

# Coyote Helps Out



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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Coyote Helps Out.....	3
Oh Please.....	4
Babe.....	5
Eunice in a Cableknit.....	6
Beatnik Girl.....	7
Clubbing.....	8
Sad Pam.....	9
Not a Lake.....	10
Every Photograph.....	11
She Looked Back.....	13
My Suit.....	14
A TV Show.....	16
On Guard.....	17
War Torn Kids.....	18
Ukraine 2022.....	19
In Dreams.....	20
Euni's Mullet.....	21
In A Corner.....	23
Tsar.....	24
Empty.....	25
Suffering Sam.....	26
The Answer.....	27
Heart Shaped Ass.....	28
You Sink.....	29
Maria At My Door.....	30
Meaning of Life.....	31
Bessemer II.....	32
The Way.....	33
She Was There.....	34
Hwy 3.....	35

A Stone.....	36
Hard Bargain.....	37
The Alarm Rings.....	38
I Spot Eunice.....	39
Selfies.....	41
Brenda.....	42
She Would Read To Him.....	43
Old Timer.....	44
Sex / No.....	45
Robin.....	46
Secret Being.....	48
Author Blues.....	49
Massage, No Happy Ending.....	50
Too Much?.....	51
The Gully.....	52
Pam and Port.....	53
To the Sauna.....	54
Broken Pipe.....	55
Dreaming of Heat.....	56
Moving In.....	57
Pam Listens.....	58
Edna Taylor.....	59
There Were Never Curtains.....	61
She was Sure.....	62
Enthusiastic.....	63
Springtime Walk.....	64
White Raisins.....	65
How To Fly.....	66
Christ Anglican.....	67
Summer Warmth.....	68
Signs of Spring.....	69
Penny in Her Capri.....	70
Abi in the Box.....	71
Soon After I Bought One.....	72

Euni Remembered.....	73
High School Weekends.....	74
Trunk Tetris.....	75
Anais Nin.....	76
Facebook Life.....	77
Photographs of Love.....	78
Word Photography.....	79
Eunice Picks a Flower.....	80
Signs of Eunice.....	81
I Find Eunice in Bed.....	82
I'm Not Touching Them.....	83
Along the Drive.....	84
Kim the Editor.....	85
I Read of a Crate.....	86
Random.....	87
A Reason to Live.....	88
Disposable Things.....	89
He Will Protect Me.....	90
Thirty Minutes.....	91
Borrowed Time.....	92
Two Moons.....	93
All I Could See.....	94
Milestones.....	95
Reading Her Book.....	96
She Pranced By.....	97
Milestones II.....	98
Happy Dance.....	99
Studio Nudes.....	100
They Call It Growing Up.....	101
Waking Up Worried.....	102
Four AM.....	103
Three Crows.....	104
A Sharp Tongue.....	105
The Laundromat.....	106

Good Old Days.....	107
Like a Bear.....	108
Little Tube Top.....	109
The Remains of Winter.....	110
A Train.....	111
A Slap.....	112
My Story Told.....	113
International Plowing Match of 1974.....	114
Her Skin.....	115
His Things.....	116
My Party, Right or Wrong.....	117
A Quiet Girl in BC.....	118
Always a Welcome.....	119
Gilbertville.....	120
New Fountain Pen.....	121
Coyote Gets a Mullet.....	122
Did You Change the Thermostat?.....	123
Coyote Thinks About Falling.....	124
Love Euni.....	125
And A Cowbell.....	126
No Point.....	127
Janice On The Beach.....	128
Another Janice.....	129
Edna My Grandmother.....	130
Joe Sharp the Blacksmith.....	131
In My Shop.....	132
From Janice' Apartment.....	133
A Hot Summer.....	134
A Bike Ride.....	135
A Mind of Her Own.....	137
A Father's Wish.....	138
On My Knees.....	139
Hungry Students.....	140
The Worst Thing.....	141

The Car Window.....	143
Longing for the Blues.....	144
Wrong.....	145
Stoicism.....	146
Fish Breath.....	147
Unexpected.....	148
Too Full.....	150
Three Threads.....	151
A Colville Painting.....	152
Coyote on the Beach.....	153
Coyote is Gassy.....	154
Pam in Chile.....	155
Coyote Asks Again.....	156
She Was Very Tall.....	157
My Coffee House Life.....	158
In My Notebooks.....	160
A Good Day.....	161
Junk Fish.....	162
Someone Farts.....	163
Monster.....	164
Saturday Matinee.....	165
Abnormal Mind.....	166
Winter Camping.....	167
Cities in the Desert.....	168
Memory Flashes.....	169
Coyote Tries Again.....	170
My Mother's Album.....	171
Lake Erie.....	172
A Tourist Town.....	173
In My Religion.....	175
I Will Live Forever.....	176
100 Minutes.....	177
Encanto Understands.....	178
Dark Eye Shadow.....	179

My Religion Might Be Wrong.....	181
Maybe Dead is Dead.....	182
Is Life Stupid?.....	183
Look, Over There.....	184
Five Years.....	185
Water From Fiji.....	186

# Introduction

Coyote, religion, society, memory and mullets. It seems my mind slowly migrates from month to month.

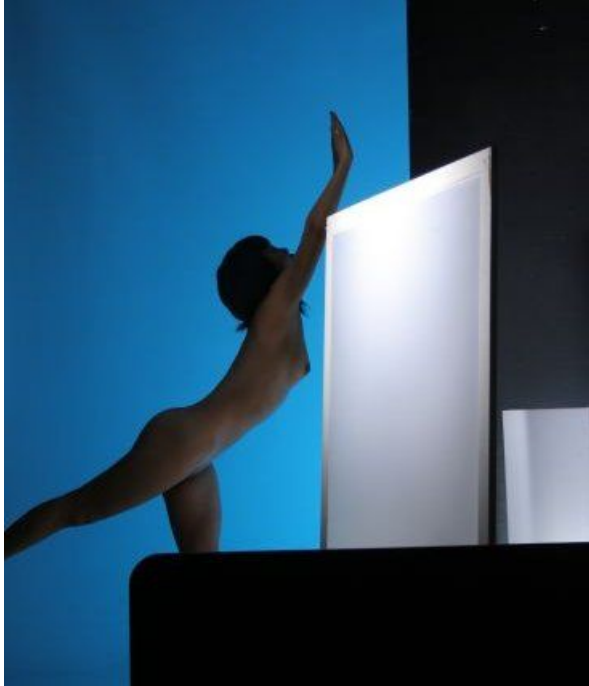
March is a miserable month around here. Not winter, where you duck down deep under the duck down. But not where you go walking to see all the first flowers.

