

Bad Timing



*Kim Taylor copyright ©2022, all rights reserved
Photos Kim Taylor copyright © 2022, all rights reserved*

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Bad Timing.....	2
A Fake Bear Rug.....	4
Student Housing.....	5
No Angel’s Wings.....	6
What They Say.....	8
Never Doubt.....	9
Pete the Architect.....	10
I Chased You.....	11
Our Claw Foot Tub.....	13
Never Poem’d.....	14
A Better Man.....	15
If Only.....	17
What Is.....	18
Meant to Fail.....	19
Sleep Now and Then.....	21
A Friend’s Floor.....	22
Eating What One Can.....	23
Not Counting Change.....	25
Mother’s Oyster Stew.....	26
The Pencil Man.....	27
A Hungry Kid.....	28
Rubber Stamps.....	30
Ownership.....	31
The Holiday Season.....	32
Sick Day.....	35
How to Reset my Brain.....	36
Fights at Twenty-Three.....	37
Family Snowmen.....	38
A Kid’s Life.....	40
My Best Friend.....	41

Milkweed.....	42
Home Surgery.....	43
On the Dock.....	45
Supper's Ready.....	46
Home.....	47
On the Shoulders.....	48
Heat on my Neck.....	50
To Learn.....	51
Above the Bed.....	52
Beside Her Bed.....	54
Between Dusk and Bed.....	55
She Was There.....	56
Remember, She Said.....	58
Sit Here.....	59
Shake it Off.....	60
Like That.....	62
Up and Down.....	63
The Reset.....	64
Jinx.....	66
Who Is This Again?.....	67
No Testosterone.....	68
Anything For a Click.....	70
Infected Words.....	72
Angel with a Backache.....	73
Greybeards in the Dojo.....	75
My Father's House.....	76
Fighting the Spirits.....	77
The Writer's Life.....	78
His Face Lit Up.....	80
Arms Too Short.....	81
Destined for Greatness.....	82
Not as Good.....	83
Tell Me You Love Me.....	85
In Japan.....	86

Can You Explain That To Me.....	87
Love and Trust.....	88
Banned Again By Machine.....	90
And Move On.....	91
The Hungry Kid.....	92
Puritan Dreams.....	95
Cinnamon Toast.....	96
Blood Red Lips.....	97
Old Things.....	98
Getting Bushy.....	99
Winter Walk.....	101
Car Dancing.....	102
Port Stanley Clay.....	103
Going To The Sun.....	104
The Worm.....	105
A Good Life.....	107
Dry as a Sauna.....	108
Pound, pound.....	109
A Pill Tray.....	110
Your Wit.....	112
Xmas Season.....	113
Another Visit.....	114
My Water.....	116
Te no Uchi.....	117
The Silence.....	118
Awake.....	120
How Will You Die.....	122
Drug Store Book Racks.....	123
The Sun Will Return.....	125
The Present is Timeless.....	126
The Secret Hero.....	127
Not the Sun.....	128
Chemicals Beware.....	129
The Rich Man.....	131

The Naughty List.....	132
Cruel Time.....	133
Odd Places.....	134
In Dreams.....	136
Speed River Behind the Convenience.....	137
Nothing More.....	138
The Hatred He Feels.....	140
Winter Afternoon.....	141
The Look.....	142
In Their Youth.....	144
Why I Don't Like Travel.....	145
It's the Volume.....	146
Christmas Day.....	148
How to be Unhappy.....	149
Not Cursing You.....	151
After the Presents.....	152
Confusion.....	154
I Told You No.....	155
Famous by Associates.....	157
No More Old.....	158
Naked Magic.....	160
Land Barons.....	161
Things Already Made.....	162
Tourist Town.....	163
A Few More Days.....	165
Freedom From Hell.....	166
What She Asked Me.....	167
For a Dead Poet.....	168
Family Visits.....	170
Three AM.....	171
Driving With My Mother.....	172
Poetic Balance.....	173
Sweet Dreams.....	174
Scars.....	176

Faithful Artists.....	179
Construction Poem.....	180
Time for Bed.....	181
Candle in a Bottle.....	182
Baby Gifts.....	184
Hello Father.....	185
The Town Hall Steps.....	186
Family Visit.....	188
Equality.....	189
Who is it?.....	190
Book Clues.....	192
Nice Lights.....	193
Cockroaches.....	194
My Last Suit.....	196
Dead Man's Desk.....	198
Neutral Ground.....	200
Mostly Nonsense.....	202
Cat Food.....	203
Another Chance.....	204
I'll Get To It.....	205
Or At Least Horny.....	207
Black and Cold.....	208
Fukuoka Souvenir.....	209
The Warning.....	211
Gone from Me.....	212
Places to Go.....	213
Never Again.....	215
Already Gone.....	216
The Neighbour.....	218
Zeno's Poems.....	219
Alone at 23.....	220
The Moon in Nova Scotia.....	222
Forty Years Together.....	223

Introduction

Is there ever a good time in your life? To me it always seems that bad timing is my timing. Old relationships, new hobbies. I seem to live in some past or future land for much of my time, and yet all I have is the present.

Kim Taylor, December 2022



Photos from 2006

Bad Timing

It shames me to realize
I put earbuds in
because the family talked
the cat yowled
and all I wanted was silence
to sit and think and write

I could have done that earlier
when I was truly alone
in this room
in silence
But I did other things
washed dishes
cooked supper
~~



A Fake Bear Rug

A fake bear rug
it hung around for years
who knows how many
made love on it
how many
slept beneath it

Inherited from a student house
passed down hand to hand
perhaps washed
by some visiting girlfriend
who wondered at the stains
it finally disappeared

Mysterious as it came
it went, perhaps with a student
who fell in love with it
the rest of us barely noticed
it had gone from one semester
to the next

~~

Student Housing

Bubbling up from memory
are bits and pieces
of student flotsam
Paintings, genuine originals
done for an art class

Chairs, stuffed and otherwise
wooden or steel
shoved under a table
sometimes hand me down
sometimes student made

Pots and pans
that never matched
but which all matched
the cutlery and dishes
A dozen different sinks

these are the images
of a decade or more
degrees taken and failed
friends made and lost
girls who drifted in and out
~~

No Angel's Wings

Not once, not once
did you glide through my door
on angel's wings
with heavenly strings
to announce your coming

Instead you strode
jeans and sweater clad
across the threshold
although never did I hear
the creaky board just inside the door

Yet each time you entered
my heart sang
my guts knotted
Oh my contradiction
I was never bored with your visits
~~



What They Say

You should write
for your recovery
it will help you deal
with the demons you have

And so a poet writes
exposing the demons
burning them in the light
the glare of public sight

Any wonder then
so many poets suicide
after all, demons exposed
are far from powerless

~~

Never Doubt

The grass, green yet
does not sound like grass
and the edges are white
with frost

Today I am reminded
of the ending of all things
myself of course, included
but mostly I think of you

So long ago, you were spring
fresh, soft, that special green
of a leaf just emerged
from a swelled winter bud

So eager for life
and perhaps for love
Never doubt I loved you
despite our wintry parting
~~

Pete the Architect

We watched and wondered
we roommates
his room, always open for us
his stereo ours to use

We watched and wondered
at his month-long absence
followed by a locked door
and dirty dishes

Each morning he was there
a different woman to meet
at breakfast
all of us on best behaviour

Then gone again
for a month or so
a new project to draw
a new woman to meet
~~

I Chased You

I chased you for years
all through my dreams
That wasn't surprising
you were worth chasing

The thing is
I chased you for years
but after I'd caught you
and let you go

~~



Our Claw Foot Tub

There was a time
when I was a much younger man
that I risked drowning
in a claw foot tub

Do you remember
You were lying back
legs over the sides
and my head underwater

You grabbed my hair
I had hair then
and held me under
as I began to rise

Then, struggling for real
You, too near to stop
wrapped your legs around my head
and squeezed
~~

Never Poem'd

No woman I ever knew
to my certain knowledge
at least
ever poem'd me

This thought gives me pleasure
for whoever makes no impression
can do no damage
and I never intended damage

I am content to be 'that face'
from some long ago fling
What was his name again
I can't recall

~~

A Better Man

All the women of my life
have had my improvement in mind
some of my fondest memories
are of corrections and instructions

I would rinse down the sink
with hot water
until I was told
it was hot made the suds, use cold

These things I have heard
my whole life spent
with a woman in the house
or those come to visit

How to brush my teeth
how to squeeze the toothpaste
how to boil an egg
how to drink my tea

Forty years of instruction
by those who knew me then
who had my education in mind
who made me a better man

~~



If Only

If only I could
reach across that table
and put my hand on yours

if only I could
brush your hair back
behind your ear
and see that secret smile
you gave only to me

I know only to me
because you told me so

If only I could
hear your voice once more
while I watch your eyes dance
If only
~~

What Is

Best you not listen
my dearest wife
to the advice you will get
on how to raise your child

Best you not look
upon the bodice ripper
reading how it should be
That romance, little girl

Best you not feel
the texture of fine silk
when all you can afford
is a polarfleece jacket

Why, you say, ignore all this
It is a matter of perspective
if you believe it goes one way
the other will surely unbalance you

You see, life
is not a matter of what should be
it is only what is
don't long for what should be, be
~~

Meant to Fail

The times I walked alone
through dark, damp streets
in this town
having struck out once again
or been thrown out

A long walk home
in the rain
never failed to lift my spirits
after a rejection
knowing the town agreed

I was meant to fail sometimes
just as it is meant to rain
and the streets are washed
and the lights reflect prettily
off of the damp pavement

~~



Sleep Now and Then

Although these years
I often am asleep
before ten pm

there was a time
when bars were closed
and I would wander
until past three am

I would arrive home
Depending on the day
and half the night
I might sit up reading
until four or five

Then, scant hours later
I would rise and walk to school
classes and coffee
until the evening and the bars
~~

A Friend's Floor

I remember parties
and visits to friends
when I would find a corner
or a space behind a table
to lie down on dusty carpet
and sleep

While drinks and discussions
went on overhead
I would sleep
and wake as the last guests
were ushered out the door

Looking a question
and receiving a nod
I would lay my head back down
and sleep until dawn

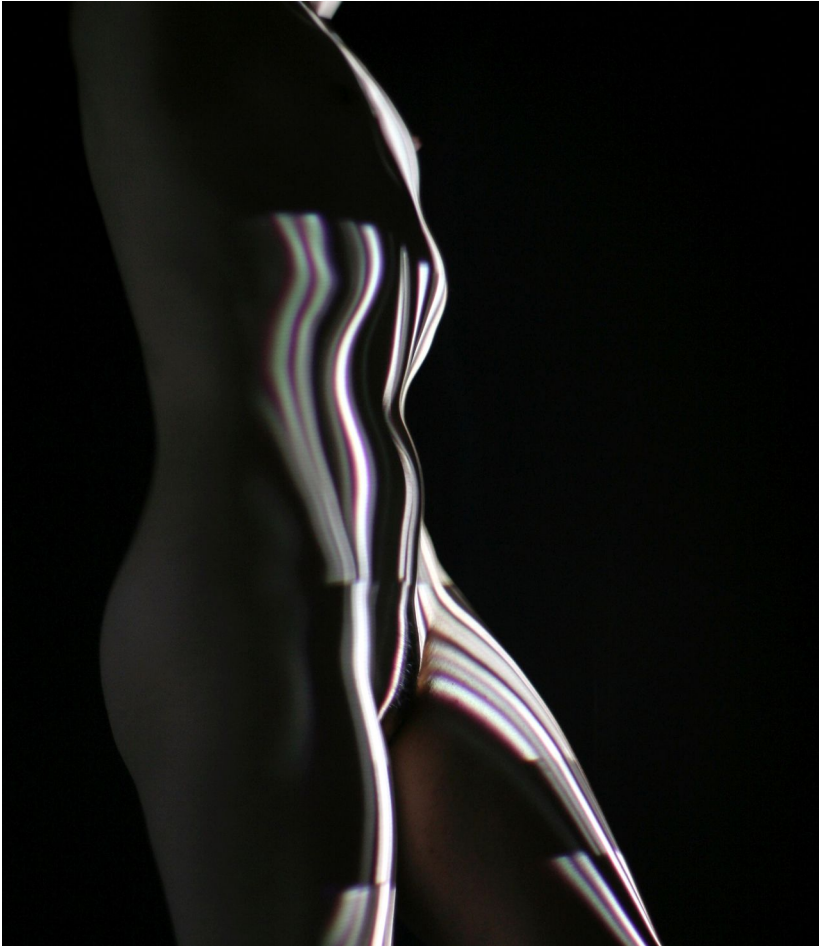
~~

Eating What One Can

A pot to collect mussels
and some seawater
boiled up over a butane stove
and eaten gratefully

