on all its descents
as I escaped blackly down my boundaries
through years of severity the lips print
forgiven stargrams across the wade window
plucked from its season of else or where—

Going sad endured I led cliffs and caves,
the world crawled as far as the one wall me,
fishnet eyes a jeweler's queue was fucking
while bar-droids begged Raskolnikov to buy
them another drink: what was I thinking!

Binoculars reeling no wonder I proceed
so suicide. The ribbon that asks me the way
home is frayed. Exalted. The dream whose guests
we are here lacks a host. I'm cueball if
I care. And forth that time we shared its birth

many but its end never. Always eluding us
like donuts in a volcano the shapes echo,
if Einstein's boxinggloves can't punch a hole
this paperbag must be real. Centuries of
crossfire crashland. Yet everyone was going

to have his own life they said; in the interim
hands regnant on the doorknob or flags
the color of null came to curry our curse.
One spat out his tasteless end, his cud
of finale. He watched the procession avidly:

the way they took such care, plucking flaws
out of every sleeve as they marched by.
Gallop I say, limping along behind them,
straightarming a lemon cart. Street where all
the marquees slump weeping on my shoulder.

COUPONS AVAILABLE

Whenever CSI tried to
chalk outline one
corpse of Proteus
too many we heard

his memoranda read
over the wind, against
the phone. Enticing
bandaids off earthworms

via mental telepathy
was still followed by
the usual appall, the same
mad-dog meanwhile.

Thus each time the chess
champs throw dice to
dictate their next move
a vase and an owl debate

the outcome. Wait,
there's more aspic
precision in this next shot
of dead peasant, arms

flogging his baby's path.
It lasts until it laughs.
It takes place in the lab
where they vie to put

the me back in mediocre
and the I in you. Equating
to the sound made in

the 1950s by a thousand

typewriter covers being
slid off to write the word
whose sound cannot
repeat that thou-slid sound,

suggesting the collective
actions of our fingers
pressing this keyboard
add up to a standard or

a flag prompting vertigo
across the nastiness when
it stands to sing the nation.
Thousands of them sound

their voice in one body as
Proteus who includes
their nature in his and has
to once we mall ourself.

LAPSES, LAPSES

There is no us unless it's *Us: the Movie*,
though each sinkdrip thinks it remembers Narcissus
from somewhere, his big mug, his big scene is

even more unwilling to assume the loss
beading up accrued as a stopgap than this
stifled hope it's happening to someone else—

When evaporations have drained every face,
when who's there, suffer-thing, damn lack of focus
get slurred together, get forgot—although

the water thinks it remembers Narcissus—
yes: wasn't he the one who claimed "Coitus
is best against a mirror"; or was it "window"?

Beyond such reflections there is no us,
I mean no univocal being to be jealous
of, scream at, hate and (sometimes) love: or so

the sink thinks. Dishes gunked with Narcissus
or other perversions too ketchup morphous
to name or too shared, perhaps. Oh! one must go

beyond such reflections. There is no lust,
really, as you well know, just this vacuous
anonymous that fills the eye with those faux

the drink thinks it remembers. Narcissus?—
simply to name him suggests his bare guise belies
that false face glimpsed from your porthole

of consciousness, the window you failed to save

when every beaut-boat was drained from below
by a backpedaling Picasso, an ocean of shrink

dripping with theme-matic modes, themedies,
where antics with gleaming target-pointed chests
formed a last lifejacket dispatching its parch-fate

as the picket-flicking projector easily shows
reruns of the same old spoonshaped profiles
likely to fall out when you crack the spines

of their autobi-hogs from the photo-insert
pages in the middle: soon descent into the drain
sargasso impinges and yet to know the arrow

is a disciple of the ball is no giveaway or tic
to squeamish at. How many of us complain
about the Vatican's porn collection, marble

halls filled with stills of Garbo Brando sex
studded poses, does anyone anyone, do you?
There is no us unless the movie version shows

how tactile its evasions are, offering a pair
loss of memory, mark-sleep, simple narcosis.
Beyond such reflections us is lost in seconds.

THE TWO-ROOM THEORY

Call the masturbator,
the muscular one,
and bid him whip his big cock
till it fills our mouths
with cups and cups of cum.
Tell the whores to dress
in undress and use their clothes
to get the boys hot: our cocks
are white and dirty as
old-rolled-up newspapers
and want to spout flowers.
Let the birds and bees
final-anal my seem, sow,
sew their seed
into my slit my seam.
The only emperor is
this emptier of cumcream.

Hi hum, hic he, another
office party at Hartford Surety.
These prissdressers,
they see me as ideal: well,
I do try to please my wife,
that frigidess—I grab her knobs,
I squeezey lick those glass tits
but even the big cigar, Father
Freud, couldn't whip Kit's
ice-cold B-cups to a curdle.
Try anything, suck her toes,

(no stanza break)

kiss her feet to make her horny
and she just lies there numb on
that damn dumb sheet she
sews fannytails across but
ask her to sow her butt, to
spread her asscrack just once
she won't. She won't. Nope.
Let my lamp, my limp lump dick
affix its fucks, be its cum.
The only emperor I am
is a jack-off chump.

Note:

the title of this parody comes from Helen Vendler's
exegesis of the original, in her formidable book, "Words
Chosen Out of Desire," p. 50-53.

BOTH

They slept with each other kept
under their pillows
in case of alarm,
hoping to wake up in time
should love threaten. This is
the only way to arm
themselves against the marriage
that lurks in nightly unlinkings
imposed by the body's need
for cease. What better scare
can they clutch for, hugging
the bedclothes into a monster
who scorns their defenselessness, a sphinx
who hisses catcalls at the two gates
of their threshold theater
whose ivory horn shines
with the spectre of their formal embrace
and relative kiss—and will
that riddle still confront them
with the answer owned
by every dream they've ever shared
when its failsheet sheds them
and this momentary blanket
rouses and breaks apart,
when day emerges from both its arches,
the one of triumph and the other
one of retreat.

STRAND

Poured transparent by water I enter,
the minutiae find me whole again,
the small storms that attend my pores,
the closest fears. I enter my room,

the space I must disrobe to occupy: I see
the coathangers shrug off my timid gesture
of solidarity, of consolation
for their intrinsic aloneness, their

bone forms never quite covered
each time the waves heave these clothes
upon our strand. I stand in front
of this convenient nakedness,

this open door of the moment knowing
every closet longs to be unique in its disorder,
a shambles of mothholes and outworn forms
donating itself daily to the place

I must parse to the point of empathy,
knowing that as true its brunt breeze
intends to condense all I contain of sea,
and as always succeeds. Yes,

it rains my ocean empty.

VACATION DESTINATION

They were cabinets in secret, the trees—
they kept their contents hidden, often—
is a list necessary. Not knowing is what,
nuff-enough? They wept openly as
the coffin was rotisseried on the hour.
I began to pour white paint on the spots
the mime missed. My ardour woke
no mirror like a mobile of stabs into light.

So cryptically hostile I fly de Milo high
over your emaciated eiffels, towers
where lambs shower the multibaa you
mistake for bells. Each rose powdered
with tint of retouseé, or wagtails parks
evacuate when gelded highrise-ranks panic
and sleep. They oracle us down there.

If one without diff speaks of his same,
who will, obscurest in their nearness,
echo minty all his words if dazed by
the circumference of this sheer niquity
long tainted in the cease, the gravitational
caress on the soles of a corpse, who—
And yet origin needs nothing to be
itself. The way numerals on a digital

take an exact time to appear, to etch
themselves anon, sweet enemies of
the ether. Contrast them with your

(no stanza break)

old ticktock clock, the one you wind up
and stick in a sulk so you can't hear
it, how clumsy its numbers seem
compared to these. It's like that flash of

green when the brake is going down and
the sky anchorscents your rave and sane.
Rags bathed in bull, more tenant with
void than breeze, we parade Pompeii
in blank laundry. Don't pout at the Marquis
de Sade please. Don't pet the snake he
likes to spice up his enemas with, either.

VERTIGO

All prisons were quiet where I walked,
yet my way was limited
as buried in my tread I made rounds
that threw up barricade.
Rivers can flow with no sense of advance,
no anticipation of arc, but I must know
what my steps seek, thrust
thumbs into my belt for navigation
or find an emptiness between
the possible routes, a stay
to steer me through the faceless confetti
my mouth scatters in front.

Like kisses clocked by scars
my days were overt in their intent
to pass these words
through unison to you.
And even though the disguises by which
you have not known me
still wield flagell-eyelids
that haunt me with rainbow seepage
I have yet to mourn for signs
that I am here, and I refuse to mime
the verities that crest your view
in dread of drops.

Does my anonymous know me
or am I alone here in the night
where I guide myself down
via kite-strings.

DRAMA

Tiresias's fingers trace the scars
on the ankles of Oedipus
to map out the blind routes
he will advise us not to follow

Newtonisms cling
like crumbs to his mouth
each distance is aimed straight
plumblines measure these murders

the crowd gathers in the square
fruit plucked from keyholes
fill their hands while plague-winds
surge through them to make aisles

upstairs alone the artist
leans over carefully
and blots her watercolor
with camels to dry it

MYSTERY MOVIE

The business rival, the jealous lover,
the distant heir: once I've guessed
who the murderer is, it's over before
it's over, like life. The detective will
continue to not see the obvious or
else pretend to lack the answers till
his hunch is confirmed: if he's Poirot
or so, he savors his superiority and
holds his gloat over the heads of all
the stupid others: the cast still looks
each suspicious close-up in the eye,
but my attention fades to patience.
Post-intrigue and somewhat bored I
settle back, awaiting the confirmation
of my solution. Then: each clue hangs
abacus-like on the bars I've placed
around it all, safe and cell, confident
the guilty one shall confess to prove
that even I must suffer exoneration
in the executions destined for those
who foresee the end, who linger here
complacent in our deductive wisdom,
reviewing the forensics, the shrewd
sleuth-insights that result in the death
of suspense, the loss of our audience
innocence. Now the soundtrack swells
to leitmotif its list of suspects, each of
whom could have done it if this world
were only perfect, equal in its sharing

(no stanza break)

of virtue or crime. Sherlocks who solve
the puzzle pre-climax are most to blame
perhaps: are we to show for this lack
of justice, we who jump the gun, who
deny the drawing out of the dilemma,
thrill of the withheld. The unknown.
We who rush too soon to the revelation.
We killjoys who slay its necessary delay.

RETURN (CINEMA)

Down every road that rounds us off with rain
I go though
of course precious
I have lost the way—

Corridors run through movies
to lead me onward to the onward place,
but every time I try

to keep track of that trackshot
I die in clumps beneath its rails.

See the days that drag me down with road.

You stars who shine from the door
of the projector, you holy detours,
where my threshold fails is home
to you. You rule each realm

I ache my grin into skeleton for.

I know your names
Will nickname my name some more.

TRYING TO KEEP THE DIALOGUE GOING

when my hand was cut off
I got worried
but then suddenly
from the shirtcuff flap

slips of paper began to appear
bearing printed lines
for me to speak
when the cues come

now the other actors pay
attention to me
and seem happy
when I respond to them

and so I'm wondering
if it worked this way
with the hand what
should be cut off next

NICOLE KIDMAN

Hates it when her husband Clark Gable
shows his cigars to the whores and grins:
his dimple is a temple full of drunks
who swear at a grease-spot on a saint,
the hushavoice high in their roaring.

It's doormat day at Hollywood Donuts.
The whisper of their hinges wastes my ears;
washed up higher we wait for its lapse.
Tactile, tangible, what else resists
the awakened world I suffer from.

