

24,000 Mornings



*Kim Taylor copyright ©2021, all rights reserved
March 2021*

Table of Contents

24,000 Mornings.....	1
One More Day.....	2
Days to come.....	3
Bad Day.....	5
Between the Fender.....	6
Broken.....	7
An Extra Day.....	8
Never a Joiner.....	9
A Safe Place.....	10
At The End of The Day.....	11
Exceptionalism.....	12
Come the Dawn.....	13
Late in the Evening.....	14
I Had To Confess Today.....	15
Today I Was Tired.....	16
Deep Suspicion.....	17
A Day's Work.....	18
After Two Years.....	19
One Day.....	20
A Pristine Copy.....	21
The Best Thing.....	22
The University Lanes.....	23
Toasted Sandwiches.....	24
The Months We Spent.....	25
My List for the Day.....	26
Bare Wood.....	27
For a Little While.....	28
The Weather Continues.....	29
I Have Lost Surprise.....	30
More Enemies.....	31

Not 18 Again.....	32
Browned Pages.....	33
Modern Cure.....	34
No Longer The Owl.....	35
Every Umbrella.....	36
Modern Castrati.....	37
Picture This.....	38
The Dog Flap.....	39
In Each Season.....	40
Coal.....	41
Daylight.....	43
Nirvana.....	44
Just Days Like That.....	45
Asleep in UBC.....	46
To Wake From a Dream.....	47
An Old Man Now.....	48
Searching For.....	49
The Same Couple.....	51
Park Benches.....	52
At 20.....	53
The Rogers Pass.....	54
Not a Good Day.....	55
A Soft Summer Night.....	56
If I Should See You.....	57
She Came to Visit Friends.....	58
It Gets Better.....	59
Just One Thing.....	60
Hashtag Simple.....	61
Where Can You Source Feathers.....	62
She Had Opinions.....	63
Say Something Profound.....	64
Make Me Happy.....	65

Heading To Work.....	66
The Worth of Arguments.....	67
The Saddest Songs.....	68
How Many Bars.....	69
Summer Days.....	70
With My Old Man.....	71
Dawn in Ketchikan.....	72
What you ask.....	73
Losing the Heat.....	74
Not 18.....	75
One Day with Anne.....	76
A Bigger Push.....	77
Shoe Box With Grasshopper.....	78
Another Week.....	79
Young Poet.....	80
Prove It.....	81
Promising Young Poet.....	82
Accommodation.....	83
Disney Princess.....	84
Early Morning Meetings.....	85
The First Three Days.....	86
You Can Smell Spring.....	87
New Notebook.....	88
Wisdom Today.....	89
Me.....	90
Beautiful Flowers.....	91
Last Two Sips.....	92
To Be Canadian.....	93
Safe.....	95
Not Your Business.....	96
Where I Wake.....	97
Time Capsule.....	98

March Wind.....	99
Long Beach.....	100
With Earle Birney.....	101
Haida Gwaii.....	102
Cherry Blossom Time.....	103
My Front Yard.....	104
To Mexico.....	105
Drowsing Over the Amazon.....	106
Real Poetry.....	107
New Poetry Books.....	108
Two Extra Years.....	110
Globalization.....	111
Losing the Thread.....	112
How to Eat Japan.....	113
Hello Down There.....	114
A Pointy-toothed Smile.....	115
At 20.....	116
Out Of The Loop.....	117
Scared of Numbers.....	118
Inoculate Me.....	119
Erie North Shore.....	120
Learned Poem.....	121
I Think Her Name Was April.....	122
Have I Worth.....	123
Back to Youth.....	124
Read It Again Dad.....	125
Too Sunny For Zombies.....	126
New Makings.....	127
The Great Explorer.....	128
See the Rockies By Train.....	129
Sorry About That.....	130
Missed It.....	131

Early Morning Sun.....	132
Please Forget Me.....	133
I Should Be Editing.....	134
Horse Shit.....	135
My Numerology.....	136
Balance Can Wait.....	137
If Such Be Death.....	138
I Felt The Urge.....	139
Move On.....	140
Feed Me To The Birds.....	141
An Irish Pub.....	142
What Remains.....	143
waaA.....	144
Ungrateful.....	145
A Long Hug.....	146
Missing Bushes.....	147
Deep In The Bush.....	148
70-24=.....	149
Easy To Move Along.....	150
Neanderthal.....	151
Massey Hall Coffee Shop.....	152
Brutalism.....	153
The Bullring.....	154
A Brisk Walk.....	156
Dark O'Clock.....	157
Enthusiastic.....	158
My Room.....	159
Bring on the Wrinkles.....	160
She Was Kind.....	161
Polka-dot Vibe.....	162
Into The Ground.....	163
Senator Taylor.....	165

Sore Arms.....	166
Thrift Store Treasures.....	167
Wailan.....	168
A Dead Arm.....	169
Each Day.....	170
Slipping From My Hand.....	171
Have Nice Dreams.....	172
Your Hand Softly.....	173
Leave Me Be.....	174
Negotiation.....	175
Not Yet, But Soon.....	176
Fisherman's Creek.....	177
Every Poem.....	178
Dredging It Up.....	179
Now You Know.....	180
Sand Road.....	181
I Wrote My Name.....	182
Took My Son For a Walk.....	183
Tinnitus Blues.....	184
Suicide By Bandsaw.....	185
Bogart and Bacall.....	186
I Was There.....	187
When She Saw the Dust.....	188
Show Me.....	189
Most Mornings.....	190
An Old Friend.....	191
Are You Here?.....	192
Local Poets.....	193
House-Husband.....	194
So Far Today.....	195
A Little Twist.....	196
I Never Had To Fly Away.....	197

Not Doing My Bit.....	198
I Will Check Tomorrow.....	199
Yogourt Maker.....	200
I Know How You Worry.....	201
We Need To Talk.....	202
Good Night Sweetheart.....	203
Never Asking.....	204
Take Great Care.....	205
The Right Instrument.....	206
An Editor.....	207
Sorry Susan.....	208
I Promise, Neruda.....	209
Generic.....	210
Kuzushi.....	211
Asanoyama.....	212
Lying On A Hill.....	213
Dangerous.....	214
You Wouldn't Be There.....	215
Step On A Crack.....	216
Beam Me Up.....	217
Broken Neck.....	218
It Is Easy.....	219
Time Wasted.....	220
Loofah Time.....	221
What is 4am For.....	222
High School Pens.....	223
Nice Chapeau.....	224
That Time.....	225
Dreaming of a Blowjob.....	226
Self Portrait With Old Love.....	227
I Lost a Lot of Shirts.....	228
She Checks For Me.....	229

I Always Use A Bookmark.....	230
Trying to Lose Weight.....	231
Big Plans.....	232
Imagine My Surprise.....	233
Routine Disrupted.....	234
You Never Get Upset.....	235
On Haida Gwaii.....	236
I Sit With You.....	237
Only My Mother.....	238
I Got Over It.....	239
Too Smart.....	240
Good Morning.....	241
The Asshole.....	242
Great View.....	243
Note To Self and Explanation.....	244
Tossing and Turning.....	245
Not Starving.....	246
Middle Class.....	247
My Turn To Talk Now.....	248
How Many Children.....	249
It Might Be Best.....	250
Totalled 'er.....	251
Too Shallow For Trauma.....	253
Boring Country.....	254
At The Pub.....	255
She Leaned In Close.....	256
I Love Routine.....	257
Watching, Watching.....	258
Radio Times.....	259
Taking a Walk.....	260
A Bad Day.....	261
Kid Should Be Fired.....	262

Some Days.....	263
You Never Tell Me You Love Me.....	264
My Land.....	265
The Worlds of This House.....	266
Last Week.....	267
Each Day With You.....	268
Your First Time.....	269
Dorey.....	270
Too Many Choices.....	271
I Meant To Say That.....	272
Plumb The Depths.....	273
Wait And See.....	274
Too Much Walking.....	275
Am I Good At This.....	276
Grumpy Fellow.....	277
Magical Things.....	278
She Dreamed of Me.....	279
Someone to Heal Me.....	280
Nobody Famous.....	281
Bored Until The Next Life.....	282
An Empty House.....	283
Movie Gimmick.....	284
What Do I Know.....	285
The Tyranny of Small Numbers.....	286
March Is Wind.....	287
I Know You.....	288
In The Car.....	289
Is It Me.....	290
Al Purdy's Death.....	291
The Poet of One Place.....	294
Sorry, Not That Poet.....	296
She And The Cat.....	297

Never Thrown In Jail.....	298
I Confess.....	299
Burned Coffee.....	300
Almost Bedtime.....	301
Almost Spring.....	302
Dreams of Perch Roe.....	303
Take This Book.....	304

24,000 Mornings

Coming up on
24,000 mornings
and each one
saw me happy
sad, angry, placid
and all of them
were mine

There will come a morning
where I will not wake
but until then
I think I will go to sleep
expecting to see the sun
and if I do, as I do
I will smile
before I open my eyes
~~

One More Day

There was never a time
when I didn't struggle
to remember I am dead
Those days, years
when I felt most alive
were the most difficult

So easy to feel
you will live forever
when you are young
healthy and in love

But even now
when death is a certainty
(how was it ever not)
it's not health, youth, or love
that I must fight against
It's the simple urge
to see one more day

~~

Days to come

All my ancestors
every single one
is dead

All those
who said "think about the family"
are dead

All those
who might set an example
might have kept up the side
are dead

And here am I
with siblings and children
here am I
one of the ancestor brigade
still alive to advise
and I will

Here, for the descendants
is my advice
The hell with the past
with anything I laid on you
anything I screwed up for you

Do what you know is right
with no thought for who came before
and certainly none
for me

~~

Bad Day

There is a fish
that lives in tropical waters
that swims up your prick
if you piss

There it wedges itself
by spines on its gills
so that you cannot get it out

Why it does this
I don't know
but I do know
that you should have listened
to your mother
~~

Between the Fender

What you do, see
is you turn your bike over
rest it on the seat
and the handlebars
and then you crank the pedals
as fast as you can
while your buddy
takes some gravel
and drops it down
between the fender and the wheel
~~

