

# And Once More



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# Introduction

I thought maybe I was done with books of poetry, done with novels, but it seems I have once more produced enough work to justify an edition.

The photos are from 2005.

~~

Kim Taylor, August-September 2023



## **And Once More**

And once more  
the day has slipped by  
a chapter written  
lunch made  
a bit of photography  
with a revived cell phone  
just to see  
and it's 3pm  
time to think about dinner  
and dishes

~~

## I Was Busy

Sometimes day and night  
got switched  
You know,  
you stay up later and later  
and suddenly it's early

I would slip around  
to wake up after dark  
and go to bed in the morning  
It wasn't a hardship  
I had no place to go

But sometimes  
the things I saw  
late at night  
or should I say  
about my mid-afternoon  
in the dark

Strange beings  
who floated outside my balcony  
asking to come in  
pretty beings  
but I was busy  
and always said no

~~

## **We Were Roommates**

We were roommates  
for a long time  
all the time I was there  
in that apartment

She had been there  
with the previous tenant  
a friend of mine  
and he had told me about her

She'll come late at night  
she never talks much  
but she likes to listen  
and she's not much trouble  
Best you just leave her be

She was good company  
and she talked just enough  
for me to understand  
that her story was rather sad  
~~



## Hello You

Hey, hello you, she said  
it's been a long time

She was beautiful  
breathtaking I'd say  
but I was young  
and believed in honesty

I'm sorry, truly I am  
but I don't remember you

Oh shit, she said  
her hand going to a pendant  
around her neck  
Wrong way, sorry

She turned and left  
and like a fool  
I didn't follow her  
just turned back to my beer  
~~

## A Life in Books

It was a hard time for me  
those years  
but there were books  
and sometimes  
more than a rack  
in the drug store

There were book stores  
Incredible places  
piled and packed  
and all the time in the world  
All the time there was

and I spent it deep inside  
away from everyone  
tucked back  
into other worlds  
that spun around my head  
every book cover  
taking me to another place

And best of all  
so magical to me  
I could afford to buy  
a couple of those used books  
to have  
for my very own

~~



## **You're Safe Now**

Mud on her face  
dirt on her knees  
hair stringy with sweat  
She came into the place  
through the back door  
I happened to be passing  
and of course I asked  
what she'd been doing

Nothing you need to know  
you're safe now

I must have looked doubtful  
what could I say  
but I was curious  
and so she took me  
up to her room

Sit here, she said  
as she went off to shower  
I'll tell you after

I sat, not much to do  
so I sat quiet  
breathing slow and regular  
and in the corner of my eye  
was a massive bow  
feathered arrows beside it  
and slowly  
other things appeared  
A leather pouch  
a sling tied to it  
and in the corner  
a wicked looking spear

As she came from the shower  
towelling her hair  
she looked at me  
Ah, you see  
So I don't have to explain  
~~



## Listen to Her

She played with Tarot cards  
and sometimes  
would shake her bones  
a collection she got  
from anatomy classes  
and walks in the wood

She claimed to know the future  
and one day she told me  
not to go downtown  
not to go to the bar  
I laughed at her  
and walked toward the door

No  
You must not go  
Stay here with me  
and we'll go to my bed

Of course I stayed  
and that evening the bar burned  
and that evening I learned  
to listen to her

~~

## Sometimes One of Us

I was fourteen  
when it happened  
for the first time  
I went full tree  
That's what my uncle called it  
full tree

I branched  
I rooted  
thankfully I was outside  
deep into the yard  
and I could feel the earth  
the water  
the minerals

and I could feel the sun  
the sweet sugars  
running down my arm  
Half a day it was  
and that's it  
It never happened again  
and my family nodded  
and said  
Sometimes one of us

~~

## **Making Soup**

Another pot of soup  
for the family  
workers all  
except me  
an old man at home  
writing a little  
napping a lot  
making soup