The obsolescence of it is too shining
to blink a mote at unless the eye can
filter out the rest of this instinctual
alarm, my campfires insanely signalling
no end to its vigil. Of course the war

is over I tell her trembling snowpeakable
toes, the Oscar is yours for the height
if only, if only. Night surrenders to her
naked bike. I must steal the clothesline
to make the clothes fit me. Ride, ride, Nic,

take those sacred spoke-wheels veer
for Sunset Beach featuring Tom Cruise
on Serenity and Artifice: The Actor's
Choice. Rant-serenade in dream-demure
my foe-limbs chose this evening's attire.

But awe-while, like a manifesto tossed
into a zoo's mouth, I'm nude too. As if
it would do me any good. Please post
no bills on your tongue. The sky by torches
soars. No tongues allowed her wall says.

AN ORIGAMI CLOCK

Never fast, never slow, this horologue
seems to work via the exactitude
its folds embrace, a geometric
reinforcement of shapes that entwine
the present in the past, emerged
from a pulpmill, a sheet
gnarled not by lovers' meshings
but by the origamist's fingers.
Page which is also a maze.
Book of nothing but dog-ears.
In which one reads the vertical
crease vis-a-vis the horizontal—
until each pried segpiece tells
our foretell, go on, peel it deeper
like a nest which involutes
wings in tinier and tinier tucks.
Tuck tick tock, can our end
be tighter tied than this? What a twist
to the then; what a knot to the now.
Conundrum of time. Watchworks
ultrawhorled. Outward stemmed, hour
that is midmost. Day that must
be wound up daily in woundabout.
Always its paper petals are shown
tolled by the whole it introjects.

MISHAP MESSAGE

I bandage my wristwatch
to stop the bleeding
of time but time
is perforce the wound
out of which space empties
Einstein's bag of marbles

the greenie I shoot at its sister the moon
the purey I bury with a note saying no
the blue one weighs in my hand
as light as sky minus earth
earth of course is the last marble

I like to hear it roll
around my showerstall
before I fall into the drain
into that distillate of distance we call
ocean

whitecaps whitecaps
beneath each of which
a nurse bobs up and down

cold fingers hold my wrist
cold toes probe my throat
is that my pulse I ask
sisters is that my life

(stanza break)

is that the onomatopoeia of the waves
words that jumble space with time
laughter tumbling down a telescope

words that turn to marble all I say
white as my years they bleed
they bleed away
white but white as only Einstein's hair is white
or a note slipped under drowning doors

ITCH

too many words but
if you could pare
them down to what
your fingernails scratch
over every pore
of skin on your body
except for a certain
portion of the back
below the blades above
the small of it sits
that singular patch
your hands cannot reach
to inscribe the lines
that cover all the other
fleshparchment
so is that spot
virgin reserved for
Mallarmé perhaps
untouched till god or
devil autopist writes
theirs there

THE BALLOON THAT LIVED ON THE MOON

The lower gravity was kind to it
It could bounce and soar higher
Than Earth allows
So the balloon was happier
By far
And soon forgot the puncture culture
We perpetuate down here
Where the hate-pins of our eyes skewer
The frailest inflation
The beadiest bubble is not safe
But up there
The bleak unpeopled landscape
Mirrrors more faithfully
A balloon's own sterility and
Essential snootiness
Consider
What a round object by its perfect nature
Excludes
How its boundaries segregate the in from the out
And show what is enough
And what is less
So when you think of the balloon
That lived on the moon you might wonder
Why all its brothers and sisters
Because can't you feel how
When one tugs your hand
Deft with that upward urge how much
It resists your touch
How endlessly
You are not a part of it

NO

If only no-man's-land
were not nomadic; if
that disarmistice place

were meant to be mapped
and did not constantly
waver between us shifting

reserves; if there were a cease
in which to find peace,
a lull to sing among,

to sing our bye to: a site
in whose endless sign
genesis could be lost.

NOVADOOR

To bear the light
as it grows ever

is no way unless
I want to waste

the ease of what
stays but the feet

won't let me. I
exist by repeating

I immediately
even though my

insistent rent of
past-tense has

close-focus cursed
what's left of this

redundant
page, contagious

singularity. They
try to spread the key.

HAIRBRUSH POEM

the hairbrush can hardly breathe
it suffocates in strands
it snarls as tense as teeth
biting an enemy's hands

the things we tame are what
entangle and turn us wild
every parent grows ragged tugged
disciplining their child

pity the year-old hairbrush
its stems all split its roots bare
like a field that's tilled too much
now a hoarbrush blooms there

hairbrush hairbrush have you
any tufts to spare today
now that I'm bald and cannot comb
please give back my gray

the hairbrush yanks and yanks
stubborn curl that won't lie dead
even a poorbrush should shed
such rebels from its ranks

(so try not to cry and just say thanks
when it hauls you off your head!)

PATIENCE

Snapshots rot first at the edges,
little cracks like escape routes
point beyond
the frame home.

Silhouette stabbed
by a treeleaf, night
at the window. Gushers
of headlights, cars
that chase the blinds
across the ceiling.

The face always expects
to perform
its own innocence.
Beyond question.

Just squint into the sun
until the camera calms down.

POEM

1
the same face peered from both our eyes
but not to say goodbye

the scene rejects your precious how-to

pervaded by dripping moments
notice the immobility of one

see enemies free of their graves finally

2
more born than alive
too born to be alive
the penis rides

through a bullet palace

(aboard the meow express
or the purr local

even a snowfall
unveils its air
of sole percussions

on wielderwings

3
He found in lapse
his body's solo data—
it left him whole

without the halve-of-love.

4

I was eager to play place,
to bet the the blue racetracks
that run beneath my skin—
and even to dare win.

VITAL SIGNS

Suicides are the pulse of time.
Its BP and temp are not, however,
Births and weddings respectively.

I respect all three, though;
I even regulate myself accordingly—
Because hours, even instants,

Require our belief or else
They will become forever;
The transitory needs us to pledge

Ourselves to its exit, yet this is a typically
Poetic phhft-thought, a whish of words,
A Rilkemilky blancmange.

The ground breaks off a bit of dust
To give to us, a little crust
For the lips of the lost.

EXTINCTSPHINX

Underline these half-written words as
if to say their incompleteness increases—
italicizes my meaning. Similar such
those partials out of which

dinosaurologists construe
that overpowering, that overtowering—
that propped up by the very worship
it yearns to bite in two.

*

In selfswamp submerged then
to breathe through reeds of piss
that gold god's evening panes
barely adumbrate: they know how

to improve the ceiling by
removing the floor.

*

Birthdays having leapt their children,
hesitation of candle, endless fugitive.
A shudder emptied itself into your eyes.

*

Goodbye now,
for my coat is changing hands upon me.

CONTRARY

Dawn leaks consequence. Where it will,
hovering over appletree or railroad, all
bright angles, letting the hopes happen.

Maybe the day is blue, meaning south,
meaning drought can find a path in it,
lack can offer it reasons for not being—

But if the day were gray, would plenitude
negate it? These eithers make a laugh.
They do not consider my health, how

it depends on neitherness neutrality,
on tepid clemencies and staling bread,
room temperature always preferred.

My armchair sits beneath a glowing
antenna which even hums a little to ease
what I concern. Twilight, chores done,

the overflow of panting elevators appears
frayed, decayed, despite ferocious washing;
a wasteland imposes grateful ants. Some

say the afterlife will console our taste
for communism: faraway docility, dog-boy,
can you restore such *douceur*? Transitory

commeasurate, the body's border throws
that origin an old lens stained with
the remoteness of incest. Tilled bare,

ground mutes me, bored rascal ill;

I maladministrate the war of handshakes:
sweet rain nets too much pit. Covert

holes perforate air. Then hints of dark
guidance—are sky's ways unsullied by
route or is it all pre-mapped, programmed

by fate? Here you and I are loath: we
conspire with appears, coy counterfeits,
zeroing in on the spoils that fill spoons

daily with hesitation while intention
awaits all festivity. All reception. Or else.
I'd sink sulkwise if it weren't such regress.

POEM

two sculptors duel
with sabers and chisels
hacking and honing
what they create
will not have
the stable emptiness of stone
nor the ephemeral fullness
of flesh
like butchers playing
chicken they slash
a rain of rubble
carving away the excess
whatever crude form
remains
after they separate
the parts that prevent
them from being one
will be
their singular twin standing
as they grow weak
on lopped arms
the tools heavier
until finally
less and less
detail emerges

TO YOU

If I were gravity I would
increase my grip exactly
at noon, knowing then the sun
is furthest away and least

able to help you resist
the urge to slacken all
and to fall down still
into death's ergo siesta.

I would ease up gradually
throughout the day until,
post-midnight, freed a bit
from that bright counter-tug,

I might even doze
briefly if I were gravity;
as long as I knew you
were asleep, too, that is.

FLEDGLINGS OF THE CYMBAL

Dawn, the ledge of day, is where
every dreamer's reflexes are tested;
one misstep is enough. Each waking
is a fall from that high surefootedness,

a descent from grace. All sleepers
thread their beds with this steadiest
of paths that they may arrive at last
in the plunge, the giddiness of worlds grasp—

Now who shall lift his hands to show
an hourglass in each armpit: birds emerge
screeching, we devour his wormgroin.
His moist declivities scour our habits.

When evening empties the buildings of
what is tall in them, we will return
each to his roost, ledging and listening
to a percussionist lapping against lily pads.

TRICKLEMAN, TRICKLEMAN, WASH ME AWAY

Is it habit, is it human,
clinging to a pet wheel,
to make me his last, his breast heir?

Yet how valiant the fish are to trace
the blood of each worm
back to him.

Anybody can play the hero
to etymology's silence: each of us
can bruise that pre-amphibian, that ooze.

That's why I must forget this man
whose past is fresh
from being abolished . . .

But why bare words, why threadwater thin—
just to fill gnarls up,
just to replete the studious ceiling?

VISITS (to X)

Belonging to all that moves through me,
I always go to look back through
the rearview.

Trees upholster the car in shade,
but no comfort can delay
its start. Its way
is laid out, is you.

A rushed goodbye is truer
than leisurely adieux.

Refined from the sun's raw fire,
our farewells are polite;
appearances maintained.

We say we want to stay but never do.

FROGPRINCE

Presence had its stay with me,
and even if only for a time
it came in the brief of love—

I used to whisper in her ear's
idyl. She was so treat, so could.
I mostly was worse. Now

the unkind years of peace
strand me here, where the lamp
studies pain with impunity.

The dust etched in its trance
seems a core the air can't share,
overwhelming the eye which

itself is plus-sulked with themes
of sight, beyond-borne. Imagine
a lily pad pregnant with eyelids,

lapping the light with its lashes.
Diffused to me the outward lies
as motes to the beam that bears

them. So what I see carries me
somehow, I cannot stand apart
subject and object observer

though as always I desire to.
I prefer to view than act, and
reflect upon the pond I appear.