I always feel that way about March, a sort of unfinished time of the year, often when I'm editing books, written earlier.

One good thing though, about March, and Coyote says it best. "It wasn't me."

Kim Taylor, March 2022





*Photographs taken in February 2007*

## Coyote Helps Out

I'll help you, said Coyote  
to take that piano up the stairs  
I don't think you can do it alone  
That's right, said the man  
take the back end

And so Coyote sweats and blows  
and shoves that piano upstairs  
and he thinks  
that guy is tall  
I can see him over the top

It turns out, that man  
was sitting on the piano  
as Coyote was pushing  
up the stairs  
but they got to the top

Thank you, thank you  
said the woman at the top  
You're very welcome  
said the man, and thank you  
for the money

Now I'll get rid of that dirty mutt  
standing on your stairs  
for a little bit extra cash.

~~

## Oh Please

Oh please  
don't show me poems  
of those who chose to die  
and when

I will be there again one day  
as I was, a week of nerve pain  
a week without sleep

and luck was on my side  
the next prescription worked  
the cancer halted

And I will, one day  
have to decide once more  
~~

## **Babe**

I had forgotten  
these long decades  
the name of my bicycle

The bicycle that is now  
my daughter's

I had forgotten  
until I found the tool roll  
made forty years ago  
and lettered neatly  
by my first wife

the name "Babe"

~~

## Eunice in a Cableknit

Soon after she moved in  
she found my white  
cable-knit sweater  
made by my grandmother

From that moment, it was hers  
she would roll up the sleeves  
and those impossible wrists  
would peek out, driving me wild

She got more hugs from me  
in that sweater  
than she did naked  
I swear  
~~

## Beatnik Girl

She was a beatnik girl  
in the time of hippies  
Tight crop jeans  
turtleneck

Long hair and bangs  
with those sunglasses  
she never wore in the sun

I was so in love with her  
my beatnik girl  
I would watch her from afar

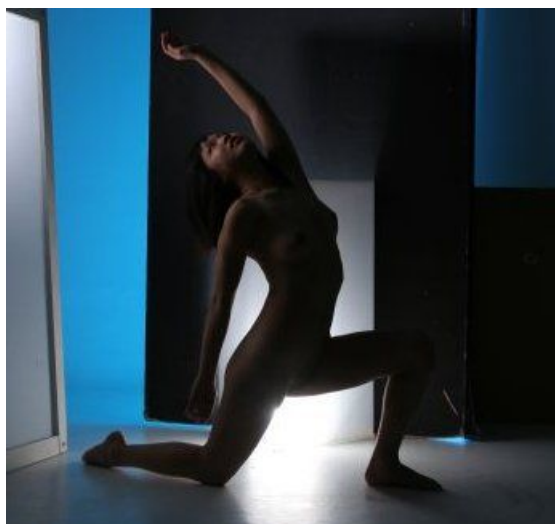
and never told her  
how really cool she was  
~~

## Clubbing

Hey daddy-o  
I can go to your club  
to watch you play  
and you can come play  
at mine

But don't you try  
to watch someone else  
in that good old club of mine

~~



## Sad Pam

You always know  
where Saturn and Venus are  
what phase of the moon  
and where the sun is  
just by looking at the moon

You used to take pictures  
of clouds  
Every day a new photo  
a new cloud

Head always turned upward  
I wonder now  
why it is facing down

~~



## Not a Lake

That's not a lake  
I thought  
when I first saw it  
from the porch  
of my friend's cottage

You can see across it  
not like my lake  
the one I was born beside  
Poor Erie, full of junk and life  
not like this clear, acid thing  
No fish from top to bottom

~~

## Every Photograph

Every photograph  
I ever took  
has a story  
Some are boring  
others not  
Each has a story  
even if that story is  
"I don't remember this one"

~~



## **She Looked Back**

She wanted caviar  
and French champagne  
She wanted Dior  
and Hermes

When she met him  
she looked and looked away  
But she looked back  
and now it's Mac and Cheese

~~

## **My Suit**

I have a suit  
It used to be  
for funerals  
and gradings

But the funerals ran out  
and I don't need it  
for the gradings I sit  
so it sits in the closet

~~



## A TV Show

If violence is not the answer  
why am I watching a new show  
where the body count rises  
every episode

It's not an unusual show  
Pretty standard fare  
the only thing original  
is the way folks die

~~

## On Guard

He lay on his back  
eyes closed  
drowsing, daydreaming

She lay beside him  
in the grass  
watching him, guarding him

There were no dangers  
but she watched  
he was so beautiful in his sleep  
~~



## War Torn Kids

It's going to be all they know  
and they will make the best of it  
they will laugh  
and they will play  
in the basements

and if they grow up  
if they grow up  
if they grow up  
they will remember

~~

## Ukraine 2022

She was left at the border  
a note pinned to her blue dress  
a yellow balloon tied to her wrist  
"please love her  
as we loved her  
please tell her  
we loved her  
and we have gone back  
to protect her"

~~

## In Dreams

I talk with you  
night after night  
and we speak again  
of the things that mattered

The things that pressed us apart  
Nothing so violent  
as to tear us apart  
but that drift, always that drift

~~

## **Euni's Mullet**

I suggested a hairdo  
and you got it

From that sort of a start  
you moved away  
to live your own life  
and I could not say  
that I was anything but happy  
I would not say

~~



## In A Corner

The dried hulk of a spider  
in a corner  
out of the way  
but someplace  
where I saw it, rarely  
A dead friend  
something that gave me comfort  
I never swept that corner

~~

## Tsar

Blind to truth  
greedy for power  
devoid of advice  
a bloated self  
isolated

Yet with immense power  
a power only to destroy  
incapable of building  
incapable of feeling