~~



## The Bed

She took me by the hand  
and walked with me  
into the forest

This was a long time ago  
and in that forest  
there was a clearing  
with a bed, so very soft  
the sun coming down  
lighting the bed so it glowed

She led me there  
undressed me  
undressed herself  
and lay back on the bed

As I walked to her  
and was about to lie down  
the bed was gone  
the girl was gone  
the sun was the moon  
and I was cold

I looked around  
no clothing  
I'd laid it over the foot  
of the bed

~~



## **She Would Wait**

She would wait quiet  
while I tried  
and when I set it down  
she would pick it up  
and finish the crossword  
in about ten minutes time

I would shake my head  
with a half smile  
she was so much smarter  
so much better than I  
but she would wait quiet  
while I tried

~~

## Why She Left

You know, she said  
around you I feel just like  
those girls with the tambourines  
standing on stage  
and hitting it on their hip  
looking at the guitarist  
and he never looks at her  
But after the show  
he expects her to be there  
and she always is

~~



## Across the Lake

Midnight in 1969  
and Iron Butterfly is playing  
on the radio  
drifting over the lake  
from Mercyhurst College  
Erie Pa.

Still awake  
First years of high school  
a Country kid  
grown up on Motown  
the Big 8 Windsor  
Fifty thousand watts  
straight through Detroit

That drum solo, fifteen minutes  
and where were the horns  
just a Vox Continental  
and enough energy  
for a sleepless kid  
alone in his bed  
at midnight  
~~

## The Wanderer

Small town girl  
wondering if she'd ever get out  
out of that town

He was a wanderer  
told her stories of the road  
told her about the city lights  
and she thought he'd stay

Still a small town girl  
with a half grown boy  
wondering where he is now

She's with him still  
if only in her dreams

~~

## Succession

She was supposed to be next  
she knew that

He wanted her  
and wanted her at his home  
with his wife gone

She was his grad student  
and so ended up at his place  
where she met the wife  
"The Wife"

Things didn't go as he planned  
His grad student fell hard  
for "The Wife"  
and between the two of them  
they saw the old fart off  
~~



## Fictional

I suppose it's because  
"things happened"  
I want to write a campus novel

Things happened  
but things always happen  
that doesn't make them interesting  
So write them in an interesting way  
you can do that  
call it fiction

Make it fiction, you say  
but seriously  
what would I make fictitious  
that hasn't already been made  
you know  
fictional  
~~



## The Swimming Hole

Thinking back  
it was such a cliché  
that we boys down at the creek  
would strip naked  
and swing out  
on the rope  
into the middle  
and let go whooping  
and hollering  
to splash in

And yet we were convinced  
that we had invented it  
Never thinking  
about who tied the rope  
up into the swamp willow  
beside the creek

~~

## Exactly Right

I think she was like  
one of those book covers  
from the late 70s

A vague and transparent woman  
with streamers of something  
in red  
and in the background  
maybe a bear  
or a bicycle

None of it making sense  
all of it, exactly right  
~~



## Oyster Stew

It never really got any better  
than when I was in my 20s  
searching for the meanings  
looking for love  
and finding oyster stew instead

I no longer look for meaning  
have an abundance of love  
but damn it  
I mean damn it

Search as I may  
I can't find oyster stew  
~~

## **Me and the Good People**

I live in the bottom of this town  
right by the river  
in the attic of this student dive

Even there  
I'm only part way up the hill  
Part way to the good people  
who run this town

Not that I mind  
if the river floods  
I've got the roof  
and a bag of potatoes

It's never going to flood  
high enough  
to reach the good people  
on the top of the hill  
~~

## **Buddha in the Attic**

She kept a Buddha in the attic  
it looks down on me  
and smiles  
at the top of my head

I don't want him to see my feet  
they are small, and always dirty

He likes my head though  
and says he will protect it  
If he protects my head  
my feet will be safe  
~~



## Still Here

The world is here  
still here  
I know this because  
I woke this morning  
eyes open  
chest rising and falling