Broken

The snow blower is broken
the electrical system
is broken
The door
the window
the deck
is broken
and when I am there
at the cabin
I
am broken
~~

An Extra Day

If I go to bed early
and get up early
and have a nap
half way through the day
can I say
that I have had an extra day
alive
~~

Never a Joiner

When I look ahead
I wonder
why I would consent
to have my heart weighed
against a feather
or some such other proof
in four seconds
of a long life lived well

No, send me on to oblivion
where I expected to be
and save me
from your silly frat initiation
I was never a joiner
~~

A Safe Place

Every child
needs a safe place
Mine was a hollow
under the snowball bush
where my dog
would spend the hot summer afternoons
spread out on his belly
the sun blocked
by the leaves
the bare dirt
cool
He always shoved over
to give me room
and that single kindness
was often what saved me
~~

At The End of The Day

What have we
at the end
but words

Perhaps with words
we can explain
justify
or advise
those who are too busy
to listen
~~

Exceptionalism

Only one empire
on the earth today
could, through choice
kill more of its own
than its enemies have
in its entire existence

~~

Come the Dawn

When
did I decide
that Wikipedia
was the source of choice
on the net
for accurate and truthful information?
~~

Late in the Evening

Late in the evening
with a tin can
strapped to an ankle
the kids are out
on the golf course
picking up dew worms
for a few pennies

~~

I Had To Confess Today

I had to confess today
that I don't prepare for class
so sometimes it takes
a couple of tries
before I remember how it goes

The problem is
even if I read the book
to remind me how it goes
I would not remember it
These days, I teach by feel

Ask me how this goes
and I will sometimes let my body answer
and sometimes I will know
in my head
what feels right

~~

Today I Was Tired

Today I was tired
two naps worth
and so I had 20 minutes
to make dinner
while trying to clean the grease
off of a tray
and I forgot that the fish
were greasy
so instead of a little smoke
there was a lot
and tomorrow I clean the oven
~~

Deep Suspicion

I never had a girl
threaten suicide at me
I have a deep suspicion
that
from the way I treated them
none of them would have believed
that I would care

~~

A Day's Work

I spent some time once
as a bouncer
I want to make it clear
that this was before
I studied martial arts.
I wanted the money
not the experience

I knew a guy
who worked there before me
a big redheaded fellow
whose wife had left him
His favourite
was to take out a table of bikers
two at a time
he's put them into a headlock
and throw them out the door

Fun as that sounded
I had no such desire
I just wanted my \$3.50 an hour
One of the guys I worked with
got stabbed in the toilet
by his buddies
who thought he'd ratted them
on a drug deal
I had quit by then
~~

After Two Years

After two years
of her telling me
that I had said this
and done that
she told me I had done
something I would never do

"You just made that up!"
She grinned at me
I didn't have a memory
like a sieve
I didn't say things
and never follow up

This shook me to the core
~~

One Day

My mother gave me
her wedding ring
She put in my birthstone
I was so proud of that ring
that one day
when playing in a field
I put it in my shirt pocket
so as not to scratch it

Years later
I was moving rocks
and a Haida ring
by Robert Davidson
went into my pants pocket
To be lost in the fence-row
with the rocks

I decided then and there
that I didn't learn
that I shouldn't have nice things
that rings
belong on fingers
Having none, I stopped
wearing rings
~~

A Pristine Copy

A pristine copy
of Kerouac's poetry
found in a thrift store
Claims his poetry
is the root of his prose
We shall see

Momentarily I thought
I should be writing a book

What book?
I have no desire
to write a book
based on my poetry

Read my poetry
and as for my life
I'm still using it
~~

The Best Thing

We flew to Florida
for the Disney thing
for the tourist thing
And discovered
(not the first, I'm sure)
that the best thing
was the motel pool

~~

The University Lanes

I have walked
the University lanes
this week
The woods
being thawed and frozen
its paths cratered and ridged
by hundreds of boots

So I walk the University
home to me for almost fifty years
Finding those places
never found before
and looking at places
gone for decades

~~

Toasted Sandwiches

I daydream now
of toasted sandwiches
filled with meat
and melted cheese
with hot mustard
and grease on the plate

~~

The Months We Spent

I don't remember
the days
the months we spent
tearing the hearts
from each other

Or rather
I remember them
but looking back
through long years
I don't feel those days

What I feel
is the warmth
of a spring sunbeam
across your naked belly
as you stretched
across my bed

~~

My List for the Day

I will die of this
or that, I think
of cancer or covid

And
I think
Where is that invalid's bed
that sunlit conservatory
where I receive the doctor
and solicitous friends?

Instead, my list for the day
includes cleaning the oven
and
I must admit
A nap
~~

Bare Wood

I look at a stool
sitting in sunshine
made by my son

A real chip off the old block
he is

It has never been finished
Bare wood, glowing
~~

For a Little While

I sit here
still
my eyes closed
my head bowed
and nothing hurts

For a little while
as long as I don't move
I am 20 again
~~

The Weather Continues

The weather continues
cold but sunny here

The pandemic has had
little effect
You know how
I like to socialize
You know me
and crowds

The kids have grown
both, strong and sturdy
with their own lives

I continue to miss you
but I think
I may see you soon
if you are waiting for me
~~

I Have Lost Surprise

I have lost surprise itself
Whether tail-raised stomping skunk
or wild-eyed squirrel
gyrating between choices

I no longer start
eyes no longer widen
pulse no longer leaps
~~

More Enemies

I have outlived
more enemies
than I was bothered
to count

Wait a bit
those who still live
you will outlive me
~~

Not 18 Again

Older than my mother
when she told me
she wished
to feel as intensely
as the young feel

I thought then
that she dissembled
trying to make
me feel better

I have not changed
my mind
Not for a new penny
would I wish
to be 18 again

~~

Browned Pages

Acid-browned pages
out of harmony
with a modern-design cover
I look inside
finding, shocked,
it was published in 1991
Surely not

Surely not enough time
to brown so
But, cruel mathematics
I count off thirty years
and look at the brown spots
on my hands
Not there in 1991

~~

Modern Cure

You must tell everyone
how you feel
then you will be healed

I feel like shit
does that help?

~~

No Longer The Owl

No longer the owl
I am become the frog
who cannot turn his neck
and cannot reach behind
with his arms

With a sore back
I wiggle my ass
around on the seat
to lay aside
glasses and pen
~~

Every Umbrella

Every umbrella
I have ever owned
has been given away
to someone who had none

Mostly I have said
"I was born wet
and I'll dry out when I'm dead"
Mostly I got a strange look

~~

Modern Castrati

Trust me on this
desire is not hormonal
I am of the modern castrati
All the bits there
but suppressed, shoved back in time
To an age before puberty

And yet
There is no change
in the desire to bed
a beautiful woman
The eyes see, the heart desires
Even if the body does not respond

The habits of mind
are resilient
and some things
remain
My voice is still deep
if the chest is now bare

The desire remains
but the body's failure
is not as bothersome
as you might think
At my age, the desire was there
but the opportunities were long past
~~

Picture This

Picture a neighbourhood garden
and a small child
who could never get enough
to eat

Picture the wooden fence
Not white, but picket
and enough space
for a small arm
to reach through
to grab a carrot
planted, unwisely
too close to the fence

Picture the child
sprawled in the tallish grass
reaching
fingers walking out
shoulder strained
for that carrot
Dreading the moment
when the gardener sees

~~

The Dog Flap

I think that somewhere
in some drawer or box
I have the old lock
that held the barn doors closed

We children
never bothered with that lock
we used the dog flap
that was cut into the wall
with a bit of stiff canvas
to cover it

Inside, a canoe hung from the rafters
my grandfather's work bench
a hay loft, with bits of hay
and old furniture
License plates
nailed across holes

Better than any Narnia
was our old barn
our secret place
known only to everyone

~~

In Each Season

In each season
is the echo of the future
of the next arc
of the cycle

In the endless sweat of summer
the days grow shorter
In the frozen depths of winter
the sun shines strong enough
to make the snow evaporate

and so, in all of us
in me
the growth of our death
is dimly felt

~~

Coal

Coal, that stone that burns
is part of me
I grew up beside the docks
where the coal was unloaded
from lake freighters
into piles of slippery
sliding blackness

Coal heated
my grandmother's houses
until that furnace
with its wax impregnated
rolled newspaper lighters
was modified, an oil burner
placed lonely in the centre
of that massive furnace

Coal heated my school
with its auger-fed
pea-coal
the burners in a row
That bin
that developed a cone
of nothing in the centre
into which we small kids
would scramble to shovel the coal
back over the auger

I remember the gully
slowly being filled
with clinkers from the furnace
as our playground
grew a bit each year
I remember the sound
that peculiar squeak
of the ash on our track
as I ran mile after mile
in search of peace

I still know the smell
in the bags, or burning
when I sometimes visit
a blacksmith's shop
and if I could
I would have a pot-bellied stove
to sit beside
with the old fishermen
telling lies to each other

~~

Daylight

The wind howls
outside the front door
and the bushes scratch
at the screens

But it's full, bright daylight
and the only thing
causing me to shiver
is the draft

~~

Nirvana

"Not that I want Nirvana for myself, no sir, just a good night's reset every single night, with window open, in silent night, and wake up to a good cup of coffee."