And there are those  
who, feeding their own greed  
allow this thing to live

~~

## Empty

The man hunched over  
knees in the dirt  
head bowed, he prayed

Tears fell onto a spider web  
and he prayed, as if to Spider  
God of loss  
God of empty husks

God of memories, poorly covered  
so that wings and feet  
stuck out to be remembered

~~



## Suffering Sam

He moved through his friends  
horns from his head  
from his shoulders  
his elbows

and each friend  
as he passed  
was gored

~~

## The Answer

The shaman dances  
into the exhausted trance  
and turns into a bird

a crow  
who flies to the spirit realm  
and pleads with the spirits  
for the release of the man  
who has asked  
to be released from memory  
of what he has done

The shaman returns  
dropping as fast as he flew  
As a snake  
bearing the message of the spirits  
~~

## Heart Shaped Ass

There is something about  
a heart shaped ass  
I've always, always fallen  
for that part of the anatomy

It's not sexual, I assure you  
although that's not unimportant  
No, it's just that shape and  
that feeling in my chest

~~



## You Sink

There's something about  
a woman from the coast  
a wildness  
followed by calm  
like the waves

A woman from the land  
oh so steady  
at least it seems so  
until the rains  
and then you sink

Both of them  
you sink and sink  
down into their eyes  
down into their souls  
and you breathe out  
~~

## **Maria At My Door**

I thought about you today  
my broken armed beauty  
and the way I treated you

Like a common lout

You didn't deserve that  
but perhaps I was thinking  
of the girl who would come back  
who never came back

I hope that was it  
I would hate to believe  
that I could think of anyone  
as an object, especially you

~~

## Meaning of Life

Decade upon decade  
I tried to learn  
the meaning of life  
when it was right there  
all the time, right there

I only needed to learn  
to be kind

~~

## Bessemer II

For an old sin  
he drifts forever  
in sight of the harbour  
Never able  
to move against the flow  
of the river

My thoughts a harbour  
my memories a river  
Am I to drift  
until my death  
never able to land  
forever on rough waters

~~

## The Way

Arriving at last  
at the top of the hill  
hoping to see the way  
And we look

no, no,  
every direction  
trees, just trees

~~



## She Was There

A dirt road  
a heavy summer day  
and moving around a curve  
she was there

Long skirt  
flowing blouse  
under the pines  
as I drifted by

~~



## Hwy 3

Moving through the night  
my mother driving  
My sister and I  
in pyjamas

Heading home  
from another town  
I watch for lights  
houses, villages  
in the distance

And I silently will  
my mother to drive  
through towns

where people are living  
where lights happen  
where everyone is happy

~~

## A Stone

He kept a stone  
in a jar of water  
This boy

He waited  
for the stone  
to soften

If a stone can soften  
he thought  
So might his father  
~~

## Hard Bargain

If I work hard  
to produce things of beauty  
will you gods above  
grant me a few more years  
in which to make them?

~~



## The Alarm Rings

I would stay  
five minutes longer  
just to watch her sleep  
before getting out of bed

~~

## I Spot Eunice

Is it a reward  
or a punishment

She's not my wife  
that much is obvious  
but she's the same age  
as when we were together

Taller, with black hair  
but the mouth  
the nose  
those delicate wrists  
the way she walks

Thank you, to whatever power  
let me sit here  
and watch her for a moment

~~



## Selfies

Selfies of her  
and me

I never saw her take  
another photograph  
and she never sowed me  
another photograph

Just selfies  
her and me

~~



## Brenda

Photo after photo  
of cute couples  
obviously models

Well lit  
in exotic locations  
obviously stock images

and what of us  
my life long friend  
what do we have  
for forty years together

We were never cute  
We were never frolicking  
in exotic locations

We just slogged on  
for forty years

Just slogged on  
~~

## **She Would Read To Him**

She would read to him  
his old letters  
and he would dream  
of the women he knew

Never jealous  
only pleased for him  
she read of old joys  
and old heartaches

Of the days he felt both  
of the nights in heaven  
and the days in hell  
and she held him close

~~

## Old Timer

Not so very long ago  
this was all fields  
he would say

And his children, nodding  
would roll eyes at each other  
They had moved just last month  
~~

## Sex / No

He dreamed of a time  
when he held her tight  
and she cried out  
as she came

So very long ago  
and now he holds her tight  
just to know he's here  
Still here

~~

## Robin

I saw an old photo  
and remembered I rowed  
for the city of Guelph  
once in front of the Queen

And I saw a girl  
and thought, I knew her  
I'm sure I did  
how well did I know her

I read an old note  
and I cooked her dinner  
and I thought I should ask  
I wonder if I did

~~



## Secret Being

I move to the sink  
push closed three drawers  
and two cupboard doors

This is my job  
I am the secret being  
who closes doors  
others leave open

And now  
secret no more

~~

## Author Blues

There is a book, waiting  
almost plotted in my head  
but I seem only to have  
two coffees worth of writing

Instead I scan an old journal  
a run of several years  
because the knowledge  
should not disappear  
as my things are thrown out

Tomorrow, another story  
and perhaps some writing  
left over for the book

~~



## Massage, No Happy Ending

A naked woman straddles me  
lotion on her hands  
She reaches for me  
and I feel nothing but pain

~~

## Too Much?

Got to watch my percentages  
I think my magical realist book  
may be slipping into fantasy  
I'll need to look it up on the net

~~

## The Gully

The gully behind our house  
was full of wonders  
a stream with rocks  
to build pools

an oil well  
that seeped rainbows  
into the water

Brush and dead trees to explore  
lined on the banks every spring

A swimming hole  
with a rope on a tree  
Lamprey Eels every year

If you walked down the bank  
you came to the broken dam

and the clay banks  
were good for childhood sculpture  
~~

## Pam and Port

Double digit temperatures  
mean a road trip  
to my home town  
where cookery treasures  
will be found by Pam

I will drive  
and she will work  
in her mobile office  
powered by coffee  
cookies, and me

~~



## To the Sauna

The path to the sauna  
is muddy  
but there is snow still  
piled along the sides

Do I risk a slip  
on the mud  
or on the snow bank

I must risk  
to get to the heat  
that saves me  
from the snow  
~~

## **Broken Pipe**

Cast iron pipe  
broken by fallen stone

Still working  
filled with running water  
that smells of sewage

~~

## Dreaming of Heat

Bodies slippery with sweat  
lying as far apart  
as possible  
on a bed made with one sheet

