

Coyote Spring



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Introduction

Unlike Coyote, I wonder how many more months there will be in my own spring. I am getting close to that Winter that comes to us all eventually, and so I think a lot about each book at the end of the month. Will it be my last, will there be one that is unfinished.

It seems obvious there will be, unless I get a different hobby.

It's cold, rainy, dreary. I'll feel better when the sun comes and stays more than a day or two.

Coyote comes in many forms, these are one of my favourites. The photographs come from a makeup shoot in 2012

~~

Kim Taylor, April 2023



Coyote Spring

Coyote was happy
The warm weather had arrived
And he was ready to play
But it was April
And we all know how April goes

It got cold again
There was snow
There was rain
And Coyote went back to his den
“Call me when it’s really Spring”
~~

Storm Drain Song

As I walked in the warmer weather
a sound from my youth
the one before the country
came to my ear

It was a sound of spring
the sound of water falling
into the storm drains
as the snow melted

Sure, the snowdrops
and the crocus were appearing
but that sound
More familiar than Robin's song

Something I don't remember
from the DDT years
~~

Coyote Helps Wind Wool

In all the years
I held the skein
or wrapped the ball
nobody ever said no
to an offer of help

A bit offended
I looked later to see
Pam was carefully winding
a ball that she would use
from the inside out

~~

My Favourite

It will soon be the time
of the dragon-flies
and I hope I am there
for the big bruisers
wide shoulders
big eyes

They are my favourite
because often
searching for a warm place
they will land on my head
A living bow
for my long, gone, hair
~~

Euni Knitting

Oh my girl, my beautiful girl
I hope, after you left
you married happily
and more than that
I hope you have grandchildren
playing around your feet
as you knit sweaters
for them all

You told me once
you were knitting, "Knitting!"
and I smiled
I could see you there
settled on a couch
needles clicking in your hands

Funny, the couch
it looked like the one
in our apartment
~~

Bronze and Gold

So very still
the air in this room
so very loud
the ticking of the clock

I sit motionless
afraid to break the spell
that takes me back to you
back to that apartment
high over the tracks

to that dormer
where a long gone chair
would hold us both
you, legs spread over arms
bouncing
~~

Thank You Coyote

Is there a being
supernatural, up high
or deep in the earth
That I can thank

Thanks that I was never
an academic
trying to teach poetry
while writing my own

I am certain
I would have had no joy
from either
~~

So Soon Gone

Thoughts and prayers
Thank you for your service
I'm sorry for your loss

Of such meaningless noise
comes the destruction
of civilization

~~

Coyote Comfy

Sitting inside
on my padded chair
wearing fluffy slippers
and a long sleeved shirt
in a house warmer today
for milder weather
In other words
warm inside

I listen to the wind
outside the walls
~~

My Coyote

A happy man
a fortunate man
that I have a thought
now and then
of her

the one who loved life
the one I loved
the one who, one day
with a giggle and a smile
tried to kick a pigeon

She failed, spun
and looked to see
what I thought of that

~~

On The Street

There are too many
and amongst them too many

Once, in a small town
that man was known
and wherever he went
eyes pressed into him

But here, in a city
there are not enough eyes
to press on all those men
and women too
who need help
before they explode

Nobody to say
"don't, not today,
tomorrow may be better"
Somewhere is a tipping point

somewhere, at some number
nobody gives a shit
and everybody must be viewed
with suspicion

~~

Three Cats

Three cats walked with me today
none of them mine

Three cats who trusted my foot
would not seek their ass

How is it that cats
have better instincts than men

Cats give the benefit of the doubt
Men doubt the benefit

~~

Self-Learner

Those horrible high school dates
Nobody ever told me
what we were supposed to do

Necking for hours, apparently
trying to get around all the bases

But I was never a great kisser
had to be taught in University
along with Biophysics

With no hints from those dates

I eventually got around to asking
"Do you want to stay the night?"

~~

Coyote's Floppy Ear

Reading the anthology
of Canadian poetry
I run across the dog-eared page

and later
the poem assigned
to the previous owner
marked up completely
explanations written carefully

Very nice
worth an extra few minutes
to know all about PK Page

~~

I Own This Land, Coyote Says

The clay cliffs of Lake Erie
are like rock
when dry
but like soup
when soaked with rain

And the farmer plows
right to the edge
and then is amazed
to see his house
go over the side
on a rainy autumn day
~~

I Live There Still

There is a photograph
forty years old
she wears her mullet
before it had a name

legs tucked up
book in her lap
she is wearing a turtleneck
with a white cotton shirt
sleeves rolled up

I didn't need a photograph
to remember her so
She is there always
that moment just before
she would look up
and smile

~~

Coyote Never Knew

The shock
it was always a shock
to realize those women
I loved so much
loved me

~~



Her Clumsy Old Man

Lately I am unsure
if I will stand or stagger
so I rise slowly, carefully
where once I would bounce
careless of my balance
careless of my footing

If I slipped
no bother, Billy
I'd catch myself or fall
I knew how to fall

I stand and this time stagger
my foot nudging something
half finished on the floor
and hear her breath hiss
hear a mutter, "careful"

Trust me
I'm as careful as I can be
I'm not sure any more
that my bones won't break
Oh yes, I am careful
~~

Coyote the Clown

What I wouldn't do
for a smile

Act the fool

the lover

anything to see
that delicate bow
of her mouth
curve upward

Her eyes
fixed on mine
or on the nonsense
that amuses her

Just a smile
that's all I need
to feel present
to feel alive

Just a smile
~~

Did I Really

Did I really tell my father
alone in a hospital ward
hooked to an IV
and barely able to speak

Did I really tell him
that it was all right
to let go
Is that memory true

Something dug up
on a Sunday morning
twenty years later
I don't know, I don't know

~~

At Silence

She came out of the bedroom
walked to the kitchen
and then back again
I was reading and watched her
she didn't say hello

We were not there yet
not in the place
where we could be comfortable
saying nothing
simply living together

I worried
I fretted
had I done something
Had I forgotten something
What had I done

Eventually, instead of thinking
I watched
and realized, with a start
that we were there now
She was comfortable with silence
~~

Having Said It

Having said it
I could not take it back
and I stood and watched
as I died in her eyes

I sank back and back
from her present
to her past
And I could not take it back

~~

I Did That

So many things
you forget
perhaps by choice

The days spent
in the fields
picking rocks
because it had to be done

Following slowly
beside the wagon
throwing rocks

Stooped down to the ground
back up again and heave
into the centre
and back down once more
to pick up the next

~~

Summer Wages

Riding the priming machine
you have your rows
and you pick tobacco
covering the same ground
day after day
three leaves at a time
into the basket
Four times?
Five?