— Jack Kerouac, Jack Kerouac: Selected Letters, 1957-1969

Almost every night

I sleep like a dog

Wake up at 4am (piss and right back to sleep)

Wake up at 6am (piss and right back to sleep)

but mostly wake up

to Brenda's voice saying

"Breakfast"

Oatmeal with seeds and yogourt

And a great cup of coffee

Jack, that IS Nirvana

~~

Just Days Like That

I have walked into restaurants
and not been seen
fifteen, fifty minutes
and I can't get the eye
of a single waitress
There are just days like that

~~

Asleep in UBC

There is a peculiar dislocation
that comes with hitchhiking across Canada

A sense of being elsewhere
another world
something perhaps, beside this one
but not fully of this one

One night, sleeping in a residence lounge
at UBC

I heard Peter Gabriel's Solsbury Hill
and it took me out of that side world
and back to another
as I fell asleep on a couch

~~

To Wake From a Dream

To wake from a dream
and see her beside you
is not unusual

But to have her continue
a conversation you were having
in the dream
is, I must admit
a bit disturbing

~~

An Old Man Now

I am an old man now
retired
I would not need
to stick my thumb out
by the side of the road

I could take my car
I could take a new car
and simply drive
I know people
all across the country
and could meet others

Or I could spend months
speaking to nobody
Perhaps, I say again
Perhaps this summer I will
~~

Searching For

And what would I look for
when the pandemic is over
and I take up a wandering way

The last time was forty years ago
as I drifted across the country
looking for work
perhaps looking for myself
No
it was for work
and I came back
for my sister's wedding

Since then
it's been airplanes
it's been a day going by
each hour
and always back
to work, to a house
to my children

What would happen this time
when I have nothing to look for
nothing to keep me in one place
Would I simply go
simply drift, like that kite in the story
which flies on forever on the wind

Or, like a real kite
would I need a string
to keep me aloft

~~

The Same Couple

I have been in restaurants
all across the world
and often
not every time
not in every one
but often
I will see the same couple
a few tables over

At first I thought this was strange
but now
I nod to them
and they nod back
that nod that you give someone
you are sure the other one knows
~~

Park Benches

I have slept on park benches
picnic tables
and school bleachers
I have slept
on top of tents
just to be out in the air
under the stars

I have also been inside a tent
with a Queen Charlotte bear
snuffling around
on the other side of the nylon
and I was happy
not to be looking at the stars
~~

At 20

When you are 20
and you are hitching around
you might see a girl here
and then again there

At 20 you might think
that it is fate
that you are destined
to be together

But at 20
trust me, it's your balls
that want a bit of attention
not your heart

~~

The Rogers Pass

Somewhere in the Rogers Pass
Somewhere in the middle of the night
I went to sleep
on the only grass around
the grass between the lanes

Apparently the police
came and asked if I was dead
but my buddy told them I wasn't
and I slept happily on

~~

Not a Good Day

It was not a good day
and I sat on a stone wall
kicking my heels
harder and harder
not seeing much

A small cat
walked along the wall
and sat beside me
Just sat

and my heels beat
a more quiet note
and I got through
another day

~~

A Soft Summer Night

A soft summer night
at Little Beach
in Port Stanley

I knew nobody
and was simply there
to see a party
with a fire
and someone
with a guitar

As I walked up
someone turned
shifted down a bit
and patted the log
~~

If I Should See You

If I should see you
on the street
after these long years
should I say hello
or would you prefer
that I walk past
as if I didn't recognize you

~~

She Came to Visit Friends

She came to visit friends
and she was sleeping
on my couch
but she came from the shower
with a towel
that slipped off her shoulder

I wasn't sure where to look
until I looked into her eyes
which were, as they say,
reading me like a book
~~

It Gets Better

You are a boy
and you are a man
You are the problem
You are the solution
You are scum
and you are the prince
who will save the day
Hang on
it gets better

~~

Just One Thing

Boys want just one thing
Girls too
It is unfortunate
that for so long
for so many
They are different things
~~

Hashtag Simple

Hashtag simple
it's too bad
that life is not simple
that people
don't sort into categories
according to solutions
~~

Where Can You Source Feathers

When you say "men"
or "all men"
do you mean me?

If so, why not give
those other guys a break
and say "you" instead

But if you don't mean me
please be a bit more careful
with that brush
and that bucket of tar
~~

She Had Opinions

She had opinions

"He is this

she is that

those types are the other thing"

In all the time

I knew her

I never actually met her

~~

Say Something Profound

Say something profound
she said
"The carpet is soft
The sun is warm
as it comes through the window"
She looked away
disappointed, I think
~~

Make Me Happy

Make me happy
she said
"I could give you an orgasm
or I think I've got some cash
in my wallet
or maybe a joke
Would one of those
do it"?
~~

Heading To Work

She was very coy
and hinted
with veiled eyes
and veiled words

But I was in a hurry
and asked if she wanted
to fuck

She looked offended
and I made it to work
on time

~~

The Worth of Arguments

If I can't fuck you
to make up
Why do you think
I would want to argue
with you

~~

The Saddest Songs

She sang
the saddest songs
I ever heard
She sang them
with her shoulders
and with her eyes
and with every breath she took
every word she said

~~

How Many Bars

How many bars
have I leaned against
looking into my beer
looking for a line
notebook open beside me
pen sometimes
making it awkward
to lift my glass
~~

Summer Days

We soaked corn cobs
in turpentine
and made sure we dropped them
in the middle of a gravel path
Not being insane

We skinned walnuts
with cement blocks
and went home
with black fingers

~~

With My Old Man

I must admit
that propping up a bar
with my old man
felt pretty good

Yes, it was a silly thing
there were better ways
to bond
but I am grateful
that there was a window
me old enough
him not too sick
where we could have a drink
together

Where he could talk to me
adult to adult
Can I say man to man?
~~

Dawn in Ketchikan

I woke
lifted my cheek
out of the drool
on the blue deck
of the Alaska ferry
and opened my eyes
to see Ketchikan
across the water

Such memories
should be in each of us
for when we get old
for when they drift
across our mind
and bring a smile
to our wrinkled faces

~~

What you ask

Be careful
what you ask of her
I once asked
"how far can you get it in"
and she swallowed it to the root

My response
was to wonder if I was, perhaps
not very big

~~

Losing the Heat

I don't know when
I lost control
of the thermostat
but I know it was long before
I started getting hot flashes

The sweat-soaked sheets
I can handle
but when I would lose the heat
when I would start to shiver
and the cold would drive
into my chest and my guts
the only thing to help
was when she would wrap me
in her arms, legs and blankets
and squeeze like hell

~~

Not 18

The body has ways
nasty little ways
of reminding you
that you are no longer
eighteen
when you forget

~~

One Day with Anne

Ah, Anne
you haven't aged
a day (I'm dreaming)
but you look great
smooth skin
sharp jawline (I stroked it)
and amazing abs
which you showed to me
by lifting your shirt

You gave me some paper
to write my number
so you could get in touch

And there it is

I tried writing my name
and number
but somehow
I'd forgotten how to write
I fumbled around
while you talked to your friend
until the dream ended

It was always hard for me
this keeping in touch thing

~~

A Bigger Push

I was never much good
at visiting her folks
and that looked
like I didn't want
to commit
Or perhaps she thought
"I've pushed too hard"

But the simple truth is
I have always
had trouble starting
and I have always
had trouble stopping

My life is inertia
Look at it
forty-five years here
It wasn't personal, girls
I just needed
a bigger push

~~

Shoe Box With Grasshopper

It's true, what they say
my life is passing
before my eyes

But slowly
dream by dream
I had hoped
that all would be remembered
but my dreams
are no better
than my shattered mind
able to give me images
of her face (no name)
of a tree in bloom (no place)

My past is gone
replaced by a box of photos
shaken by a child

~~

Another Week

Another cycle
of the pill box
Another week gained
I am still here
and I appreciate
that small milestone

~~

Young Poet

The young poet
uses i
When i becomes I
a poet will be born
~~

Prove It

Prove it
Prove it
Prove it
Prove you love me
don't just say it
I don't believe you
Don't just show it
I want you to say it

One can get tired
of trying to fill
a black hole of need
~~

Promising Young Poet

Why, oh why
would you ask a boy
to know
what only a man knows

If he can't make
your head explode
and your legs part
so that dam can break
Teach him
or find a man who can

Complaints
do not good poems
make
~~

Accommodation

Love is what you find
in books
and films
and distant hazy memory
Accommodation is what you find
in a life together

~~

Disney Princess

Only a Disney princess
goes through life
with bluebells and bluebirds
and in the end
has everything she wants

If you want to be
that Disney princess
please warn me
in advance

~~

Early Morning Meetings

Here, on my walk
is a young couple
discussing whether
teenage ends at 18
or 19

So cute, smiling
and unmasked
So I can imagine
where they were
an hour before

And here is a car
pulled up
for a young woman
to get out and head
for work
while he drives off
Both frowning

Only a few years apart
but so different

~~

The First Three Days

I loved
the first three days
of a relationship
Getting to know the story
finding the forbidden places
the ticklish places

The trailers were the best part
of my Saturday afternoon movies
and the best part
of an action film
is the gathering of the gang
The rest is just plot

~~

You Can Smell Spring

The first warm spell
of March
and the snowbanks
are ugly
all sorts of nasty
showing up

But if you raise your eyes
and use your nose
You can smell spring
~~

New Notebook

Turn the page
run your finger
down the binding
and wonder
what new thing
you will learn

This is true
for books
and for blank pages

~~

Wisdom Today

Wisdom today
assumes you are a saint
that you spend all your time
giving to others
And to be happy
you must think of yourself

There are too many
happy people
and too few saints
~~

Me

Me, me, me

me, me

Me, me, me, me

me, me

~~

Beautiful Flowers

Beautiful flowers
don't grow from pain
Nor do they grow
from your happiness

Beautiful flowers
grow from shit
and they are all about
sex
~~

Last Two Sips

As I put down
another book of poetry
I pick up my cup
so nicely insulated
that these last two sips
are warm enough
for pleasure

~~

To Be Canadian

Can I call myself Canadian
I'm not fond of winter
having grown up cold
grown old the same way

Although I own a chunk
I'm not fond of the bush
which, like the song says
is miles and miles of trees and rocks
The bush I can see
from my porch
is the same bush
a thousand metres in

Mind you
one city block
is much the same
as another

Fishing is something
you do with nets
and boats before dawn
Hunting is a week
free of the wives

Mountains are nice
as is landscape
once in a while
But pictures of rocks and trees
tend to repeat
a couple hours later

I suppose
in the middle of it all
I need a visitor
to see it for the first time

~~

Safe

I keep my books
of poetry
on the very top shelf
where they can't be got
by small children

We have a duty
to the next generation
after all

~~

Not Your Business

There are things
even now
at the end
That I refuse to write

Which is strange
if they were evil
or shameful
or otherwise nasty
They'd be on the page
~~

Where I Wake

How many times
have I opened my eyes
from a sleep
that takes me far away
to be startled
at where I am