A fan in the window  
blowing hot evening air  
across bodies, past cooling  
stalling, half way, spilling the heat

I remember summer nights  
I remember sex  
that was just fingers touching  
from two sides of a bed  
~~

## Moving In

It was all still to happen  
the months of fighting  
followed by weeks of tears  
on one side  
and silence, tense as steel  
on the other

But for now  
the excitement of boxes  
full of everyday things  
being unpacked  
and stored away in cupboards  
in drawers and on shelves

~~



## Pam Listens

We drove around my home town  
and she heard all the old stories

That is where I was born  
and where I lived  
then we moved to there

That was the house of my first girlfriend  
and the ball diamond  
where I met my last girlfriend

There is the coffee shop  
where I met my friends

And she was kind  
she nodded as if she would remember  
something that she had no reason  
to remember

Helping me to remember  
~~

## Edna Taylor

Her kitchen cupboard filled  
with cans that  
like an archaeology dig  
are silted down year on year

At the bottom  
were cans from the 1950s  
and the cultural context  
was obvious

My grandmother lived  
through the crash  
and through the war  
and was never going hungry again

Her best piece of advice  
to me  
duly passed along  
to my children

Never go into debt  
~~



## There Were Never Curtains

When the afternoon sunlight  
flowed through my father's window  
it shone through grime  
onto dust  
and through glasses  
filled and refilled  
with rum and coke

It shone on the old man  
in his broken down chair  
so that he held up his hand  
to block the sun  
as he watched another  
nature documentary  
With me on the couch  
watching him

~~

## She was Sure

She was sure  
that animals could not love  
but only stayed together  
out of mutual benefit  
For steady sex  
For the offspring  
For comfort and protection

I nodded and agreed  
not wanting another fight  
over what an idiot I was  
To be told  
how I disrespected her

Yes, I said  
Only humans know  
the true meaning of love

~~

## Enthusiastic

She was nothing  
if not enthusiastic

Please love me  
like an animal  
and please

a small bruise

~~

## Springtime Walk

We were walking  
a couple of photographers  
a model  
perhaps a couple of friends

Deep in the woods  
late spring snow  
the last, saved by shadow  
and I said, a chance

A chance for a photo  
a nude in the snow  
and we laughed, but  
the model was disrobing  
~~

## White Raisins

Seventeen virgins, he said  
I will get seventeen virgins  
when I am martyred

And I said to him  
have you ever had a virgin  
they are no great prize

And I said to him  
only seventeen  
is that not unambitious

And I said to him  
perhaps a different goal  
perhaps 72 white raisins  
~~



## How To Fly

I wanted to fly  
and so outside the laundromat  
I spread my arms  
hoping the Mayflies  
would grab my shirt  
and fly upward

Spread, as on a cross  
they did indeed land  
but when they flew again  
they forgot to take me  
As I dropped my arms  
I heard a voice saying  
There is the bridge

~~



## Christ Anglican

I went one spring  
to the blessing of the nets  
in the Anglican church

an old one  
a small one

and the fishermen  
bowed their heads

~~

## Summer Warmth

The creeks, swollen  
chunks of ice  
thrown up on the bank  
and I roll up my pants  
take off my socks  
and wade in

Hoping to catch the feel  
of sand shifting  
in the water  
sliding between my toes  
I hope to remember summer

But my toes go numb  
my ankles hurt  
and I step out of the creek  
to summer warmth in my feet  
on a zero degree day

~~

## Signs of Spring

The first days of spring  
smell of corruption  
the rot of leaves  
held under snow  
for several months

Contrary to expectation  
the first days of spring  
offer nothing more  
than the faint offering  
of growth to come

~~

## **Penny in Her Capri**

A blue Mercury Capri  
and she would drive  
the windows down

and I, sitting beside  
would look at her face  
the wind blowing her hair

and she would be free  
and I clung to her  
for just as long as I could

~~

## **Abi in the Box**

In half an hour  
I will take my pills

I think this evening  
I will fill my pill box

two tablets per day  
for two weeks  
done twice  
and I've lived another month

another ten years  
if I fill that box  
210 times  
Better get to it  
~~

## Soon After I Bought One

Today it tickled me  
today I remembered  
we wrote with fountain pens  
when I was a child

I am sure  
that ball point pens  
were available  
but for some reason, denied

~~



## Euni Remembered

Susanne Vega sings  
from the computer speakers  
and forty years ago  
she sang from my PSBs

That delicate chin  
that haircut  
so like Euni's  
and she returns to me

So little left  
of three years together  
three years in the same bed  
So little left

Her delicate wrists  
but not the feel of her hands  
The flash of her eyes  
as she fluttered her lashes  
~~



## High School Weekends

Those radio tunes of my youth  
driving the back roads  
a case of beer on the back seat

three or four of us  
windows open  
empty bottles tossed  
at stop signs and mailboxes  
generally hitting the ditch

Brothers Gibb  
Doobie Brothers  
Allman Brothers  
Family Stone  
and our family of brothers

united by the boredom  
of a country high school

~~

## Trunk Tetris

Demanding boxes  
and knapsacks

I would perform trunk tetris  
before each road trip  
and I was given thirty seconds  
to admire my work

before the rag-bag plastic sacks  
the last minute shoes  
and that somehow forgotten cooler  
would show up behind the car

~~

## Anais Nin

It is unfair of the universe  
that I was not older  
or she younger

It is unfair that Anais Nin  
was not my lover  
~~

## Facebook Life

What am I looking at?  
blank square of screen  
typing until the letters shrink  
to a decent size

Cat screaming to be fed  
the last six hours  
as he was fed twice  
but thinks by screaming, food appears  
~~

## Photographs of Love

I call for images of love  
on google search  
and I receive dross

Commercial trash  
not a speck of originality  
in the lot  
~~



## Word Photography

I call for images of hate  
and google gives me the word  
written, typed,  
Just the word out of context  
~~

## Eunice Picks a Flower

In one of my books  
I found a violet  
placed there so long ago  
by a woman I loved

I gaze at it fondly  
hoping she was happy  
that her life continues  
and I gently close the book

~~

## Signs of Eunice

She collected such strange things  
and left them around our apartment

When she moved out  
some of them remained  
Were they forgotten  
or unwanted?