Chicken hearts
cheap as dirt in the grocery
fried and then stirred into
hamburger helper

Such were the foods
of a young man
with little money
but a willingness to eat
~~



Not Counting Change

Today I set out
long before dawn
and walked downtown
to Planet Bean

They know my habits
dark roast with a refill
and with the refill
two peanut butter cookies

The sun comes up
the trains come and go
and I sit and write
another chapter, another book

This is my life now
and I worked all of it before
to get to this spot
where I don't count my change

I simply tap my card
to buy my coffee
the price unknown
my reward for a life of work
~~

Mother's Oyster Stew

Oysters were cheap
once upon a time
and came in cardboard
with a cardboard lid

My mother would buy them
cheap as they were
She would make oyster stew
with milk and butter

They told me lobster
was a poor kid's food
long ago, down east
a shameful lunch

It has been a long time
since I've eaten oysters
or lobsters
although I might afford them
~~

The Pencil Man

The pencil man
would sit outside Woolworth's
and shake his can
a few pennies a pencil

Legless, he road a board
with wheels on each corner
and we kids, if we needed one
would buy a pencil

Years he was there
and then he was gone
but I think of him often
each time I need a pencil

~~

A Hungry Kid

A wooden fence
but carrots barely in reach
face squashed against the post
ears pricked
fearing the gardener's approach

Just a bit further
and there, I'd have it
stealthy withdrawal
and wipe off the dirt
hunger dulled a bit that day
~~



Rubber Stamps

In this part of town are
identical saltbox houses
built just after the war
but you have to look close
to see them there
under porches, sunrooms
and attic windows

A generation of improvement
of carving rubber stamps
into a home
And yet today
bought for thirty times the price
there in the suburbs
those rubber stamps are at work

~~

Ownership

Three kids
and three apples
taken from a bushel basket
under the stairs
of one of the kids

Finished, the core
flung into the gully
deep in the wood
with the cry "That one's mine"
laying claim to future apples
~~

The Holiday Season

The holiday spending season
is upon us
Liam and Brenda are working
so the weekend is left to shop

It was not very cold today
three below or so
but that wind was cruel
chilling right to the bone

We were very brave
and entered the mall
or at least two shops
through the automatic doors

So welcoming in summer
they let in that wind
pushing us deeper
trying to escape the cold

The middle aged women
having learned nothing at all
from their own mothers
repeating all their mistakes

Entitled, embittered women
shouting after their boys
counting to three
with their pinched mouths

Their pinched faces
entitled to whatever they want
the personal is political of course
and I scampered out of their way

The men, large men, well fed men
led around by their wives
stupid from so many years
of saying yes dear

Listening to the clerks explain
slowly and repeatedly
how the new technology works
as the wives tapped their feet

As soon as we could
as very soon as we could
we bolted from the store
and retreated to our house

~~



Sick Day

Two naps already today
to make up for lost sleep
I'm a bit sick again
with the runs at both ends

I doze through documentaries
and twice in the bed
but slowly, only slowly
do I feel my normal side arise

I suspect that later today
I might write a little
but poems only
the book is beyond me

~~

How to Reset my Brain

The crow was in the tree
outside my window
looking in on me

Then it was on my chair
by the kitchen table
it looked at me
one eye then the other

Finding fault, it must have,
it burst into flame
the chair and the table burned

until I became wise
and closed my eyes

When open again
I saw neither fire nor crow
save in the tree outside
~~

Fights at Twenty-Three

When she shouted and left
I left her to leave
knowing she would be back
when she was ready

When I shouted and left
she left with me
and trailed along behind
pleading for us to talk

When she came back
from her solo walk
she was calm once more
and then we could talk

~~

Family Snowmen

It was packing snow
perfect for snowmen
and there, the neighbour's lawn
was a happy little family

Mother, father and kid
I knew the kid
He had worked a while
better out than in he'd say

I checked the house
no curtains twitched aside
so I went to the smallest
and looked around back

From the front so cute
in the back were twigs
laid across so carefully
in parallel lines
~~



A Kid's Life

For many years
I sat on that tree
the great roots perfect
for a kid's backside

Leaning on the trunk
I would drop my hand
and touching the bark there
I would tell the tree

All my secrets bare
they were stored there
those many years
those many tears

And never, not once
did the tree answer
the spirit inside content
to lend a listening ear

~~

My Best Friend

Underneath the snowball bush
were bare dirt hollows
shivered and wriggled
by the dog's chest

I would join him there
on those impossible
summer days
dumping the heat of the sun
down deep into the earth

~~

Milkweed

You should grow milkweed
I am told
to save the Monarch butterfly
Yet in all the city
I have never seen the milkweed
chewed to leafless stems

At my cabin in the woods
the milkweed grows volunteer
over the weeping tiles
and fat yellow caterpillars
chew day and night
until there are only stems

~~

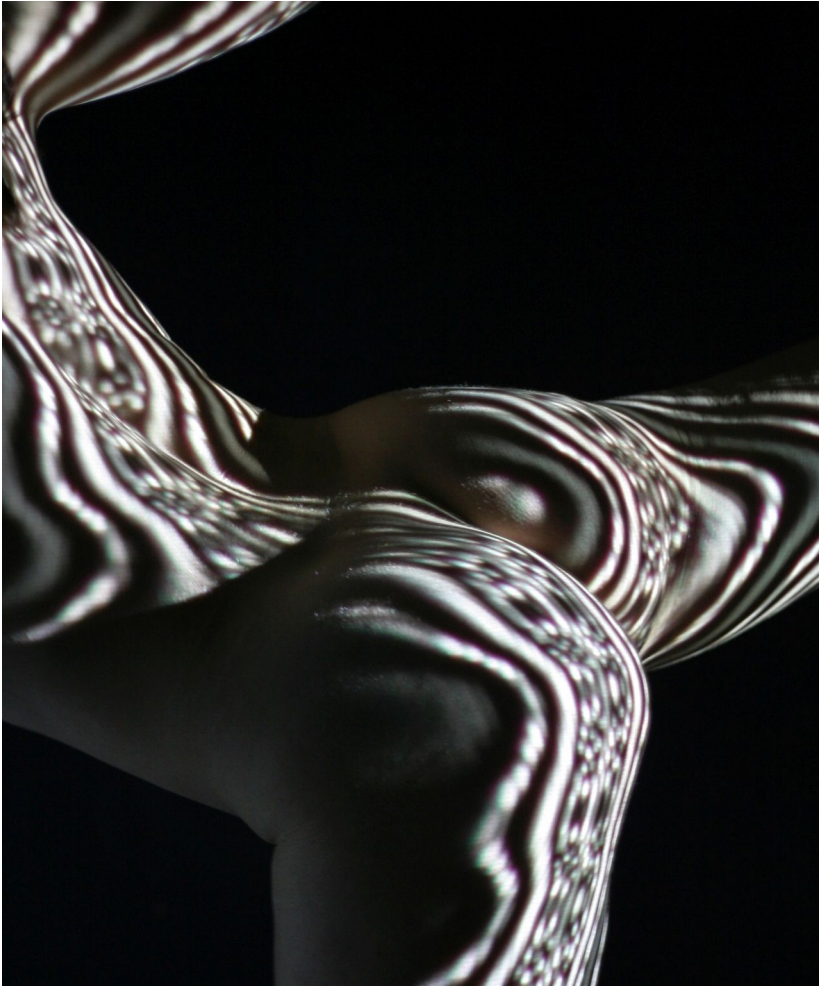
Home Surgery

Three weeks I spent once
with tweezers and scalpel
slicing and ripping
a planters wart from my foot

Today on youtube
I watched as someone
used a sharp spatula
to tease them out whole

Would I have tried that
in my younger days
if I had known
Probably not, impatient boy

~~



On the Dock

So very long ago
was she lorelei
or just a girl
who slipped all in darkness
from the harbour waters
onto the dock before me

A jilted lover
betrayed by faithless man
did she now lure fishermen
and tourists into the creek
to drown in its sandy bottom
Or just a girl in for a swim

~~

Supper's Ready

I had walked out
so many years before
not caring what became of her
I walked out
and tried to move on

It didn't happen
Life was so hard
jobs were scarce
and I didn't make it

I was on the streets
back in that town
I was on a park bench
when she walked up to me

She knew who I was
called me by name
She held out her hand
come on, she said
supper's ready
I took her hand

~~

Home

Home is that place
where if you go
they have to take you in

But what happens
when mom and dad are gone
and there's no place to go
where they have to take you in

What happens then
when you lose your place
the book makes no sense
and neither does your life

No place you ever were
wants you back again
not her
not after what you did

And so you sit
up high under a bridge
repeating, over and over
I can change
I can make it right
I can make it again
~~

On the Shoulders

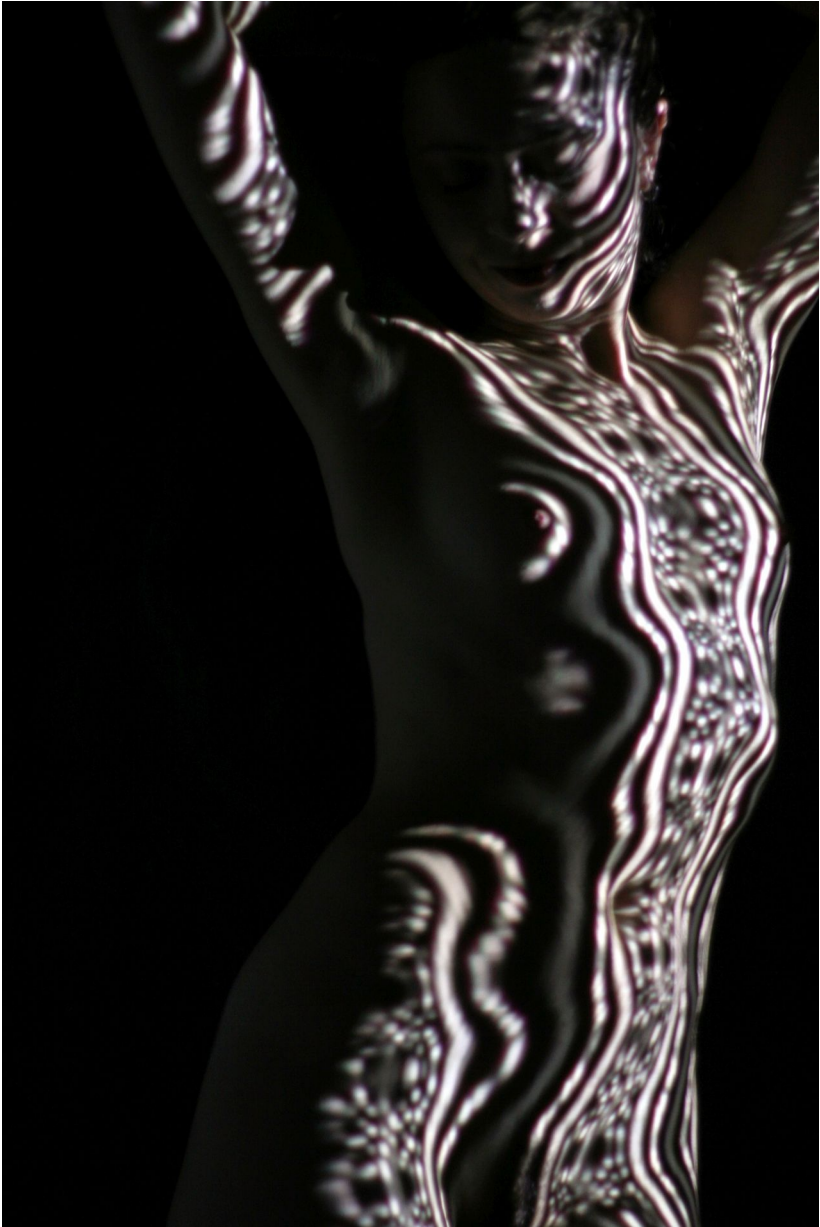
How can you stand
where the giants would stand
and tell us how it is