I never counted
never knew which field
Just sat down in the green
tried not to catch a leaf
across the eye
picking
The only job around
~~

Coyote Settles It

"No woman of mine"
he began
and I held up my hand
stopped him right there

"No woman of yours
is surely correct
for you will have none
that you don't force
to be with you"

He didn't understand
and he walked away
I nodded to myself
No loss, no loss

~~

Fair Deal

"Don't come in here again"
he said
as he kicked us
small boys the three of us
each in the ass

We were running by then
and it didn't hurt
but we deserved it
this we knew

We stole something
I don't remember
but it wasn't much
What a small boy would steal

We felt no resentment
at that boot to the ass
This was long enough ago
that we knew he was right
and what we did was wrong
It was a fair deal

~~

Routine

Downtown again
with nothing to write
Downtown because
I need the walk
and one more coffee
already paid for
Another fifteen minutes
and I can walk back

~~

What Japanese Story

Awake at 3am
reading a Japanese story
because I can't sleep
It's always something
but I'm never worried
I can nap the afternoon away

Funny
It's not even my problem
but my mind gets caught
on just how petty, juvenile
and egotistical
people can be.

The mind boggles
and won't let it go
~~



Small Girl Day

Last evening was small girl day
I remembered three tiny women
that I bedded forty years ago
a rather interesting thing
to come to mind

I never minded much
what size they were
but maybe my sleepy mind
is trying to categorize

~~

Coyote Has The Answer

I asked my barista
for a refill
and a new book idea

Funny
he came up with the one
I had just written
~~

Early Bird

It's amazing
how many more sunny days
there are
when you get up at dawn
and go outside

The clouds sneak up
and cover the sun
a couple hours later
and those up after that
will count a cloudy day
~~

Same Difference

There is a half box of letters
behind me on the floor
they've been there forever
or at least a few months

I read about half
and was chased away
not wanting to read the others
the ones that might tell me

What?
That I was a prick?
That I was loved
and didn't love enough back

~~

Coyote Screws It Up

Up again at 4am last night
my brain awake, working hard
trying to fathom the world
and those who want to fuck it up
for no reason than that they can
or they think they can

Of course, to do that
they need those who won't say no
those who want to ignore
who don't have time
who simply don't care
"I'm all right Jack"

The solution
is to get up
read some
and go back to sleep
~~

Maybe Tomorrow

Every so often
I have the urge
to say something profound
but never finding it
I move on with my life

~~

Clever Baby

After a long labour
and an easy birth
all were shocked
at the red hair
which proved to be fur

and the fox jumped down
from the birthing table
and ran out the door
A nurse held it open for him
The mother, stunned

momentarily stunned
shouted, "Close the door"
but it was too late
and she spent years after
hunting for her child
hunting for that fox
in all it's red furred cleverness

~~

My Past, Dimly

The misty rain of the morning
gave a lovely look
to the city streets

and at one point
in my walk up Waterloo
I saw that college on the hill
swathed in drifts of mist

the residences
and the power stack
rising upward

~~

Coyote Bowed Too

I often go to the shore
and watch the sunset
"Ah nice one"
or
"Kind of a bust today"

But once
only once
I bowed deeply
as the sun sank
below the waves

Here is where
Gods are born
~~



Coyote Likes a Beer Too

I come from a line
of alcoholics
but I was a drunk

"He's not an alcoholic"
my mother said
"Trust me, you would know"

Just a drunk
just a guy
who liked to drink
and when I got cancer
I stopped drinking
Just like that

"Oh but you have a beer
once in a while"

I do, you are correct
I have one
and one is not
one too many
It's simply one
~~

Vantage Point

The flatness of her belly
taught, still
like a pond at midnight
like stretched and starched
pure white sheets
smelling of winter air

The sudden flex
that hump upward
followed by several more
as her head flew back
her eyes rolled up
and that joyful shout

~~

Summer Sweat

Both panting
covered in sweat
naked on a summertime bed
hearts pounding

She rolls off of me
and there is a gap
flesh, air, flesh
as we catch our breath

The fan above turns
the sweat slowly dries
our bodies cool
and the gap closes

She puts her head
onto my shoulder
drapes her hand
over my chest

And now, the best part
now it starts
that long slow drift
into sleep together

~~

Coyote's Choice

It's a lot of years
since I've felt a woman's hand
down my pants
my penis growing hard
the twinkle in her eye

I have traded that
for a few years more life
a bit more health
and if you'd asked me then
I might not be, now
~~

Sweat it Out

Three times yesterday
I had to reboot my computer
half way through photos
for a new poetry book
I swear, some days it's better
just to go back to sleep

Today the sauna is warming up
getting ready
for the next locked up computer
the next disruption
of my work flow
I'll sweat it out

~~

A Coyote Move

There are, I suppose
some stages of life
that you're not proud of
stages that you dislike
because they tell you
something about yourself

I'm thinking of the night
she was naked on the bed
and I came in late
Drinking with the boys

and for the first time
I was still angry
for the first time
I did not fuck a naked woman
lying on my bed

~~

Messy Gardens

Under bushes
and along the shed
where the sun doesn't go
are tiny, filthy bits
of the winter's snow

I have an urge to kick it
such is my fondness
for the cold season
But looking in the garden
looking at the leaves
matted and half rotted

I think, at least in winter
the depths of winter
after a snowfall
this place looks clean
neat, tidy
Like it never looks
elsewhen

~~

Loss and Gain

When I was a child
with a broken arm
they knocked me out
and when I woke
in the hospital hallway
I was sure I'd lost a day
That it was the next day