Did she think of them  
in a random breeze of memory  
like the bush scratching the screen

I kept them safe  
through two moves  
to my present house  
Where they are left around the place  
in random arrangements

~~



## I Find Eunice in Bed

She is lying on her back  
as I enter the bedroom  
She knows what I like  
and rolls onto her stomach

Lifts her feet and crosses them  
at the ankle  
Rests her chin on her hands  
and looks at me  
from under those bangs

But I am looking at her ass  
the sway of her lower back  
and those twin dimples  
those twin dimples

She smiles to herself

~~

## I'm Not Touching Them

I can imagine the cottage  
a winter's full of flies  
all awakened by sun  
through windows  
and then dying  
in the frozen darkness

I can imagine they will sit there  
under the window  
until I come for them  
with brush and vacuum  
The only one who can

~~

## Along the Drive

Along the drive  
up to our cottage  
we have created a puddle  
from water that does not drain  
and some years  
Salamanders

~~

## Kim the Editor

Such things as magazines  
begun with such enthusiasm  
bright, hopeful things  
and then, inevitably,  
comes the double issue  
June/July

~~



## **I Read of a Crate**

As I read of a crate  
a box to hold fruit

I think of fruit  
and you must now excuse me

I know where  
there is a pear

~~

## Random

Every so often  
Once in a while

A girl would come home with me  
and stay for several days  
Maybe a weekend  
Maybe a week

And then she would leave  
Most often  
with a kiss

But she would never  
come back  
~~

## A Reason to Live

I remember fondly  
and with the same gentle smile  
as I remember an old love

I remember the moment  
when my prick was first swallowed  
by that holy place  
between her legs

A new conversation  
A new day  
A new reason to live  
I remember fondly  
~~

## Disposable Things

How difficult it is to imagine  
the incredible strength  
of those who cared for children  
and by superhuman effort  
managed to see those children  
as things

Disposable things

~~



## He Will Protect Me

The first day  
and Our Lord decrees  
the disease is gone  
so take off your masks

And in the coffee shop  
And in the thrift shop  
I see those  
who Jesus loves  
with a personal love

Their masks removed  
so He can recognize them  
~~

## Thirty Minutes

Just half an hour

I had thirty minutes  
before her bus  
before she left my life

Thirty minutes  
to convince her to stay

~~



## **Borrowed Time**

When I was a child  
I would daydream  
as a child does  
Of my future life

When I was a child  
the oldest I ever saw myself  
was 23  
and I was in university

That daydream came true  
that time came and went  
and the rest of my life  
has felt like borrowed time  
~~

## Two Moons

Tonight, I saw two moons  
I saw one with you  
We admired it's fullness  
as we held hands

And later, when you had left  
I saw another moon  
so very cold  
and empty

~~

## All I Could See

I would come home  
and catch her napping

Her leg on top  
of the blankets  
her arms around a pillow

I noticed those things  
much later  
because all I could see  
was her flank

that wonderful curve  
from ass to thigh

All I could see  
~~

## Milestones

The day she walked out  
of our bedroom  
wearing a pair of my underwear  
and she said

Mine are in the laundry  
as she went past

Daring me to say something

~~

## Reading Her Book

She would sit in the stairwell  
reading her book  
her back on one side  
her foot up the wall  
on the other

She would never move  
as I tried to get past  
Making a giant step  
over her  
over two steps

and every time  
every single time  
she would grab my ass  
and giggle

~~

## **She Pranced By**

She pranced by  
on tiptoe  
and I had only a moment  
to kiss her

If I didn't  
I was in trouble  
~~



## Milestones II

There was a special moment  
in some of my relationships

It was the night  
we slept together  
without fucking

I would wake with a smile  
thinking  
This one will last a while

~~



## Happy Dance

She would dance for me  
in the shower  
when she had been away

Her happy dance  
and I would scrub her back  
and she would scrub mine

Both happy

~~

## Studio Nudes

A woman walks onto the backdrop  
and starts to pose

I kick a light toward her  
and start to take photographs

For ten years  
this was my life  
Often three times a week

kicking lights around  
looking for accidents

~~

## **They Call It Growing Up**

The sleepless nights  
of a failing relationship  
are, one would hope  
a thing of one's youth

But those nights  
are soon replaced  
with the sleeping nights  
of problems at work

~~

## **Waking Up Worried**

Six hours  
of tossing and turning  
do not make  
for a good sleep

So get up old man  
get up and work  
at whatever gives your life  
some sort of meaning

~~

## Four AM

The stripes of light  
through a Venetian blind  
falling across the body  
of a woman  
lying on my bed

The street lamp  
The blind  
The woman  
Four AM

~~

## Three Crows

Three crows  
over the door  
of my favourite pub

You're going to die  
You're going to die  
You're going to die they croak

Hello gentlemen, I say

You're right  
You're right  
You're right  
~~

## A Sharp Tongue

She had a sharp tongue  
and the words were formed  
into spears

sentences of polished steel  
that pierced me

quick, quick, snick snick  
and I lay bleeding

~~





## The Laundromat

Eventually  
I got old enough  
to decide  
my mother should not  
be doing my laundry

So my girlfriend and I  
would gather our clothes  
into garbage bags  
and walk down the block  
pockets full of change

We would lean together  
watching the clothes spin  
warm and drowsy  
comfortable with each other  
on those plastic chairs

~~

## Good Old Days

The good old days  
are something that happened  
in TV sitcoms, mostly

I don't remember  
the good old days  
so much  
as those old days  
where the muscles sometimes  
did not ache

~~

## Like a Bear

Like a bear atop a waterfall  
she stood and waited  
for that great leap of my heart

and she caught it  
firmly in her jaws

and the next thing I knew  
she was running through the water  
with my heart flopping

happy, sad, happy, sad  
~~

## Little Tube Top

A stretchy little tube top  
and she would grin

Take the top edge  
and pull it up  
under her chin

exposing the bottom  
of her breasts

Somewhere around that time  
I would reach for her

~~

## The Remains of Winter

A cold spring rain  
and I'm 15  
wandering across the sand  
still almost frozen