It is no illusion  
no dream  
because I had to piss  
the bladder said so  
and so I arose  
and walked to the place  
where I piss

As I walked back  
I looked around  
all was as it was  
no changes  
so the world is here  
it isn't some other place

~~



## Boy on a Cliff

There is a boy  
on the edge of a cliff  
his feet dangling  
his weight back  
on his arms

He is watching  
nothing more  
just watching  
so many things  
to see

How long has he been  
watching  
How long will he be  
watching  
Who can tell us that  
~~

## Your Own Decisions

There was a promise made  
the day you were born  
A promise of change  
a promise of a chance  
of potential

It was made to you  
a gift bestowed  
and then you were set free  
to do with it what you wished

~~



## Just one Step

The wind moves  
the waves  
the earth itself  
moves

Movement is life  
your life  
moving down the illusion  
that we call time

Move, just one step  
in front of the other  
and you know  
you are alive  
~~

## Real Magic

Why look for magic  
in books or strange places  
It is all around you

if you need a ritual  
to pass a test  
look around you

There is a pebble  
throw it into the grave  
a gift worth a life

There is a feather  
carry it for a day  
then let it go  
into the wind

carrying your sadness  
drying your tears

~~

## Your Past

You can't escape your past  
she often said to me

It made you  
it shaped you  
it follows you forever

Without that past  
you would not exist

But one thing more she said  
You can forgive the past  
~~



## And Then

The sun down  
the moon not quite there  
and we walked single file  
she and I

through the bush  
through the darkness

I stopped to look back  
and she was there  
we kept walking  
and I stopped to look back

~~



## The Crows

When the time comes  
the crows will be here  
to take me away  
from the rotting hull  
that will remain  
and they will carry me  
up into the sky  
where the winds will take me  
and scatter what I was  
into what will be

~~

## Gentle Parting

When it got too much  
the world crowding in  
the people too loud  
she would slip softly  
into another place

I could see her go  
gently moving across  
into that world  
where I could not go

but it was enough  
to see that gentle smile  
to see her eyes  
soften from diamonds  
to something marvellous

~~



## Young Again

My mother once said  
she wished she was young again  
to feel things so intensely

I gawped at her  
and shook my head  
Don't wish this on yourself  
my dear Mama  
You don't remember this  
the ache in your chest  
wanting to pound your head  
against the wall  
until it stops

When I am your age  
my dear Mama  
I will look back  
and smile fondly  
at the good parts

Doing my damndest  
to forget that intensity  
I am so happy to know  
you have forgotten

~~

## **Shit Stupid Boy**

God those times were rough  
when I was twenty  
Shit stupid  
right out of the countryside

Just learning about life  
Just learning about girls  
and they were so kind  
they were so good to me

And I never knew  
I look back at that boy  
so dreamy-eyed  
so damned stupid  
and all I can do is cry  
for all that I lost  
all that I threw away

Sure, so very sure  
something better was ahead

It was  
but only when I became a man  
and learned to love  
learned to understand  
that it wasn't about me

Still, rough as it was  
for a stupid boy  
I'd not trade any of it  
for I'd have missed them  
Those women so kind to me  
~~

## The Film Look

Ten or fifteen hours this week  
spent trying to make film  
from a digital camera  
And I don't know why  
with a thousand or three  
images on real film  
why would I miss them

I can't reach back  
into my past  
and take the photographs  
I wanted to take  
I should have taken

but I remember the cost  
more than a student could spend  
so a photo here and there  
of a beloved friend  
a few nudes  
and the rest had to wait  
for digital cameras

~~





## All of Them

Coyote has come to visit  
reminding me of her  
All of her  
every one of her  
and he laughs at me  
as I try to talk  
with shaking voice  
and liquid eyes

Why  
this is not funny, dog  
I don't want these memories  
They are good  
but they hurt anyway  
and, damn you  
You know they do  
~~