When I was a man
and they knocked me out
to sew up a hernia
I woke the next day
I was sure of it
although it was today

And now that I'm an old man
I have naps so deep
so still and quiet
that when I wake
I'm sure it's the next day
but far from feeling a loss
I feel I have gained
another day of life

~~

HAFU Pint

Again the shirt comes off
again I am sweating
hormones all fucked up
HAFU

Sounds sort of like Japanese
asking for a half pint
And like the hot flashes
this isn't making any sense

~~



Coyote Told Me This One

This is not my memory

although I've seen elk
across the Banff road
in the mist
at dawn
as I woke from fitful sleep
in a newspaper van
having hitched a ride

But the sight of a moose
chasing a bunch of campers
down the shore
and into the trees
while their Tripper laughed
That is not mine

Although I can see it clearly

~~

It's There I'm Sure

I see, from the corner of my eye
movement by the outlet
by the white electrical plug
but I don't look
for fear I will see nothing

My eyes are going
and I'd rather not see
strange things waving at me
from the corner of my eye
so I choose to believe it's there
~~

Dali's Lobster

On my sauna post
is a red metal lobster
with a tail
for your robe

A tribute to Dali
a surrealist touch
for your home
as the decorators
might say

More red now
than when I found it
because I painted it
against the rust
that will take us all
~~

Coyote Ducked Too

I always liked watching
our cats go out
and flatten to the ground
ears laid back
eyes wildly upward
as they scuttled under the bush

No bird-killers these
the Jays and the Robins
the Blackbirds and Starlings
had them well under control
as they peered from under the car
waiting for the door to open
and a mad dash inside

~~

Your Job Now

Eleven AM
and the sauna
with its lobster hanger
should be warm enough

An hour to sweat
then an hour to eat
and perhaps I will try
to edit the photos
for the last book

Cute backward references
completed
I leave this with you
~~

Coyote Says Good Morning

Is it strange
that I have conversations
with imaginary people
with extraordinary powers

Is it wrong
that my social life
is more at the edge
of my brain
than in my heart

I sit for coffee each morning
and say hello
to a bunch of characters
in a bunch of books
They talk and I type

Strange days indeed

~~

All Explained Now

How does it go again
Just start
the rest will follow
It seems to work
I hope for a long time
because when it stops
I will have stopped

Wait, all of it stops
so what am I worrying about
One can only start
When it stops
one cannot know
How wonderful it is
~~

I Would Gasp

I would lift the covers
and gasp
That curve along her back
and over her ass
smooth, pale skin
or black, rough with pores
it never mattered
I would gasp

and without thinking
I would run my hand
from her shoulder down
and over her ass
while she stirred, smiled
and then stretched
knowing that stretch
would draw another gasp

~~

Nobody Asked

No one ever asked
how many had been there
in my bed, before
And I never asked
I wasn't interested

But because nobody asked
I sometimes wondered
if I was no good in bed
Did she assume
a lack of experience
~~

My Favourite Meal

Who was your favourite cook
I was asked
Your favourite meal
that restaurant you think of

And all I can say
is that what stays with me
are those times
when a woman left the bed
to cook breakfast
and to make coffee

What was the breakfast
I don't know
The flavour of the coffee
I never noticed
Only that the bed was empty
but there were sounds
coming from the kitchen
Even now, I am smiling
~~



The Best Solution

No matter how angry
how ugly my mood
when she walked
into the room
straight over to me
and sat on my lap
put her arms around me
I was fine, just fine
the world was good
really good

~~

Not My Beach

Walking on Little Beach
a beach in the same place
as the one I grew up on
but not the same beach
not even close

We looked at the driftwood
at the stones
a well worn down brick
and some early spring swimmers
who were filming themselves

It was nice
to be on that beach
even if it was not
my beach
~~

Coyote's Pets

At night from the corner of my eye
I see shapes moving
black shapes
Cat sized
that dart into the dark corners

I see them, I look
and they are gone
shadow in shadow
I'm not surprised

They live in my house
and I never worry about them
Like centipedes
they scurry around
doing some good

The shadow creatures
eat bad memories
that fall to the floor
and roll into dark corners
~~

The Talisman

You said your love for me
was written in stone
That it would last
as long as the stone we saw
on the beach

That was a brick
and it was more than half way gone
but I knew what you meant
so I didn't pick the stone up
to keep it as a guide
~~

A Coyote Style Hint

New to this relationship stuff
I tried to be subtle
I tried to indicate indirectly
I got a plant
and gave it to her

You will need to water this
and fertilize it too
pay attention
give it a bit when it needs it
She killed it in a month
~~

The Small Joys

Stick to the small joys
the taste of coffee
an ice cream on a hot day
the first walk of spring

Stick to the small joys
and hope it stays that way
at least until the children
have had enough of life

If we can't do that
I hope they will forgive me
for bringing them forth
into what might soon be

~~

But I Drank

I drank a lot
not so long ago
It was something to do
I wasn't happy
but not unhappy either
Just moving through time

I never watched much TV
certainly no video games
Smart phones were not yet
My eyes were going
and I didn't know
so I didn't read
But I drank

~~

Past The Edge of the World

I'm from Canada he says
I'm from Ontario
and I'm with him so far

I'm from Toronto
and I think perhaps
he isn't really from Ontario
not really from Canada

But I say nothing
I nod and agree
thinking

Perhaps he will get there
One day perhaps
he'll get out of Toronto
~~

Japanese Girl

She was a lovely girl
made all the best noises
said, "It's so Big!"
when she saw it first
"I don't know if it will fit"

Such a nice girl
knew all the best words
I thought myself fortunate
that she was so far away
that I only saw her once
~~



I Never Smelled Like Coyote

I smell of nothing right now
certainly not a sweaty jock
Not without testosterone