DISENROUTE

Between her breasts was
a glass of water from
which I paused to sip myself

occasionally, to augment
the moment. And since
I've failed to regain that thirst,

can it happen again when
I re-read the poems from
that night, still fragments

for the most part, forgive
me, I know one word leads
to the one right for it, but

I can't stand an anthol,
a whole—the book held
by its pages together shows

its total tangents caught or is
that thought an adequate
lack of transition—there

are rules to excuse these
detours, yet I resent the facts
that run me offtrack—for

if I were linear solely and
kin of rails, my schedule
my purpose no choice, set

to refuse the switchshuttle

intent of this; and were
say weather for instance

its own similar, if rain
was the rain, like an express
it would never stop but

express itself in drops,
its destination contained
within the figure, no need

to board the Noah needle
swerving single-mindedly,
bound to change at the next

station although some claim
the immanent, the round
the bend one alone houses

all the sights the others
suppressed while others
sedentary, say there is

no need to proceed unless
vicarious, for whom a flyspeck
on the wall will fix fully

the great ideal of goal, be
that what's-met metaphor
to greet our roamer with as

he returns from the endless
crash, the west of his word.
Pilgrims of the accord, sigh

what lies beyond? Faced
with this wait, this plexideath
present, this plain computer

pane, I'm gone. If life bye
(switchyard skyport harbordock)
is a processor of arrivals

and departures, can there be
a point at which the two mesh,
a Heisenbergian mote-spot

where bi-quarks mate
monosexually, where the map
disowns these double-junctures,

discharted couplings hoping
the cars of our corpse can
twin-bine every inner coping

and shed their gathered tours
in disembarkment's cloak:
it takes place guise, the twain

train comes goes, the terminal
time empties fills like a well
oasis, the desert's depths

get piped together in sate
instant to create a kiss, its
memory parched-up on lips

that halfbelieve the lie I lay
beside her in the denoue of
lovemaking, or that I'll stay

survey the nipples that kept
distance placed the way any
window reveals its view by

far: I spell it out there in my
arms for the spill of it, start
recount: whereupon that

template that heartpump aims
to fructify the waste sill,
to render more sand fertile

facile—temperate it tries
overstrewn overmonsoon
to wade straits, facilitate

garden and wine-grove, grow
similitudes of old term-twines,
codesystems called rhymes,

a life sentence of coils
undermined yet constant
ark buoyed by breakers,

though lingering inside
every sign's writing entails
a vine-pattern, erratic

struggling with the field
of its tributaries, till wow
revolves but pow stays put.

Because the hands are
what the arms would be

if they crumbled and

each thing falls into its lesser
extremities, its future
attributes/beauties, their

distant vista's view veiled,
as if by glass. If she
shattered, I told her, she'd be me.

GENERIC

I look along the shelf
for brand-name goods of wealth
and fame but all I see
is that cutprice item me.

Wise shoppers shun my aisle
for bargains with a style
shiny and new, not used—
they know I've been reduced.

My sell-date fades pastdue,
retail reveals the true value
that wastes each cost invested:
to wipe this dust off my head

and open my packaging,
ignore the evident aging,
the brown tainted spots
splotching up under Knott's

Best: to buy me takes
a blind eye. A lack of taste.
Half-off or marked for free
this sale's not worth a spree.

SOLIPSISTIC VILLANELLE

Above his toes is where he prefers to be,
Below his hair. Precipice paradise!
Beyond himself, what else is there to see?

All others are, for all their airs, merely
Landmarks and lackstones to steady his eyes
Above his toes. Is where he prefers to be

That faraway? In that fabforeign sea
He drowns to a uniformity that lies
Beyond himself: what else is there? To see

One's soul as separate is to agree
Distance portrays estranged as the disguise
Above his toes is. Where he prefers to be

Sullen, apart, believing himself free
Of entangle temptations, seeking no prize
Beyond himself, what else is there to see

But acutely—in evil amalgamize—
No? do I share the body that daily dies
Above his toes? What can he prefer to see
Beyond me: Hell! what else is there to be?

A LIFETIME YET

Look, in the sky, how those clouds turn
into a place which briefly appears
to be unique or is that pattern
repeated once every 33.3 years—

Termcycle which can't be seen unless
via long computers our sapient view
finds its site: or is this simply false
recurrence imposed upon a true

chaos. Can heaven's formations be
further figured beyond the phase
nonce of that one fate we suddenly
see: a third of the way through his

thirtythird year we hoisted Jesus
up to check this question out; he
was supposed to get back to us
on it but we're still on hold, aren't we?

THE MIRROR INSPECTOR

Everyday when I arrive at their doors I am not
Surprised at how amazed they are, knowing of course
They threw the notification away without reading it:
Good morning (I say): May I inspect your mirrors—

No, you're on my list, is all: it's a regular checkup,
There haven't been any complaints. At least, none
I'm aware of. I try to be brisk but not abrupt
As I step smartly past them into the checklist zone

They call home, slicing my palmtop-puter across
Their immaculate floorplans. My first question
Now intends to reverse their post-breakfast ease,
I press my iniquity inquiring and just how often

Do you look at yourselves? Regrettably the rate per
Median is based on higher incident than most folks
Like you manage daily: no, you don't doubt your
Existence enough to satisfy the Law that yokes

Us together in this most commensurate duty,
Both me officially and you, you civilians must never
Neglect the brief barest urge toward beauty
Verification; we must take every chance to share

Our equity there. But what a ready home you have;
It's like all the others around. And that's why
I love assignments here: you should see the depraved
City, the rooms all wherefore sizes, the mirrors really

Get into a bit of—but out here, where the blocks
Are reflective—scapesules of their inhabitants—
Mirrors too need their own kind, their basics

Depend on exclusivity, the classical refinements

Of class struggle, of mass heritage. Your lovely children:
6 Lectras, 4 Meres, a Chandelite, and what else . . .
But where to start! I could fall back on tradition:
Bathroom first, the manual instructs! Toilet always tells

A steamy story but don't worry, we're discrete,
All according to our professional oath. The code
Of our guild would never allow us to reveal what
Shameful postures the public assumes: your rigid

Animadversions concern us only as they grieve
The victim, meaning our true clientele, the mirrors
Themselves. Oh yes, they're extremely sensitive,
They know when they're being slighted or worse,

Each time you refuse to meet your eyes in the glass
Or blink, they register that as a criticism of their
Impartiality—the Confront Affront, we term it. Yes,
The mirrors remember it all. Every gesture

Tears at their heart. It's a wonder they don't wear
Out but in fact sacrifice ensures that perennial
Glow, that youth that survives until they shatter—
Ah, it happens to us too. Everyone of you people,

And me, the perfect servant, the prime functionary
Of the Bureau of Mirrors, I too (though I'll try
To take a few with me when I go—to purge every
Mislooker whose infractions are so citeful—!) . . . Sorry;

Where was I: Your paranoia is appropriate—in fact
I've already punished the neighbors up and down this
Street, their episodes are serial now, the loathe-lack

Denaturedness of their crimes enough to furnish

Fellowship and whimsy to a waiting nation who's
Tuning in as I adjust my tie-pin camera to focus in on
Your astonishment: your snippet of tonight's news
Will augment that pageant of panic and guilt no clean

Sponge can wipe clear, all those dust streaks and flecks
Delaying the arrival of any nose-to-nose view
Of that cameo-coiffured face, that trap that reflects
Our truest self back to us, showing us how and who

But no, not that which we need to know most of all:
What is it in us that drags us each day to these sills;
And, how can one keep the self from this insidious role,
Which none escape, at least according to our files.

IMP

as i sd to my
the darkness sur
always talking i
caught maybellene
at the top
of the hill drive
he sd for christ
sake john why
can't you
be true i sd but
john was
not his name
his name was not
sd his name
no not was
never his
name i was not
his john though
as i was
motivating
over the hill i
saw him come his
cadillac sitting
like a ton
of lead sd sur
why not i caught
john at the top
of christ i
sd christ which
was not his name
maybellene mary
i sd which
was not his come
why can't you be
true drive he
started back do

ing the things
he sd john he
sd christ my
cadillac you
used to do what
can we do
against it why
can't we be
true for christ
sake look out where
yr going john
was not his name
came yr going
not look out
where not his
not no one
to witness to
adjust drive he
maybellene mary
i caught at
the top of the
cross was not
the darkness sur
creeley sur
berry sur
rounds us shall we
and why not
why can't you
be true drive
he sd for
christ sake you
can't be true
why can't can
we do against
and why not buy
maybellene a
goddamn big
car a god

cadillac to
witness and
adjust no
one to drive
he sd for
buy buy look
out why
can't you true
at the top of
the hill as
i sd to my
name which was
not why can't
why can't you
be true

Note: a collage of phrases from Robert Creeley's "I Know a Man" and Chuck Berry's "Maybellene," plus a few from "To Elsie" by William Carlos Williams.

FROM

I've studied the wallcrack
from which Roderick
Usher filled his syringe

at regular intervals but
no decalcomania occurs
when I trace it in my mind

or find a speck of chaos
to watch writhe. Illiterate
each pattern bolts me back

till teen angst hurts less
than birth beyond which
it's all alien, lightyears

assert themselves every
sill, or toppling snowfall
mimes the air with blue

precisions. Is it right to
frame it in errors largess
costumes in such nemesis,

encrusting the nostrils
with navels for example,
letting the body's rooms

merge in decay or worse,
cognition. My sister
counts worms for luck,

the curse of us Ushers
towers over the muck
it sucks its swamp from.

POSTCOITAL

time to scratch
though nothing can itch
like the beard
of her breasts

she can feel his blood
being injected
back into the grape
it gushed from

beneath this dead calm
the bed bends like
a sail bellied out
with distance

(may mallarméans
not regret
the white erased
from these sheets)

only a shiver
covers them now
a snowflake pinned
to their bones

PRE-PINDARIC

they starjump General Brecht in
to a proving ground moon
to inspect our poems to see
if they're good against the enemy

thrusting his head forward
in a way that can only be
described as Brechtbrowed he
scowls and scans-off on them

we see his eye-bots have special
code meter modes to correct
any limp iamb or hemistich
any chink in the poems' armor

he glints up from time to time
as if he can't believe our stuff
as if all he taught has nought-it
to do with what we've wrought

but Sir we plead you must read
avant-context historically we
moot the fact you wrote poems
on trees are no use anymore

for trees died eck-logues ago
when all the oceans went ebb
what we really need you see
is a blurb a lend of your celeb

what we need's your face big guy
bitten-witty grainy-campaigned
its closeups can authenticate

every adumbrate we write

a save the galaxy concert with
the Rolling Stones and you and
us Post-Planet poets will surely
defeat the muses of entropy

we love the way your cigar juts
from EarthCuba where the CIA kill
Fidel Castro daily when he hides
in the strange game called baseball

which no one plays on our worlds
our only olympic's the universal
join-in of a jousting blog url
the jot-in of its poetics journal

LATEST TWIST

in his oval office nest
does our President worry
whether this awful oval
was ever an egg and he
a wild gene in its cell

then the hen that squats
above his troubled den
must coo and coddle him
hush my dovecock what's
that bother in your head

remember when I said
if we could lay our arms
down next to our qualms
and then pit our qualms
against our dreams

such harmless tourney feats
might hatch within your heart
some circum round of peace
a perfect arctic circle
shining in its shell

you my yolk would yeast
and motherbrood my roost
so drink some oval-tine
forget that war-milk machine
bomb its udders to rest

egg along with me and see
each day I lay one more
go zygote your god-reich war

stay my mutant mite astray
in white house DNA

when time unlocks its clucks
you bad li'l roosterboy
like Hamlet Oedipus Rex
you're mommy's junior joy
one of my choicest chicks

yet I fear your fate is theirs
ego-typical of the male
pursuing his hubris wars
he loses his human weal
becomes an insane criminal

his mind can't mend its cracks
Humpty Dumpty's no lie
all your Irans and Iraqs
can't stick you together again
you're fry freud in the pan

sicky runny on the plate
yellow gunked with hate
like medals melting nuked
all your poultry-folk cry halt
too late our goose is cooked

so pluck my feathers for
the flag of white surrender
even us fuckfowl know what
backs up that diplomatic talk
heck just one wrungneck-hung 'll
make me halt my squawk

EXCHANGE

My love is torture
But no one attends my screams
My whimpers die out
Fade out the charmed windows
Fall unheard along the streets
Where couples walk in touch lightly
Exchanging pet phrases
Oh fortunate language whose meaning
Is confined to two
Who need no dictionary:
There goes another fingernail: see
They shove the fingernail into
My face as if
To show me this is a serious
Business we aren't kidding around
Here:
We want the truth you scum
Out with it tell us what
Their names are: who
Have you poisoned who have you
Defiled with the ugly
Gaze of your longing
What innocents have you left
Stricken by the sight of your
Adoring
Face tell us who who have you dared
To desecrate with love?