## Indian Rugs

I bought those Indian rugs for you  
they were cheap  
all we could afford  
and they lay on our cold, cold floor  
with us on them  
more than once  
When Summer rolled around

I bought them for you  
but you left without them  
and I've kept them ever since

They came off the floor  
and onto the bed in winter  
They came off the bed  
and onto the couch  
Forty years I've had those rugs  
and every time I look at them  
Every time  
I think of you and me  
~~

## When I'm Gone

She's gone  
deserted me again  
for family fun  
and a visit to the cabin  
While I'm left here  
to teach the classes

I can't blame her  
I suppose  
or at least, I should not  
she has a life beyond mine  
and she should live it

The more she does  
the easier it will be  
when I'm gone

~~



## Some Fresh Air

I spend too much time  
at the computer  
writing, reading  
both lovely things to do  
but sometimes  
I need to get out

Today I walked my yard  
taking photographs  
after a rain

Editing them afterward  
and deleting the bad ones  
made me feel creative  
and got me some air

~~

## Looking Down at Myself

I would imagine myself high  
up by the ceiling  
looking down at myself  
making love

My then-hairy ass  
and then-hairy legs  
moving up and down  
like a kitchen pump-handle  
on an un-primed pump

~~

## Is That It?

I miss that  
the feeling of my dick  
between her legs  
slowly softening  
slowly dropping out

a small trail  
across her leg  
and that small sound  
deep in her throat  
that said

Oh, is that it?  
~~





## Advice to my Students

Oh my no  
I can't stand my ground  
can't hold the line  
for what's right  
If I do, I may be gone  
and then who  
would do this job

Oh my yes  
you are indispensable  
right?  
Nobody can replace you  
except perhaps anybody  
The illusion of useful  
is a trap

Stand your ground  
Hold the line  
if it's right  
Retire for a reason  
bargain for it  
and if the bargain is not kept  
That's not on you, is it?

If you don't get fired  
for what you believe in  
wait for it  
and you'll be gone  
for what someone else  
thinks is good  
for them

~~

## Too Short Season

Last night  
walking in from the sauna  
the grass wet  
I noticed  
as I took off my crocs  
(dollar store fakes)  
a leaf. Yellow.

My heart sank  
and I remembered  
the dead flox and other flowers  
out in the garden  
on the way back in

Is it over so soon  
this summer I've loved  
This too short season

~~

## Water for the Farmhouse

Stay off the well  
A sort of half dome  
of cement, cracked  
up against the back kitchen

The well itself running  
both in and outside the wall

I would lie on my stomach  
and look between the cracks  
of the floorboards  
to see the water below

No pump any more  
we had running water  
but once, that was it

Water for the farmhouse  
~~



## **Believe Me**

An invented title  
an imagined importance  
and the kid demanded respect

The problem was  
nobody ever heard of it  
that invented title  
and so didn't believe  
that respect was due  
or earned

That shrill voice  
saying "believe me"  
didn't help at all

~~

## **Tiger Tiger**

Above my bed  
was that poster of a tiger  
I would look at it  
and wonder  
if I would be the only one  
ever to see it

My first semester in residence  
Sadly  
I can't remember now  
if anyone else  
ever saw it  
~~

## Crows

August mornings  
mean the distant caws  
of crows at dawn

No cars yet  
the bypass far enough away  
that the cars are water  
down a rough river

and before I open them  
my eyes see vast cliffs  
a gorge and rapids  
and crows, wheeling  
above the mists

calling to one another  
calling to me

~~





## Just Once

He needed to get laid  
just once  
without all the guilt  
without the pressure

But it never happened  
and all that pressure  
went into a career  
of saying "No"  
of saying "You can't"  
and "Not allowed"

Just one time  
with a woman  
maybe that would have  
made a difference

~~

## **Your Apartment**

I loved arriving at your apartment  
early in the morning  
and spending the rest of the day  
in bed with you