It saves on showers

Once I smelled of fish
working in a shanty
for my great-uncle

I smelled of tobacco tar
for months at a time
during the harvests

I've smelled of burnt wood
and sawdust
common and exotic

I smelled sometimes of cement
as I mixed mortar
to lay blocks

I smelled of mud one summer
in the woods of Alberta
Yes, woods of Alberta

And I've smelled of cedar
when clearing the lane
to my cabin

I've smelled of much more
than the Old Spice
gifted me by my daughter

And when I smell
of Old Spice
I smell like my old man
~~

Hot Summer Nights

Don't touch the canvas
when it rains
But of course we did
and it dripped there
all night long
onto our blankets

In the summers
we slept outside
That brick farmhouse
un-insulated, was too hot
to stay indoors

We slept on a porch
attached to our second floor
with a canvas tarp
strung from wall to rail
and we tried not to touch

~~

Oops Cat

Last night the cat yelled
just as loud as he could
and this morning
a dumbbell was rolled
across the floor

Did he start it going
and then yell for help
to stop it?
I wonder

Short Spring

Spring has arrived this week
well, the first half
of this week

Summer arrives on Wednesday
Thursday at the latest

and the bulbs
barely above ground
will perhaps, not even bloom
this year
~~

Practice Time

I hit the wrong hole
in the fence
on the cross-country course

During a practice
I hit the wrong hole
and the back of my calf
was ripped up good
with barbed wire

I didn't notice
until I got back to the school
and felt something more sticky
than sweat
running down my leg

~~

Messing About

She lay with her head on my lap
I was content to sit still
But, being young
and her being naked
my hand drifted
down her belly
to that hairy junction
and her head squirmed
on my thigh

~~

Leftover Spaghetti

Leftover spaghetti
three days in a row
I hope it will be OK
and I won't catch something
nasty, brutish and short

I'd hate to die
of such a thing
when there are so many other
more interesting ways to go

~~

Crocus to Crocus

I could write of horrors
both here and abroad
or of those who are evil

But I haven't the bile
left in me
Stay too long
amongst the trash
and you pick up the stink

I will stroll through the streets
and look from one crocus
to the next
avoiding much thought
of the half rotted leaves
~~



My Old Grey Cat

What have you got
stuck to your whiskers
my old grey cat

You sit upon my lap
horrible awful lap
but the only one available

You twitch
you shiver
but you seem to like my hand
softly resting on your shoulders

What is that thing
stuck to your whiskers
as you purr silently

Preferring to mrrr these days
or to howl out loud
and you shove your cheek
onto my hand
hoping for a pet, a stroke

Or maybe just wiping that thing
whatever it is
off your whiskers
~~

The Contest

I make sure he wants down
and then I lift him down
as gently as I can

the old man
who was on my lap
as fragile as I am

I put him down gently
so as not to bias the contest

Which of us will go first
~~

Named Meat

Poets in a book
are like 'named meat'
in a meat pie

Something pre-examined
pre-approved
pre-assumed

And so it gives me pleasure
to read their works

All assured ahead of time
that they are good
and good for me

~~

Waiting for Coyote

From a farmhouse near here
miles from nowhere
surrounded by corn
she looked out the window
and a stray thought arrived
"A man could walk right up here
and nobody would see him"

She went and got the shotgun
kept for wolves that never were
A farmer's gun
something you ought to have
to protect what's yours
She loaded it
went outside onto the porch
sat in her chair
and waited

~~

Coyote was Confused

The two sat facing each other
stroking each other's beards
which was strange
One of them
was not a man

~~

Coyote Told Me

When a cat gets old enough
it turns into a dog

Yapping and following you around

That's what he said
and I might just believe him

~~

Always 23

She is always 23
never a year older
but the same age
as I met her

I, myself
am 27, older
but not enough
to make a difference
except in our bed

~~

Finding the Problem

I do not
I cannot have
testosterone poisoning
and yet, my dear
and yet, I still don't like you

How can we explain this
Perhaps it wasn't in my testosterone
Perhaps it was in you
No, absolutely not
Wait

I take a small amount
of steroid to keep living
Steroid poisoning, certainly
it's 'roid rage
~~

Afternoon Dilemma

There is time yet
before coffee and supper
I've a choice to make
Spiderman or sleep

~~



Scrawny Old Man

Sixty six
and still enough vanity
to look in the mirror
and think

I need some smaller t-shirts
these make me look sick
hanging fifty pounds lighter
Scrawny old man

~~

Driving Conversation

You're low on gas

You told me that
just a moment ago

Really?
While we've been in the car?

Yes, just a moment ago

Oh
~~

Why She Stays

He's a nasty piece of work
she would say

Got a temper
drinks way too much
and then fights in the bar

Nobody much likes him
but they talk to him
because he talks to them

Nasty brutish man
You may wonder why
I'm with him

It isn't because I fear him
because I don't
He's kind and sweet to me
he'd die for me, I know it

He's someone else
with me

~~

The Greeting

They stand on the balcony
and lean over the rail
to say hello to us

"lovely day, about time too"

We nod and agree
and walk on by
while they continue their survey
of the town
on the first nice day of spring
~~

Constants

All my life
I've remained the same

Same body
Same mind

and the women I've known
Are they the same woman
in different bodies

To me it seems so
Each has spoken to me
taught me a little
and each has loved me
just a little

Perhaps I have not lost
any of them
Perhaps they are here

She is here
with me now

~~

Coyote Learns Something

When I was in school
a teacher showed us
how to open a book

Break the middle
and work out
to the beginning
to the end
pressing it open
pressing the binding flat

I was fascinated
and so many years later
when I found a used book
a paperback
with slightly browned paper
and an unopened look

I opened it at the middle
and suddenly
it was no longer a book
but two hundred loose pages
flying down the street
in the wind

~~

Day 1872

Sometimes I wish my life
was numbered like a book
each day stamped
in the outside bottom corner
from one to today

I suppose I could do it
since we have calendars
I could take my birth day
stamp it one
and today would be
whatever it is today

But to do that
I would need to remember
all those days
~~

Maybe a Beer Tap

I am thirsty
I eat a handful of peanuts

and I'm thirsty
so a piece of chocolate
that sits on my desk

Still thirsty
and eventually
with a stomach-ache

I think that maybe
I need a tap at my desk

~~

Pelicans

Pelicans
What a thing
to pop uninvited into my mind

Not just any pelicans
but the ones by the ocean
at Vina Del Mar

Well, a few miles north
sitting on the piers
on the fishing boats
and floating in the water