I woke once
to a Banff dawn
riding in a newspaper van
Woke to mist
and dozens of Elk
standing on their road

We the interlopers
waiting permission to go

~~

Time Capsule

In my basement
were letters
real letters
Envelope, paper and ink
I had no idea
I had saved them

I opened one
read a few lines
and put it away
As if it were a time capsule
opened too early

I wonder if
they are still there
~~

March Wind

Our house cracks
and creaks
in the March wind
Not ten years old
but a stairwell
of many steps

The wooden chimes
I made from scrap
clonk their warning
"Rain's coming"

~~

Long Beach

We rode
armpit-damp
and piss-leg'd
Across Vancouver island
to sleep
on the Pacific shore

A trip of gravel
sprayed into deep gullies
made the thought
of ocean storms
and being washed to sea
while asleep
a lullaby
~~

With Earle Birney

I check the time
my empty mug
and stick a pin
in Earle Birney

Looking forward
to tomorrow
when I'll pick him up again
no confessional teen he

~~

Haida Gwaii

On Queen Charlotte
there was mile after mile
of stumps

And where the trees
still stood
were those
with deep holes
burned in

To check for rot
before cutting them
for war canoes

~~

Cherry Blossom Time

It's all cherry blossoms
of course
So romantic
those pinks
that only last a week

Nothing interesting
about green leaves
Yet I much prefer
the look of cherry wood
the source of all that
romantic cuteness

~~

My Front Yard

Look at the garlic chives
hanging on into the fall
Long past time
when other flowers have gone

Do more than glance
Yes, they are white
and small
but when you stop your gaze
they start to swim

They move, they pulse
They hum
Flowers that hum
and finally you see them
hundreds, thousands of bees
Yellowjackets, flies
The last feast of the year
~~

To Mexico

Earle Birney flew to Mexico
the year I was born

I too went into the air
not so many years later
as my grandmother took us
my sister and I
to Toronto and back
on a TCA Vickers Viscount
Just for the sake
of flying

So many years later
I took my daughter
from Guelph to Kitchener
on the train
Just to ride the train
~~

Drowsing Over the Amazon

I opened my eyes
after drowsing
and there, on a moonlit night
high over Brazil
I saw the Amazon
snaking through the jungle
Silver moonlight
reflected in each bend
~~

Real Poetry

Shall I compare you
to a summer's day?

Hot, slick with sweat
and sticky
Each time I rolled into you
I brought the sheets with me

And between the two of us
enough sweat
that I had to brace my arms
to stay on top of you

~~

New Poetry Books

Bought today
Dear Leader
dedicated by Damien Rogers
to Mike in 2015
The Tree Reading Series, Ottawa
Read once with care, I suspect

Pith and Wry
is a compilation
used as a course textbook
somewhere
Dog-eared pages
and Marginalia

It's Nice to Know Someone Like You
was dedicated by Connie
then by Wes
It would be nice
to think they were a couple

And the very same book
(publisher, rather)
These Words are for You
Dedicated by Connie
written by Leonard Nimoy
who was More Than Spock
I know this
because I published two stories
of his photographs
long ago
~~

Two Extra Years

Hey, she said
you've had two extra years

One with a broken neck
and one with a pandemic
he said
Good thing I don't have a bucket list
~~

Globalization

Once, you would buy tools
and make what you needed
Wood was cheap
but the tools were not

Now the tools
cost less than the lumber
and nobody has time
to make their own stuff

~~

Losing the Thread

I am losing the thread
of my life
Creation has always been first
but lately it's hard
to find something on youtube
on facebook, on artnet
on
to look at

I don't want to know
how you do something
I don't want to know
all about the artists
I know all about

I seem to be running
on habit, write a few poems
take a photo or two
teach a couple of classes
but I can't seem to
put the books together

Perhaps I've done as much
as I ever intended to do
I know for certain
I don't want to be famous
or even a big frog
in a little pond

~~

How to Eat Japan

"How to eat sushi"
the youtube video says
"You've been doing it wrong"

Yes, there it is
that says it all
everything about youtube
everything about Japan

Each year, for at least a decade
the Japanese sensei
would be telling us
how to eat sushi
As dictated by the latest fashion
in Tokyo

~~

Hello Down There

My first job on campus
was as a life model
I had done a studio course
and even sketched a model
but I much preferred being the object
to making from the object

I posed with old women
young girls
and men, sometimes,
but mostly it was me
the students
and once, my roommates
outside the windows
madly waving up at me
on the second floor

~~

A Pointy-toothed Smile

I miss my cracked teeth
those Nosforatu choppers
fixed by dental students
in Toronto while I was a student
in Guelph

The crowns are nice
but there was a certain image
a certain authenticity
that was projected
to my sparring partners
when they saw those busted biters

~~

At 20

Is it hard
to express yourself
my 20 year old friend
Do you have insights
but can't get them out
fast enough

Then pick up a damned pencil
and write them down
at whatever speed you must
Just put them down
and look at them
to see what you know
and what you mean

~~

Out Of The Loop

Give me the weirdos
the outsiders, the outliers
the lost and the profound

I have had enough
of the ones who get along
the ones who go along
to get along

I'd rather be out of the loop
in the boondocks
than in the know
When those who know
only know what they're told
~~

Scared of Numbers

Three days of shit
at the end of three months
of watching the numbers
go up
and realizing the cancer
may have started to grow again

Three months of hoping
the machines are drifting
the standards are off
the machines more sensitive

Three days of trying once again
to come to terms with dying
to accept
that I won't live forever
and the result

Three pounds of weight
from all that comfort food
that brings no comfort at all

~~

Inoculate Me

Inoculate me
with your desire
spit into my mouth
and I will swallow
Your heat
your passions
give them to me
~~

Erie North Shore

They came to the sand
cut the trees
and plowed the moisture
out of the ground

And the winds came
they were stone farmers
dirt farmers
A generation they spent
planting trees
to break the wind

But they found tobacco
was a great cash crop
and they bought big tractors
and cut the trees
so they could turn Betsy
around

When tobacco collapsed
they thought they'd try ginseng
which grows under trees
so they put up shades
~~

Learned Poem

Short beginning
then cultural reference
leading to more cultural reference
summed up
by another reference mashup
~~

I Think Her Name Was April

The Vances lived there
in a big house
with a big shed
that we would look at
over the stone wall

We kids
who only had a lawn
with a dirt path across it
Not swell enough
for a fence

Except for the old page fence
left over from the farm
out by the vegetable patch
The one with dog-holes
under it

~~

Have I Worth

The times
when I MUST create
a terrible pressure
that makes me want
to sit at my desk
and write

The times when I sit
at my desk
and nothing comes
when I am ready
Muse, take me
And nothing

The times when I don't sit
at my desk
but wash the dishes
sweep the floor
make the coffee
or cook

~~

Back to Youth

I reach over my shoulder
and scratch
where I've scratched
all my life
but there is no hair

There is no hair
on my back
and only the softest down
on my chest

My shoulder feels
like I am ten again

~~

Read It Again Dad

Ah, I see that it is time
to go to the sauna
where I will roll a towel
to put under my neck
in hopes of making it curve
once more

I will read a bit
while waiting to sweat
I will start a new book
probably the next
in Terry Pratchett's witches series
It may be time for the vampyrs
to come again to Lancre
That's always a good one

Funny how, when I am old
I start reading books
like the kids liked them
Over and over again

~~

Too Sunny For Zombies

I walked today
through the forest
of the dead
Thousands of dead names
leering at me

And now
I listen to R.I.P.
a prog rock band
on my music feed

But the sun today
was strong on my jeans
if the air was freezing
Promise of spring
~~

New Makings

I read Birney's
"Lost Makings"
and once again marvel
at the ability to look back
to collect an old poem
and place it
in a book

I find that hard
an old poem
an old photograph
an old essay
seems dead to me

Only the scratch
of pen on paper
the click of a shutter
feels alive

~~

The Great Explorer

In all my life
I haven't really known
what I was doing
where I was going

But apparently
I figured if it was worth doing
it was worth doing badly

A road trip, bus and thumb
with army surplus duds
Something about wanting
lots of pockets

But three days of
"are you a soldier"
had me heading home
~~

See the Rockies By Train

I try to think
if I ever took a train
through the mountains

And there it is
the White Pass and Yukon

But we got off
on a whim
at Bennet Lake
to walk the Chilkoot Pass
down into Skagway

~~

Sorry About That

Despite a girlfriend
back home
I fell in love
with every waitress
from Whitecourt
to Skagway

~~

Missed It

What is this, a poem?
Right, on to faceplant
to write it down
oh, a notification
ah, better answer
oh, check the weather
and the news
not on faceplant
What, Oh yes
back to faceplant
oh, a notification
~~

Early Morning Sun

The early morning sun
so bright
that you had covered your face
with the blanket
Leaving your flank
that wonderful name
for a wonderful place
exposed

I looked, but the sun
so bright on your flank
made it impossible for me
to see that curve
from the dent of your hip
to the swell of your ass

~~

Please Forget Me

Finally, enough "Kim Taylor"
on the internet
that I am not on the first few
pages at all

Since the last time I checked
I have disappeared
a comforting thing
so, one final check

Damn, "Kim Taylor" budo
and there I am
in multi-entry glory
for all the world to see

~~

I Should Be Editing

I tried
I just opened a folder
of photos for 2021
and arranged them
by month
But then I lost interest

I am looking at two book files
open for two books
that have been waiting
for a month

In my inbox are several books
edited and sent to me
some I worked through
some still sit there
accusing me from the inbox
and now
here is another poem

Two years ago
I would have gone to the bar
right about now
~~

Horse Shit

I have walked the campus
for the winter months
walked the arboretum
until it got too icy
and then the lanes
between the buildings
but it wasn't until
I got across the street
and near the barn
that I smelled the horse shit
and suddenly I became
just a little bit nostalgic

~~

My Numerology

The fear, the uncertainty
are over
and the acceptance
begins

The numbers are indeed
going up
and it's time to get ready
for the next phase

Each phase
gives a little less time
but there are several

None of this
is negotiable
Whether I fight
or accept
makes no difference
and there is no cure