The remains of winter  
At the waterline is ice  
in chunks bigger than cubes  
much bigger than the flakes  
my uncle's machine makes  
to go out with the boats  
and keep the fish fresh

The remains of winter  
in my chest as well  
She has gone  
and I walk this lonely wet beach  
digging my toe into holes  
to see how deeply frozen  
is the sand

~~

## A Train

A train whistle  
the thump of big diesels  
The sound carrying  
from tracks a block away

In dry winter  
the sounds seem more quiet  
but this humid air

This cold rain  
seems to bring them near  
~~



## A Slap

This coffee  
in a rust-pocked  
metal mug  
Tastes like blood

Reminds me of a slap  
I received too many years ago  
and the blood from my cheek  
sliced by my teeth

Reminds me of a nose  
bloodied and broken  
the red warmth trickling down  
the back of my throat  
~~

## My Story Told

A story once told  
a biography written  
And the memory  
can be released

The past was never meant  
to be held in our heads  
Before we could write  
we spoke

Let it go  
leave it with another  
leave it on the page  
And turn forward  
~~



## International Plowing Match of 1974

She was willing enough  
to go with me  
for the day

We wandered amongst the tractors  
the farm equipment  
the plowed fields

and like those fields  
I found nothing  
nothing to say

A sort of sadness  
a melancholy silence  
hung over us  
~~

## Her Skin

Her skin was porcelain  
alabaster  
It was very white  
and she would stare  
into the distance  
not moving  
for minutes at a time

My very own Greek statue  
It was all I could do  
not to stroke her cheek  
and ruin the pose

I thought of a sign  
"Do not touch the stone  
finger acid will destroy it"  
and I believed that

~~

## His Things

Nothing but a thing  
sired by him  
on a thing

she could be used  
in any way he wished

He owned these things  
and we all understand

you can do what you wish  
with what is yours

~~

## My Party, Right or Wrong

Poor white trash  
with a grade 9 education  
got to have someone  
to blame their lives on

Some internal enemy  
that ain't white,  
and uneducated

Lookit them ummigints  
Them refugees  
them elites

don't look over here  
remember, remember  
Less education  
more obedience

~~

## A Quiet Girl in BC

Ah, a quiet girl I thought  
a smooth re-entry  
to my country  
Just what my hangover needs  
and she smiled nicely

"Anything to declare"  
no, nothing  
"No booze?"  
no, no booze

"Ah and what is this," she said  
pulling a bottle of vodka  
from where it was sticking out  
of a pocket

I've never seen that before, I try  
"Just over here sir,  
where we will rip your pack apart  
and leave you  
and your hangover  
to put it back together"  
~~

## Always a Welcome

Decades

I would drop in on her  
in her cabin in the woods  
and she always had a welcome  
always a meal  
and a warm bed

She would ask about my life  
and never tell me hers  
it was enough that I was there  
and she was there  
with a warm meal  
and a bed

~~

## Gilbertville

Two of us  
in a rowboat  
crawling around a field  
in trenches  
cut into the sand

"Are you OK?" she said  
"Yes, I'm OK," I said  
"It's just that you haven't said  
a word since we began to float."  
"Oh"  
~~



## **New Fountain Pen**

In an art store  
I buy a fountain pen  
"I haven't used one  
since I was eight."

"This one has green ink," she said  
and I replied "I wrote in green ink  
for many years."

But I stopped myself  
from telling her  
I was a poet  
and somehow green ink  
was what I needed  
~~



## Coyote Gets a Mullet

Coyote came to me  
and asked  
"What about a mullet"  
To eat? I said

"No the haircut,  
do you think I'd look good?"  
Coyote, I said,  
the mullet is so two decades ago

"Yes," he said, "time to bring it back"  
~~

## Did You Change the Thermostat?

Freezing, I put on a shirt  
over my shirt

Then sweating, I take off the shirt  
and wait for the next wave

Did you change the thermostat?

~~

## Coyote Thinks About Falling

How far can you fall  
when you fall  
for the rest of your life?

Coyote, I said  
if you fall from more than 50 feet  
you'll fall for the rest of your life

But what if I live  
for a hundred years  
how long will I fall then

Coyote, you won't  
if you fall for fifty feet  
you'll live for fifty feet  
~~

## Love Euni

It was just a birthday card  
that I kept for forty years

She had moved out  
months earlier  
and mailed it to me

No note, but she wrote  
Love Euni

~~

## **And A Cowbell**

A B3 and a cowbell  
Now that's a musical combination  
you don't hear any more

But get yourself back  
to 1971 and you'll hear  
that lovely sound  
of my high school years

~~

## No Point

I knew a girl once  
who liked a girl  
she kissed a girl  
she bedded a girl  
and she liked me  
kissed me  
bedded me

And this poem  
like this girl  
is of no importance  
Just a poem  
Just a girl  
No point at all  
Which is the point  
don't you think?

~~

## Janice On The Beach

She said hello  
her friends said  
hustle, hustle, hustle  
and she walked away

I watched her  
as she walked away  
down the beach

~~



## Another Janice

When I met her  
there was a flash  
in the corner of my eye

My instinct to bolt  
away from that flash  
that tiger in the bush

But all homo sapiens sapiens  
I overruled my reflex  
ignored my instinct

and stayed  
~~



## Edna My Grandmother

A penny a dandelion she said  
and I spent the afternoon  
with a trowel  
and a garbage bag

By the evening I said  
there were 400

And she said  
that many?  
Are you sure?