Waiting for the fishermen
to clean their catch

~~

Suffolk Street

I can't go down that street
without looking up

The window of our apartment
where we lived for a lifetime
a year at a time

I can't look at that window
without seeing you looking out
watching whatever it was
you looked at
when you looked out

I can't look up without hearing
your soft yes
when I asked
if you were coming to bed

Dear, I still feel your flank
under my hands
even with their slow crippling
as they turn to claws

~~



Lake Erie Sand

Driving someone else's car
I was tempted
in the warm sunny day
to keep driving

To go south
to Lake Erie
and take off my shoes
to walk on the sand
and let the waves wash my feet

as I closed my eyes
and remembered warm days
tongue tied and shy
surrounded by girls
ever so much smarter than I
~~

Old Football Injury

Three times last night
I woke with pains in my knee
a memory from grade nine
and a tackle gone wrong

A rip I've lived with
for fifty years
but last night
proving that all things change
was the first I was wakened
by a knife through the flesh
and into the bones

~~

She Was Kind

We never danced much
she and I
but sometimes late at night
after beers in the bar
she would hold out her hand
and I would take it

I would do my best
stomping around
jumping
and waving my arms
And she seemed happy with that
~~

My Old Man

I woke you once
and you were up
eyes wide
looking for the Chinese
reaching for your gun

I never grabbed your foot again
not after you told me
you slept under the tank
and that's how the infantry woke you
sent you to the top
cocking the fifty cal

And looking for the Chinese

~~

Nightmares at My Age

I woke covered in sweat
fighting, fighting the covers
moaning, she said

and she put a hand on me
she coo'd meaningless noises
close to my ear

she breathed into my neck
and I knew, finally
I knew
that she was there beside me

I closed my eyes
breathed my own sigh
and went back to sleep
~~

Still Want a Sauna

A bit of dust moves
on the back door sill
and I look more closely
it is a grey weevil

In almost no time at all
it has warmed and the bugs
are out in swarms

We had no spring
There are piles here and there
of dirty snow
and it's 25 degrees centigrade

I turn the sauna on
~~

Can't Win

You know what a draw-knife is
she said to me once

Yes of course, I've used them

That's what you are, she said
You're a drawknife
and you're slicing bits of my flesh
off of my body
You're leaving me with nothing
bare muscle, nerves to the wind

I could say nothing to that
afraid that she was right

You see, this is what I mean
you strip me with your silence

I remained speechless

~~

Purity

I remember as a child
thinking the frost on the window
looked so pure, so clean
that I licked it

In a house full of smokers
I licked a windowpane
thinking it was pure
wanting to taste purity

~~

Avalon

Did Arthur ever get old
and see his whole life fall to shit
did it make him angry
Angry enough to punch a wall

I want to punch a wall
so many years of trying
so many years of dying
watching it all decay

And I wonder if my life
had any meaning at all
is there anything to leave
Does anybody care at all

I watch a video
trying to escape the mood
trying to avoid the wall
trying to live until tomorrow

Did Arthur ever get old
or did he die
before it all went to shit
Did he find his Avalon

I watch a documentary
Roxy Music
and the end of the band
Avalon

My Avalon was then
the album bought new
And the girl was new
and my life was new

We listened to the song
on speakers long gone
turntable long gone
girl long gone

And that was my Avalon
I still have Avalon
while my memory exists
I'll have my Avalon

~~



Making Room

Whatever I made
Whatever I bought
inherited

You can throw it out
Don't ask me
Don't delay
Don't do it slowly

Like a bandage
rip it off quick
Get it out of the house
get it out of my sight
and never mention it
ever again

~~

What I Create

Is it any wonder
that I've switched to writing

That can be created
and sent out
to live or die
and I don't care

Anything physical I've created
for the last 30 years
is too much

There's no room in the house
there's no room

Well there's room for books
and lots of them
in the electronic form

If they all disappear
I won't know
and I won't much care

They were written for me
and so we're done
as soon as they're done

~~

Coyote Doesn't Read it Either

What's on my mind?

Stupid platform
learn to read
You'll know quick enough
what's on my mind

Here it is
right here
but you aren't reading it
are you?

~~

Suffolk Street and You

Are you there my love
are you there with me
in that apartment
ghosts in a place of longing
ghosts in a place of love

Are you there on that couch
that couch that sits by the road
unwanted by anyone but me
Do you still sit and read
your feet tucked up

Am I still there
by the stereo
asking what you'd like to hear
Tell me love
are you still there with me

I know I am still there
Back when the couch was new
back when we were together
in that apartment I loved so much
because I loved you so very much

~~

What I Remember Most

Your waist
I could almost get my hands around
your legs
the dimples on your ass
and what do I remember most

It's your lips
those soft lips
on my cheek
on the side of my neck
as you murmured to me
late at night

Of all your attributes
those feet
your eyes that drove me crazy
It's your lips, touching me
that I miss the most

~~

Writing To You

I stay up late
listening to the songs
we listened to

Using headphones
in a private world
and I want to spend the night

writing to you
writing of you
remembering you
~~

My Things

One should be philosophical
about the disposition
of one's things
before and after death

It is a common fact
that three generations later
nobody will care
about anything you had

Anything you did
anything at all
But now, at this instant
I am here

To see my things thrown out
thrown aside
is like watching my past
being erased

My path is not so long
ahead of me
but I look back
and see it there

And seeing it is comfort
There I was
but wait, along comes someone
with a broom
~~

The Indecision

There is a couch
soaked to the bones
on the road in front of my house

A Danish modern from the fifties
my Godfather's couch
given to me for school

In about 1980 my first wife
decided it wasn't a nice colour
and so I asked my mother
to refinish it

To pick the fabric
oh my it was months
and finally I got angry
Down to the street of shops
and "pick something!"