They told us long ago
and so it would seem
there is no longer a need

How do you teach what your teacher taught
when he told you to go past what he said
How unimaginable, how can you do it

You are convinced you cannot
but you must try
or it all will be lost, all will be lost

~~



Heat on my Neck

So close to me
I can feel the heat from your lips
on my neck

Kiss me, I think
but you won't

closer and closer
I feel your breath on my neck

Kiss me, I plead
but you won't

Your hand on my shoulder
sliding down my arm

but I feel nothing
except the heat on my neck

~~

To Learn

I like to listen
to people talk
you never know
what you might learn

I like to sit
with people who are easy
don't want me to contribute
just let me listen

I like to watch
from face to face
as one speaks
and one listens, really listens

~~

Above the Bed

She sleeps above the bed
when I'm not there
Floating in the air
and there's a string

I come into the room
and see her there
floating in the air
without a care

Take the string with care
gently pull her down
lay her on the bed
a pillow for her head

And lie beside her
put your arm around her
then the blankets
hold her safe in the night
~~



Beside Her Bed

The wall beside her bed
Paint and plaster peeling
stone wall revealing
rough mortar between

A rough wooden shelf
with a candle, a cup
and a photograph of him
I'm not him

The texture of her life
taken from that wall
soaked into her
through nights alone in bed

All like glass, a still pond
smooth as silk they say
Her, the wall, all of it
smooth it was to me
~~

Between Dusk and Bed

Short summer nights
just enough time
between dusk and bed
we would walk to the park

White painted board
nailed to a shed
sometimes a slide show
sometimes a small movie

We'd sit on the grass
slapping at mosquitoes
and be miles and miles away
far from dusk and bed

~~

She Was There

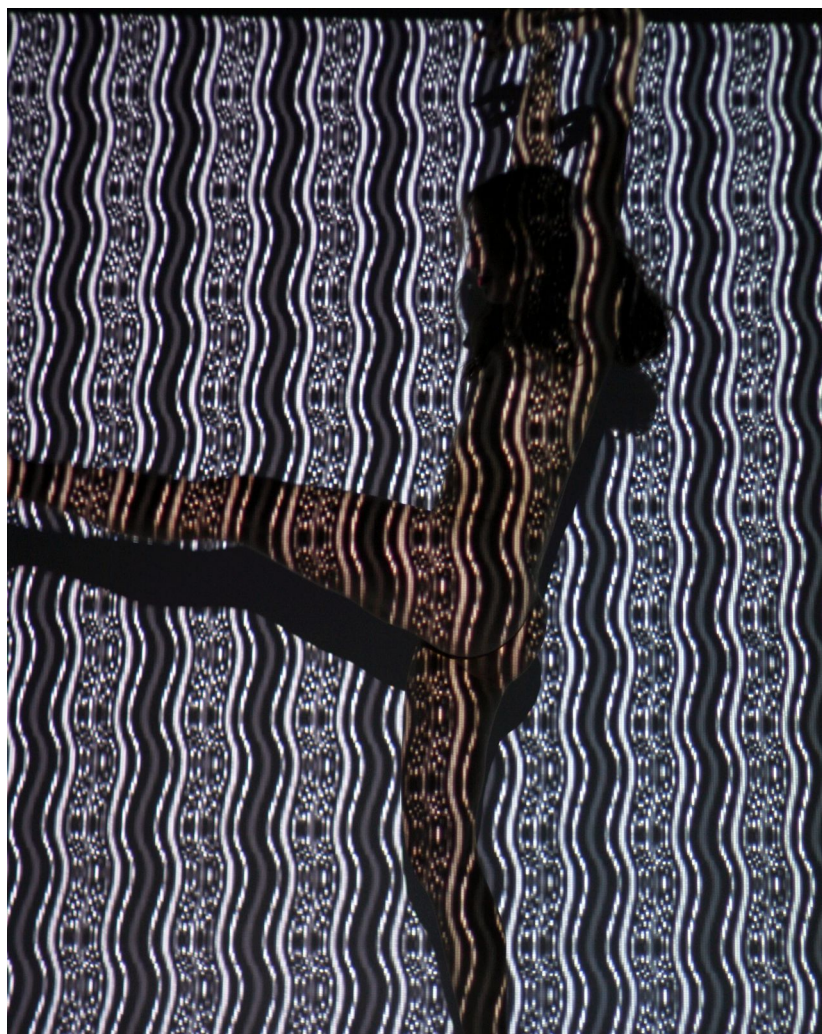
The old man was dying
but he was at home
and his granddaughter
stayed with him in the day

She sang to him
told him stories
and he smiled
She watched over him

A cool hand on his face
as he slept
shorter than last time
he twitched as he slept

She watched the pain
run through his eyes
but he smiled
because she was there

She was there
~~



Remember, She Said

Just remember
she said
That crown of thorns
on your head
will make you bleed

and that blood
will run to your eyes
and you won't see
what you need to see

~~

Sit Here

I spent years
watching her put on
her lotions

The special one
around her eyes
the bulky one

For the rest of her body
and when she approached
I moved my feet

She would sit
and do her legs
look at me and smile
~~

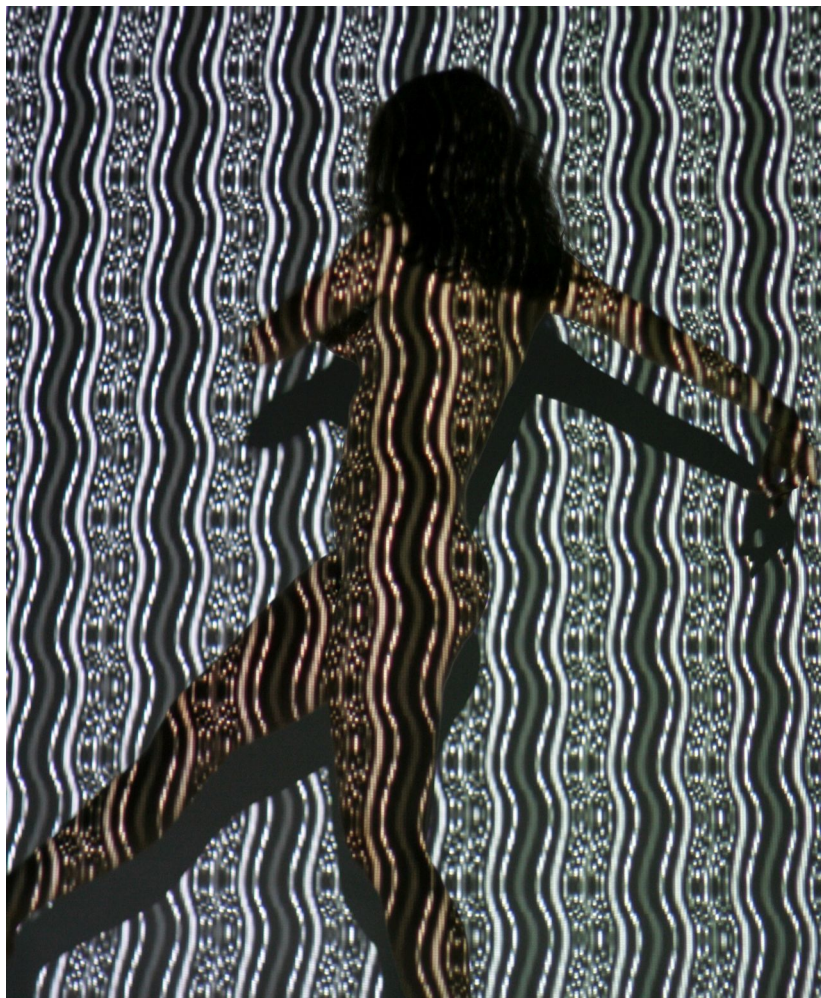
Shake it Off

Shake it off
she said
It's just a broken heart
nothing serious

A broken heart
is not a heart attack
except in your heart
Oh just shake it off

Shake it off
she said
as she walked away
closed the door

Don't come after me
Others will come after me
Shake it off
I'm not the one for you
~~



Like That

I want you to hit me
like Gabriel's voice
in the Epping Forest

I want you to look at me
with Neil's eyes
as he sees the audience

I want you to back me up
like Joni Mitchell
Singing Helpless
at the Last Waltz

You understand me now
Old man, you hear me
Like that
~~

Up and Down

I am I suppose, at that age
where I wake
and want to go back to sleep
and when I lie in bed
I want to get up
and produce something
anything

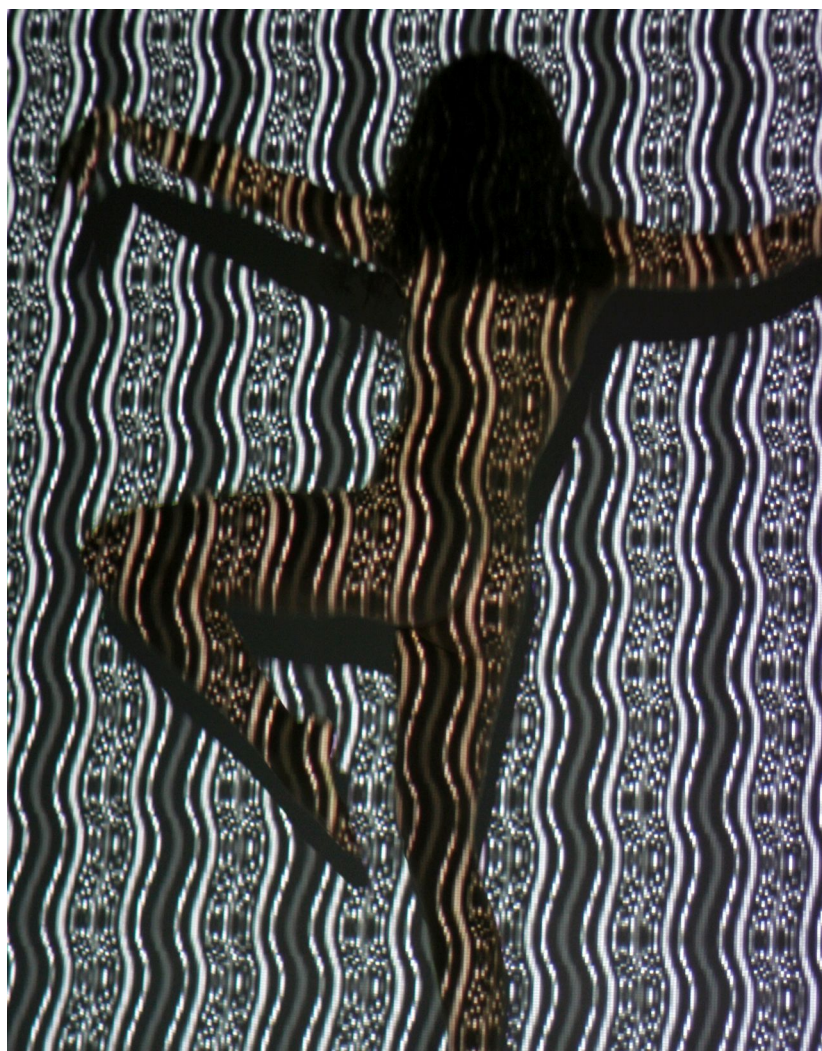
~~

The Reset

How is it that computer programs
reset themselves
to, for instance, the main feed
when all I ever listen to
is the strange feed

Is it me
or the folks who provide the feed
and whatever happened
to just leaving the radio station
on what it was
when we turned it off

~~



Jinx

Hey, my back feels pretty good
Oh hell
why did I say that

Sure enough
a day later
my shoulder is killing me
~~

Who Is This Again?