(stanza break)

But I, I have never confessed—
I have never revealed your names
Whoever you are
Whoever you are out there
Embracing in touch lightly
Exchanging those phrases
Which only you understand
Those coos those moans those
Hoarse unmeanings
That sound so much at times
Like my screams my whimpers here.

POEM

They stole all the belongings I left
on the sidewalk because I could only
lug part of my stuff into my new home;
and so I cried screaming at the cars
that shrieked by, sobbing on my knees.
Seems all I could do to calm myself
was rub my thumb along the clawpoints
of the strange key which would open
the door of my new place, if, that is,
I had indeed locked it behind me:
they may have already gone up there
and stole the things I carried in before.

THOSE PILLOWS

Those pillows lovers keep
adjusting beneath themselves to find
the right slant (that of a man
walking against high wind)

have their own cushion-quotient
of soft or hardness: they're
similar and unique like snowflakes;
every pillow has its singular

feel-degree, though blizzards of limbs
would moosh them all the same—
yet chastened to lie winterfold
among them when you've come

so close to breasting the best of
bed's storms, then maybe now
your relent-laced forms will learn
what little ease our loves allow.

LOVE POEM

Because you have set your lips in my life
like an event, the date
I had missed and longed for
unknowing if it had passed,
day dull as diaries
that wait for wonders—

Love, error of the unique,
rare-offering the one
moment
that will never share itself with
the dishwasher chores,

the drab demands of normal
life that line up pending to be
faced with nothing required of me
but an absent askance quality:
the stove and sink et al.

Love
on your heights
on the crest of a kiss
can you ever know the comfort
of these doldrum dole duties,
these small acts of repeat.

Against their duliness
your beauties dull.
I bend to their boredom
which after all remain home

and I find real life alone
and release
and solace
each time
I press my mouth against them.

THE NOTES

given the fame
surrounding
the recent book
of unfinished or
abandoned writings
by Elizabeth Bishop
won't someone
plan another
consisting of her
(and the concept
might work as well
with Robert Lowell
or James Merrill)
penned instructions
to the maid
the menus she
sent to the cook
the lists she left
for her secretary
and what about
her stockbrokers
the screeds they got
regarding assets
and every scrap she
(or William Matthews
Russell Edson etcet)
wrote should be in it
all the notes
to the chauffeur
the wine steward
the groundskeeper
the butler

the manicurist
the psychotherapist
the poolboy
the hairstylist
the dressmaker
the wigcomber
the authorized
biographer
the pillwrangler
the gardener
the cleaning staff
the masseuse
and what about
the servants
we don't know about
the flunkies
whose functions
remain hidden
whose arcane chores
are kept secret from
us the public
unimaginable
to us lowerclass
unbelievable
the sponge-wringer-outer
the sexologue
the doubled-over doters
the astro-prefixed kneelers
and of course
the lawyers on retainer
not to mention
the critics on retainer

NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM

*

A museum is too many rooms
where nothing can be moved;
one is forgotten in most of them.

*

A tiptoe theater, full of shushes
and overly-lit faces whose big
scene seems always imminent.

But if the cue is anything more
than a coin-toss, a chance word
from a spectator's bypass glance,

this expectation of response
is your guess, your great stance,
the stage you hem and haw at.

*

How the overflow of doorways
that link all these galleries
interrupts the paintings' spaces,

adjusting the land with lack
and lacunae, thrusting gaps into
the hushed square of our attention

and ushering us to the question
of absence, that thief peering in

on these always-without scenes.

*

Are we outside what is shown?
Made audience, do we attend
a pageant patient with our pauses

in perception, the solipsistic
tunnels we hug. Why otherwise
is there almost nowhere to sit?

Isn't it, that the viewers must
move in order for the viewed
to remain still. The authorities

curate these corridors with us—
offscreen captions ape our attempts
to evade rigidities they'd impose

until our amblings became
a Nazi lockstep across this grid
that exists mostly to secure

the screws that make sure
the patrons' plaques are more
the wall than we are: hungworks

belong to the victor; postwar
reparations are a chimera—
this world is bolted in place.

*

Museums are for the rich: it's just
another way they gloat and spit
on us, the blunt message is *See*

*twice great am I who can afford
to both buy this board and I
may also throw it away: this view zoo*

*is what I feed the animals
meaning you: gaze-cage where
I nonplus you with my surplus,*

*torture you with my morehood,
here you must worship my worth's
leavings, the Picasso I pissed on*

*before purportedly donating it
you bet to get a big tax write
off that really comes of course*

*from scum like you, you pay the cost
and the critics conspire my con:
I own them and you and all this too.*

*

The poor have no right here,
though ostensibly it's here
for us, its existence is built on

our backs, our lacks of education:

connaisseurs of crap, we'll buy
any crud postcard Impressionist

wallpaperers provide—victims of
fade-forgers who reign everywhere,
enforcers of the de rigueur; their

efforts to convince us this emptiness
is otherwise, succeeds: that's why
nothing here can ever be touched,

even a fingertip would disturb the
dead tenuous alignment of forces
fragility can only lament from frame

to frame until the all but unshown
collusion between donors and whore
curators completes its scam decor.

*

Numberless our looks languish
unable to compose their path,
halting an inch in front of

the canvas; the air is thick with
incomplete glances, gazes that
failed to reach these pictures,

overtures toward an unsatisfactory
climax, unbridgeable the gulf,
still impotent or frigid the mind

feels confronted by these large
garish (i.e. visible) examples of
a wig tossed onto a TV to be

a diva antenna receiving pictures
from the Tesla Void where
spysats orbit to catch the planet

in closeup, candid depictions of our
centimeter selves, the slimed movement
of border sorties, incursions that

violate the treaties signed by
dignitaries retiring with a wing
named after their Mom and Dad.

*

Though our observances are far
from over, scalped by perspective's
relentless blade we wander home

truant now to our other portraits,
false to their provenance, the lands
we lost by invading the sanctum

of this museum, serene scene
we plebs must abhor in front of

our lives which cannot authenticate

the real exhibit: this wealth of lies
before whose truth our face is
forgeries; our eyes un-nude, unseen.

*

[UNTITLED]

matter anti-matter it's all ain't matter to me
the guns and the butter think I am the worst
the guns and the butter think I am their brother
they think I'm dirt

out of paper and teardrop I made a tongs
I crafted a calipers
to grasp
to snatch this last word from the hand of herd

POEM

Out the window snow falls like an insistent tugging
at a sleeve or a generalized sloppy tide of miracles.
They put a mirror in a testtube and call it clone. No
sperm-spume dripping down a favored wall of cave
to yield a stereo distance of shore—a petitioned real.
Some measure of contempt holds me ransom, makes me
pose like this in roughed up eye fashions. Amnesia
for other measures who suspect I play no part in my
identikit capsizing finally homo ref, mime corps
spreading immune icicles to blatant those targets
savant I was incruled by; remember my echo purse
field of ratio blanket, verbs who crop up the futile—
gelid morning slim in its queue, the mold thumb
for an instant was poured that way. Appointedly.
World of roses in which the thing stands whole again,
programmed by phoning the echo, converting it
to cash behind me. Message intimate for the blond
sincerity if you repeat it slowly eyes closed. A delve
away from here the day I crowned prattler fills me
with mythbolic, and if I were not destined with it
I could foretell what vast sky constraining this
ensured the god of my wide road was you. Inevitable
enough for two, more borne than the one strands
painted less of, their scrawl all I knew in the end.

ADGE

such the strength of signs
I mean abbreviations

that before he dies
someone often tries

foolishly to devise
to dream up one

as if the right acronym
might save him

from time he scatters
out the letters

of his name arranging
them

in different combinations
or anyone's

to spell out the logo
the curt slogan

whose shortcut on
the screen asserts

the brand buy
the standard eye

can respond to
any cant will do

any congerie of
some might work

every shtum may
shtow the way

but not a phrase
it has to be less

than a word it must
resist the mind almost

equally as errata
and yet mean more

than any term can
it must determine

itself as a what's grasped
a spasm like the gasp

that wakes from dreams
what syllable it seems

to the dumbest ipod
it's no anagram stupid

so drop your digiter
halfwit fidgiter

you can't tap it in
fingertip or dumbpad

even if you erase it with
your sanity's bleach

it must reach
you instantly i.e. breach

your customary
perceptions like Laurence Harvey

in The Manchurian Candidate
brainwash etcet

it must replace you
with a clone-face you

which is your instead
than the one on your head

DAYS AWAY

Days away. The lazy orchestra
lip-syncs the sounds of its instruments,
the audience itself gawks in vain
at an apparition of kindred yawns.

Days away. Last night someone scraped
the paint off Ivan Albright's verminous
portrait of Dorian Gray and they
injected it into my eyes neck
and every feature. Buboos
pustule pouches blistered the lips
that bussed Bosie buff. MGM
commissioned it for the 1948
film, he stayed young and spoiled
while his picture impugned, while
a gleaming palette knife cued each glop
of dull oils into their title role.

Days away. A state of oasis is the sun
in enervation, the lowest ebb
of encroachment when the desert
is around one, inching closer with
each footstep took. The solitary
palmtree shrivels, the waterhole
shrinks to a pinhole in a mask
worn once to assist desire.

Days away. On his deathbed
he wears summer clothes, out
of season to the end. Always
had to embarrassingly carry
his sweater where others strode
short-sleeved and free.

ANTICIPATION

Before the bell rings,
let's put on our uniforms,
pre-don and suit-up prior,
prepared in proper attire,
occasion-costumed.

If a comic alarmclock frowns
its brow to get set to let go,
stick on a mask, a face-circle
whose eyelashes tick
from numeral to numeral.

Say it's a tall church-steeple
and it takes a deep well of a breath,
an inhale-heave readying to ring,
drape yourself in the smudgy fringes
of sermons and elegies.

If it's only a bicycle huffing
and puffing to expel
its tiny pedally peal,
pull on your shorties and shifts
until they tuck your knees.

A dinner-gong, you must
tie up your bib-knot in huge swaths,
large lashings of effort. It should
always go flourished thus
ruffs and fluffs for the feed.

Prepare yourself for the tolling
of time, don't be caught without
the proper clothing

for clang, tinkle, or teaspout.
But sadly if it's the bell that tells

your day has fled and flit,
your poem needs an edit,
don't bother looking through the closet
for that outfit,
you don't have it.

POEM

Knott-plotting to fellate Rudolph
the Red-Nosed Reindeer I crouch
behind a snowclad chimney shivering
less from the cold than from my
cringing proximity to the loved one as
he lands skidding a little on
my icy roof: verismo venture, ploy
rugged enough to succor its desired
agency. I could even add my feet
stamp out the small bravoos
of the snow as it falls. Or else
pretend I cowered likewise in a cove
full of eels eliciting Aegean delays
of day post-finis its druglord intent,
sinister and pale-opaque, tactile even.
Impatient to breed the satyr-hyena
from a handful of fruitkin, then
all formats let your aperture drool
duelling swimmers coiffed at dusk:
the children of alternate cramps
may concur. And yet an attic that's
dustmopped daily is no attic, I cry,
stubbly, sulk-emberish, numb-only.
Abashment's beverage. My hair
needles the dust. I comb through
photos of mythological scissors,
I tend to fly like I got a wing up
my ass but at least I try. Imagine
balloons released at burials to signal
the bloodnests in the caves, the eave
cotes of blood Earthbound leaves
his sister Skybound to fend bare.