In the very last store
at the very last moment
she chose

My mother used the fabric
not at all suitable
she lined it all
and there it was
through many apartments
and two more wives

Seeing it there on the street
I am led to wonder
if I would have had any women
if any had been able
to make up their mind about me
~~



The Old Flame

This book I write
I know it is fiction
I know it because
an old flame
just walked through a door
to see our hero

This doesn't happen
in real life, I know
Oh wait
there was the time
No, twice at least
the old flame there
the new flame frowning

~~

Bedridden

The story involves someone
in a hospital bed
on the cusp of life or death
and I turn away

Give me a story of love and war
a story of hardship
but the hero has full use
of four limbs

I like stories
but that is a nightmare
that bedridden monster
unable to turn over

I know this for a fact
I've been that monster
and will be again

~~

A Poem For You

I was led to believe
as a young boy
that women liked poems
especially poems about them

But not one
of the women I've known
Not one that I recall
has ever read a poem
that I've written for her

Was there one?
Perhaps, but as I'm unsure
I'm also half sure
that she didn't like it

No, that's right
She didn't like it
One girl read one
and didn't like it

Perhaps it's best
if they aren't read at all
~~

I'm Done for the Day

That's it
I can't continue
not today

Call me a snowflake
but I can't write kindly
gently about love

when I have just read a story
about a child
tortured by his own mother
~~

Snow Today

The narcissus will last
more than the day they would
if the heat had stayed
but there is snow today

They sit outside my back door
friendly and bright
unlike a visitor to my house
who would tell you
he is friendly and bright
but is, instead
dull and irritating

Such is the magic
the miracle
of the narcissist
who loves his image most of all
and is terribly careful
that everyone praises him
loves him
and gives him lovely gifts

Unlike my flowers
who will go soon
just before I get tired
of their cheery heads

~~

Coyote Hunts for Words

I wonder
is there any end to poems
poems to read
poems to be written
I begin to doubt

A few words set down
to invoke a feeling
There must be enough

~~



Learning About Relationships

The two of us
away from home
away from friends
for the first time

Newly installed
in the student residence
Newly introduced
and just like that
a relationship

such a lovely word
One I had loved
but never understood
A relationship
and it lasted just as long
as it lasted

Then there was another
Eventually I learned
got better at it
and the relationships lasted
just a bit longer

until finally
I was counting in decades
rather than weeks

~~

Not Free, Not Brave

Every day another story
another dead kid
sometimes dozens
and in the land of the free
and the home of the brave
I wonder how free
I wonder how brave
when we kill for the offence
of ringing the wrong doorbell
~~

Dreaming of Choice

Did I ever daydream
about having two women to sleep with
having a choice where to go
each night.

I have no recollection of that
but two women in my bed
at the same time
was once or twice a thing

Poor teenage boy
with little imagination
think what would have been
had I dreamed bigger still

~~

She Turned Her Back

Sometimes in the night
when we were getting ready
for bed
she would turn her back to me
and let me circle her body
with my arms

putting my body
including my fat belly
all along her back
and tucking my head
down into her neck

to kiss her there
where I loved to smell
that soft scent
I had never smelled before
Or since

~~

What She Taught Me

With her
it was like a great wind
that blew my hair away
and the sand in the wind
scrubbing bits of me off

I watched helpless
as I lost my skin
my muscle, my bones
until all that was left
was that heart

It was ice she said
it was iron, it was stone
and when she was done
and all that was left
was hardness
she had proved herself right

~~

Dead Air

I talk too much
they tell me now
but I learned it from her

She was quiet
she liked to listen
and she smiled at me
when I talked

About nothing, usually
just the sound of my voice
she listened so very hard
that I became a radio
dead air was bad

One day I went silent
the station went off air
and she changed the dial

~~

The Cat

The little grey mutt
screams and screams
at the top of his lungs
until I finally get angry

I wander toward the door
thinking to throw him out
when I realize
he wants out

Sure enough
three minutes later

he wants in
~~

How to Remember Your Age

A casual comment
about Mother's day
and how I lost mine
twenty years ago

It wasn't fifteen
I am told
and I shrug

I never knew my birthday
or my own age
until I began my visits
to the hospital
Where they ask three times
at least
every time they take my blood
~~

Spring Cleaning

Little things I've made
several years ago
cascade down from the shelf
above my desk
Yet another mess

Why do I keep these things
I don't do anything
but look at them
Time for them to go

~~

De-Nesting

Am I beginning to understand my mother
She collected things, repaired things
but as she got older
she got rid of things

She was determined we would not
just sweep her things into bags
and throw them out
like she watched happen
to her mother's things

New mothers nest
this I know, they clean
they sweep
they collect things

Do old folks de-nest
I have begun
giving away what I have
wondering who would like this
and who would like that
~~



Too Close

You lie like a rug
I told her
trying to make a joke
but she shut down
her eyes got hard
her lips got hard
and I thought
Too close to the bone
boy
Too close to the bone
~~

Young Me vs Old Me

Just when did the future
become the past
When did I look at a woman
and think of someone gone
rather than think
I'll know her soon

~~

Coyote Likes It Too

Attiwapiskat
I've always liked that name
never been there
I've been through Wawa
hitched right past
never got stuck there
but we were stuck in Thunder Bay
for almost a day

Should I go to Attiwapiskat
Is there something there for me
I like saying the name
but that's not the same
as the place wanting me
or even liking me
It's not on my bucket list
I don't have one
~~

Why Laundromats

Laundromats
somehow I am reminded
that I loved the places
they were warm
too warm for some
but to a kid from a brick house
brick, plaster and lath
and a space between
they were not too warm for me
And the hum and thrum
that you could feel
if you put your head on the window
when you sat on the ledge
made your brain shake a bit
helped to turn the thoughts off
helped

Oh, I have it
I'm sitting at my desk
in my house
and I'm cold
I'll put another shirt on

~~

How I Remember Her

Coming into the apartment
I would see her book
then that impossible hand

I would run my eyes down
that wonderful arm
to her shoulder
Hair spilling all over

Running down her chest
(looking down her shirt)
I would come to her legs

so very long
one crossed on the other
and her bare foot
slightly moving in the air

I would wait patiently
until she finished reading
and tilted her head
I would kiss her then