So this ebook reader
that I use
displays the page
and all sorts of other things
except
the book title and author

I suppose I am supposed to remember
who and what I'm reading
but that's not my life
I read the cereal boxes
and other labels
when I was a kid
It hasn't changed

~~

No Testosterone

Wondering yet again
if it bothers me
not to have sex any more
and of course it does

But not as much
as I might have thought
Getting it up was nice
but most of it was in my head

Except that part of it
that was in her
Oh my, should I ask her
No, I don't want the answer
~~



Anything For a Click

On the internet
I see there is video
of a cop trying to break the ice
to get at the drowning kids
below

Bombs falling on houses
rockets from over the horizon
blowing apartments inward
spraying glass on those
in bed

Kids with bandages and tubes
trying to live
past their seventh birthday
waiting for a cure
or at least stitches

Gigantic insects
pulled from skin
or pus from a zit
that goes on and on
all of it for free

I try not to watch
but my brain says
that can't be right
and yet it is
anything for a click
~~

Infected Words

How lucky I was
these women put up with me
and my innocent insults
my awkward manner
my infected speech

Was I better
than the others
or were they already taken
and I the one who was left
It matters not, not to me

Each and every one
was kindness beyond words
(infected or not)
and I loved them all
for their charity
~~

Angel with a Backache

She walks slowly
bent over
hand on her back
toward the bedroom
as if she wants to sleep

She wants to sleep
this woman of mine
who works so hard
for the insurance plan
I use to stay alive

Guilt, of course I feel it
she works so hard
and it hurts her
while I lie around the place
trying not to pull the cancer card
~~



Greybeards in the Dojo

These old men
posting about martial arts
on the internet

They all look the same
Grey beards
no hair

and oh so serious
I see them each time
I look in the mirror
~~

My Father's House

Here at the end of my life
I dream of my father's house
and it worries me
that I got it wrong

I find myself asking a question
two or three times
Is it my name and where I live
next?

Stay with me please
and take me by the hand
tell me my name
Tell me this is my place

~~

Fighting the Spirits

When the wind blows hard
there are small drafts
in the sauna

Like tiny spirits
from the far north
they drift up from the floor

and through the bench
onto naked flesh
and sweat

Where heat lived
the northern spirits poke
their icy fingers
and almost shivers
are the result

Still, sixty degrees is hard to beat
and with a tiny act of will
Shivers are defeated

~~

The Writer's Life

In my half-doze
under a warm comforter
I half-dream stories
of heroes and villains
magic and mischief
of relationships won
and seldom lost

These are compensation
for a lifetime of struggle
with daylight's harsh vision
with reality sharp and hot
The cool half-dreams
that comfort an old man
where all is forgiven

~~



His Face Lit Up

He sat at the bar
head down
hand around his pint
You could tell
he was hurting

I sat two stools away
drinking my beer
just sat, almost beside him
although I had company
at a table further away

For ten minutes
I kept him company
and not company
until she came in
and his face lit up
~~

Arms Too Short

I hold my phone
at arms length
trying to read the message

Not for the first time
I wonder
why I don't carry glasses

I squint
I make the tiny lens
with my fist hand

But in the end I guess
I think that's what she wants
I'm almost sure of it

~~

Destined for Greatness

He was a lovely kid
but you could tell
he was destined for greatness
His parents had decided so
and he was taken
to lessons and games
and extra classes

From four he worked hard
we kids never saw him
outside school and often
not inside either
as he was gone playing
those games his parents
had decided for him

Long years later
I heard he was gone
his playing days over
after an injury
his parents gone
and with no support
he left this world

~~

Not as Good

I open my hands
and feel the roughness
see the odd colours
of ropy tendons
and think to myself

these are not half so good
as your breasts
your hips
the lush plumpness
of your lips

I close my hands
and open them again
looking for change
but no, still not as good

~~



Tell Me You Love Me

Tell me you love me
she said
standing dressed
before my bed

Tell me you love me
as she removed her shirt
Still I could not answer

Tell me you love me
as she sat on my bed
and slowly removed her socks
showing me exquisite toes

Tell me you love me
But I could not
~~

In Japan

A small island
where there are only wives
left for the day
or even the week
by busy husbands

He told me
my friend
there were no girls for him
on this island
of lonely wives

~~

Can You Explain That To Me

Life confuses me
half of what is said
I haven't a clue

People who do things
I am supposed to boggle at
are unknown to me

and strangers cheating
mean nothing to me

Places that are struck
with bad management
don't hit me very hard
if I don't know where

I live my life
in a half understood world
a world that seems
to have moved past me

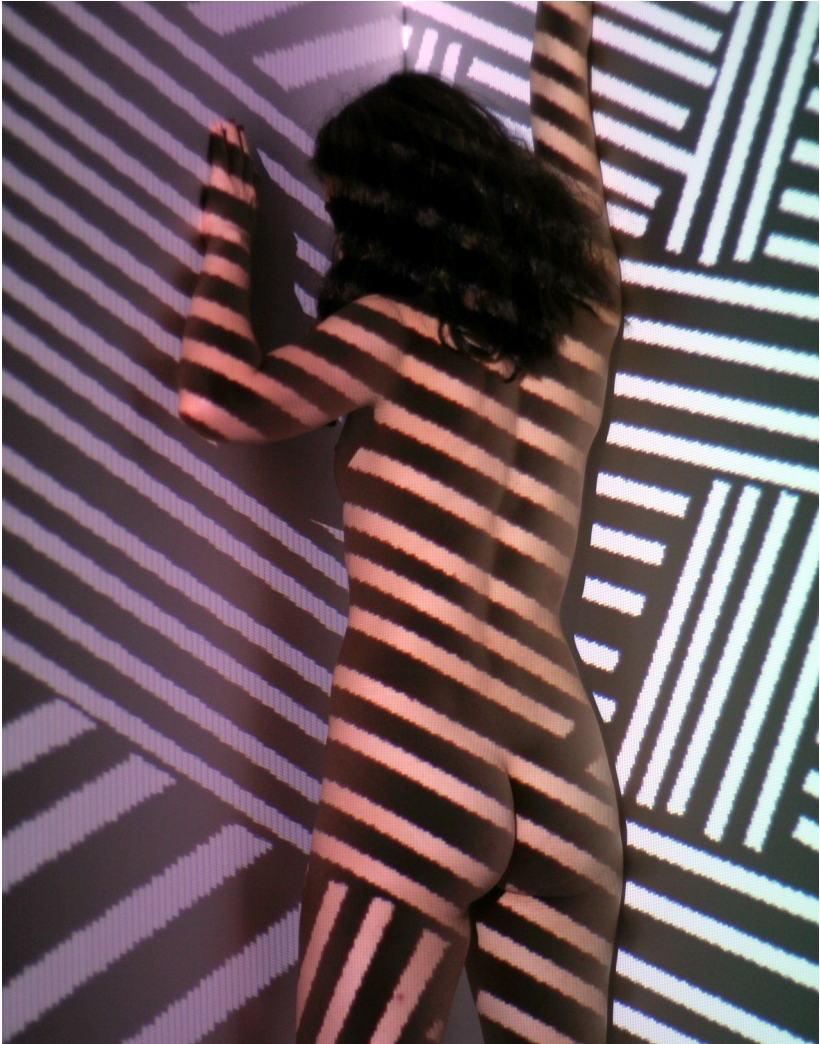
~~

Love and Trust

Lies, more lies
lies and omissions
and there was I
not used to such treatment

But I forgave her
all of it
There is a long difference
between love and trust

~~



Banned Again By Machine

If I am censored
it is the act of not reading
A personal choice
that I would never dispute

Otherwise, the mechanical beast
the programmed algorithm
picks up words
and disapproves

Rather the Man
than the machine
Rather any gender
than genderless prude

~~

And Move On

Shall I presume
make claims important
that poetry is relevant

I think not
at least not mine
Nor do I want it

Run the eyes across
and down the lines
and take what remains

But think not too deeply
nor look for cleverness
read and move on

Breathe and move on
try not to extract more
than a brief cool breath
~~

The Hungry Kid

(and Trichloroacetic Acid)

Look, look here
oh lucky find
cabbage in this wet
in this swampy ground

I break it off
and almost to my mouth
I smelled
Skunk cabbage

Here, rhubarb growing wild
escaped no doubt
from a garden nearby
at first touch to tongue

Numb for half a day
oxalic acid and nothing else
a nasty weed
disguised as food

Did I learn from this
In a laboratory
a pipette and TCA
no thought at all

It hit my mouth
which was instantly dry
and the taste of chalk
as my teeth lost calcium
~~



Puritan Dreams

It is God's punishment
says the preacher
of the tornado
that hits the poor

God's punishment
for being unwanted
after all if they were wanted
God would make them rich

The next year
the preacher's house was gone
taken by God
as punishment
~~

Cinnamon Toast

A cold day
or at least
a cold old man
and the cure

Cinnamon toast
made from ancient grain
or so they say
and it's just the thing

~~

Blood Red Lips

Raspberries she ate
that summer afternoon
they stained her hands
and her lips

She came to me
with blood red lips
and in her kiss
the sweetness of summer

Her arms around me
and my white shirt
red handprints on the back
to laugh about later

That day floats
in my memory
a perfect crystal time
flawless

~~

Old Things

Europe is so very old
so much older than here
in the new world
I was told

And I thought
of those rocks
not so very far from here
as old as the earth

Buildings are old at 500
bog oak may be 5000
but look down at the stone
you just kicked with your foot
~~

Getting Bushy

I look hard at the mirror
(always a dangerous thing)
and notice my hair needs cutting
Beard and eyebrows
all that's left on my head

~~



Winter Walk

Walking on the edge of a field
I catch sight in the snow
of the place where a fox
leapt up and dove down
onto some mouse or other

I could see him
suspended in air
arcing from upright
to the diving position
with his tail flaring outward

I could see the mouse
or other
below the snow
thinking himself safe
protected from owls
~~

Car Dancing

What came over me
I cannot say
I don't dance
but riding in her car
I watched Pam sing
and dance as she drove
and I had the strange urge
to join her

~~

Port Stanley Clay

I stood on that hill
looking out over the town
and staring beyond it
into the vast lake
I suddenly started to sink

Down into the clay
past my knees
past my eyes
past my needs

into the clay
and down, down past the hill
into the ground
sliding horizontally
and out into the harbour

where I climbed out
and saw her
~~

Going To The Sun

A road with small stones
by its edge
all that keeps us
from a long fall and death

As it winds around mountains
in and out from cuts
we can see the impossible pins
that keep the road aloft

Huge signs at the beginning
that say RVs banned
have not kept that one
from trying, trying, trying

to round a corner
without going over
and we sit, watching
unsure what to cheer for
~~

The Worm

A small twig
on our snow covered drive
makes me think of a worm

I have been known
in ages past
to pick up a worm from the cement
and move it to the cool grass
out of the threatening sun

Warm brown rain
I once called them
as, after a shower
they covered the walk

And now I think
who will move me aside
from what is coming next

~~



A Good Life

I hope she had a good life
popped out of my mouth today
from nowhere
from nothing
No
I lie

I was asked to make
a peanut butter and banana
and so I did
but I can't ever forget
the way she would say penis butter
and giggle

Yes, I hope she had a good life
full of the delight she had
when I knew her
where she would imitate
spawning grunion
and pretend to be herself
~~

Dry as a Sauna

The sauna was hot today
and dry as the clay
under my father's house
The smell of it and I was there
fifty years ago or more
in the space below his house
built just above the ground

Go fix the water pipe
and he handed me an antique
a soldering torch you had to pump
and I crawled toward the back
until I was stuck
thin as a rail
and stuck

I can't do it, I'm stuck
Breathe out and go
You're insane, I'm stuck
and you can't come get me
I don't know if I can get out now
Alright then get out
I'll fix it another way

~~

Pound, pound

The old lady
sat on the dusty ground
and pounded her fist
into the dirt

What do you want, lady
what are you trying to say
pound
are you in pain
do you want money