We would see how many times  
we could make you come  
before I did  
and called a halt to the game

~~

## Worried

Oh good lord  
what have I eaten  
that it should smell like that  
when it escapes my ass

I suppose I shouldn't be surprised  
nothing else works very well  
the joints  
the muscles  
the heart with it's bomp de bomp bomp

so why should my guts  
be expected to do their job  
on kimchi and cauliflower and beans  
~~



## **This Face**

I don't like this face much  
Yes it's been with me  
for all my life  
but things keep being added  
wrinkles, moles,  
actinic keratosis  
Oh go look it up  
and get out of the sun

I don't like this face much  
because it's my father's face  
and my grandfather before him  
only older  
more wrinkled  
because I've lived longer  
and they saw more than I  
~~

## How to Break Up

For sudden breakups  
I guess it was definite  
I don't remember any calls  
"Do you think, maybe"  
There was just nothing  
as if the earth opened  
and swallowed her

For the others  
there was this slow fade  
as if she was walking away  
turning back to wave  
and walking further away  
until I couldn't see her

~~

## I Know What That's Like

In the middle of his nap  
the cat wakes and yells twice  
then settles down again

He's over twenty  
I guess it hurts

I know what that's like  
to wake and hurt  
shift a little bit  
and go back to sleep

~~





## **No More Late Nights**

My head goes back on my chair  
and my eyes close

I need four days of ten pm  
and no more late nights  
for a while

~~

## Lost

They say you can get lost  
in a woman's eyes

I never got lost in yours  
but I got lost in the wonder  
the absolute mystery  
of what was behind your eyes

Of you  
~~

## Water and Sand

Coming from the water  
the sun and the breeze  
dried our skin  
but our suits kept the water

Water that wet the towels  
so that when we got up  
to walk home  
I saw the outline, in sand  
of that wonderful ass

Your wonderful ass  
and I hoped you would not  
shake out the towel

You looked  
to see where my eyes were  
and laughed  
"You'll see it for real  
soon enough"

And you shook out the towel  
~~



## Babies

I look at a baby and freeze  
my mind going blank  
I dare not go closer  
for fear of catching that scent  
that smell of a baby

If I do I will break down  
Cry for the loss of my own  
My two babies who grew up  
and became someone else  
No longer my babies

~~

## Someone Beside Me

I woke from a dream  
and smiled

I was no longer a child  
There was a woman beside me  
and had been for decades

I smiled again  
as I reached behind myself  
and patted her flank

No longer a child  
in a bed alone  
wishing to be somewhere else  
anywhere

Even in my earliest days  
away from family  
I sought someone beside me  
through the night

So much more important  
than a quick fuck  
and home again

~~

## **Not Here**

Desperate to make something  
but in need of a nap

I waver and neither happens

More coffee only leads  
to more snacks  
and doom scrolling

I am not present

~~





## Giggling and Grinning

Giggling and grinning  
we ate green plums  
until the juice ran down  
our chins

Wiping the back of our hands  
over each other's cheeks  
we ate until our stomachs bulged

That night I held her head  
wiped her face with a wet cloth  
as she threw up  
Groaning, we lay in bed  
and fell asleep around four

At nine, surprised, we woke  
We had not died  
and soon  
we were giggling and grinning  
~~

## She Talked in her Sleep

She wasn't a talker  
when she was awake  
but sometimes, at night  
she would speak

I always paid attention  
trying to decide  
if it was a nightmare

I would gently hold her  
let her know I was there  
that I would wake her  
if it got bad

but usually she calmed down  
stopped running  
breath slowed  
and I would go back  
to my own dreams

~~

## Two Men

It began to rain  
and she lifted her face  
letting the tears flow  
and mix with whatever the rain brought

Two men  
she loved them both  
but she had to choose  
and she could not

If she could have done it  
she would have ripped herself in half  
and given each as much  
as she had