~~

Glimpse of Paradise

She bent over
and the t-shirt riding up
revealed that mossy grove

Oh, I thought
if only
if only

but we had places to go
people to see

and so I looked away
and finished dressing

~~

My Time

Oh I thought
here is a poem
that mentions martial arts

It's from the '80s
I wonder what it meant
back then

~~

The Primitive

Believe it or not
cans used to be pierced
with a can-punch
A big triangle on one side
a little one on the other
so it would not glug
as the liquid came out

Even cans of pop
had to be pierced
The pop-tops came later
and were scattered around
on city streets
like leaves
until they made them
so that they stayed attached

We used to collect the loose tops
to donate for wheelchairs

~~

My Mess, Her Mess

I would listen to her complain
about the mess in the kitchen
the dust in the hall

and then I would step
into the unholy mess
of her bedroom

Once I mentioned it
and she exploded
"I've been busy
what do you expect
I don't have enough room
for all my stuff
and it's not that messy"

I stopped looking
at her room
and I stopped listening
~~



Golden Age Radio

Yet another golden oldie
another hit from my youth
and I switch the channel

I had enough of those
when I was twenty
thank you very much

~~

Coyote is Preaching

As I enter the room
he is telling one and all
about how he sold the world
and invested the profits
into being a prophet
and how his clothing line
was doing fine

I was there
when he was young
and I know each and every lie
but why say anything
his followers eat it up
and what it does to them
is no concern of mine

~~

Old Men at the Bar

They are still there
those old men I remember
from when I first went to the bar

At the counter-top
where the beer comes fast
no waiting for a waiter
just a nod to the barkeep

Fifty years later
they are still there
not aged a day
not any younger
nodding to the barkeep
I nod too

~~

Death Watch

I wasn't there
for my father
I wasn't there
for my grandmother
and I wasn't there
for my mother
I wasn't asked

I hope when the time comes
that my children are not there
for me

~~

Regrets

Regrets?

Yes I think so

one comes to mind quickly

My mother wanted

to see the mountains

she mentioned it

more than once

and when I finally had the money

to take her there

she was too old

her eyes were going

and she said no

Thank you son

but no

I regret I didn't have the money

when she was young enough

to see the mountains

~~

Proof Positive

The man whipped the donkey
and the donkey kicked the dog
the dog bit the cat
and the cat scratched the rat
The rat ran past the man
shedding fleas
which bit the man
who died a week later
of the black plague

There, that's the story I remember
from long, long ago
the one to prove to me
that there is a God

~~

Famous Poetess

He was in prison
but she loved him
and she waited

~~

My Best Place

I drifted in and out of dreams
while sleeping with my face
in her hair
breathing on that place
between neck and shoulder

My arm around her
I soaked in her warmth
while my dreams, confused
baffled and amazed me
until I could not remember
a single one

~~

Moon Dust

If we get to the moon
we'll have to watch the dust
so fine it gets everywhere
so small, the gravity of a machine
is enough to pull it in

So much more brutal
than the dead skin and bugs
we encounter in our homes

or the stuff
that gets up your nose
on windy days in the fields
and packs so tightly
you really do have
to pick your nose

~~



I Hope Not

We'll never make it, I said

Sure we will, she said
your girlfriend won't mind

But she's the jealous type

She's not you know
she sleeps with him
and she's slept with me
so really
sleeping with me
is just like sleeping with her

I really hope not, I said

~~

Ripe Old Age

He died
at a ripe
of old age

In the centre of it all
was a large ruby
said to be enchanted
but really just shiny
as most enchanted things are
Shiny

So
he died
of a ripe
in his old age
a toadstool grew
in the bathroom tiles
where they were cracked
in the corner of the shower

He ate it
the crazy old man
~~

Coyote Knows

The rain at the curbs
used to foam
you'd think you could do dishes
it was so sudsy

All that extra phosphate
dribbling off the fields
around the town
into the storm drains
and eventually the river
and more eventually the lake

Erie, warm with scum
was dying of plant life
and fertilizer
Plants and fertilizer
how could that go so wrong
~~

At the Restaurant

So, on the doors
a yellow rose
and a red rose

From that I suppose
I'm supposed to know
which is boys
and which is women
(notice what I did there?)

I hadn't a clue
I turned left
~~

Just Plain Stupid

I believe all my life
I have been unaware
of what's going on
at least that's what I'm told

"You don't know"
"Why did you do that!"
So it must be so
that I'm slow

Although every so often
I would catch on enough
to call bullshit
to the surprise of the girlfriend
and then I'd be off

while maybe she thought
it was more about selective hearing
than just plain stupid

~~

Satellites

How excited I was
on that hilltop in Newfoundland
when, amongst all those stars
one was moving over the sky
A satellite, I breathed
a rare and exciting breed

Today on that hill
I would probably be excited
to see a wink of light
that didn't move across the sky
that stood still and said
twinkle twinkle

~~

Coyote with a Beer

I'm going to drink myself
to death
he told me once
when we were young

And he got a good start
but there was that girl
and the kids
and the job

A brief couple-three decades
where he was just a drunk
and eventually the kids grew up
the girl left
because of his drinking
and he got back to it

the business of drinking himself
to death
~~

Sneaky Fighter

He moved as if adrift
on a slow moving stream
but when he struck
it was like a snake

You fell asleep
until you were struggling
for your very life

~~

Waiting For a Ride

Skinny legs and all
did I read it?
Perhaps

But there she is
I see her walking
across the bottom of my street

or sitting, knees at ears
on the steps
of the next street over
~~

Tillsonburg

A Carnegie library
in a small town
and I remember it, elegant
a haven, a place of escape
a place of my own

They taught me
Mr. Dewey's decimals
but I soon learned which rows
had the books I liked

The library
across the street
from the town hall
was torn down
for the downtown mall

so that one rich local
could thumb his nose
at the other rich local
who built a mall outside town

Thank goodness I was gone
before I had to go to the library
in the mall

~~



OCD Clean

When she was a child
she never got dirty
never played near the tree
where the grass was worn out
by children's sneakers

Later, with the boys
you never saw her lying down
where her dress could be stained
by the soft grass