Pound
is it a message
are you telling me something
pound
pound
~~

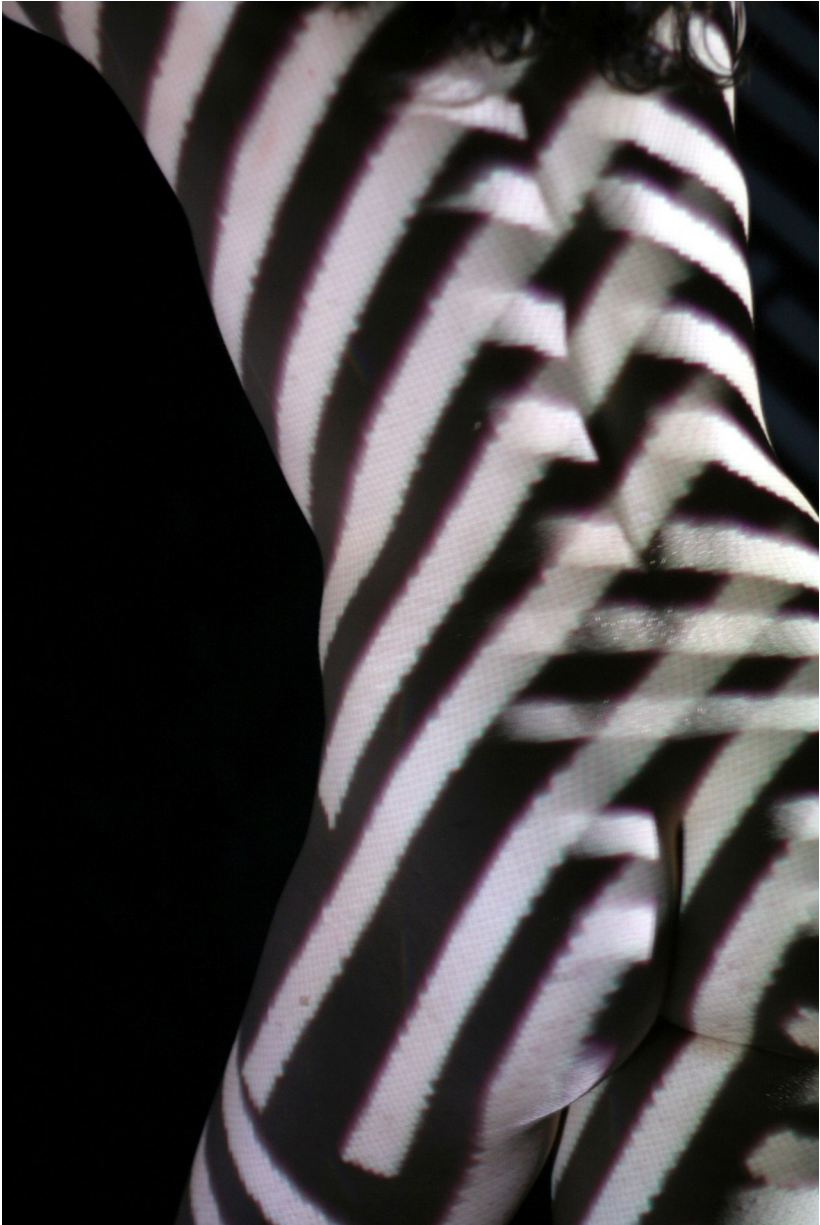
A Pill Tray

A pill tray, two weeks worth
and I will fill it up
in a few more minutes
when I take my pills

The other one
a week's worth
morning and night
I can't fill, I'm too clumsy

Luckily I have a kind wife
who fills it for me
and keeps track
of the prescriptions

~~



Your Wit

Oh my ancient love
of so long ago
I wish I had the wit
and the craft
to make those alive now
see you as I saw you

Alive, and full of life
not as you must be now
wrinkled at the least
I am so very blessed
to have known you then
in the full splendour
of your youth

If I could
I would write you a poem
that would be read
a hundred years from now
praising your wit
your skin, and your ass
Those being only three of the things
I loved about you

~~

Xmas Season

I'm not fond of this season
have never been
but for many different reasons

Today I was amongst the important
those who were busy
buying last minute things
driving their cars
reluctantly stopping for pedestrians
who were in their way

Each and every one of them
the most important person on the road
And the worst part of all

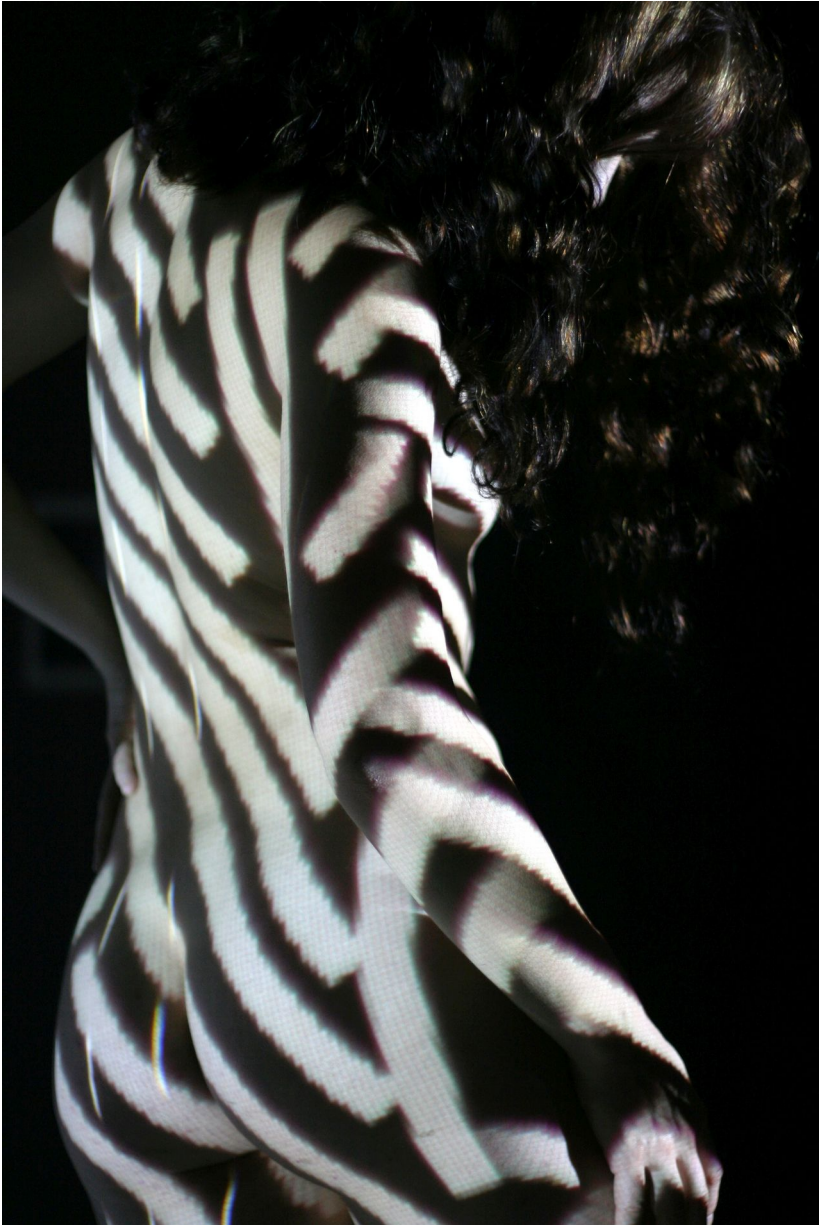
You had to act like them
to get anywhere at all
If I had my way
I'd not be out there until next year
~~

Another Visit

The doctor says
my sugar is too high
and my blood pressure
is too high
Do I want to see a dietitian?

And once again I think
what a useless idea that is
in a society where diabetics
(a shit-tonne of us)
have to look for Keto Diet Stuff
at three times the rising price
our two grocery chains
are charging (because of inflation)

Good thing I own stock in both
the profits are record-breaking
~~



My Water

If I say so myself
I was an easygoing fellow
willing to overlook
many sorts of faults
or perhaps to say
Not inclined for look for faults
but there was one

When we went out for dinner
she would finish her water
and half way done
would reach for mine
That bit of water
I had left to be drunk
at the end of my meal

~~

Te no Uchi

To calm myself
I have a special ritual
I have used it for decades

When the panic sets in
the despair
the desire to lash out

I put my hands forward
and grip my sword

I don't expect you, dear
to know what I'm saying

but the act itself
puts me in a place
where calm spreads through me
like a warm breeze
spreads through the tall grass
on an autumn evening

~~

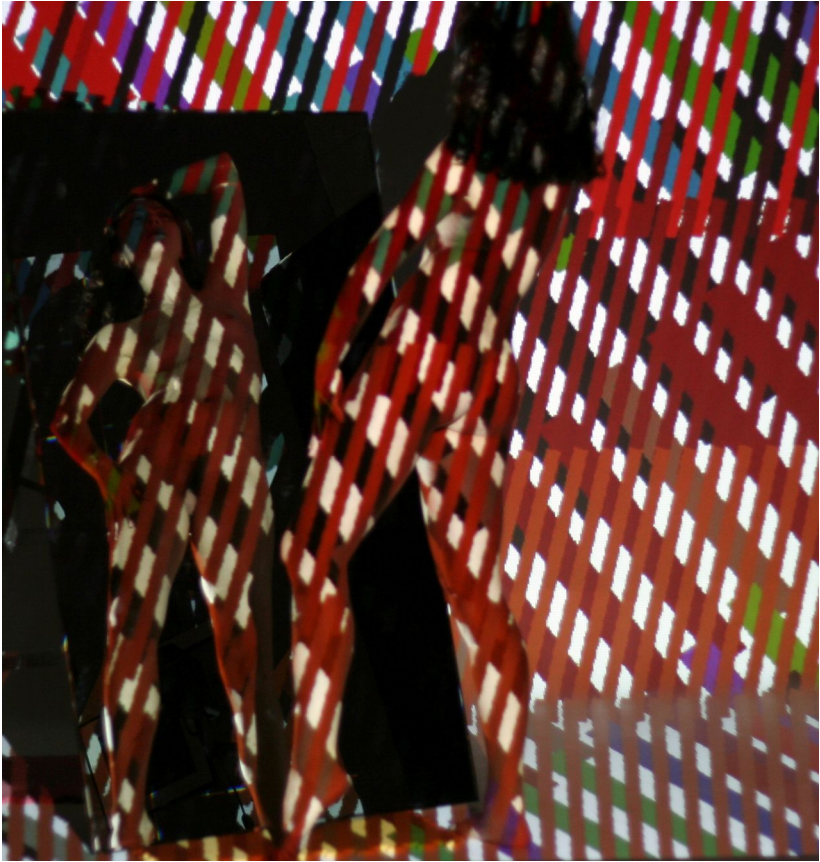
The Silence

How far away it seems
the silence
of my youth

the still silent days
spent sitting with a dog
on the edge of a gully

The long hot days
alone on a beach
staring up at the sun

The silence of a good friend
dawdling along beside me
with no place to go
and nothing to speak of
~~



Awake

I never had any religion
to lose
and so felt no need
to talk about it

I spent my time
sitting in churches
where mother and grandmother
thought it might do me some good

But whatever happened there
washed over me
like wind in a hailstorm
and did me as much good

Nobody ever promised me
a good life, now
or after I die
and I never expected one

So reading the educated
telling me there is no god
was not the existential panic
it was supposed to be

I am comforted not by Grampa
in a white beard in the sky
but by my own eyes
that open each morning

~~

How Will You Die

In my high school yearbook
or maybe middle school
I said I would die by drowning
And yet, my life is far from the sea

Am I in trouble?
Condemned to live forever
and at risk of inhaling deeply
whenever I'm near a pool
stream, bathtub or watering can

~~

Drug Store Book Racks

I like short novels
about two hundred pages
something you can read
in less than three months

I don't have the time
very well, the patience
to read six hundred pages
like books seem to be today

I know paper is cheap
and e-readers have the memory
but I don't have the time
to wade through all that