So it's time for acceptance
just like it was time
two years ago
~~

Balance Can Wait

I was going to sit
and think
and write
until I am balanced
once more

But a look at the time
reveals it is time
to make coffee
and dinner
Balance can wait
~~

If Such Be Death

Three times in the night
a young crow whispered
into my ear
Twice gently
he took my cheekbone
in his bill

If such be death
so quiet
so affable
so kind
I will welcome him
~~

I Felt The Urge

This morning
I pissed
in the forest of the dead
Not because I could
Not because I am alive
Not because the dead don't care
but because I felt the urge

~~

Move On

Move on
move on
Such a tiresome subject
this death of mine

All is in place
I need not be reminded
by good wishes

I have never lived
in the past
or the future
but only here
Which is infinite
and everlasting

Let us do interesting things
and think interesting thoughts
Now, and forever
~~

Feed Me To The Birds

I want a natural burial
a sky burial
at Sky Lake
throw the husk
into the bush
and put up a sigh
that says
"Coroner's experiment"

~~

An Irish Pub

What things
I have thought to do
I have done
What places
I have thought to go
I have gone

Just now I thought
I will go to sit
in an Irish pub
to write

But the next thought
of pandemic
releases me of the desire
with neither anger
nor regret

This chair
supports my ass
just as well
as a pew in South Africa

I live here
in my head
in warmth
and comfort
and great content

~~

What Remains

There are ephemera here
in boxes and files
should any of you
wish to rake through
the ashes of an ass

Somewhere in there
you might find
the one you look for

There are so many
boys and men
None of them
this fellow
who writes now

~~

waaA

waaA, waaA, waaA
once per second
for as long as I can hear

Not one pause
not one change
waaA, waaA, waaA

"You're Boring"
I shout toward the trees
waaA, waaA, waaA
~~

Ungrateful

The hospital calls
with a CT appointment
"and do you have your milkshake"

Once more events move
too quickly
Of course I have no milkshake
"well just drop by and pick one up"

And what do I think of?
That I'm grateful they took me
so quickly, and told me about it?

No, I am annoyed
that I have to pick a milkshake up

Oh ungrateful man
Lucky to be born
Lucky to know the universe
Annoyed at a ten minute chore
~~

A Long Hug

I must be careful
how long I hug
a loved one

Too long
and the desire
to hug for ten more years
will lead
to crying
~~

Missing Bushes

I look across
Johnston Green
and fail to see
the bushes where
long years ago
on a warm summer night
I made love beneath
to a recently met lass
While at my home
my girlfriend waited
for my return

~~

Deep In The Bush

Deep in the bush
there is an ancient cedar
shallow-rooted
lightning-scarred

Look again
see the young cedars
all around
propping up the old boy

One day
he will topple
expose his roots
to the sky

But for now
the young trees
keep him upright
against what winds
they can

~~

70-24=

In 1974
Earle Birney was 70
and Wailan Low was 24

What do you say
about this pair?
What do you think?

As for myself
I am content
to know they had
decades together
and that each found something
in the other
that was worth keeping

~~

Easy To Move Along

Something happened to me
as a child

Some switch
was never turned on
and I have always
had trouble with regret
with the longing
for a lost love

It has always
been easy
to say goodbye

Always easy
to move along

~~

Neanderthal

We have the DNA sequence
for a Neanderthal
And instantly
I want to see one

Can we talk?
But what do I ask?
Other questions
on the lab rat level
come to mind

But how much more
can we learn?
No, I am selfish
I simply want to see
But then again
is that not the root
of science?

~~

Massey Hall Coffee Shop

Here is where I spent
years and years
In the coffee shop
in the basement

Students dug it out
by hand
I think my stepfather
was one of them
and the students got it
for a coffee shop

While I was there
one, single manager
screwed it up
and the University got it

Now it is a storage area
and the path to the door
is growing over
but, like an archaeologist
I can still see where it was

~~

Brutalism

Our Brutalist buildings
well out of fashion
but beloved
for their ability
to be restructured

They are a legacy
from the mid-60s
a decade before I arrived
to marvel at their brutality

Even the interiors
were products
of the mid-60s
with separate tower
for the professors
in the arts building

Where the old fossils
could boil their kettles
and pour them down
the stairwells
at the rebelling students

~~

The Bullring

The Bullring
a student pub
with church tables
and church chairs

Where I would sit
back against the wall
and place my foot
on the ass of the boys
as they fought
and shove them
into the fray once more

Where the boys
would send the girls away
to dance with ourselves
to the Stones (Satisfaction)
at midnight

Where, at two am
the boys would strip
to underwear
and climb the central pole
for last call

Where, at four am
when they booted us
out the door
we would stagger
to the Arboretum
and skinny-dip
in the muddy pond
~~

A Brisk Walk

This morning I thought
"go hard, it's Friday"
and this evening
I was quite looking forward
to a quiet weekend

It's Thursday
so now I have to walk
even more briskly tomorrow
~~

Dark O'Clock

I spent a summer
in a sublet
in a room
deep inside an old grocery
without a window

I would wake
and have no idea
what time it was
I think that stuck

~~

Enthusiastic

She was enthusiastic
I would wake
and go to the bathroom
only to find an ear bleeding
or a bruise on my shoulder
in the shape of teeth

~~

My Room

I was never good
with variation
I always asked her
back to my room
where I could find
the toilet
the toothpaste
and all the comforting things
that I kept around me

~~

Bring on the Wrinkles

I would look
in the mirror
and wish I didn't see
an old man

But now, bring it on
bring on the wrinkles
the saggy eyes
the hair sprouting
from my ears and nose

Bring it on because
each wrinkle marks
another day alive
and I so want to live
to a ripe old age

~~

She Was Kind

She was ever kind
I would come home
from the bar
and roll into her
until I came
then my head would drop
to her pillow
and I would be asleep

She would leave me there
arms wrapped
legs wrapped
until, muzzily
I would roll off
to snore the night away

~~

Polka-dot Vibe

Sperm would often mix
with blood
She was never sure
when her period would start
and in the darkness
I would roll back to my side
and go to sleep

In the morning
I might notice the stains
on the sheets
too late to worry about them
those sheets eventually
had a sort of polka-dot vibe
~~

Into The Ground

I sometimes think
of what will happen
if I am put into the ground

I have dug up dogs
and cats
and seen the worms
crawling through flesh
It doesn't bother me

I, like the pets
will be meat, just rotting meat
food for something

bones releasing phosphorus
(part of NPK for healthy growth)
so even the plants
could feast

But the expense
of buying a plot
makes no sense to me
if I can't flip it for a profit

So I'll likely burn
as my mother did
before we buried her
next to my stepfather
in the cookie tin
that held her embroidery things

~~

Senator Taylor

I was once a senator
at the University
and I sat upon the stage
while the graduating classes
filed by to receive
their blank paper
rolled and wrapped in ribbon

This was years before
I got my own rolled paper
I seldom think about that
I suspect because being a senator
made no difference to me
and I made no difference
being a student senator

~~

Sore Arms

As I woke
I realized my arms
were sore
Then I remembered
the small girl
asleep beside me
And how, last evening
I lifted her hips
to my mouth

~~

Thrift Store Treasures

More thrift store treasures
books of poetry
with dedications
and declarations of love

Thrown into a box
to be donated
to be claimed
by me

~~

Wailan

The last half
of Birney's last book
is dedicated to Wailan
and it is a delight
to read what this old man
thought of that young girl

Each poem a message
for the future
For the time
when she is alone again

~~

A Dead Arm

I want to tell you now
how much I loved it then
when I woke
to a dead arm
Your head on my shoulder
your bangs up my nose
~~

Each Day

Each day I see you
is worth a year
of being apart

Whatever time
is left to me
let me spend it with you

~~

Slipping From My Hand

I reach for a book
and it slips
from my hand

There it is
the day you left
to get on with your life
leaving me behind

And forever
I will feel your fingers
slipping from my hand
~~

Have Nice Dreams

"Have nice dreams"
you say
"of me"
you say

I am tempted to tell you
that all my dreams
are of you
Your face may change
and your name
but always
I dream of you

Yet I remain silent
in the hope that tomorrow
you will wish me nice dreams
of you
~~

Your Hand Softly

The way your hand
would come softly
up to mine
when I had my arm
around your shoulder

I don't think
you even knew
you were doing it
but every time you did
every
single
time
I would fall in love with you
~~

Leave Me Be

Please don't waste my time
I have so little of it left

I don't want to explain
things I have explained before

I don't want to fight
battles that have been

I will no longer justify
the things I say

there is nothing you can do
that will pull me into an argument

If you want to spend time
be with me

If you want to do something else
leave me be

~~

Negotiation

Once again I suggest
and you reject
so I ask
and you choose
what you always choose
and we do that

At least
you have learned to choose

~~

Not Yet, But Soon

Not yet, but soon
I can throw open the windows
and sleep with the smell
of growing things

Hear clearly the sounds
of birds
calling out their territory
and feel a breeze
across my back

Not yet, but soon
~~

Fisherman's Creek

Somewhere in Peterborough
as you walk to the bar
you might notice the sound
of a creek

Looking around
there is nothing but a street
but looking down
looking through a storm grate
there is running water

going under the street
going under the sidewalk
going under the bar
you are about to enter

Is there, somewhere in that bar
a trap door
where they drop the bodies through
~~

Every Poem

No need for tarot cards
or mysterious men
with towels wrapped
about their heads

If you want to know
what your brain is doing
simply open a magazine
of poetry
and pay attention
to what "every poem is about"

In my case, it's death

~~

Dredging It Up

Is it strange
or just the sign
of a brain accumulating signs
for sixty years
that a poem I read
is referencing a photograph
that I know well
an image
from the very dawn of photography
~~

Now You Know

That day
when you go home
and ask how the bathroom sink
got broken

Your parents shake their heads
but you
the idiot you are
insist on knowing

Finally
at the end of the weekend
when you are heading back to school
your mother says
with sharp tongue
and sharper glance

"it got broken because my ass was on it"
And now you know

~~

Sand Road

A sand road
well back in the country
a road that can be washed out
not by water
nothing so energetic
but by the wind

~~

I Wrote My Name

I wrote my name once
on a leaf
wrote it with my fingernail
and let it drop
from the highest bridge
I could find

Watched it twist
sliding from side to side
trying to delay
the inevitable kiss
of the ground

~~

Took My Son For a Walk

I took my son
for a walk
thinking it would be
a memory for him

but we got deep
into the wood
beside the swamp
and the mosquitoes rose

He was too big
for me to carry
and wasn't up to running
so we walked
as fast as we could

~~

Tinnitus Blues

A youtube video
promises to solve
the agony of tinnitus

Funny, I think
all my life
I have been hearing the whine
of televisions, radios
and electrical wires
It never bothered me
and I always wondered
why nobody else could hear

It wasn't until my forties
that I was told
what tinnitus is
Ah, I thought
that's why I always slept
with the radio on

~~

Suicide By Bandsaw

I heard he committed suicide
on a bandsaw
and I wondered
how on earth
you can do such a thing

Did he open the throat
as wide as he could
and then take a run at it?