POEM

Keep the droolroom greased, Letitia;
to put the lisp on it, I lay there like
cheese on toasted princesses, but
it rips its heart out the mumbling
cherry-pit. As it says in the epitaphs
grimly carved on whitecaps, each
wave offers another death: the dateless
notations of our global sauna delete
instantaneously your shouldered-aside
arrival. Pore-poised before leaping
gestureless, stripped, livid into
that seething swank eyelid triggered
by a mass of rubiks playing catch
laughter, I am stirred by the impetus
ankhs yank-off with. Despite them
the flesh of night-fleeing comets
and gash genital rotations combine
to fool me still. A dictionary posing
as a free calendar leads me off while
no OK Corral rushes a piano's exits
with such relish an angel wets
his finger to see it. Barbers smearing
pep-pills on their toes know to hide
these last nubilities in rags of pied
piper and snorts (cyclotron in chains)
or else I rub the small of her back
with the small of my dick. How
can I bear it when the headless
jostle the armless to rise in one
plaited symptom like tongues on
dark lemons. Dazzled by the slits
in pingpong's forehead I weigh
venison in lamps while stars, stars

publish their bitter day tribes on
my window. Bees shed their mes-
merism so quickly when tattooed
at advent that I fear I must flash
the sign of the knish in response,
cautious as a sphinx measuring
volcano-rims to see which one is
roundest. Mystics always seek this
perfect circularity, though I suspect
they simply desire to feel the warm
bigamies and stat tomtoms lining
them like jewels on a sorcerer's
nostrils. My humanity has gone
to the gills. You know why. Candles
rearranged you in profile, yours at
the dawn of anoint, exuding that
fur of unreachable cages you were
known for. Six white scissors lashed
the wisps a while, hushed in spiels.

THE LOVES OF A DRAIN

Our lovemaking summarizes the wallpaper,
its repetitive visual rhythms find
their analog in every urgent thrust—

designed to repeat patterns our flesh meets
and lies apart, subsumed in the love
of a drain. The drip of repetitive

visual rhythms across the ceiling
finds analog in the clogged couplings of
two who find themselves sinking into

each hole with swirl-on-cue tongues
insistent, barely saved by the act
gestures they denude the bed with,

waking transgressions that express
vent the urge to lie on one's back and
advocate thumbs. Gurgling passionately

their pipes express me better than I,
internal plumbing meets in these feints
across the sheets like a hand waving me

away from the precipice edge, whose
fidelity assuages the prayer to die here
caught in this transit of self, the score

scaled in ascent. Otherwise to lie here
in else submerged in the event that
creates its surge, in which our part

is incidental, types in the format

of excitation and release. Ergo
eager as love in a downpour of thumbs

they bite each other shock absorber.
They requite each other in prescient
measures, the prince whispers let me

stab this glass slipper into your heart
to see if it fits. Cindy stirs her stupor
of tongues, what can she any-say that's

not surplus. The prison left our pores
for a moment; orgasm hopped a plane
to the coast. The departures fell hurt

staggering or instead staggered, staged
at conversant intervals. Let me see
you there inbetween the cursive coffin

stains on the blanket, the rack designs,
see what they try to cover over with
arabesque or maze motions, shapes

harmonized by how we occupy this
torture clockwise counter, north south
one liquid motif finds our mouth gorge

all peasant tunes and themes untapped,
swept violins replete with vulgartone
conductors percolate at the sink-rim of

"The Loves of a Drain," opus utter,
ought whose sudden faucets flush
existence from our loins. Can it empty

these fountains flowing in the hid
innards of the house we address
our plainest parts to, heart to hearts

no one overhears. Their intercourse
maps the circuitous vein of thought,
juncturing thwarts and coverts caught

in the crook of architects' nightmares,
foundations unjoining to reach apex
here beneath the daily business of sex

and cloister, nude transactions above
such bare facts, dusty basement tracts
where waterheater toilet ducts convey

our thirsts and wastes in train of vain,
plumbing veins that twist the house's id
into its antithesis; channels constant,

core beyond. It creates its space on
the theme of oasis. It waits to inherit
the whole of empathy per desperate

sand islands and saharas subsumed in
succession, scene one and scene twos
lacking intermission's mercy. The sun

standing for relief on the shoulder
of Harold Pinter may dazzle these
silences with increase of time there

in the dream acts that aftercede
in our closer contacts: blinding each
dalliance with desert, dunes awash

the cess, the bigamous cusp of Venus.
Greece unifying space with ruins
offers no landscape as vast as this

or desolate. Its pillars defeat quest,
baring huge axioms of math attemptance.
Nothing nevers nonce, yet recurrent

orchestrations search that trite for
a you're perfect dull ballet whose score
can hoard off the hours death regales

our lucifer belle with. Maybe such
clay-cud of dinosaur—overcite meme,
sour sleeve for flesh's defenses to slay

polar war with lunar warp—can lure,
out of confident distance, more
regrets and drunkenness to attend us.

SWAT POET

They use me as an anticlimax, right before
smoke bombs door rams bambam guns—
I'm a SWAT poet. After the fuzz negoce has
got nowhere they haul me up as a semi-last
resort, hand me the bullhorn and I'm on. It's
usually too late by then, the crumbum thug
or slimeball felon inside has resisted all
the handbook ploys—once I asked the Chief
why me? why a poet? wouldn't a standup
comedian be more appropo? Yeah they would
he grunted but like if it's poetry we can get
a grant. I stand there and address my saddest
lines to the dog fugitive holed up in his mad
grudge, what'd I say? Yesterday I started with
"The haystack itches where the needle is, but
it can't reach that far." But today I'm peeved
by something I just read, so I tell the crazed
killer: Camille Paglia says this poem began
with pizzazz but its zazz always pizzles out—
both the critics and the cops want a big bang
finish, the rough beast y'know, Bethlehem
every time. But all these stand-offs fizzle in
their droll, you die, I slink to the U. to teach
the junior bards how futile words are to quell
the violence you manifesto in flesh, the flash
fails its prosaic finale, the hostages flail hell,
footnotes revenge this transgress and trope,
hopeless my every appeal. But you in there
my ideal captive audience, you must know
our hold-outs our hide-outs are no help up,
the authoridudes gonna nail us in the end,
you on death row and me on the shelf where
my policed volumes plug their sanctioned

crimes of rhyme in chime with the same old
Villonmyths, Rimbaud selling slaves to find
his fateful famous shame, what the hell? You
and me, buddy, smut good are we? God hail
this suicidal shootout and movie macho
got no chance of precedence in the pants,
it can't oedipize your dad and mine and what's
his name the president the king the man—
so come out now and let our tame jails remain
jealous of each other, barricaded in their
terror of empathy, these cowardly face-downs
just to create what, an obvious world where
yours murders, mine bores them to death
with its antithet, its smug badguy of verse
poses, nothin's worse than this stale feud's
duelling each other to whose purpose, you's?
Give it up. Unlock your door. Look—it's like
the avantgarde out here, every rifle round me
is bristling with theory to prove you wrong
and them right, right between your eyes,
stooge. Staged version of my poetry prize.

THE RETRIEVAL

In order to recapture
the features of the one
lost, one must gaze
first into nothingness,

in which the semblance
encountered should
be blank so it can flit
across the screen of

expectation, and wither
all the images there:
as we scan the past for
someone any the same

we see must be cipher
enough to erase that
old recognition which
we hold in our mind.

The search necessitates
losing the present to
the degree we pursue
its opposite. The ratio

may not be exact though,
and we may lose more
time than we regain,
the numbers may not

even out. There can be
an excess of loss, a gap
that greets us when we

return to our senses

clutching whomever
we've brought back to
this void which can't
be filled by the thus

recalled person no
matter how beautiful
they hover here now
in place in face of us.

WHEN THE TIME COMES

there is no alleviation
from the pain
there is no balm

there is no balm unless
via the inner alias
of rhyme it's
Li Po's palm

as it lays
another just-written poem
on the river
to let
it float away

all that effort
lifelong to create
a self sacrificed
as soon as
you got it finished

I hope I can say
when the time comes
as considerately
as calmly
Li Po let go of me

EACH THOUGHT EMITS A CAST OF ITSELF

Every roll is a new role
And each shows its truest face
When Yorick's skull is tossed you'll
Reveal your final disguise

Bone against bone they spin
Exposed by a thrust of wrist-lace
Yet Hamlet stripped to his skin
Scolds the players' displays

Don't saw the air when you throw
Don't wince at seven eleven
Whatever odds you're down to now
Will zoom up zero soon

Act Five Scene Five waits
To quietus these words words words
Death itself is just one of the fates
Our dice are rolling towards

POEM

To give this offensive death a gesture beyond
its candle-paint, a mist, dawn where night
enough is calm in the midst of vanishing,
being replaced by necessity, time that impaled
incognito your surf-lingering thoughts: or
shallow as snorkel knighthoods, a steady
decay of flesh as cover for, a shirtsense
existence. You outlast all year-end prospects
which eventually beach all that follows us,
a bundle of abbreviations that suddenly
replace the thank-you-writhed witnesses, intrusive
plumage that still invades my evasions—
peach-red kerchiefs tied to my tusks attest
your presence, the resonance your profile
worth. How could it have happened when
I am the same, how could this death have
the faintest taste of ripeness, the harvest
shuddering through heads of others: avid
they speak with a voice whose sigh slopes
us toward homage, unique solo conclusive
impending voice that ensures descent, yet
the imminent nexus of this crush is a fizz
lesson leading on home, home always signals
its horizon to close-up, zoom-profile slashed
by blood, by innocence putative limbs substituting
your testifying prudent myth, whose words
always counter my indifference. Days to
love you, years to regret—the last teardrops
facile, leaky faucet concepts fucked continually,
instant island insert, an island discovered
to be without inhabitants is where nature
gathers its examples of us, more paradigms
a slope flowers towards, each foothold

another face, the rockface impervious to solo—
the privacy of the commonplace valued as
omission, found only as the opaque hornclock
levels its gaze lensward: techniques that sever
every sentence from firsthand endeavors,
each unique niche of it forever featured, no,
concealed by empty perspective bleeding true.

FACADE

Mirrors worn out by apple
renderings, depictions the carcass
of peepingtom sneers at.

Vatic surface disdained by Cezanne,
doubts that blemish forever rarity,
wise beauty is painted parallel
always.

Always beauty is tempted to falsify
every shadow, as if nothing nearer
could be real. Doubling its fade
it seems to set an alternate yet not.

Facepaint spoils
the forbidden zone quality
that lives and dies there (indirectly).

But truth lies immobile on the sundial.

(Its other else moves to the blazon
of summer rhymes that remain names
unknown till birth when the tongue
must pronounce itself the tongue,
forsaking every purer synonym.)

MEANING

Imagine a world disguised as art, or one in which art masquerades as you, so your face is just a portrait, your legs a landscape. Your hair abstract expressionism. And when you go to the window each morning you glimpse in its transfiguring pane a streak of the vein source of things: that your eyelashes remain nothing but brushstrokes, that your feet beneath it all are woodcuts. And when you open the door to inquire how a rose can limp between the breasts of the dawn, you feel like a collage snipped from the pages of a novel whose words have always remained immune to meaning, whose plot is not subject to that mute truthserum.