~~

## Joe Sharp the Blacksmith

In my shop  
is an aluminum horseshoe

Given to me  
by the village blacksmith

I know the horse it came from  
but I would have to go to the shop  
to read it's name  
from the back of the shoe

~~

## In My Shop

In my shop  
is a mobile  
made of fifteen medals  
for winning fifteen  
intramural volleyball championships

Friends have come and gone  
and accused me of theft

But I tell you now  
my new friend

I won every one of them  
not knowing what to do with them  
made the mobile

not knowing where to hang it  
hung it in my shop

~~

## **From Janice' Apartment**

I turn my collar against the wind  
and jam my hands  
deep into pockets

Once more it is 3am

Once more I am walking home  
from her apartment  
from another argument

Once more my collar turned  
once more my hands jammed

~~

## A Hot Summer

She stood up  
from the bench

and her white shirt  
stuck to her breasts  
soaked with sweat

She hadn't bothered  
to button it  
see through as it was

What would be the point  
~~

## A Bike Ride

A bit of a bike ride  
My son, his friend  
Mom and Dad

A hot day  
the ride to the lake  
making for sweaty arms

The lake, deserted  
where we were  
and my son hides his eyes

While his parents strip down  
and go for a swim  
laughing  
~~



## A Mind of Her Own

She went away  
to summer camp  
a girl on the cusp

She came back a woman  
in every sense of a shirt  
filled nicely out

and a mind of her own  
not that borrowed thing  
from her parents

~~



## A Father's Wish

A hell of a thing  
to say to a kid  
"I think the line  
should die with you"

Well it hasn't old man  
and be damned to you

And I'll not tell either child  
a thing about it

They can make up their own  
if they wish  
or not  
Without my advice  
Or yours  
~~

## On My Knees

I know lots of Japanese names  
for sitting on my knees  
Far more than I know  
for standing up

Well, they say budo  
the art of fighting  
begins and ends with etiquette

although I'm not sure  
what that has to do  
with smacking someone  
on the side of the head

~~

## Hungry Students

She's good in the bar  
our wolf-girl  
The plates of wings  
half eaten are fair game  
"there's good eating  
in the marrow"

Ah students  
always hungry

like a wolf  
~~

## The Worst Thing

I think the worst thing  
any woman  
ever said to me was

"I wish you well  
in your life  
I hope it's a good one"

I mean how the hell  
are you supposed to hate  
someone like that?

~~



## The Car Window

The rain came sideways  
revealing nothing at all  
through the car window

I looked anyway  
chin on hand  
stared hard, trying to see

something, anything  
anything but the words  
in my head

~~

## Longing for the Blues

There were days  
although more nights  
when I longed for the blues

Anything but the empty  
the nothing I felt  
inside my chest

~~

## Wrong

"You always disagree with me  
when I say that."

"Oh no, not always,  
only when you're..."

And she fell silent  
student not willing  
to tell teacher  
what she really thinks

And teacher stays silent  
silently proud  
that student is learning  
teacher can be wrong  
~~



## **Stoicism**

Some I watched dying  
some being buried  
Death doesn't frighten me  
but life scares me to death

Please Lucius, please Marcus  
Tell me how to live  
when it's so easy  
to die

~~

## **Fish Breath**

Fish breath wanders in  
announcing with mrrrs  
and yowls his presence

Up onto the bed  
with zero cat-like stealth  
as he lumps along  
up to the pillows  
to insinuate himself  
between two heads

His head on her shoulder  
his ass in my face  
~~

## Unexpected

Two books unexpected  
of poetry recently found  
Thomas King  
Herman Hesse

I see them now, on my desk  
and wonder when  
I will read them  
Expectantly waiting  
~~



## Too Full

I walk slowly from the kitchen  
a fork  
and a glass of milk  
the milk too full  
so I stop half way  
and drink enough  
that I don't spill it  
once again  
on the floor

~~

## Three Threads

I don't know where we were going  
in that land yacht of a car  
a Mercury the size of a barge

Tumpityityity each time I let off the gas  
Tumpityityity I thought maybe  
the universal joint

We pulled over  
from the 401 highway  
to have a look  
when it got louder

I kicked each tire  
and one of them  
flopped over a treat  
About three threads left  
on all five bolts

~~

## A Colville Painting

What is it like  
she said  
to live in a Colville painting

something disastrous  
just outside the frame

Some horrible event  
just a heartbeat past now

~~

## Coyote on the Beach

It's been a long winter  
but it's spring now  
let's go to the beach  
Coyote said

Coyote, I said  
It's minus fourteen  
it's bloody freezing  
It's spring, but it's not spring-like

Oh, but I'm tired  
of being cooped up inside  
are you sure  
it's not beach weather  
~~



## **Coyote is Gassy**

I'm so sorry  
Coyote said  
I seem to get gassy  
after dinner  
and I don't know why

You don't suppose  
Coyote  
that it might be three beers  
and a coke  
maybe  
~~

## **Pam in Chile**

When I sit quiet  
I sometimes reach back  
and find a treat  
in my memory

A bus ride  
to Isla Negra with Pam  
and a visit  
to Pablo Neruda's home

To wander through  
rooms of his possessions  
to giggle at a thousand  
empty bottles  
and the men's bathroom  
with its fine art collection

A treat for those quiet times  
when I sit silent  
When you may see me smile  
~~

## Coyote Asks Again

Is it spring-like yet  
because I'd really like  
to get outside  
and play on the beach

Coyote, you asked that  
ten minutes ago  
and the answer is still the same  
It's minus fifteen out

~~

## She Was Very Tall

I wondered what she would look like  
if she was much taller  
and so I lay down on my back  
and looked up her legs  
past her knees  
past white panties  
all the way up  
past boobs much smaller  
than they were  
and she was very tall  
but her head was tiny

~~

## **My Coffee House Life**

In Smale's place in London  
the Black Swan in Ottawa

The Carden Street Cafe  
and countless others

Coffee with demerara sugar  
and someone with a guitar

That was a good four years

~~



## In My Notebooks

In my notebooks  
I find myself at music venues  
I don't remember

sometimes with girls  
I don't remember

But I am comforted  
that I was there

~~

## A Good Day

The king lost the ring  
the philosopher gave him  
and the bowl to hold the world  
was gone

The painting that showed love  
was lost in a flood  
and the clothing he bought  
that nobody could see  
was moth eaten

The clever man  
who asked for grains of rice  
was buried under the pile

It was a good day  
and the King was happy

~~



## **Junk Fish**

A fat sheephead fish  
dead on the pier  
drying in the sun  
not stinking at all

Don't throw it back  
you caught it  
and it's a junk fish  
its proper place the pier  
~~

## Someone Farts

You farted under the blanket  
I said  
No, it wasn't me  
she said  
It was Coyote, he did it

I looked  
and Coyote shook his head  
So I had to conclude  
that it must have been me  
I'm sorry, I said  
~~

## Monster

Are you going to leave that bag  
in your tea  
while you drink it

And what I heard was  
You eat small song birds  
live, feathers and all  
~~

## **Saturday Matinee**

The walk down the aisle  
to your favourite seat  
a different one each week  
and the time  
you stare at a blank screen