She looked up  
into the clouds  
and the rain came down  
~~



## Stupid Damned Toes

Twice last night  
twice  
my toes curled up  
toward my knees  
and I had to get up  
and walk around

Once, OK  
you can cramp once  
anywhere in my legs  
but twice  
COME ON  
don't be annoying  
~~

## My Childhood Screen Door

I built a wooden screen door  
trying to copy the one  
that I remember  
but it was never quite right  
it went clunk  
and not BANG bang-bang

I'm not sure what happened to it  
Several years on the sun room  
but it was gone  
when we ripped that down

Probably flung open  
and broken  
as the kids left it unlatched

And that was another failure  
the hook that would bounce off  
when you hit it in the right place  
mine never did  
no matter how hard you hit it  
~~

## **Damned Immigrants**

The first time  
a ladybug bit me  
it was a shock  
I mean, a ladybug  
so cute  
fly away, fly away home  
and the damned thing  
bit me

Years later  
someone told me  
a new type of ladybug  
had taken over from the old  
and I thought  
Damned invaders  
coming to our country  
biting our arms  
~~





## Isn't That Amazing

As I turn the penultimate corner  
to my house  
I spot a fellow with a bike  
stopped in the middle of the lane  
talking on his phone

I go around  
and nobody dies  
nobody is upset  
nobody's day or life is ruined  
Isn't that amazing

~~

## My Poetry

Oh please please  
don't let these small things  
be placed one day  
into a classroom  
to be pulled apart  
and put together again  
in some sort of new order  
to satisfy the feelings  
of a teacher

I mean seriously, Wendy  
Susanne was not a princess  
she was just some girl  
Leonard knew in Montreal  
and these things  
mean nothing at all

~~

## **It's OK**

It's OK  
I hate cooking  
So many likes  
and dislikes  
And I'll eat anything at all

Never let me cook  
I'm not fussy enough to cook  
I don't care what I eat  
and I cook again  
hoping that most of it gets eaten

It's OK  
High praise indeed  
I'll wash the dishes tonight  
while floating on a cloud  
See if I don't  
~~



## Things I Can Do

Almost to the back door  
the neighbour let out the dogs  
who ran barking to their fence  
and I put down my things  
turned to them  
and walked over the drive

Hello Monsters  
(They're little things  
all wiggle tailed)  
and gave them pats  
"There" I said aloud  
"I can pet dogs."  
~~

## Useless

Useless

I had a laptop  
and a tablet  
and I couldn't get a file  
from the laptop  
to the tablet

It wouldn't work  
I tried but it was beyond me  
Me, the guy who hacked the University  
but that was thirty years ago  
when back doors  
were front doors

Today, doing something  
that should be simple  
proved that I was useless

~~

## **Strangers are Polite**

I'm not sure  
what my family thinks  
of my writing

None of them read it

Others might read a bit  
and tell me it's nice  
but strangers are polite

~~





## How to Black a Tsuba

Allow it to rust  
hanging under the eaves  
will do it  
If you want it to look old  
bury it in the dung heap

Wait for a good amount of red rust  
now take it and boil it  
until the rust is black  
brush it a bit  
and boil it some more

Now put it in your pocket  
and play with it  
so the oil from your hand  
coats it well  
This is how to black a tsuba

~~

## Summer Day 1983

Driving alone  
on a summer day  
in 1983  
Heading somewhere  
I can't remember where  
Was it 1983

I was driving  
in my father's car  
going somewhere  
and the sun came in  
the windows were down  
the wind blew my hair around  
and I was happy

I can't remember why  
but I remember how that felt

~~

## The Threesome

Drifting down the hill  
from the University  
into town

I make up stories  
about those who walk  
up that hill

Today it was about  
the threesome  
who looked ruffled  
two girls and a boy

So very young  
I hope my story is true

~~



## Here to Enjoy It

I love the summer  
the crows talking before dawn  
the smell of the gardens  
the air after a shower  
the warmth in the sun  
that moves into my joints