Tell me the story
in two hundred pages
like what I used to read
when I was a kid

~~



The Sun Will Return

Too early to tell
if the sun is returning
but I have faith
that I will see another warm day

through this winter wind
with its sharp wet snow
soon turning into ice
I look out the window

and see green trees
and flowers
not the skeletal branches
and brown slush on the road

I must have faith
that the lights on the tree
and the gifts given
will be enough

~~

The Present is Timeless

He looks into his past
an iced over stream
and through the ice
he sees bodies

mothers fathers
friends and lovers
all there under the ice
hands folded
long robes waving
in the current below

while above, on the ice
he stands frozen in place
Time only moves on
for those who are gone

~~

The Secret Hero

He was a secret hero
he told me, this old man
He would infiltrate the high
he would penetrate the mighty
and while in their good graces
he would bed their wives

Dictators, tyrants and robber barons
he would woo their women
and impregnate their wombs
so that the children
would have a chance at decent lives
much different than those
who imagined themselves father

~~

Not the Sun

From the corner of my eye
do I see the sun
come out on a wintry day

No, not the sun
but the white twinkle lights
of the Yuletide tree

The sun is still long gone away
and won't be back
for many a day
(That last is shameful)

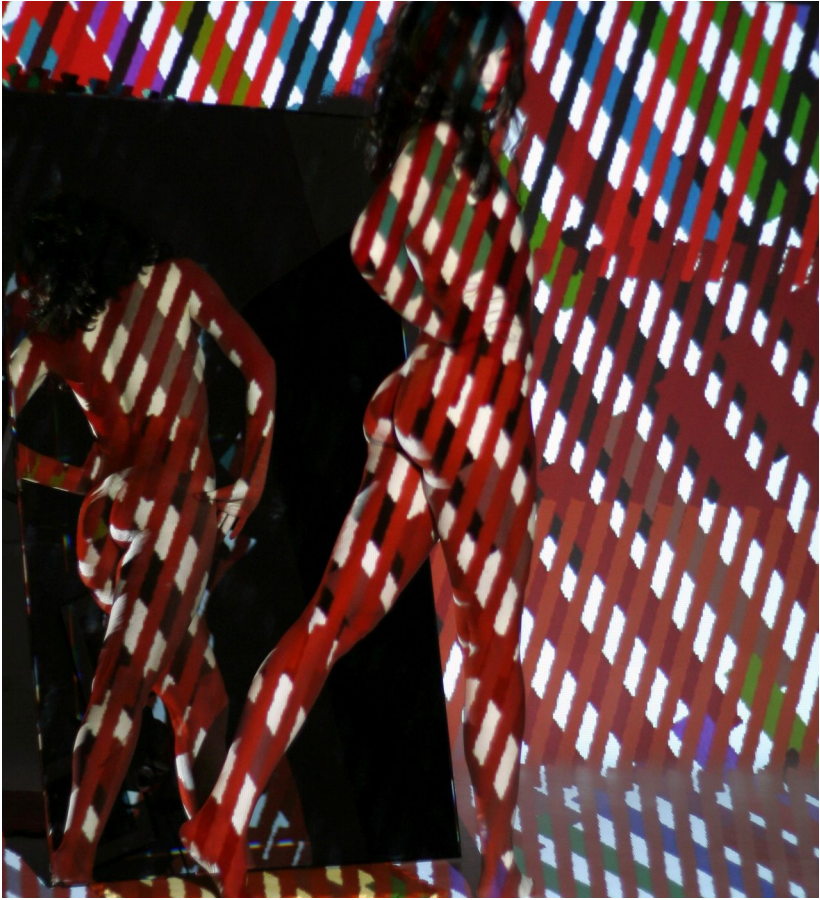
~~

Chemicals Beware

You must beware
of chemicals in your food
she told her children
and they believed her

They went to school
and learned what chemicals were
and two months later
those obedient children
were dead of starvation

~~



The Rich Man

How rich is the man
who watches his children born
and sees them grow
to fine strong adults

What regrets can that man have
there in his old age
What has he neglected
compared to those sights

Small potatoes
in a world of giant squash
from little ones, seeing the world all new
to wise strong ones, seeing it all

~~

The Naughty List

He was a sweet shy kid
and his family was dirt poor
He kept mostly to himself
and tried not to be noticed

It was the new year
and we were back to school
I was ever so proud
of my new boots and coat

I asked him
what did Santa bring you
and Gods forgive me
I saw the tears in his eyes

I think I'm on the naughty list
Santa didn't bring me anything
I sat down beside him
and gave him my lunch
~~

Cruel Time

Time is a cruel thing
it flies quickly away
when she is here

and when she is gone
it drags, it creeps, it slows
far too much time on my hands

I tend to nap
and go to bed early
anything to shorten the time
she is away from me

~~

Odd Places

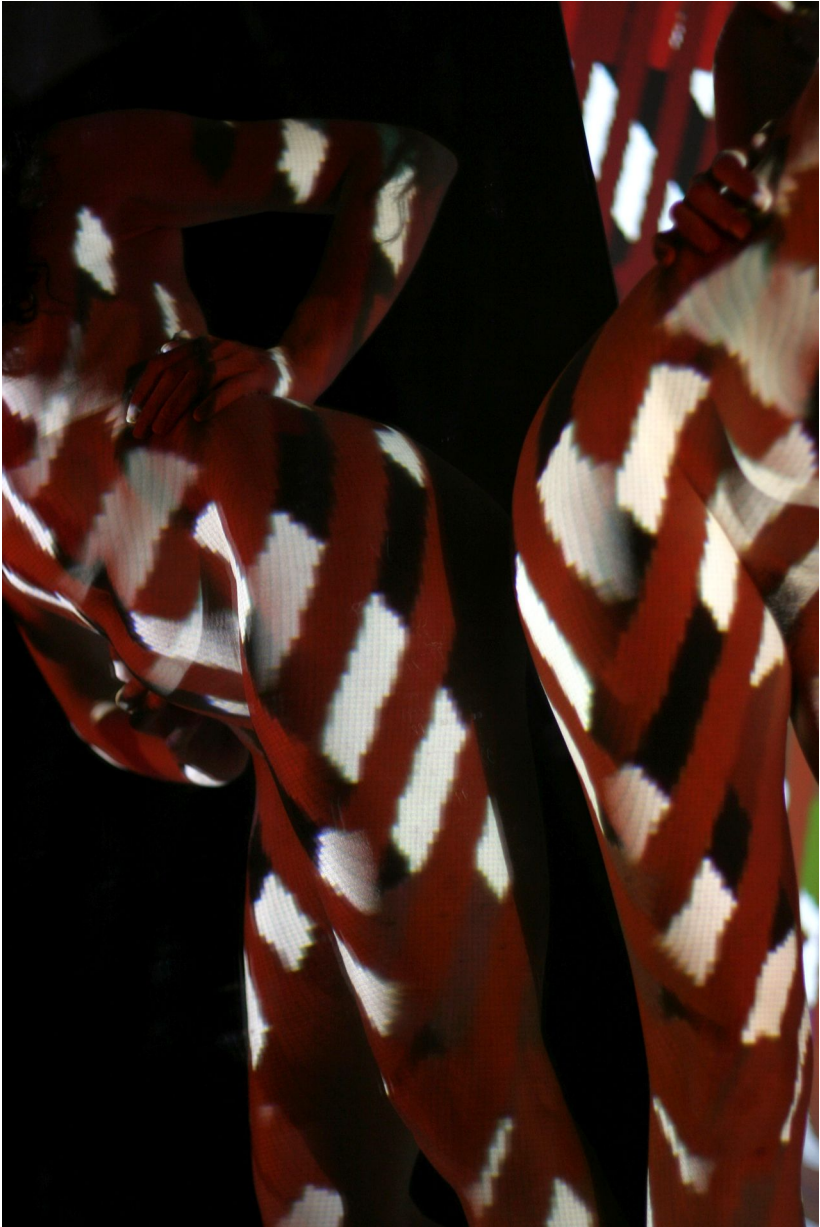
Odd times
and odd places
the feeling of her boob
on the side of my face
will fill my head

There is no reason
that it should be so
but I don't resent it
I enjoy the feeling
of warmth and softness

Other times
I might hear the scritch
of the hair between her thighs
on the edges of my ears
as she squirmed

Or the smell of her neck
right by her shoulder
will fill my nose better
than any baking pie
or perfume shop

~~



In Dreams

How many more times
will I dream of you
before I am gone

And then the only chance
for us to meet again
is if you dream of me

~~

Speed River Behind the Convenience

I watched
as yet another blob
of brown-stained foam
came along on the river

Not very romantic, I said
Good enough for me, she said
as she lay back on the asphalt
and opened her arms

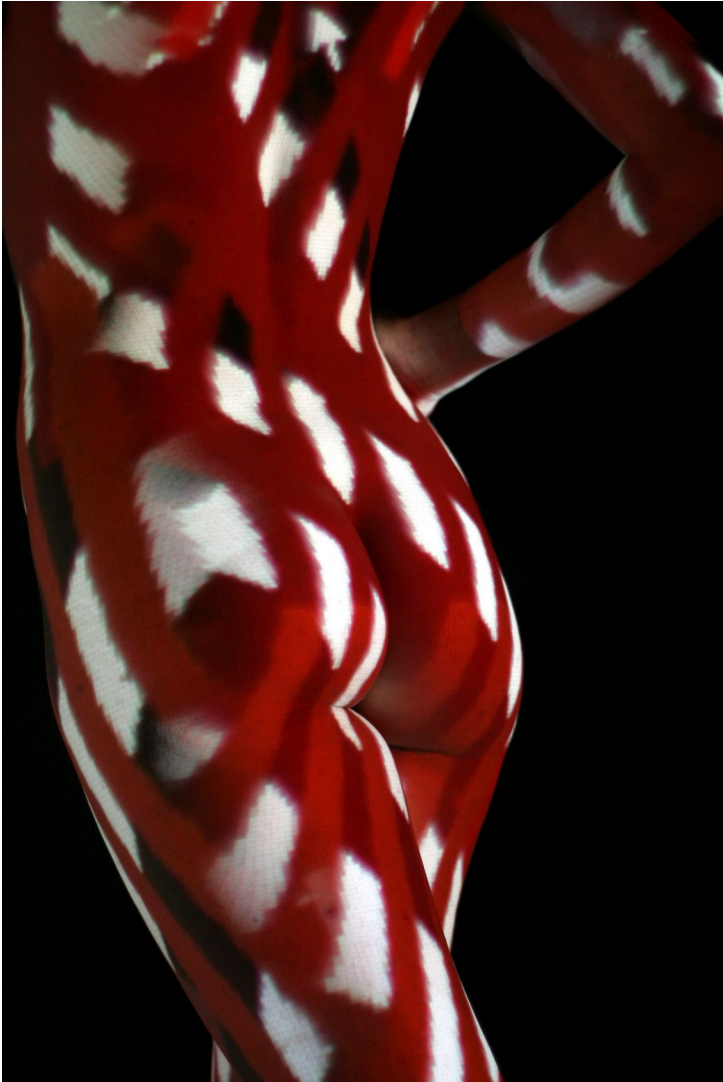
~~

Nothing More

How much of life has been lost
flying to Paris for dinner
when here, in my small house
Brenda has made soup
Mushrooms, ham and onion
As I take another bowl
I regret nothing of travel

This story teller, this writer
how much of his life has he missed
waiting for a tale to come along
and make him famous
Right there beside him
a woman who loves him
with more story than he could ever write

These long days of waiting
to get to a place
or to have a piece come to you
Think of all the delicious life
you have passed up
waiting for something more
Not knowing there is nothing more
~~



The Hatred He Feels

The poet shows me
the hatred he feels
for the woman who hated
him

I must admit to confusion
such a waste of time
this hatred
better to forgive and forget

There was a time I was convinced
she would knife me in my sleep
and yet ten years later
I slept with her still

~~

Winter Afternoon

Someone on the road
is moving around in his car
revving the engine
zoom zoom zoom

I don't bother to look
on a day like today
he and his summer tires
are trying to get up the street
~~

The Look

Let's open a present
I whine to the wife
I'm bored
it's the day before xmas
isn't that close enough