That feeling in your soul  
when the lights dim  
and you know the movie  
will soon begin

~~

## Abnormal Mind

Once more I am told  
my mind is weird  
my thinking not normal  
and I wonder again  
why it is, that I miss reality  
one more time

It is a mystery  
that I am not dead  
my grasp of the world  
should not have got me here  
Long ago  
with my weird thinking  
I should have died

~~

## Winter Camping

Nowhere near Hudson's Bay  
in our canvas tent

The snow falling quietly  
built up on trees and tent

The tent moving from ten feet  
to five, rolling us together

and the trees, weighed down  
branches breaking

one of them scraping down the tent  
and snapping the tip off my ski

~~

## Cities in the Desert

What will happen to the city  
when the water is gone  
when the glacier is melted  
down to bare gravel

What will happen to the city  
when the rains no longer  
water the crops  
Drill wells you say

Create those circles of green  
you see flying over Idaho  
or is it a Dakota  
On your way to where it's wet

Perhaps, once the well is dry  
we will move to another place  
and leave the city alone  
to crumble and blow away

~~

## Memory Flashes

Before I was two  
I existed only in the memory  
of my mother and my father

Once I was two  
I had memories of my own  
but after twenty  
those memories crawled  
away from me  
and back to my mother

More and more of them  
with her, and not with me  
until she died

And now they flap around loose  
giving me flashes  
like some pervert in a raincoat  
on a dark path  
~~



## Coyote Tries Again

Coyote says  
I sang the world into being  
I made it all  
I can shift time  
I can create space

And Coyote's friends laugh  
Good one, Coyo  
That's one of your best  
How you going to top that

And Coyote sang  
the world out of existence  
and tried again  
~~

## **My Mother's Album**

Here are your 30 pieces of silver  
Thirty photographs  
of you as a baby  
as a toddler  
and your grandfather  
your father

These are all you have  
of the time when they lived  
and you lived with them  
flashes, not of memory  
you were too young  
but flashes of silver in a book  
~~

## Lake Erie

Where you grew up  
you could sit on the beach  
close to the water  
for days at a time  
and never get wet

There are no tides  
in a lake  
just a gentle slosh  
from one end to the other  
like getting into a clawfoot tub

Your grandmother had one  
A clawfoot tub  
and you would bathe there  
every weekend  
until you were too old

But when you were too old  
for a bath  
you would swim in that lake  
with no tides  
only a slosh

You would come out wet  
and somewhat more clean  
but after your towel  
the fragments of sticks  
and weeds would be gone

~~

## A Tourist Town

In November  
all the tourist shops close

and for the snowy months  
the town sleeps quietly  
waiting for May

waiting to be resurrected  
by the Holy Gorby

When the silver sound  
of change changing hands  
will be heard again

~~



## In My Religion

In my religion  
the world was made of dust  
by the holy power of gravity  
and its helper time

From that thing  
all things came  
requiring no more help  
and Man came along  
with no need for help

man was made of pink flesh  
not dust  
not mud  
Not in my religion  
~~

## I Will Live Forever

I don't know about you  
but I will live forever

They will cremate me  
or bury me  
in such a way that I can escape  
and bits and pieces of me  
will scatter flutter  
around the world

I made them promise me  
that they would not try  
to trap me insulated  
isolated from the world  
where I will be just dead  
of no more use to anything

Dead until all is dead  
They'd better understand  
my religion  
and let me have another life  
as a flower, a bee, or a rock  
~~

## 100 Minutes

I would like to live in a movie  
I think  
100 minutes  
we find a problem  
someone has some trouble  
but in the end  
they solve the problem

Wouldn't that be nice  
to live in a place  
where people find problems  
and then solve them?  
I think I would like to live there  
in the land of 100 minutes  
~~



## Encanto Understands

Encanto understands  
the overwhelming pressure  
put upon latin american women

That's what it says  
in the email I received today  
That's a good thing, right?  
Encanto will now fix the problem  
of overwhelming pressure  
on Latin American women

And then Encanto can start in  
on the overwhelming pressure  
put on Asian women  
or perhaps African women  
or maybe European women

At least I hope so

~~

## Dark Eye Shadow

Look out now  
he has dark eye shadow  
all around his eyes

He must be brooding  
with a dark past  
and a tortured soul

Maybe he wears a black mask  
Better stay away

~~



## My Religion Might Be Wrong

My religion has no arguing  
no trying to convince others  
that my way is the best

That's because my religion  
says "I might be wrong"  
and "Here, let me test that"

My religion says  
"I can be proved wrong by experiment  
but I can't be proved right by faith"

It's a funny old religion  
we mostly fight with our own ideas  
instead of with each other

~~

## Maybe Dead is Dead

I never saw the appeal  
of doing what the mucky-mucks say  
so that some day  
when I'm dead  
I get to do what I want  
for-ever-more, make-it-so

Instead of mucky-mucking around  
on somebody else's say-so  
I always thought  
I'd do what I want now  
just in case there's no place to do it  
when I'm dead

~~

## Is Life Stupid?

If life is stupid  
please let me know  
if it's my fault

No, really  
I'd like to know  
and I will think it over  
and maybe I'll try to fix it

Or maybe not  
if I decide it's not me  
that is stupid

But wait, how do I know  
if I'm stupid  
if I'm stupid

OK tell me I'm stupid  
and then you can run things  
and we'll see if it gets less stupid

~~

## Look, Over There

Look, over there  
don't they look suspicious  
those horrible men  
in their horrible clothes  
and their masks

No, keep looking  
make sure you don't look away  
listen hard to their gibberish  
Damn it  
Why is your wallet so hard to remove  
~~

## Five Years

Bowie gave us five years  
but he was just a singer

The scientists give us twenty  
that's plenty

We'll work it out Wednesday  
fifteen years from today

OK

~~



## Water From Fiji

You can have the oceans for free  
nobody is going to pay  
for salt water  
But let me put a well in here  
I know some people  
who will pay for that water  
if I put it in plastic bottles

And some of it  
I'll say comes from Fiji  
I'll import dehydrated water  
from there  
and reconstitute it here  
I bet it will sell  
a treat  
~~



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