I love the summer dresses  
the soft looks  
of summer romance

The long days  
and the empty roads  
no students  
everyone on vacation  
And I love that I'm here  
to enjoy it for one more year

~~

## Waiting

A full day of waiting  
For what, I don't know  
something  
maybe the files to copy  
from an old disk  
to a new one

maybe for inspiration  
I think I'd like to write  
another book  
but nothing is talking to me  
and so I wonder  
yet again  
what it is I'm waiting for  
~~

## Gratefully

Two small noises  
like a cat  
who wants a pet  
I turned and she was there  
arms open

She had been home  
half a day  
and we'd said hello

but just then  
something I did perhaps  
the way I stepped  
out of the hallway  
and turned

made her want to tell me  
that she still loved me  
I stepped into those arms  
Gratefully, I'd say

~~





## Soft Eyes

It was the way she looked at me  
soft eyes  
the lids barely narrowing  
like she was hugging me  
with the lashes  
and that tiny tilt  
of her head

Nobody else  
would have noticed  
but I did  
as much as if she ran  
and threw her arms around me  
which she sometimes did  
Once, her leg too

~~

## 5AM Bats

When I die  
there will be no one  
to remember the shush  
of a bat's wing  
across my stomach  
as I stood in the cabin door  
looking out at the pre-dawn  
listening to the bats come home  
and fly across the doorway  
wings just touching my stomach

Will anyone else  
stand there in the pre-dawn  
naked  
listening to them chirp  
feeling a wing  
across bare skin  
and then closing the door  
before one of them  
comes in

~~

## Judgment

Two girls  
just walking by  
not asking for my opinion  
not asking an old man  
to look at their asses

but I looked  
and decided  
and judged

that the one in thin pants  
loose pants  
with just the right tightness  
across her ass  
was preferable  
to the bikini bottom  
if only for the mystery

~~



## In The Corner

It's in the corner  
she said  
always in the corner

I'll be at a party  
and half drunk  
alive or at least feeling life  
and I'll look

it will be in the corner  
staring out at us  
all of us  
looking hungry

I've never not seen it  
but I stopped asking  
if others did

~~

## No Poem Now

Usually, I write about now  
I mean it's the right time of night  
not that I write about this moment  
in time

But I'm backing things up  
hours and hours of writing  
to a new hard disk  
and it has rejected some files

photographs from a long time ago  
with question marks  
in the file name

I'm so nervous  
I will forget to save them  
to lose them would be to lose  
so much of my youth  
that I'd never forgive myself  
and so, no poem at this time

~~

## Living by the Clock

I glance at the clock  
two hours to class  
and I wonder if it's time  
to set up the equipment

I will glance at that clock  
many more times  
in the next two hours  
and wonder if it's time

Perhaps I should get up  
and do what I must  
but I want to wring every word  
out of whatever creativity  
I can get together this morning

beside that  
my back hurts  
and sitting with good posture  
while typing  
doesn't

~~





## **It's the Doing**

Dressed like 1980  
I lounged on the hand-me-down chair  
and listened to the roommates  
while composing a poem in my head

I can't remember  
if I wrote it down  
but it doesn't matter  
it's the doing that counts  
not the saving

She was in the room  
that girl I loved  
talking with the roommates  
I suspect the poem  
was for her

~~

## **Fuck Trudeau**

Platform?

We don't need no stinking platform  
all we need is a good old American  
shit kicking

Shout them down

tell lies

bring it to a single phrase

Fornicate with the prime minister

and hope nobody notices

how good looking I find him

That's the way to win

That's what everyone wants

Policies?