Did he tip over the machine
so it fell across his throat
Surely he didn't lean forward
and then sway his body to the side
until his head fell off

~~

Bogart and Bacall

Looking at a photograph
of Humphrey Bogart
looking at the camera
while Lauren Bacall
looks at him
makes me feel
especially happy

~~

I Was There

A photograph
of Patti Smith
and Robert Mapplethorpe
on a balcony
so very young
and looking at each other

I was there
I was that age once
and felt just like that
on a balcony
outside a small apartment
leaning against the rail

~~

When She Saw the Dust

I used to sit for hours
and watch the dust
dance in a beam of light
through the curtains

I can't remember
the last time I did that
but I certainly remember
when she saw the dust
dancing in the light

Such a stream of complaint
about poor housekeeping
such a bout of coughing
as if to eject a lung

I begin to wonder
how I made it this far
~~

Show Me

There was a great splashing
and sliding
as I came into the bathroom
I looked at you
in the bath
and saw that look

Tell me, I said
and as usual
you giggled, told me
and I stood for a while
with my mouth open

Show me, I said
~~

Most Mornings

Most mornings
I would walk into the kitchen
to find her reading the paper
A pair of panties
and her fluffy slippers

I would tip-toe to her
and peek over the paper
to be rewarded
with a nice view of her boobs
and a disgusted look
"they haven't changed since yesterday"

~~

An Old Friend

A fit of coughing
an old friend
from a decade ago
Running in the winter
and my poor
coal-soaked, wood-dust soaked
lungs do their best

Perhaps I will cough up
some of that second-hand smoke
accumulated in bars
workplaces
and home

~~

Are You Here?

I would come home
and look hopefully
for your shoes by the door

but later
after you moved in
there were so many shoes
I had to call your name

~~

Local Poets

All poets are local
when you shop
at the thrift store

Most sell a few books
locally
and those who
clear off their shelves
donate locally

~~

House-Husband

Coming home
to an empty apartment
always left
a small hollow space
in my gut

Even though I knew
you were at the lab
working on your PhD
while I was just working
and home at 5

~~

So Far Today

So far today
I've rescued a website
instead of walking
and collected a year
of invoices
instead of running

Had a second cup
of coffee
instead of eating
Repotted a plant
instead of writing
and wrote a little
instead of lifting weights
~~

A Little Twist

Someone told me
that poems had to have
a little twist
a bit of a surprise
at the end

~~

I Never Had To Fly Away

I never had to fly away
to worry that some younger
fitter boy
would catch your eye

Each morning
when I said goodbye
was a chance
that it was forever

And it was even worse
if we said goodbye angry
Surely you would find
some more agreeable fellow
~~

Not Doing My Bit

A poem of rape?
No, that I will not do
not for lack of stories
but they are not my stories
to tell

My own childhood experiences
are trite, trivial
and to write them
would be gratuitous

As they had no effect
they have no meaning
today, and so
no place in a poem
of mine

~~

I Will Check Tomorrow

I search the calendar
suspicious
that I have forgotten some appointment
some visit or test

I have not
but tomorrow
I will check again
~~

Yogourt Maker

Pam has made some yogourt
and I have helped myself
Lime, a very good taste
if a bit runny
It tastes as good drunk
as spooned

There was a girl
many years ago
who also loved making yogourt
and when she left me
she took my maker
Nothing like the setup
that Pam has created
~~

I Know How You Worry

I imagined her once
at a crossroads
in rural England

She was in a phone booth
calling me
away across the sea
in Canada

"Hello Kim"
(nobody ever seems
to have a nickname for me)
"I am in England now,
I'm healthy and very happy

I just thought I would call
and tell you that
I know how you worry"
~~

We Need To Talk

She thought we needed to talk
and so
she would push my buttons

It wasn't the buttons
that made me furious,
it was that she pushed them
deliberately

~~

Good Night Sweetheart

I swear this is true
You were on the other side
of the world
and I was in my shop
grinding wood
into weapons
When I felt your arms
around me

It must have been evening
where you were
Good night sweetheart

~~

Never Asking

An old man
with a young companion
seems compelled
to plan for the time
when she is alone

Wishing her
a younger roommate
for the next time

Never asking
what she thinks
of his plans

~~

Take Great Care

Never NEVER
wish for a woman
who loves you completely

And if it happens
that one finds you
Take great care
to be kind
for when you go
(walking through the door
or in a box)

She should remember you
kindly

~~

The Right Instrument

I breathe
ever so gently
into an ear
and am rewarded
with a shiver

Unmusical I thought myself
until I found the right instrument

~~

An Editor

When I die
who will receive my work
those things even I
could not assemble
into a worthy story

Who will care enough
to edit my life
into a fiction
worth reading

~~

Sorry Susan

Susan Musgrave has appeared
at the top of my thrift shop pile
of poetry volumes

I owe her an apology
When I saw the book
I thought
Isn't she the one
who married a bank robber?

Yes
And so?

She is 70 now
and he is dead
for many years

Perhaps I will read her poems
and stop thinking
about her life

~~

I Promise, Neruda

I promise, Neruda
that I will return
to your work
How could I not

And you Brautigan
Be patient
as you never were
I will return
to my youth and vigour

As for the rest
we are slowly
getting to know each other

You are all moving onto my shelf
high out of reach
of the grandchildren
I do not have

Some of you
have a promised date

~~

Generic

I am become an old man
I look in the mirror
and all the bald, wrinkled
weird little beard guys
look back at me

~~

Kuzushi

Take the balance
at the instant of contact
Something I say a lot
when I am teaching
Just now
at the end of a class
I thanked the Pamurai for her help
and she ran across the room
to give me a hug

Yes, threw herself
and took my balance
Sometimes the lessons
are painful

~~

Asanoyama

Watching the sumo tournament
I looked over
and her toes were curled
her eyes were half shut
(You've seen the shunga)
And I said
"You really like Asanoyama
that much?"

~~

Lying On A Hill

Long slow afternoons together
lying on a hill
watching the clouds drift by
We sat close to each other
but never touching
Until that hot summer day
when you turned your face to me
and I knew
and I kissed you

It's strange
that I can't think
of a single instance
where that happened
in my whole life
Not a single romantic bone
in my body
you would say
~~

Dangerous

Everybody's life is boring
everyone wants
to stand beside an outlaw

Me, I'm standing beside
a cordless vacuum
and I'm watching the light blink
as the cord
takes power from the plug
to the battery

See, it's not really cordless
and you're not really boring
You just need to plug in
your outlaw
once in a while

~~

You Wouldn't Be There

One day
in our travels
I looked around
and you were no longer there
Oh, there was a body
to be sure
but you had stopped
at some small town
back along the way
I thought about going back
but you wouldn't be there
~~

Step On A Crack

When I was a child
if you stepped on a crack
you would break your mother's back
and if you stepped on a line
you would break her spine
But it was worse
if you stepped on the gas valve
it was bad luck
But very good luck
if you stepped on a water valve
When I was a child
we all learned to dance

~~

Beam Me Up

You get on the plane
and at night
they close all the windows
and tell you to sleep
so you don't make more work

Later, they let you out
of the can
and you are somewhere else
But who knows where?
It might be the next town over
if you've never been there
you wouldn't know

~~

Broken Neck

I'm not going on like this
I told Brenda
One more visit
to the doctor
one more day
in constant pain
with a useless arm
and that's it

I had a bottle
of narcotic that didn't work
that I hoped would work
if I took them all at once

~~

It Is Easy

It is easy
oh so very easy
to wound someone you love
a sister, a father, a lover
and there are times
when the urge
is painful
When you feel
you will die
if you do not wound

Cut out your tongue
those words
once said
are never forgotten
Swallow them
let them consume you
from within
and not the one you love

When you are consumed
when you grow another tongue
you will find your pain
is consumed
and those wounding words
never spoken
never were
~~

Time Wasted

She spent a full minute
trying to hang the loofah
from her nipple

We were in a bit of a rush
but I didn't mind
I watched
~~

Loofah Time

Of the thousands of times
I have loofahed her back
and the thousands of times
She did mine
I have to say
that I much preferred
to do hers

~~

What is 4am For

Like clockwork
the 4am peeing
is like the 4am feeding
of the kids

I'd like to say I got up
to feed the kids
but they slept with us
and Brenda did all the work

I wonder if I could get Brenda
to get up and do the peeing
like she did the feeding
Probably not

~~

High School Pens

I feel like a high school girl
with a pile of multicoloured ink
This one is brown

I might switch to green
because once upon a time
I seem to recall
I wrote in green
~~

Nice Chapeau

At the drive through
the fellow said
"nice chapeau"

I found this hat
in the airport toilet
in Montevideo
Someone left it
on a shelf

I really hope
I can wear white
before Easter

~~

That Time

Even before children
removed my distaste
for bodily secretions
a woman's monthly blood
never bothered me

So when I met a model
who didn't use a pad
or a tampon
it was a simple thing
to be down on my knees
wiping the sweep
after a nude shoot

(You clean the sweep anyway)

~~

Dreaming of a Blowjob

I dreamt last night
of a blowjob

Not much else
just that
But no wistful thoughts
of youthful priapitude

This was my current dick
the one limp
for lack of testosterone

Even in my dreams
I can't allow myself
delusions or fantasies

~~

Self Portrait With Old Love

It is an old photo
she is wearing
my football shirt
Number 23
because my father's 13
was taken