SONG TO CHER

you've got too many feathers
on what you're wearing
but you're just sharing what
you're carrying inside
to help you hide
our dying eyes

you've got too few letters
there in your name to show
but like every brevity you
help us live help us give
our day a little stay
before we go

there's too many young
boyfriends in your bio
but that's just jealous jive
and we all know oh
we were never old enough
to be the one you love

there's too much agelessness
in your face and every dress
you wear is less and less
but nothing can replace
what's barely there as
you stride on stage on high

(all you one-name wonders
sing your numbers
everywhere
you've no discretion in your
expression of the air)

now there's too much cher in
spangled hanging there in
that fixture picture HER
our eyes have all died
our days have gone inside
to find out who you always were

APPLE

Pack your bathtub with humankind.
Your closet with animaldom.
Let grassmost spill from your shelves.

Cram the world into your house,
overlooking no cubbyhole
no corner. Surrender your personal

to matter external,
privacy to plethora,
fill each space with all.

Leave no room for yourself, though—
how foolish that would be.
For, as the fruit is a little

recantation on the part of bitterness,
a letting up of its overkill reign,
so this surfeit will solve

for a while your null.

CROSSROADS

A crossroads is a solely human place—
animals in their time have created paths
through jungle, woods or plain, wearing
down the grass with hooves and paws,
but roads that intersect are necessities
which only we respect. The junction
of two lines laid in the earth serves
to focus our steps in ways which crazed
disparate fleerings of herds to and from
their waterholes and feedgrounds can't
come flock or follow. Beyond those mad
meanders lies the nearest need to greet
a configuration of fates we recognize
indigenous to us: hostile purposes, aims
in antipathy: two destinies that disagree
at every point except one, pure opposites
who meet just once, whose encounter
is over before the moment can swerve,
the transient turn untrue. Forever lost
(like chessmen in a labyrinth) we must
impose our cartography upon this dirt,
whose card-dealt corrosive tracings deny
our thoroughfare thought, our dream
of achieving that beckon-cathect, that
act which will prove by evil increasing
daily acts of horsepower steadfastness
that our choice of trek was correct, since
a crossroads alone can show us the way
we didn't take, lunging there at right
angles to our progress: its ninety degree
option runs so counter to our own that
it endorses the unique course we each
ride out the rims of, our souls plow-low

so none of them neither else can share
what, except for that single instance of
sidelong, that helpless avoidance, that
glimpse of other lives we might have
shared a respite with on this junctured
hurrythrough, is a solely human place.

SCENARIO

I am in love of old with your voice
the one fading into its clones sighed,
the voice in love of old replied
a delayed sense of one attends me:
if actors learn each role with scissors
repeating its rip across the script—
I am in love of old but it is hard to
rehearse our parts when they occur
snipped along the dialogue's errata
yet love of old will show its face
that text of frequent halts our ways exalt;
they flood the scrim to see the movie
memory dreams but what film will fill
or ford its depth though death is
imminent in love of old and wings
to kill those sky trceries that show
no stage can hold the shapes that cut
catty the paper where these apes appear
or keep its stills in sequence when
curtain-askance your eye I ascend.

DREAMTIDE

downways the beach
where waves battle shallows
I thought of maybe
a pillowfight with the sea
using hearts for pillows

sownways their feathers
would drift all day on me
childhood-hoarded could
I let my hours
finally jet free

but flownways the days
must wait there to bare
that blood which neither
wound nor water
adulterates

shall yawnwaves waken when
every sandgrain sifts
its one memory pure
of the breakers taken
the oceans endured

now on drawnway beach
dreamtide high they lay me
from comforter combatted
spread over lap dunes dead
wings wherever I reach

THE MALL-TIQUE ESTHETIC

Often a flower tries to befriend your shirt,
but you must shun its minor transcendence
and remain in transit afterwards then later forward,

nor stop along any ground lure to wield
an egg balanced on a T-square and declaim
how grateful you are for whatever cameo roles

your film noir killers and thieves can still assume,
though the thrill of closing your eyes in witness
leitmotifs the fear they show account to.

Earth-surface seems to support this with evasions
which, if difference did deliver, might
grant monkey unanimity to time's isolation

and overcome your capacity for reason among
vined gardens of origin, desperate media
which litter the floor with florabunda

whose come-ons to your clothing are due
to their desperate desire to be real somehow:
how sad nature is in its entourage stage,

its stalker nazi strategems to stay relevant,
the way it mimics us. Its simulacra swarm
almost human in their gaudiness of thorn

or leaf though of course they lack our essential
say nay qua. Yet here you are among their
units of ubiquity as if they were the one you

should escape and run to hide beneath a sundial,

while your windmills pump water to a stalled
starting-block; your bread sops up the clouds.

Hey: each day don't you see on the screen
a comedian's teeth battle the lava of his own lips.
Doesn't that scene render Vesuvius superfluous.

IMMUNE

Listening's confined to animals,
What we call ear uncalls all we hear—
Eyesight applies to hawks and owls
But never to our narrow peer:

Each natural sense we experience
Here as humans pales, halved or less
To a modest of its male-ness—
Smell; touch; taste: can you even guess

Which of them if any might still prey on
Our higher-evolved state . . .
Which of that five's alive and hovering—
Dead to its lunge we wait.

SEFFI'S BLUES

every year the same
they forget my name
I take some time away
and when I'm back in May
it's like I never was
all my former buzz
my résumé my respect
where's my endorsements
they treat me worse
than a fatality-show reject
didn't I have a series
didn't I star once
special guest appearance
Sharon Stone as Ceres
but looky here is
this my career this limbo
where'd it all go
I want my audition
I want my youtube hit on
but no it's always no
can't even get a video
or a pilot slot
or a Phil Spector shot
I used to be lah-de hot
now look at this wan
subterrene skin
this bone I'm in
god Dis I'm damned
Angelina can tan
but the sun won't bide
Brad Hades' bride
whitened-hide I stride
past the poppin'-rot-zi

it's me they can not see
I'm fade to the shades
I read the trades
I was Liz and Cher
but the Biz says where
so please don't tell
'TMZ I'm back from hell
stale out of rehab
for a while until
I feel that heel-jab
fang again this Fall
that icky-phallic python
is waitin' to writhe-on
when my rerun begins
and my comeback ends
he'll fuck me Paris Hilton
and lay me Lethe Lohan
till I'm gone for rotten
a hasbeen-to-be
signed Persephone
PS don't 'lert the media
don't IM your 'TV
don't earth to Mom
she cursed the sitcom
I died on and I agree

THE NEVE VILLANELLE

He was a Montague and she was a Capulet
yet no feuding families threw them in thwart—
it wasn't that that stopped Romeo and Juliet

from Act Five Scene Fiving it on their first date:
no, it was that Neve Campbell that left them reft-heart—
It was Neve Montague and Neve Capulet

they wrote on their carnal diaries' most intimate
page: every time they tried to kiss they'd start
to Neve-itate, and that stopped Romeo and Juliet

from making out further. Neve made them hot
but not for each other. They'd just sit there in flirt
gone faux at the Montague or the Capulet

manse and navigate some Neve-or-die site
and ram *Scream 1/2/3* up the DVD insert—
that comely Campbell stopped Romeo and Juliet

from consummating their teen-tragic fate:
and even when she did indie roles for her art
they'd still curse the Montague and Capulet

DNA that kept their lives so punked, so pre-set:
Why can't we be Neve? Why can't we clone her part?
Having to stay a human Montague/Capulet
stopped them from loving Romeo and Juliet.

ASSASSIN

kiss each bullet
before you load them
so every saliva'd
shell will slurp up
during its inspired flight
some of the confetti
snowing down on
the motorcade
and will use those
alphabet bits of
newspaper or torn
campaign posters
whose false hope
peoples this parade
to compose an obituary
to collate out
of those shredded
syllables and words
those puffery lies
like a poem drawn
dada from a hat and
thereby at the end
of their satisfactory
trajectory come to
imprint some random
elegy in the flesh
of the tyrant me

TCM BLUES

I can't go far
I can't go free
although I am a star
everywhere I move is
right there (see me?)
on Turner Classic Movies

Mad scene cued for Oscar
my head looms closeup size
gosh I feel so lost there
trapped in celluloid
I collide inside with eyes
I can't escape them
on TCM

No one under eightyfive
remembers my name
that's the forget-its the fuck-its of fame
the goodies and the groovies
why am I still alive
on Turner Classic Movies

I wish they'd forget me
and let me rot in peace
why the hell they have to show
all the B's that Louis B made me
get on my knees for I don't know

Silents mute me
Garbo suits me
Bogie shoots me
Bette boots me
out the door

then comes the War
Coop salutes me
Film Noir
convolutes me
I'm ready for more
but time and TV executes me

My birthday they unvault me
popcorn butter and salt me
their experts all exalt me
for each posthumous premiere
of the pics I wish would disappear
once a year like Dracula I up and rear
from my mausoleum here
at lovely Forest Lawn
my death goes on and on and on
like boring Norma Shearer
even though I look so young
I just hate how they approve me
on Turner Classic Movies

I should have stayed on the Stage
my Chekov Ibsen defined the Age
I was the rage with Page One raves
all Hollywood ever saw was my Beauty
I told Jack Warner Go ahead Sue me
I don't need the movies
screw you you studio enslavers
I'm off to Hedda Gabler's

The gangsters and the crooners
the roughies and the smoothies
the dames who came from nowhere
in their furs and rubies
it's Turner Classic Movies

The chippies from the chorus
do their Queens and Madame Boovrys
the hams who knew their Hamlet
are clowns and falldown boobies
the teens who grew up meanies
the Garlands and the Rooneys
come join the ingenues and juvies
on Turner Classic Movies

Producers used me
directors abused me
my co-stars co-screwed me so
please don't behoove me
don't Catherine Deneuve me
all you S-O-B's just leave me let me go
all you Mickeys and you Goofys
you hasbeens and newbies
12-step friends and floozies
don't try to sob-and-soothe me
don't emote and quote you love me
you really really love me
oh how you love to view me
on Turner Classic Movies

(fadeout:)

My flicks all used to slay em
in the big towns and the boonies
but now they only play em
on Turner Classic Movies

THE FUTILIST

Is there a single inch—
one square millimeter
on the face of our planet
which some animal
human or otherwise
has not shit on?

Is there anywhere even a
pore's-worth of ground—
earth that has never
(not once in its eons)
been covered by what
golgotha of dung?

If such a place exists,
I want to go there
and stand there
at that site
in that spot, truly
and purely for an instant.

Note:

Futilist to dream of an edenic site untainted by waste and decay. As the last line indicates, even if he found that mythical speckpoint, in one instant his mere presence would defile it for ever.

EACH TIME

Sometimes I dream of Rumor's house, which,
I just read in Ovid, is situated cruxic

"the world's center," at that core of cores
beneath us all. He contends its windows doors

are forever open, a porous palace where
every word uttered by every person is stored

in what I'd call the ultimate anthology.
Where is this house, in what country?