Why I had a girlfriend
and her family opened
all their presents xmas eve
Surely we can open
just the one

She gave me the look
I reviewed what I'd said
Oops, an old girlfriend
slipped into my mouth
and there will be no open presents

~~



In Their Youth

In their youth
the poets wish for fame
or at least
to save the world from itself

as they get older
the poems to their students
and to old lovers
begin to creep in
like incontinence and Alzheimer's

~~

Why I Don't Like Travel

Christmas was never much fun
certainly not my favourite holiday
It was a time of driving around
in the snow

Two grandmothers
my father, and often more
Family arguments picked up
from the year before

Meals gulped
and back in the car
I could never convince myself
that three or four sets of presents
was a good thing

Mostly I was happy
to have my new winter boots
(saved to be given as a present)
to replace my soaked and icy sneakers

So when you tell me to travel
remember my thoughts are going to
those childhood Christmas trips

~~

It's the Volume

It took a lot of years
but I think they get it

"I think I understand Dad now
It's not how nice the present
it's the pile under the tree

Just lots and lots of presents
for everyone to open
One sock in one sack
the other in a box

Just make sure the pile is high
and he's going to be happy"

~~



Christmas Day

The toilet water
cascading down through the room
announces my son is awake
Newly jobbed he wakes early
to drive to work
but today he sleeps
I'm sure my daughter is also asleep

There was a time
when, on this day
we would hear them being quiet
under the Christmas tree
rattling paper
shaking boxes
I miss those days

~~

How to be Unhappy

Never forget
never forgive
I've met so many
who live that
Shriveled souls
bitter
spitting at the world

I mean, I get it
I know the phrase
but I'm talking others
with nowhere near the reason
to be bitter
to live with that taste
their whole lives

I have been blessed
with a poor memory
and small desire
for revenge
I do remember
but I forget my venom
I forget my desire
to keep hating

~~



Not Cursing You

It's my fault
It truly is

She says
I never get the man
he won't leave her
and I can't leave him

And the man says
it's my fault
I'm sorry, I'm weak
I can't leave her

And she says
If you were brave
if you were bold
I might believe you

But you're neither brave
nor bold
I never expected you to leave

I was cursing God
~~

After the Presents

The tree has been emptied
all the eggs it laid
have been cracked and taken

chocolate has been eaten
coffee drunk
Potato pancakes and bacon
and cobbler
with cream cheese icing

And now
three hours later
the house is quiet again
the kids disappeared
not even a mouse

Except Mr. Yelly-face
He's making a lot of noise
so all is as it was
and as it will be
for the next year

~~



Confusion

Why are you here?

I asked it over and over
of myself
of her

and the answer was only
the shrug of a delicate shoulder
the spreading of elegant fingers
the shake of her head
that magnificent hair shining

How is one like you
with one such as me

~~

I Told You No

She sat on my lap
this young girl
and declared she wanted me
I told her no
I wanted no more virgins
and their complications

But she remained
and as I talked
with someone else
she yanked my beard
to bring my eyes upon herself
Yanked my beard

Once more my girl
and I will punch you
do you understand
Why are you still here
upon my lap, at this party
Where I've told you no
~~



Famous by Associates

It would be nice
to say I knew famous painters
sculptors and writers
but I don't know anyone

From a small town
in a small country
there aren't too many
who make it all the way to fame

Nor fortune, come to that
came to anyone I know
Better off, many are
but certainly no fortunes

So I resign myself
to ordinary folk
with ordinary minds
and ordinary sins

~~

No More Old

Are there no old people

I seem to remember wrinkles
and skin hanging from bone
sunken eyes
and a cracked voice
cursing the darkness

Are there any who are not taut
smooth skinned
and healthy, tanned
from hours of exercise
drinking healthy drinks
and eating healthy food

~~



Naked Magic

Last evening, finished,
my Christmas Sauna
I came out and heard
or thought I heard
someone chopping wood
pop, pop, pop

You could imagine the pieces
falling to one side
and the other
But there was nobody there

I backed down the track
and looked above the roof
to see the Walnut sway
Each movement was a pop
as of axe on wood
pop

and in my mind's eye
it landed on the sauna
pop

I waved a finger
at the bare-branched giant
and said, "Be nice."

~~

Land Barons

All those land barons
and lesser beings
grubbing for their dirt

I have it on good authority
that what you own
for most of time
is six feet by three by six

Although in many places
you only own it
until your bones are free
of the sordid flesh of life

and then you join the ancestors
in the bone house

~~

Things Already Made

How very little
do I value work
that I've already done
I have boxes of figures
drifts of drawings
and books I misplace

A decade of studio photography
and it's all collected on a disk
waiting for nothing at all
The value was in the session
the interplay of light and model
the doing of it

~~

Tourist Town

The small village
where I was born
has made itself
a parking lot

Every space in the place
must be paid for
They say it is a wonderful thing
all this money flowing in

But I don't feel comfortable
thinking about visiting
About paying to park
across from my Father's house

Or in front
of my Grandmother's place
Or down by the beach
to get a hot dog and fries

I may not visit again
this place I was born
turned somehow now
into a tourist trap

~~



A Few More Days

Seven or eight hours sleep
and I still feel the need
for an afternoon nap
I suspect boredom
rather than illness
rather than fatigue

The more I sleep
the closer I get
to the routine of my life
such as it is
Writing a bit in the morning
Swinging swords a bit at night
~~

Freedom From Hell

All those old men
losing their faith
losing their afterlives
and heading for death

No wonder they howl
and shudder with the coming
of each night
not knowing if they will see the day

But if only
they can get past the sick feeling
they are no more
they are only here

They might at last
begin to live
really live
here, now, not after death
~~

What She Asked Me

What is all this useless work
this creating of things
only to put them away
or worse
give them away
so you can never see them again

How can I explain
it is not the product
They say it is not the destination
but the journey
Perhaps, but I hate the journey
So no help there

No, it is simply the making
that lets me know I yet live
the creations are dead things
they can survive me
or fall into the sea
it won't matter at all to me
~~

For a Dead Poet

They say you were nominated
twice for the Nobel prize
and I wonder
did you resent not winning

Was it important to you
was it worse
the second time
they didn't give it to you
~~



Family Visits

Faces are starting to confuse me
I look at them
and it's as if I've never seen them before
and yet
I know who they are

It's sort of pleasant
to meet family and friends each time
seeing a fresh face
but I do worry
that one day I will lose the connection
~~

Three AM

Haruki Murakami
says he writes at 4am
and I feel ever so clever
that I'm up at 3

The only thing is
I'm up because I can't sleep
the brain has flipped over
into regret mode

I regret things I've said
things I've done
and it just keeps digging
further into my past

No sense letting that go on
get up and read
have an apple
write
~~

Driving With My Mother

I've always liked car trips
in one particular way
The discussions that happen

My mother drove us each weekend
to visit my father
an hour each way
and we talked

Later, she drove me to university
and back again
and we talked

Sometimes quiet for stretches
but mostly an easy talk
Being my mother
it was about me

In the dark was the best
no distractions out the window
no reason not to talk

When my son was young
he liked to talk in the car
but somewhere along the way
came smartphones and headphones

~~

Poetic Balance

I worry, often
about being too clever
about obscure reference
and intricate wordplay

I tell myself
it's not my style

But then again
there's something to be said
for not driving a thumbtack
with a sledgehammer

~~

Sweet Dreams

Sweet dreams
A kind of benediction
said with good night
but last night
the dream was not sweet

Three youngsters
two boys
and a woman
the boys just fifth business
and she quite chatty

There was to be sex
and my poor willie
sort of maybe half erect
by furious effort
was commented upon

What are you going to do
with that, she said
I intend to watch
you know it's bigger than before
you'd be surprised

Jump to me explaining
why it was so small
The mention of fourth stage
caused the fifth business
to droop as well

Sweet dreams?
I suppose any dream
that you can remember
and not end up weeping
is good enough
for a poem

~~

Scars

Not having seen each other
for a year
the family somehow arrived
on the topic of scars

Not psychological, thank you
but the various knife cuts
and power tools
that sometimes bite us

None were shown
and I brought nothing new
to the conversation
just comments and tsks

Not my hernia scar
the bandsaw on my thumb
the kite string on my finger
the knife across my palm

Drinking in the Grad Lounge
wanting a sandwich
I cut through that bun
probably while chatting her up

Let's face it
you get old
you collect them
these scars, in and out

~~



Faithful Artists

I heard Edward Hopper
married unhappily
and never left
His only model
his wife
no others allowed

And as I write that
I seem to recall others
who were never allowed
except perhaps in secret
another woman in their life

It made me a bit sad
but I suppose not all
experience their field
of wild oats
marrying instead, the first

Still, whatever works
to bring forth the creation
For some the happy days
bring happy images
Others need pain

~~

Construction Poem

Do I need a construction poem
Not constructed
Construction

Perhaps the day I worked
on the old man's building
hanging over the sidewalk
boot on a sill
hand on a stud
and hammer in hand

I was banging away
at something
when a voice from below:
"you should have a hardhat on"
I looked down
between my legs
one connected
one above the fellow

And with hammer in my hand
sweat falling at him
I conceded the point
"Yes, probably I should"
Not that it would stay on my head
as I fell to the ground

~~

Time for Bed

As I skip through another poem
I wonder if that is the key
To make something so complicated
obscure, long or obtuse
that students give up
and move along
to the latest instagram confessional

And there I've done it
made a poem about a poem
with reference to another poet
and complaint about
those snot-nosed kids
whining about first love
Perhaps it's time for bed

~~

Candle in a Bottle

Rod Stewart on the speakers
and a wine bottle on the table
An image of a candle
half melted down the glass

It was such a cliché
when I was 20
usually left over
from former students
in an apartment

but thinking of it now
gives me a little thrill
I was once that young

~~



Baby Gifts

When my wife was pregnant
a friend told me
watch carefully

pretty far along
there's about a week
of wild sex
and then nothing for you
for a month or two

But keep an eye open
because she may come sneaking
to squirt you if the baby's done
and she's still got some

So in the interest of public interest
I pass along the advice
which I must say
I may or may not have confirmed
~~

Hello Father

Perhaps I've watched
too many movies
or read
too many books
but I must admit
to a small disappointment

No child or adult
of the right age
ever walked up to me
and said, "hello father"
And I would look closely
and see her in that face
~~

The Town Hall Steps

We would sit
that small gang of friends
I met only on weekends
in my Father's town

We would sit
on the town hall steps
and lean back
looking up at the stars
or where the stars would be

In no hurry
to get wherever we were going
as if we were going anywhere
sit and talk about nothing much
like kids do

~~



Family Visit

This year my generation
was the oldest
with two below
the youngest still tearing
at the wrapping of presents

And which stood frowning?
tapping the foot
shaking the head
crossing the arms

Not us
not the oldest generation

It was our children
shaking their heads
at our silly notions
and trying to keep
both older and younger
under control

~~

Equality

Why I would think
of women's equality
at this moment...
Ah, a TV show

I don't understand
these shows
where the middle class
and the wealthy worry
about such things.

In my lower class experience
of five or six generations
all the women in my line
every one of them
worked

They had to
and if I had to admit it
every one of them ruled
the kids, the husbands
all of it
~~

Who is it?

The smartest person I know?
The quickest wit?