Just too boring

~~

## Politics

I am unhappy  
and so should you be  
I am unloved  
and so should you be

Why should you have more  
than I do  
Why are you not miserable  
with the religion of my father

Why do you look different  
and why do you smile

I can wipe that from your face  
because I am the true owner  
of the best nation on earth  
and you, you just wait

I'll beat you down  
to my level

~~



## Pop Psychology

Oh, if only we could explain  
if you could simply say  
what that root cause is  
it would all be better

Go ahead  
tell us that thing  
that you buried deep  
that you hope to forget

Tell us, we want to know  
it will do you good  
it will cure you  
of events that happened  
long ago

If you only remember them  
and tell us  
you can forget them  
they never happened  
Go on  
we want to know  
~~

## Don't Look

Very carefully, this morning  
I avoided the mirror

last night I looked awful  
an old man  
dehydrated  
muscles hanging from bone  
wrinkles, so many wrinkles

This morning when I woke  
I was 25 again  
until I looked at my arm  
same as yesterday

Don't look at the mirror  
~~

## Just to Make Noise

The first fly of the season  
in the house  
and he's here with me  
early, early morning  
as I sit on the toilet

and he's here with me  
mad buzzy frenzy  
Not trying to get out  
not trying to land  
It's as if he's making noise  
just to make noise

~~





## Young?

There's five spots on your bones  
and we're not sure about the pancreas  
it looks like inflammation, but we'll check

If it's just bones  
we've got a thing  
If it's other bits, soft bits  
we've got another thing

You're young, keep doing what you're doing  
and I thought  
Young eh? If I was young  
I'd look forward to a change  
in the meds

~~

## Self Defense

What's the worst sex  
you ever had  
I was stumped  
the worst sex?  
I'm a guy  
we don't have bad sex

Hell I drank free for years  
to tell the story  
of my date rape  
Seriously  
Years

Sure it's bad of me  
to tell you that  
but here's a thing  
You get to make your own story  
nobody else gets to do that  
Just you

and she was a nice girl  
a very good friend  
I didn't want it  
but it was my story  
Not yours  
~~

## How to Make Poison

If you burn this  
the smoke is poisonous  
and I wondered  
why anyone would burn  
an Oleander

But I suppose somewhere  
it's a weed  
In my grandmother's greenhouse  
it was yet another plant  
that she grew  
because she liked plants  
~~



## Mantra

At four AM my heart  
is beating a random tattoo  
which kept me up  
until I took something for it  
and lay down thinking

I'll wake up fine  
or I won't.  
My mantra these days  
I'll be alive tomorrow  
or I won't.

~~

## The True Religion

The sun is shining nicely  
God must be happy  
and doing something nice  
for some child somewhere

My grandmother said  
that if the crescent moon tipped  
so water would fall out  
it would rain

My other grandmother  
saw light beams in the clouds  
and told me angels were coming  
down to the earth

I used to avoid cracks and lines  
on the sidewalk  
Didn't break my mother's back  
didn't break my father's spine  
~~

## Cottage Visit

The cast iron pan  
and the teflon  
bell together  
as we listen  
from across the room

We watch  
and a field mouse  
not in the field  
looking soft and sleek  
climbs up onto the shelf  
the pans are hung from  
looks at us  
and disappears behind the wall  
as if he was never there

Stupid mouse

~~





## Company

I lay down on the lawn  
to look up at the clouds  
to take a little break  
from life

You lay down beside me  
at first a small distance away  
but as you squiggled  
and jiggled  
Looking for a comfortable spot  
you said

You ended up beside me  
our arms touching  
our feet touching  
and we watched the clouds  
~~

## The Pennywhistle

Bread, cheese  
a bit of pickle  
and I asked for it  
in my bar

We don't have it  
that ploughman's lunch  
to go along with your Bass  
like you had in Stoke

Bread, cheese  
a bit of pickle  
surely you can give me that  
and they did

~~



## Trying to Help

I don't know how  
to do the right thing  
she wailed

I'm afraid to fuck up  
please, tell me  
how to do the right thing

How do you answer that  
I don't know myself  
but I tried

Trust yourself  
if you're a good person  
and you are  
you will know what  
the right thing is

Do you feel bad  
that's not it  
Do you think  
it will hurt someone  
that's not it

~~

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