She is brushing her teeth
and looking at me
as I take the picture
of her reflection

So it is true
all photographs
are self portraits

~~

I Lost a Lot of Shirts

There is something soothing
about seeing a girl
walk around your room
in one of your shirts

Something exciting
if she leaves it undone
and her stomach appears
and disappears like magic

Something triumphant
as you watch her
tuck it into her pants
and walk out the door
I lost a lot of shirts

~~

She Checks For Me

Pam takes my sword
from my hand
and says "tie up your tails"

Once again
I have half-dressed for class
and once again
She has checked for me
~~

I Always Use A Bookmark

I always used a bookmark
while she would dog-ear
a page

It was obvious
it would never work out
~~

Trying to Lose Weight

Viewing with alarm
the bathroom scale
as each day
for three days
the numbers increase

Alarm mounting
until the realization
that I have been
bunged up
for three days

~~

Big Plans

Such plans I had
but a walk cancelled
due to rain
and chased out
of Starbucks parking lot
by a full bladder

Nothing for it
but to run for home
and finish my coffee there
~~

Imagine My Surprise

Imagine my surprise
when this gentle girl
shy and demure
petite to say the least
grabbed hold of my tongue
with her teeth
and wouldn't let go

~~

Routine Disrupted

Routine disrupted
I finish my coffee
in a paper cup
and debate
going back out
to prowl a thrift shop
in a pretense
of normal life
~~

You Never Get Upset

"You never get upset
at the things people
say to you"

"I don't think that's true
it's just that
anything those people say
I have said more nastily
to myself"

~~

On Haida Gwaii

Misty grey day
as I put the garbage
into the bin
Cool
And the crows
sound like ravens

I can imagine myself
back on Haida Gwaii
living in a log cabin
putting out the garbage
~~

I Sit With You

I sit with you leaning
against me
What else
can I do

You are thinking again
of those who hurt you
A certain stiffness
in your back

If I could
I would kill them all
and you know that
and you don't ask me to

So I sit quiet
with you leaning against me
and I will sit here
for as long
as you need me to
What else
can I do
~~

Only My Mother

Only my mother
ever called me handsome
Perhaps my sister
I certainly never thought so
Not handsome
Not clever

Perhaps a certain
stubbornness
a willingness to endure
often seen as pride
as ego to be knocked back

And every woman
who was with me
made sure that ego
was knocked well back

It was sweet of them
and I appreciated their efforts
but what they did
I had done decades before

~~

I Got Over It

Once, I remember
I said to her
"This isn't how
it's supposed to be
We are supposed
to be a team

You and I
against the world
Not you and the world
against me"
Once, and I got over it
~~

Too Smart

The squirrels
have got more lazy

Now they put walnuts
in the drive
so we will crack them
with our tires

~~

Good Morning

I bend over
to photograph a snowdrop
and there
two feet from my head
a rabbit hops
out of a bush

We look at each other
he seems expectant
so I say good morning
and he turns
and hops away

I take the photograph
and walk away
~~

The Asshole

I am so sorry
I feel like the asshole
I undoubtedly am

Your face just popped
into my head
while I thought of a trip
we took together

But your name
is just not there
~~

Great View

When you park
with a coffee
and turn off the car
while it's raining
it really doesn't matter
if you are in a parking lot
or overlooking a grand forest

Especially if you are writing
your head down
your notebook on your lap

~~

Note To Self and Explanation

Note to self
found on the desk
"May 2020
Moldex 9600

sumo toes

*I was to look up all Amazon purchases since May of 2020, our business year being from May to May. Moldex 9600 is the n95 dust mask I use in the shop, and that use is why I don't mind wearing a mask around the town, I've worn them for many years. And sumo toes was a reminder of a poem I was asked to write, and I did. Write it.

~~

Tossing and Turning

"I didn't sleep well last night"
"I was awake all night"
I hear this from the family
and I'm sympathetic
but I don't really feel it
any more

In the last couple of years
I've had maybe one bad night
where I woke up
and couldn't get back to sleep

I simply got caught up
in all the nonsense I have left behind
I still care
but I have passed the work on
and no longer have anything to say

So I got up, watched a show
and went back to sleep
Not even the worry
that I won't have enough sleep
makes me sleepless
I will take a nap when I'm tired
~~

Not Starving

If I'm not hungry
I shouldn't eat, right?
I mean that makes sense

Yet I eat when food appears
just as I pee when I can

All my life
I have been prepared
for whatever comes
around the corner

Eat when you can
empty your bladder
you don't know when
you'll get the next chance

After 60 years
it's a hard habit to break
~~

Middle Class

It has been a middle class life
for me
Nobody I've ever met
been to school with
or slept with
ever went on to become famous
or went down in infamy
as a murderer or otherwise
worth a story

That suits me fine
I wanted a quiet life
one that let me sit
without drama
without the interest
of the bored
of those who wished
to be me
Without knowing
a single paparazzi
~~

My Turn To Talk Now

I know many folks
who impatiently wait for their turn
to say something
Long ago I learned
to be quiet
the moment they started to talk
and so
I have been accused
of not being communicative

Only later
when I became a teacher
did I learn how
to talk over someone else
But only
if I'm teaching
and haven't finished my point

Otherwise
I still stop talking
when there might be something
for me to learn

~~

How Many Children

How many children
might I have had
a hundred?
a thousand?

I have met two of them
and they are really nice
Perhaps all of them
would have been nice

but two is enough
two, a generation later
than is traditional
so I have done my bit
to slow the death
of the world

~~

It Might Be Best

When my old man said
that it might be best
if the line ended with me
I don't think he was saying
that there were too many humans
on this old globe
and that I should do my bit
to reduce the load

Always taking the middle road
I waited until he was dead
before I had a child

~~

Totalled 'er

We were heading for the cabin
after a long week in Chile
Pam was asleep
and the music was crap
so I turned off the radio

Small wonder
that the next thing I remember
was being in the ditch
and heading for a road sign
I wrecked Pam's car

Funny, though
I can't point to the place
where it happened
I have tried, occasionally
but it just isn't in my head

Oh you might say
it's repressed
you can dig it out
But why would I want to

Why get that horrible sight
of the post growing bigger
as I pump the brakes
and swing the wheel
helpless to stop
At each trip to the cabin
~~

Too Shallow For Trauma

Too shallow for trauma
I guess
too weak for a grudge
to last long

I can remember
what has been done
and I can certainly avoid
those who have been hurtful
but that sick feeling
of helpless victimhood
has just never stayed long

No depth of character
I suppose
No years-long suffering
and plotting of revenge
worthy of a movie script
~~

Boring Country

I live in a boring part
of a boring country
where for-profit
isn't a holy word
and our sick often recover
without starving their family

where the majority
wear masks in a pandemic
where guns are not available
for when anger turns to murder
As I said
Boring
So luckily boring
~~

At The Pub

Did I dream or daydream the pub
The gathering of friends
the hoisting of pints
the bright chatter
that I usually leaned back
and let wash over me

catching what I could
in my elderly inability
to pick out one voice
amongst many
It was a nice dream
full of that happy glow
that comes with crowds

~~

She Leaned In Close

She leaned in close
and I leaned back

From the look in her eyes
I could tell she was upset
but I couldn't help it

trying to focus that close
makes my head hurt

~~

I Love Routine

I love routine
and I hate repetition
I know that sounds wrong
but this morning
I couldn't face
another walk around the school
yet this is the time
for my exercise

Go someplace else
you say
Do something else
you say
Ah
you do understand
the difference
between routine and repetition
~~

Watching, Watching

In my old spot
across the road
from the Metro
in the Starbucks
parking lot

Watching the important people
drive fast and reckless
late for work
and confident others
will look out for them

Watching bits of snow
drift onto the windscreen
leaving tiny spots
of water

Waiting for my coffee
to cool enough to drink
Wondering how to ask
for a size less than huge
~~

Radio Times

I have made it
to 9am
and so switch
to CBC
to listen to Tempo

But I listen
to the news
not by choice

and hear
what I heard earlier
on France 24
while eating oatmeal

~~

Taking a Walk

My doctor says walk
and today I tried
I really did
but I can only walk
aimless for so long

It is so much easier
to walk to
rather than for

~~

A Bad Day

The man pulls in
for his morning coffee
and sets his parking brake
with the sound of a bumper
scraping over a curb

He runs in and out
with minimum time
and leaves
with heavy foot

It's going to be
a bad day

~~

Kid Should Be Fired

I am not overly fond
of this notebook

Whatever Chinese child
newly come from the country
to the factory barracks
has been a bit liberal
with the glue

As I hold down one page
the rest bump against my pen
~~

Some Days

You went off
to another country
across the ocean
with another boy

One you were also
in love with

While I remained
in faith
in hope
that you would return

Some days were good
Some days were hell
~~

You Never Tell Me You Love Me

The more I told you
I loved you
the more you
tore into me

Taking out on me
the frustrations of work
and family
and the pain
of your periods

Is it any wonder
I was mostly silent

~~

My Land

Somewhere near
are the graves
of brave warriors
and cowards
of mothers
and children

They are the owners
of this land
the true owners

To be born here
to claim to own the dirt
that you stand on
is vanity

You do not own the land
from above
only in your grave
can you say
you and the land
are one

~~

The Worlds of This House

We make our own worlds
with one another
and in the same house

The mathematics of life
are always factorial
Every pair a world
and worlds change
One day friends
one day enemies
one day rulers and ruled
one day lovers

Each world a mystery
to those who stand outside
to those who sit beside
at the supper table

~~

Last Week

Last week
was it really thirty years ago?
you slept
in my arms

I can smell your hair
I can see your ears
those delicate orbs
I called elfin
which made you smile

Your cheek
rested on my shoulder
and I stayed awake
for fear
in my sleep
I would move
and wake to find you
on the other side
of the bed

~~

Each Day With You

Each day with you
I felt a bit more
of myself being lost

Like a tug, it felt
like yarn
being pulled from a ball
and I rolled this way
and that
in the basket
of your life

One day I thought
I will be gone
and you will knot
another ball of yarn
onto the last of me
~~