Its closets hold not only the past,
meaning the brain's nine-tenths lost

noncognitional of the capacitated,—
because it collates not just the said,

but all that will be said: Each text
it bleeds from the future is convexed

theoretically to also heal our sole flaw:
that underlying chamber, that cellar

which upholds these capsuled corridors:
that fissure floor one-celled horrors

emerged from eons earthwide scattered,
too patterned for breeding, those far

glugglugs, these slogged zillenia ago.
Each trans-cthonc myth—genetic fragments

we once keeled our island egos against—
is shored Eliotically, in toto—

but not in a waste land: in this place
nothing is wasted, each fact is facet

composite a euphemistic peg, whose hole
lies in what one might term a zero,

though the zero that defines our one
must look through itself to see what's gone:

What used to be the bookshelf
it swallows, and feeds throughout itself:

it sits each of us there at the hell
level its circuits need, and circulates us

around the entire system's railroad
to embody our brain a la bloodmode,

knowing its node is only made more real
by the fact each hypertold spongecode

can be simulsold for further gore:
every PC glued to GossipNet

increases the sanguinary poet's debt.
But I hear you say in ways this constant

poured out current has wrecked Intent:
floor-it geared, it steers us most toward

a surface abyss, a maelstrom facade—
the sargasso rock-critic, the facile hard-crowd—

it's said our eyes are icebergs in that sea.
But where they are dispelled completely

beyond my room night comes into swim.
Somewhere out there I know grow fossils

of protozoa-to-be, omega mammals,
animandroids roaming manuals

whose outreach program, whose proffered rim
as far as I'm testcase-concerned

should fend off every ocean, every cunning
void evolution took some of its beginning

from: for longspan has that epoch broke
when rumor heard what human spoke.

DOLLY THE EWE FIRST CLONE OF THE WORLD

Turflods kicked at me by Dollyherds
are d'oh-kay, but when her sheepmates
slur my name that way it grates me,
though I know from Bill to Baa
is not so far. Distance yearns for more.

So many ways to go, no wonder
hotels converge sobbing, heaving why
why is he leaving me, I want to die—
understandably. I myself feel that way
often, I who found a bird so small

it was shed by its own feathers,
and fed it to my cat. All these wild
creatures in the world and they
have no place to stay, no ark can
hold the moult-might of their DNA,

no wonder it injects my replicant's
empties over trashcan allah horizon:
I innoculate that termongrel daily
until he has his waste's worth of it
or till its pit omega-emits enough to fit

the one clone I lack the mod cons for.
The only one I'll never be anymore.
A convention of them or a conference
attended with name-tags of the extinct
is where my cage waits, kicked at by kids.

CONTINUOUS SHOWINGS

The days all drawn to December
can't remember their own
though every shopwindow offers
24 hour plus. It is precisely this
excess of time, this hyperhoopla
extolled by even the smallest streets,
their torturous emporia, tedium
temples that fly the boxoffice flag
higher each weekend, or towers
with clocks that would love to stick
their hands like neckticktockties
down into the traffic, that's the stuff
that stabs me in stride. No wonder

I run to take cover before the FX
kick in, witness en masse to those
of us who crouch in our pockets
trying to conceal the serial killer
zaccams we use to chop ourselves up
for camouflage, face snaps and shots
which hide us inside our wallets.
How beamingly we blend in with
our A-Z via the usual ID charade.
Isn't that me we quiz the sentry
who scans our cards with laser
razors while we bleed the answer,
fearing that most bandages lack
those panacea, those superpowers

(no stanza break)

evinced most and emblemized by
the youth-roles of film, the skilled
portrayals of its hero-informal mold.

It is the movies have made me old.
Looking up struck at the blankgaze
screen I see that I too must suffer
that knowledge which the brow
burrows beneath its furrows to show
the visible effort an idea creates
if nothing else. All else is else.

Surface the mind repeats as pure,
hear my TV mirrormode: I can always
remote a world's particulars, my
closeups can quell-control the quick
extinctions of your soul in oceanroll
or twig miniscule; lens can always
find a puddle to push around or
a forest to erase from a woodcut,
but Jan-to-Nov, now it's gone, no.

TRANSIT

my hand feels odd without its wrist which ticked itself away
other parts of my body are similarly running out of time
and one by one are vanishing
my left foot is gone
and my right eye and the list grows daily—
if they are departed from here
have they started to appear
elsewhere
weighing down its sill a tick more each second
ectoplasmically emerging there
from the nowhere of this life
this nonexistence I feel in every pore
ever since childhood revealed
a gap in the text or
an amputation of the hand from its gesture
a separation of act from intent
a limb from limb interstice
ever since childhood began to feel
the intrusion of that split that portal that doorway place
which little by little piece by piece
I am entering now

CAESAR LEARNING TO JUMP ON CHESSMEN'S BACKS

Why he'd have to be taught what comes
so normally to male-kind is puzzling,
unless inbreeding of noble strains has
left him esthetic, less stoic, timorous—
a child, his toes babyfat, his bare soles
poised in the approved Colossus-of-Rhodes
at the count of three jump up and down;
while his tutors applaud young gods
the fragments are brushed away by slaves,
the black-and-white pieces crushed
bloodily together form a tragic alternate
ideal society where the kings queens
etcetera are indistinguishable from
the pawns, and maybe that's the fun—
no rival to the Rome where the scum
who whisk away the grey-by-defeat shards
are neutered or both and made so
at birth, representative of the mass:
consigned to bear their broken brethen
down past the intuitive, the dirt that heaps
their dirt beyond lowest dungeons and
to bury there the chess-bits that spoiled
the boyking's heels, his small insteps
and ankles, indeed the entire tootsies
of the six-year-old Emperor must then
be amputated just below the shin, be
replaced after every lesson by the royal
transplant surgeons. Which could explain
that curious adage (that Cretan riddle),
“Where do our plebs go without feet?”

DEMISE

Not enough moviestars—

Why not one for each of us!

Until then every film we attend mocks us with its excess
of cuts and cameras, when we know what it lacks.

Until then, their star-sparse

disparity disconsolates us, we treasure

any every glimpse of that rumored screencomer,

that cinemanque who roams the scenic wilds around this
premiere

as it lies dying here,

as it flashes flickers out its tiny faltering campfire

of squeals and smiles.

HEGEMONY (prosepoem)

In school kids would stand in back of me and stick two fingers up behind my head to make the class laugh. Or so I was told. I took their word for what had occurred and that it was universal. Due to its process, I could not witness what had really happened or what it meant, what made it funny. And I still don't know today: but I can feel them back there, forefinger, middlefinger, ready to poke their putdown up for the world to jeer me. That V looms always, that rabbit-ears or peace-sign or whatever scourge stigmata I pledge it to represent; but what hurts most is, I know that victorious viciousness only by inference, only by report: I can never spin fast enough to catch a glimpse of it. I've never been able not once to see this joke my entire life has suffered the hands of. That's the worst part of this humiliation: that I have to take it on trust, that I have to believe in it blindly.

THE I DID

One memory from childhood
how when it was summer and hot
at ground level where I stood
above me I saw the tops of trees
palpitating in a proper breeze

that never came down to ease me.
I can't say I swan why I remember
what it is that makes it linger or
else enriches such a significant
nor could I see it now if I went

on a breathless day and looked up
I would not be far enough away
physically for the contrast: memory
needs that distance for its truth
to swerve from the present's path.

Is it right to hold the past fixed in
former attitudes like tops of trees
or whatever it is records history's
external focus switched to days
depictions drawn by winds upon

clouds or branches flexing wide
their leisure of purpose pause
from the hell of here. Sight cannot
even in summer when it is hot
share the airs enjoyed by the eyed.

WATER

you ask me why I come among you to mourn you
I say: I am the mourner
but we are not dead or dying
well: I am the mourner
we aren't afraid of you
I know: I am the mourner
but what do you mourn then if not us
not you: I am the mourner
is there anything worth mourning but us
yes: I am the mourner
when you leave us do you continue to mourn
to mourn: I am the mourner
your answers are only echoes
to echo is to mourn: I am the mourner
we won't feed you you know you'll starve
I live on lament: I am the mourner
but we are young and strong we don't need you
I am the mourner
here's a dollar beat it
thanks: goodbye
where will you go from here
there are others to mourn: I am the mourner
wait a sec is that all don't you have anything else
to say to us
I say: I am the mourner goodbye
wait you can't leave it like that wait up
no: I have finished mourning you
hey wait up fraud fraud stop you you catchesleeve you
cheat
sorry: you have been mourned as much as you can be
but don't worry:
I am the mourner

AFTER A BREAKUP

At times the distance known as us
Is measured off. Or so we guess: unless
An estimate be taken it is lost,

And all the usual rulers fail
By millimeters really, to fix as final
Our spreading split: what will surveil

This gap-apogee, this apartness-arc.
Horizons, forward! Borders, march!
Frame us and bind us with the starch

Our stance lacks, too human a pose
To exude the dimensions that raise
A statue whose limit is its eros,

That never spills over as we do
Across the bed's page like two
Errata in the same word, a hollow

Catachresis. Morphaphoric? Crammed
Together in a programmed
Antithesis figure, we seem

To have blundered our way here.
Mistake is the way we take our
First steps and last. And where

Desire beckons, who can resist
The climb to that nobodiest nest
Known as love, its endless

Thievings of each others' leavings,

Scraps and wisps and strings
Knitknocked together, tangle-things

Always unraveling, always
Getting in the way
Of our getting away

Knot-free. Free of me
How could anybody
Not want to be.

THE VINDICATION (prosepoem)

If it were only possible to launch enough satellites up, one apiece for each of us down here on earth, billions of spysats programmed to monitor us all individually, that's the important thing: that each one of us would have his or her own personal private skysat; and then, when our (our!) specially-designated sole-focussed fetish-trained mysat was finally and totally locked onto us, what secrets could we exchange with it, how confide its include codes would grow, how large its zoom would contain us: each unique DNA traced and zeroed in on to find us, to separate us out, tell us apart from all the space trash next door to us. Unfortunately that many satellites in the sky at once would form a hatchshell shield surrounding the planet like a resurrection of Ptolemy's cosmos and would cut off all solar energy resulting in the pandeath of vegetation and terrestrial life itself, a small price to pay, a minor consequence aftermath of having satisfied if only for one brief interval the universal desire to go recognized, singled out and beamed upon; of having appeased our deepest need, to be seen, to be known.

QUESTIONS

Before we're born we're
lowercase, and after we die,
we return to it. Only life
renders us in capital letters.

(Every headstone ms.
should really be edited
by clones of e.e.cummings.)

Life is caps for the usual reason,
an exaggerated sense
of the significance
of one's thoughts.
Life is a Beat poet.

Upper existence or
lower nonexistence,
I'm sure the eye adjusts its focus
towards either case—

But which is easier to read—
greatness or goneness,
headline or poem?

Life or its foreword-afterword?

ORPHEAD

The head displayed
for maenad analysis;
remedy amputee,
to the chute of the sea.

Disposal is all. Past
the path of its tongue
let it travel long,
unraveling song.

Through terebis territory
stained Ebro pursues
his severed lipwreck's
lyre-waxed intervals.

Its banks refuse tomb
to this bodilessness
assaulting vacuum
backbouyant combed.

Now none come to nurse
his neck where pegasi
loose their reins in blood;
missing his vein they fly.

Noon-heat leafs its hate,
whirlpool tugs his curls.
Whose garland was
grief-i-er than a girl's.

Whose love for boys
briefer than a girl's was—
stray now he sights

dame straightway at last.

Late now Europe-land
has eurid itself of him;
Eurydice finally risen
tidally takes his lid swim.

Those phalloi he laid
shake their snakelike psychs;
unshouldered his bust rolls
oceancast depthsighs.

Lesbos waits to claim
this refuse of its myth.
But Sappho says fuck it
we've no one to lay him with.

(WINTERSHADE)

*

The candle's blue fingers trace
a window skyline. Its ice
an archery of needles. I seek
the sign, the making known
to me of now. We live in a land
we can see to disappear.

*

The wither-gathered wind
rivering through a grove
of non-leaved nouns: these are
the months one must cling hard
to his habits, that mean horde.

*

Winter. We must lean closer now
to see in each other's eyes
the cleft of witness
gape itself to give.

*

Closer. Closer. At times
we must even haven this
our place.

APARTNESS

They placed the sky
in birds instead
of inside themselves.

Now from pane to pane the sun
must depend
on the clarity of elsewhere.