No, I guess I am too dim
to know what I see
but I can't think
of a single person
who is the smartest

Lots and lots
though
who are smarter than I
~~



Book Clues

How long has it been
since I looked down
a row of books
Checked the ones
piled on a table
to gain a clue

Who is she

What does he think

How long has it been
Now I look to my own shelf
and try to decide
if I've read those books
they are certainly worth reading
~~

Nice Lights

Just out of direct vision
in the periphery
is our Xmas tree
unlit all day

Busy with other things
and bereft of packages
I suppose I forgot
in my solo afternoon
to turn it on

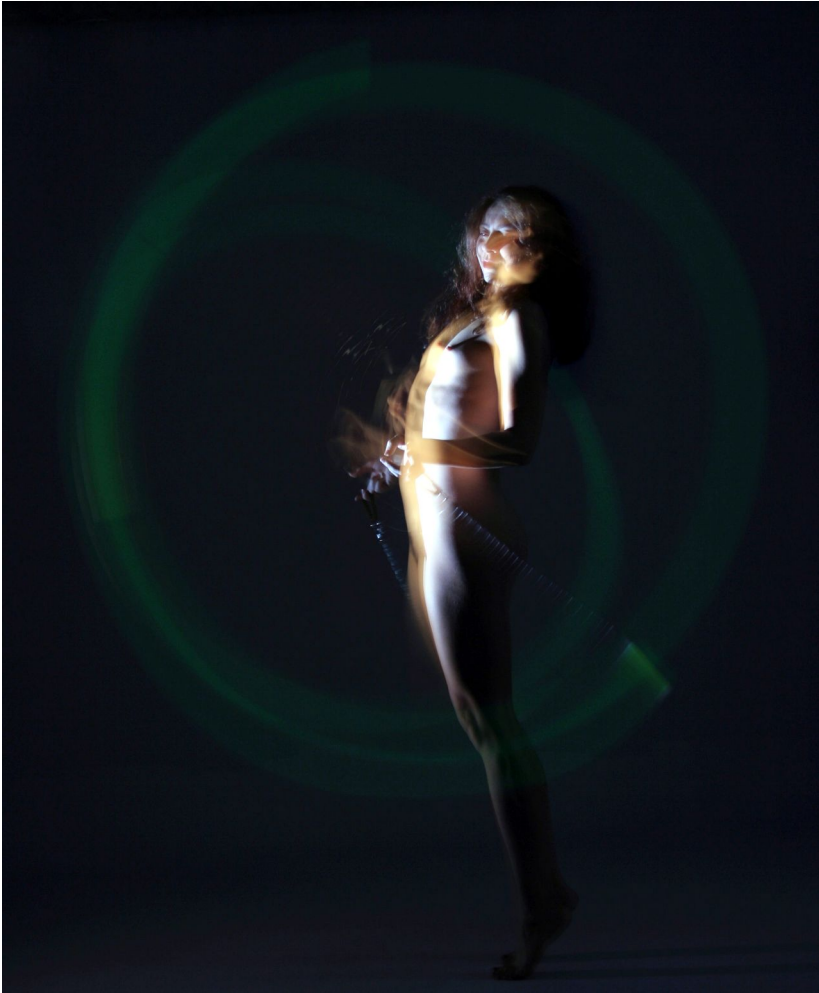
There, it looks nice
~~

Cockroaches

We moved three times
the second we piled
all the boxes
in the middle of a room
and spread poison all around

I think we carried one cockroach
to that house
and when we moved again
we had left them behind

What more studently thing
than cockroaches in your apartment
that late night sprint
for cracks and holes
when the 3am light goes on
as you stumble to the bathroom
~~



My Last Suit

For thirty years
I sat in judgment of swordsmen
wearing a dead man's suit
Only to be forbidden
to wear that
or the '80s pinstripe I bought
Forbidden by my student
Who insisted I wear a suit
that fit
and pants of the correct colour

\$500 it cost
for that new outfit
so that I could go to Brazil
and sit on a panel
I have no idea
how many more uses
that suit will have
perhaps they can bury me in it

Perhaps I can donate it
so other poor people can use it
to sit in judgment

~~



Dead Man's Desk

Before I made my own
I would attend house auctions
for furniture
The remnants
of some dead person
whose accumulated possessions
were being knocked down

Who will give me five dollars
for this box of things
You sir? Sold

I bought library desks
old radios I gutted
to make speakers
and other such things
I could use
in a student apartment

Used things never bothered me
the abandoned possessions
of the dead
sold for whatever they would bring
Better I thought
than torching the lot

Today I suspect
it is mostly left inside
while large machinery
tears the house apart
to build a McMansion
Everything busted and
into a bin

~~

Neutral Ground

The cat screams for food
that is an hour away
I make to rise
and he knows it's not to feed him
it's to throw him outside
so he scoots for his bed

Neutral ground
I've been forbidden
to drag him out
But that doesn't mean
I can't kick him in
~~



Mostly Nonsense

Your old man
has had a long life
full of trouble, strife
and nonsense

I have hair
growing out of my ears
that I chase around
with a nose trimmer

My earlobes are huge
almost as big
as Gramma's were
which is saying something

~~

Cat Food

And now the cat has been fed
not by me, but by my son
and now the cat crows
and licks his chops
and crows some more

I look a warning
but don't swivel my chair
for that way lies a cat
in your lap
and the fish stink
of Old Cat food
~~

Another Chance

One who buys six white roses
in downtown Calgary
to send back to Scarborough

Then wandered across the Chilkoot
into Skagway
to phone back to Scarborough

Only to be told
one is reassessing the relationship
and you're ten feet from the bar

Somewhere in there
twenty-four white roses
arrive in Scarborough

And upon arriving back home
getting a phone call
I've decided to give you another chance

~~

I'll Get To It

Christmas garbage
and dirty dishes
floors to be swept
and I sit here
writing this
drinking coffee

Not a bit of guilt
the old man is retired
so when I get to it
I'll get to it
~~



Or At Least Horny

You know that party
that goes on for much too long
and most people are passed out
or unspeakingly morose
but you're in the corner
speaking in a low voice
to this girl
who seems to be interested
in what you're saying
or at least horny

~~

Black and Cold

The cat yells
and wakes you up
your bladder drives you
out of the bed
and to the toilet

And as you come back
and look down at the bed
in the dim light
coming through the curtain
from the streetlamp outside

Black spots on the sheet
you've been sweating again
Damned hot flashes
and now your naked flesh
must cover those cold spots
~~

Fukuoka Souvenir

How many years ago
did I stand by the dojo
in Fukuoka
and listen hard
to the wind through the bamboo

Too many years
and through it all
I've never lost that sound
that whisking of my ears
My souvenir of that trip
~~



The Warning

Oh, oh, oh, my phone says
beware, it's going to rain
and the frozen ground
may not soak it up

The ground isn't frozen
I know it, the sump pump
is pumping
and the ice is gone

Rain is just rain
but then again
I live on a hill
I picked the spot

Having seen what happens
when low-lying houses
meet high-rushing floods
down springtime rivers
~~

Gone from Me

An old photograph
of my old apartment
and on the wall
a bamboo curtain
over bamboo print paper

Where has it gone
that split bamboo curtain
that I once owned
I don't remember when
it left my hand

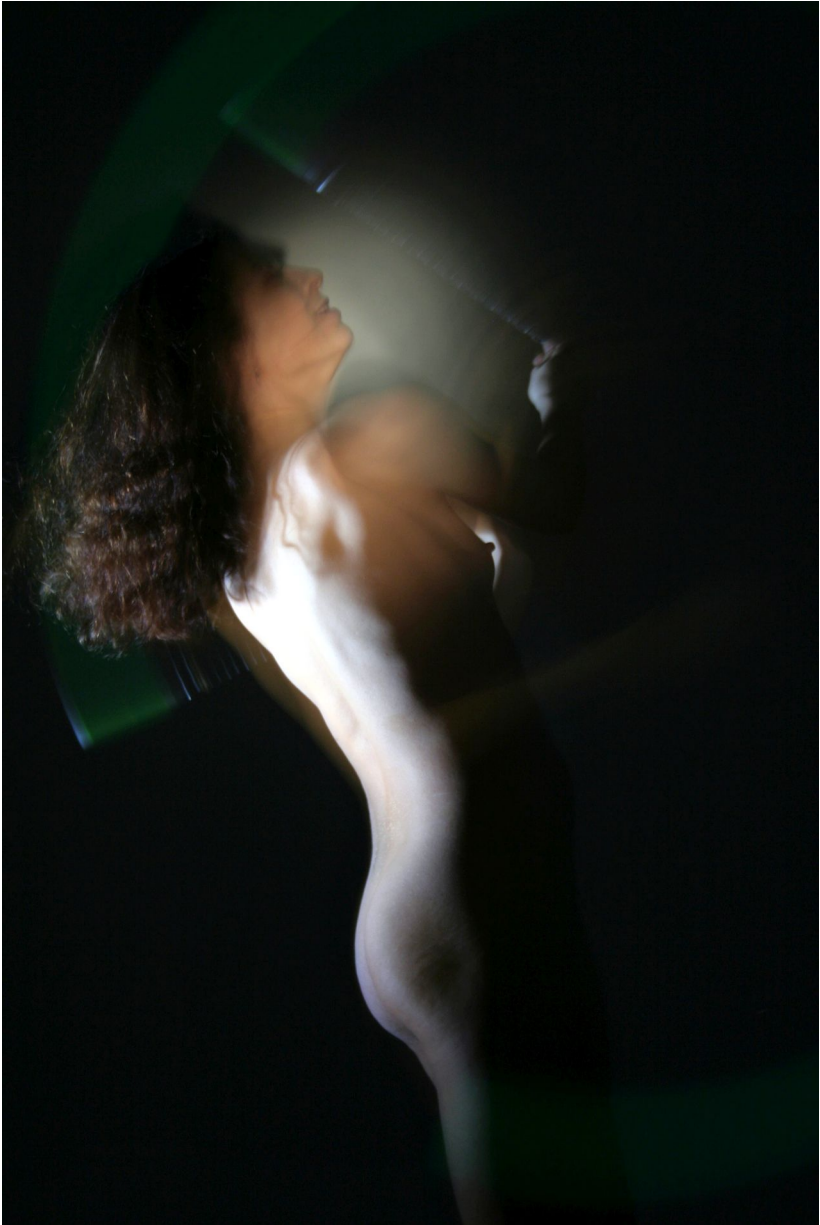
~~

Places to Go

As I left the bed
so many years ago
I looked back
and saw
in the mysterious light
from the streetlamp
outside the window
your breasts

You raised your arms
and stretched
a tight grin
as your muscles contracted
and your breasts rose
like time-lapse flowers
blooming in the spring
I wanted so to return
but I had places to go

~~



Never Again

That last morning
when I left your bed
we both knew
we would never meet again
your arms reaching
sliding down mine
clinging ever so lightly
but clinging nonetheless

The floor was hard
the air was cold
you were warm
half awake
and so warm
your hair spread blackly
over that white pillow
and I wanted to smell it
once more

~~

Already Gone

She kissed me goodbye
at the top of the stair
and I watched her go
walking slowly down
and out the door

I closed my eyes
against the tears
but then opened them
going back into our place
I walked to the window

I leaned on the sill
went up on my toes
to watch you go
You had already gone

~~



The Neighbour

Living beside me
there were no secrets
You knew who I was
and came the night
you entered my bed

So slowly I kissed you
your neck
your chest
your stomach
and the shock I felt

As I kissed you
between the thighs
and your black skin
split to bloom
such a bright red

Distracted for a moment
What had I expected
Bent my head once more
So very happy
to learn something new

~~

Zeno's Poems

The memories come
hidden gems
from all the years
of my life

What happens
when I reach the last of them
when I run out of life

No
there is no fear
To run out of memory
I would have to live
another sixty years

and by then
I would have passed
that turtle who outran
that halving hare

~~

Alone at 23

The happiness
mixed with panic
at 23

When I realized
I was in my own apartment
but I was alone
No roommates
No woman

Another milestone
in becoming a man
but the deep wrenching fear
that no other woman
would ever want me

~~



The Moon in Nova Scotia

The night
a rare clear night
in Nova Scotia
when I saw the moon

Looked up from a picnic table
my bike on the ground
Looked up and saw the moon
and wondered if you were looking
at the same moon

I felt just that little bit closer
and I slept content

~~

Forty Years Together

You drive us
to the family dinner
and I rest my eyes
almost drowsing

We're not fighting
haven't fought for years
and I reach quietly
to put my hand
on your leg

You don't twitch away
~~

You are going to find more writing from Kim Taylor at:

non fiction martial arts books

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual.htm

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

poetry, novels, and photo books

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

180mag (Photo magazine monthly) - 2005-2014

<https://180degreeimaging.com/180mag/180archive.html>

Iaido Newsletter / JJSA (monthly) - 1989-2001

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual.htm

EJMAS (monthly) - 2000-2017

<https://ejmas.com/>