Your First Time

Your first time
is supposed to be nerves
and fumbling

But, assuming I can pick
my first time
there was a lot more planning
than fumbling

Most boys would buy a condom
and keep it in their wallet
for months, just in case

I went to the drugstore
and bought some spermicide

It's been said before
and I suppose it must be true
Not a romantic bone

~~

Dorey

Dorey, the buddha
has been in a lot of apartments
with me
I bought him for \$35
an antique from, perhaps the '20s
there's a certain art deco
to the lettering
Dorey's being an incense
Or so I assume

He has been passed along
to my daughter
but to be honest
he's up to his old tricks
hiding in a corner
or beside a door

~~

Too Many Choices

I don't know
what this is
some new symptom

The second toe
on my left foot
hurts like hell

Did I jam it, unknowing
at my morning exercise
Is it nerve damage
from diabetes
or a fungal infection
finally deep enough
to hit nerves

Or is it bone cancer
At my time of life
there are too many choices
and too many of them
are likely

~~

I Meant To Say That

If I say
"a strawberry tree"
and it is translated
into some other language
Does the translator
change it to "strawberry plant"
knowing full well
strawberry's are not found
on trees

Or does he translate
faithfully
what he thinks is a mistake
in the hope
that I intended a mistake
~~

Plumb The Depths

They say you're supposed
to plumb the depths
of your lover

But, when swimming
I have never worried
about how deep the water

Deep enough to swim
is as much depth
as any ocean or river
need concern me

As for lovers
I really don't want
to get too deep
for fear of weeds
like those in the pond
in the town where I grew up

Go too deep
and you get tangled
and drown
as some kid did each year
Or so I was told

~~

Wait And See

Last night
or the one before
I went to sleep
(in the dark)
and it seemed
that one of my eyes
had a big black hole
like a detached retina

I lay down
Said I will wake blind
or fine
and promptly fell asleep

~~

Too Much Walking

Tired of walking
because an hour
is too long
and less feels like cheating

I have switched
to an elliptical machine
found in a thrift shop
for \$25 (yes, bragging)

Now fifteen minutes
is enough to make
my legs shake
(about all that does
make them shake
these days)

~~

Am I Good At This

No matter what you wore
your clothes always seemed
to come off easily

Clumsy as I am
unable at times
to get my own belt open
I suspect you helped me

~~

Grumpy Fellow

The clerk at the grocery store
is a grumpy fellow
"back off" was probably
the first thing
he said to me

Being a clerk at the grocery store
he probably has lots
to be grumpy about
and I'm always polite

But I think
deep down
that he's naturally grumpy
~~

Magical Things

Magical things happen
in magical places
Watching the Orca
play around a boat
on the west coast
comes to mind

But today, right now
outside my back door
the Crocus are opening
the Narcissus are swelling
~~

She Dreamed of Me

I dreamed of you
she said, stretching

What was I doing

She shrugged

Something nasty I bet

She smiled a bit

~~

Someone to Heal Me

After we crawled
into bed
I noticed her arms
covered in scars

Oh hell, I thought
Just once
couldn't I find
someone to heal me

~~

Nobody Famous

I don't know why
I never met anyone famous
Not enough money, perhaps
Never in the right place

And even in the right places
I was usually chatting up
the barmaid

~~

Bored Until The Next Life

If I believed that death
was only the beginning
that we went somewhere else
I don't think life
would be half so interesting
~~

An Empty House

My mother
emptied her house
before she died
She lived alone, finally
as her mother had
and she wished to spare us
the sight of drawers
being dumped into garbage bags

As for me (and most men)
there are others here
let them live with the accumulation
of my lifetime
as they are doing now
After I am gone
come the garbage bags
"I always hated that thing"

~~

Movie Gimmick

Was it clever
or dangerous
for the theatre of my mind
(another movie for a dream)
to end that way?

A black and white movie
about a revolution
and the rebels had
the power grid

Stuff happened
and at the end
(I heard breakfast)
The lights went out
in the theatre

~~

What Do I Know

Just what is it that I know?
Teaching these days
is deeply satisfying
the students are "getting it"

But what is it
that I'm telling them
Once, I thought I was clever
I knew a lot of moves
from a lot of arts

But lately when I talk
what comes out of my mouth
seems too obvious to say
"Surely everyone knows this"

~~

The Tyranny of Small Numbers

Haydn and Bach
were both born
today (on this date)
but I don't know
what to do with that

It is information, certainly
It is a fact
But I don't know
what it means
1/365.25 of those born
were born on this day
~~

March Is Wind

March is wind
wind strong enough
to rip the aluminum corners
off the garage
and tatter the plastic
on the windows
Wind that makes the stairwell
creak like a sailboat

Wind that makes the leaves dance
from down the street
to my lawn
and on again

You were like March
I didn't expect
to see you on my lawn
and just when
I became used to seeing you
The wind

~~

I Know You

The physicists tell us
that since the bang
Nothing has been gained
or lost
only changed

The wise old men
of long beards and long cloaks
tell us we are stardust
that the universe is us
and we it

And I know this
But none of that helps
for all that knowing
I still know
that when I die
I will not know you
~~

In The Car

Oh such grand plans
of running away
of doing things
I have never done
at odd
whimsical times

All brought crashing down
by a full damned bladder

~~

Is It Me

The definition of idiot
I drift through faceplant
and say to myself
over and over

"who has time to think up
all this time-wasting crap"

~~

Al Purdy's Death

Susan Musgrave in 2016
was disturbed at the news
that Al Purdy's death
was assisted

Today, in 2021 my doctor
has already asked me
what my goals are
and what my intentions
for my own death

This is good, perhaps
I will not need to be
so private as I thought
I would have to be

I have kept silent
and will remain silent
about those who have
told me stories

As Musgrave said
death is a very private thing
and here am I
in the fullness of health
the fullness of my wits
to declare to all now

I wish to die at home
I wish not to squander
the resources of this country
or of my family
on keeping a husk alive
for a few moments more

I have had two extra years
so far
to do what I wished to do
and I have done what
I always did

Those who have something
to say, have said it
or have nothing to say
so these next few years
or months
will remain as they have continued

If you hear that I have died
with help or without
do not be shocked
do not be confused
I have lived as I wished
and will die when I should

Not a moment longer
Not a moment sooner

And no, I do not want to spend
the next two weeks
saying goodbye
or hearing good wishes

Instead, be content
as I am
Look to your own life
and to your own death
~~

The Poet of One Place

As a child
we moved, and moved, and moved
and I never took hold anywhere
being one place during the week
and another on the weekend

Yet, on arriving in Guelph
to attend University
Having achieved that goal
That future I envisioned
my short life through
There was nothing more

I was in University and done
I had never seen anything beyond
My future was a blank
after twenty-three

So when I did not die
at twenty-three
I was free to stay
in one place, content
to live my life
in a small world

There are parts of this town
that I have never seen
I was never a kid here
and so, never explored
There are parts of this town
that are beyond my small world

Here, in my small world
I bought a house
a small house
and have never wanted another
Instead of finding a bigger place
when my kids grew out of space
I added a floor

Let my children move
around the world
being adventurers
I have never been a good traveller
I have never wished to see the world
I have all the world
I have ever wanted

I have a home

~~

Sorry, Not That Poet

I do apologize
that I don't want to write
poems to trees, birds
or bodies of water

It's sort of the same thing
with photographs
Trees, birds and bodies of water
have been done
and done
and done

But sometimes
I must admit
those trees, birds and bodies of water
get in the way
of what I want to say

As for rhymes
don't ask me about rhymes

~~

She And The Cat

She is in the bedroom
rolling around
shifting from side to side
sighing
bouncing up and down

More cat than person
I am coming to understand
why I wait
for her to go to sleep
before I go to bed

~~

Never Thrown In Jail

I think it unlikely
that my government
will ever jail and disappear me

I am not sure
if I should be upset about that
or perhaps try harder
to be objectionable

~~

I Confess

How do women do it
Keep their faces wrinkle free
and their hands feeling like something
softer than sandpaper

I watch, I learn
and after I work in winter cold
winter dryness
in the shop
only to come in
and wash the dishes
I reach for the lotion

There, I have said it
I am a man
and I use lotion
on my hands and on my head
and on the wrinkles under my eyes

Not often, mind you
and I buy the cheapest lotion
I can find
There are limits, after all
~~

Burned Coffee

Coffee, forgotten in the pot
cold
but beside is a microwave
and so it is at least hot
if a bit over-cooked
Finished now

Once, on a road trip somewhere
I had not found any
but restaurant coffee
Bland, boring and brown
I asked the waitress
if she had a pot
forgotten on a burner
since early morning

It turns out she had
and the black, bitter taste
of burned coffee
was a comfort in a strange land

~~

Almost Bedtime

The occasional soft snore
from next door
reminds me
as I sit, waiting
for a TP particle
(unfortunate those initials)
A Terry Pratchett particle
to sleet through the universe
and hit a neuron

In other words
I wait for inspiration
while taking note
of the expiration
from next door

~~

Almost Spring

Soon it will be warm enough
for our tiny ants to wake
and they will come inside
to gather the scraps
the cat leaves on the floor

Later, as the plants awake
they will move outdoors
or at least leave our kitchen alone
and I will be almost sad
to see them go

You see, these tiny ants
barely a millimetre long
replaced the carpenter ants
we used to host
in our rotting sun porch
~~

Dreams of Perch Roe

Sometimes, when I visited
my Grandmother would have gone
to her brother-in-law's shanty
and brought back some Perch roe

For me, she would cover it
in flour
and fry it lightly in butter
to be served hot and eaten now

I never thought
of the thousands of Perch
that were popping in my mouth
as I chewed

Only now, when Grandmother
and Perch roe
are no more
~~

Take This Book

I try once again
to look at poetry resources
the publishers
the contests
and once again
I am content in what I do

Writing is what I want
and if I get the urge
to be published
I publish myself
and offer it for free
and never try to see
if anyone else has
ever seen the book

~~

You are going to find more books like this at:

<https://180degreeimaging.com/TaylorBooks.html>

There are other free martial arts books from Kim Taylor at:

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual-free-ebooks.html