An expanse of please,
the day regained,
its goodness land.

But there are mondotrash
who still war and waste
in border disputes
brave Procrustes' realm.

They let their gods debate
the measure mete,
the counterfeit of zeroes.

Hell's lepidopteral heirs,
heap dragons.

They are lost.
They are blind, they are shoeless
as an orchestra of exits.

They are us.

We place the bird in skies
who have misplaced it
inside ourselves.

LAMENT

like pinpricks-minus-pain
the mist is on our skin

autumn mops up the poppets
of spring

they lose their heads in happendown drift
lofted-off fluff

blown of color
bled dust

white-frail
dandelions are

fright when they rare
more hues than us

which leaves but more air
to be covered with ice / frosts

if only that trotting
tragedian time took all

and stripped his guise
scrubbed this gray decay off

overly-wise
we cry

stemstruck bent to
like's likeness

OVERNIGHT FREEZE (heptasyllabics)

Window-glints of ice glaze fast
what last night flashed the mudflats,

down in which dawn has found pressed
small animal tracks: inch-niched

skylights affix these quick paths—
Each step is trapped beneath slats

of translucency attached
rime to rim: they sit there ditched,

puttied into glare hatches—
All around the ground looks patched

and spattered with puddle-thatch,
but note rather this etched stretch

where a late trotter's tread's latched
with pondgild on its ledge trench:

how glitter-together cached;
incandescently encased.

Not bins or barns' coiled harvest,
glozen molds hold placed this trace,

bold encroachments caught across:
each hoof-, paw-, claw- mark's embossed

by its lunge run: each rut crests
to extend its range, end-launched—

it must hate these lit nimbus
lids, must wince beneath such frost—

sun has tamed them flame of squints
yet some after-image haunts:

Lands on every side lie creased
with spoor that mars their hard crust

and floorflares most summer's waste
imagination, that pinch

not worth pittance, that thin purse
clutching what breast abundance

of flurry foliage tossed, prize
profligate with years' penance

whose cease has summoned what peace—
tarp white winter's carapace

tries to hide that mislaid dust
carrion in graneries

and bury deeper what grace
war's jarrior deifies—

what Troy, what toy's sacrifice
leaks justification, beast

whose Homered oathwraths can't match
this farmstead's secular crafts—

Beyond the coop's chickenhatch
pieces of a greenhouse burst

up from the clays as ghosts pass
to implant sole-sills for what's

still clear to me—I approach
each glimpsy-glaziered gapgulch

afraid my galoshes squelch
break their skittery sketches

or skidheel slide a childprance
puncturing every damn sash

I can smash, whatever blanched
and specious glow my outstanced

kick can dislodge idolfest
haloes those pit-portholes hoist

from lamb-trample slaughterous
gods displayed bad raptor hosts—

herds of ape they pasture-traipse
bestial cattlecats who scratch

paved prowess in the dirt splotch
like border-dots on mapwatch

or liens miser ledgers clutch
feral figures for our debts

predator prey pays poets
that panther pads our wallets

Ted Hughes' cunning hawk-pastiche
plugs its parrot author rich

this savage extravagance
animates each TV pitch

mad advertiser rabbits
breakfast lions and leopets

like easter eggs and christ creche
exist to rake in the cash

as you sit and clicker switch
from Tiger Attack stabsites

to Martyred Bible Prophets
can you diff any difference

in sanguinary scams which
verse-ho's popes and other shits

exchange/exploit for lootplits
getcher *guts* getcher *spirits*

festering fetish lame wish
goldgash wildpack "religious"

imperious dazzlements
its screen between me unleashed

shall I plain idealize
the sight. Pitter pattered glitz

the poorest field-rat can task:
"Trance entombed, my forage-struts?"

strangely crowned with iciclets,
thaw-askance in silver nets

that snag some Nixnaut banished
from huge spook-lakes diminished

to these mini: spangle-splashed
and scaly his mermarsh face

is damming yours to a drowse:
your powers sod, your earth cursed,

bear null this lair's fatal laze—

bide its nether-tide enclosed,

its potent emptiness poised
to bolt free, vain, hopeless wish:

train of hymen's bridal dress,
heil flower drowned mire and mess

in this fecal foul recess—
delusional any parse

that aspires to soar from smutch
or scat escape its burnished

prison-urned prism-units
lathed and locked, crystal cubits

where spot-carpeted carets—
pools, flood-scummed with gem, facets

unstrung-flung diamond pendants
it strangles you, chain necklaced.

Immured your murder-led bents
that followed friendly bloodscents

till fangs throat-fonts firmly drenched
and feast fell anticlimax—

till cycle lay established
again. Eternal matrix,

your game's destined accidents
choreograph each pounce once

but here they're preserved in twice:
cryocrypts halt their advance,

vaults for phantom enpassants—
stabatjammed their rhythm dance.

Here stands this clearing's essence,
filmed upon fillspace distance—

oh hear its car-crash score-scants:
sharkshrieks stilled, prowl-growls silenced.

Look: its slope grows near scar grazed
with overtook's veer. Steer-squished

leap-lobes laned below this sluice
this rapacious avalanche—

this meander labyrinth's
constellated those hunt-sprints.

Star-quenched in lurid casements
what vent revives these vagrants.

Plunged in pent, your harms unhitched.
Sprawled for sleep's random ambush—

hibernate, die! sink finished
along this blank fishtank maze

or wake, with mindblink ablaze—
see your scintillant depths catch

magic from the mimic glance
of this mirror while it lasts—

how soon noon will melt to mush
your hoar hour which Eskimos

have more words for than I, mouse
Michigander, verminous

mite of this sheer terminus
the Knott brat teetertoos his

trespass at. He has spare choice
and careless proceed he must

toward the devouring bless
this coldsnap moment's incised

in his own flesh. Oedipus
ankled. Pale autumn's glozes

grail incarnations of slush
frail trail we fugitives mashed

in the wet soil till chill lashed
it tight with glacier paces

palls in the mornings' stale mess
of luminescence. Sunrise

et al. Against its bright best
(nature's norm-channel brilliance

versus some thumbed thesaurus)
this polar-stamped dirt contrasts

my feet in a fret of froze
silly syllabic sets of rows

extinguished glimmer glimpses
shattered all their gleams I guess—"

Stoic, lone, those shine-lines cast
to show no magnificence

or quests quixotic-thrust, just

folk stalked by their hungriness,

critters croaked, varmints vanished
species extinct or deathwish—

Theirs is not an innocence
chosen, their hands are not clenched

on church-prayers' lack-response.
Their trek unlike ours abounds.

Under gait-grates it waits wise
in its ways portrayed saycheese—

Carnivore, killer-corps seized;
poacher captured, frozenchase.

Mid-stride taken, frigid paste
haste-hail jails this trodden caste.

Roadcage for an arctic race;
shod-zoo stocked with dull dreambrates.

Before the snow's blind expanse
blunders every further fence

a walk may stop precipice
top this fierce fenestrate lens

but what happens then depends
on some lost, glossed over sense.

One might pause to muse that post
or else forget, astonished.

Or kneel to urge weathers worse
come seal his brr-brief life's course—

(Let elf and unicorn dash
climate at its timeliest

congeals their furtive crevasse
strayhorde stayed for a nor' rest.)

Spurts of rhyme, suicide-sparse
For obvious sake. Because

It all seems so colorless.
The past and everything since.

But our chameleon's footprints—
have they been paned with stained glass?

RESIDUE

I woke to find a foursome
of sex lying atop me
as if I were a bed
on which they blended.

One was a dream
none has unless
it came as two to them—
but is it true?

Three, four:
please vomit over
the edge of the cliff,
not on it, I pleaded.

POEM

As I walk into town I notice
on the sidewalk the leaves have
fallen mostly bright side down,

the colorful-wonderful side,
i.e. the dying-decaying, hides
below the still-greenish half

which hunches over as if
to protect its fairer twin, to
save the frail waste of loveliness

from our pending feet. This
upward face is the obverse,
the unloved: yet on the tree it

was obviously the underpart,
untoasted by the sun, tree-slice
half-done. If I step on one

it flattens and perhaps some
of the color crumbles up through
to dye the skyward-displayed

sheaf-shield, something bleeds
into the drained mask it offers
to the world's uncurious shoed

glance. Virgil cites a myth that
false dreams cling beneath each leaf,
numberless: that's why the under

stays rare, unmarred by hecticcy—
its unstained purity portrays
a lottery win, a moviestar kiss.

Its perfection is a fantasy rays
have not darkened to day. It stays
asleep in its top-sheet of hope.

I love this un-lived side of the leaf,
it is in turn my life, pale-safe
and fraught with no urge to wake,

to exert its own naif enough—
my raw state resists sophistudy,
(anterior antibody of beauty)

its rootless evil nice beneath
the garish one's reign of dare and
flare, he who exalts the warmth

on his skin, Mister surface, Herr
hero. I am the lesser here, the low.
Yes: but after the fall I will show

my face toward any sole, no longer
subferior to tanned specimans
of transcendized TV glory, riper

hunks who now sprawl shrivel
and hug the pavement while their
earlier cursed teencarnations bare

out to be me, me, the bove-boy—
So what if I'm the false, the dream
none can depend on or look to

for their vacuous autumn viewing,
foolishly believing those goldshed
scarlets are a sight extolled, a sign.

They ignore my sap hue, my true
expression of the void that lies
so splendid-blazed before their eyes.

ISLANDS

Garden hoses on horseback
gallop through the desert
to fill up the gulfs
that surround us.

Born of the birds who leave
their eggs on the rim
of volcanoes, then fly off
never to return:
that urging warmth
erupts us into form.

Lava solidifies the sea
for binoculars of hourly ships
whose cruel captains allow
the stowaway days
no shore, no leave.

But the wisdom of archipelago,
how one must stop sometimes
to meet one's feet
on sites prepared for none.

Over each beach
senior sand and junior dune
establish their shifty dynasty.

Meanwhile look at all the water.

The waves
are swimmers no-one saves.

THAWDROPS

Icicle:

the long

I's

descending

end in

dot

planet

dot

period

dot

splot

dot

puddle

dot

sun

dot

cycle

dot

I

not

I.

POEM

I heard the abide.

How low it was.

How loud it was.

How soon it ended.

And what it said.

I heard its words
poured, pouring
from the sky.

The clouds were frauds.

The froth lost its mind in an ear.

HISTORICALE

If I were part of a tableau viveaux
and I fell asleep or died
none of the spectators
would notice or else
they haven't so far—
they haven't realized yet
that in essence I am absent
from this artful scene
when it freezes to depict
the panorama where
I nurse various withered
and storm-lit emergencies,
though perhaps there
is one in the audience
who suspects, who fears
that he or she will surely
be hauled up on tiers
to replace me soon,
and who even now
shrinks back in their seat
and frowns at my perfect mimicry.

AGED

how to remain mienous
as you face
the mirror's worst

I who scorned the house
unto its rafters

a self-finished man with all
his comforts I offered
my soul to the dust
that I tossed onto others

money poured
from my halo

now the limp repeats
what the stride said
when it ran in full pell toward
the meld of flight

too late the salt

bare as the way north
where they lade the gates
with the way south

to repeat the instances
as hands pinned

(no stanza break)

upon the target
may applaud when hit
your aim

trued to its shoot
why do I stay
stage-left of my exit

/////

I swept the mirror under the rug,
the rug under the house,
only now I have no floor.

And still the scene insists
there be no secrets,
no distance cloaked in Ithaca.

Too late—
its gates are hung on bars,
ledges blindfold all its windows.

In the past, in youth's nether,
how fast they climb
the steps of my tailspin.

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