Then, when the enemy came
and they strafed the road
while the rest of us dove
deep into that muddy ditch

She would not go
and instead of a muddy dress
it was stitched with red

~~

The Back Yard

One of my favourite places
was a dirt path
beside that brick farmhouse

that led from front to back
from town to gully
street to alleyway

that ended in a drive
up past the small barn
to the back of that farmhouse

To me it was a road
to another land

That path was my wardrobe
my sparkling gateway
my Kansas tornado

Taking me from my life
to my imagination

~~

Skydiving Pilot

On the weekends
when my mother would drop us
to pick us up on Sunday

On the weekends
my father would walk to the beach
and sit on the sand
while we played in the lake

and when we were done
he would walk us back again
away from the lake

I don't know
if my father could swim
Did the fishermen learn to swim
or was that like a pilot
who learns to skydive

~~

Throw It Out

Throw it out
throw it all out
the photographs
the pictures on the wall
the things I have made

If you need the room
throw them out
I have transferred the memories
from the things
to the words on this page

~~

The Best Weapon

For so very long
the smith was a magician
and a sword was precious
more expensive than a jewel
Don't buy one
if you can't use it
if you don't train

One day the machines
were tuned to the gun
and any old fool
could use it
any old inept dolt

and best of all
even the poorest
could afford one
if willing to let
his children go hungry
for a few days
~~

Too Late

She was married
with two kids
and a husband
and a house
But there was a lover
and she yearned for him
but the house
and the husband
and the kids kept her there
until she was grey

Once, she told this
to the children
and the husband
and the three of them
in chorus said
If you'd waited
until the kids were grown
we'd have waved to you
as you went to be happy
~~

Only Words

Your lips move
but from them come
only words

Behind the words
there is nothing
just the words

No meaning
no feeling

You won't allow that
and from your lips
come only words

~~

How Long

More and more I search
for words
or having the word
I search for the meaning
In the cafe washroom
I wet my hands
pull out a towel
and then reach for the soap

I look into the mirror
and wonder
Is that mind
once so very sharp
beginning to rot
to go to mush
How long do I have
before I'm wandering lost
not knowing where I am

~~



Do I Know Her

From across the cafe
she smiles
then frowns

She raises her hand
and waves a bit
but then she sees
I'm not who she thinks I am
and a small laugh

"Oh, well, good morning anyway"
I wave back, relieved
~~

Cafe Chats

I do not miss
those tight-lipped
strained, restrained talks
in public places
where we thought
perhaps we would behave
and not descend
into screaming and throwing pots

Instead, in consideration
of the others in the cafe
we speak in short, sharp sentences
of short, sharp pains
and grievances

While the bile builds
and rots our stomachs
faster than the cheap coffee

While we both wish
we were someplace else

~~

The First time

As I drove today
from the coffee shop
I looked at houses
I've seen hundreds of times
and saw them again
for the very first time

A bit of sunlight
a bit of shade
Shapes to abstract
into a brand new day
How many more times
will I see these houses
for the very first time

~~

When She Talked

Did she ever speak the words
I can't remember
listening to her talk

I would watch her talk
that arch of her eyebrow
the quirk at the corner of her mouth
those hands
around a coffee cup
a finger lifting
another replacing it

A twitch of her eyes
maybe a hand
brushing hair behind an ear

Oh yes, We talked a lot
but when she did
I listened with my eyes
~~

I Miss the Way

I miss the way
she would shift
one topic to another
but always I was with her

Something she said
weeks before
would appear
and damned if I didn't know
There was never any confusion
about what we meant

I miss that
as once more I am met
with a frown
and the statement
What are you talking about

and I want to shout
Nothing, I'm talking about nothing
can we stop talking now
about nothing

~~

Too Old for the Lies

I'm too old for today
where lies are expected
and truth is manufactured

I grew up in an era
where we understood
what others were saying
where 'gotcha' didn't happen

where we would say things
like I don't understand
rather than
'how can you say that
you shitty human being'

I just can't keep up
with the lies and the reference
to something that happened
three minutes from now

~~

With Each Woman

Time and time again
I would start our life together
with 'let's not bring an argument
into our bed'

Poor foolish boy
arguments were best
in bed
as I eventually found

What other place for them
~~

It's Always Been Her Car

There is a car outside
and I have a key
in my pocket
but it's not my car

and so, across my mind
drift thoughts
of driving someplace
of seeing something new

But I never walk out
get in the car
and drive
because it's not my car

~~

Loved By Him

You've been there I'm sure
The girl who wants to be loved
by someone

She's desperate
she's despondent
and she won't look around

to see the fellow there
right beside her
who loves her

No, the one who is there
is never as good
as the one in her mind

Imagination is that strong
~~



Not Your Enemy

I'm not your enemy
I said
I promise you
I'm just the one closest
when you need to lash out

and I'm the one who forgives
when you need to lash out
but I have limits
I have feelings
and to accept too much
from one I love
requires time

time to reset
time to forget
This is why I don't speak
for a day or perhaps more
It is not you, my love
it's me

getting rid of what you gave me
when you lashed out
at the one closest to you

~~

Magic On The Road

There is magic on the road
My head on the window
feeling the thrum of a cheap car
watching the lights of towns pass
sitting in my pyjamas
with mom driving
sometimes we'd talk in the darkness

On the road east
having driven all night
worried about gas
and watching the sun come up
straight down that highway

Waking in a news van
at dawn in Banff
surrounded by mist and Elk
Groggy from hitching
but ever so grateful
to be alive to see that

So many magical moments
on the road
Driving my father's Pontiac
from his place to my mother's
Deserted back roads
and into my mind drifted
"driving across country at high speeds
in the middle of the night"

So happy to have been there

~~

Threats

I don't much like threats
mostly because they waste my time
and cause me to act
to do something
To take my time

You see, in order to threaten
you must have something
that I want
and there's nothing that I want
Do this, or I will cause trouble
for those you care for
So I quit that job

Do this, or I will leave you
so I leave
And the threat is gone
but often it means
I have to find a new job
find a new girl
See, it takes time

Still, I've done it before
and when I die
there will be no more threats
that can cause me to do anything
Nothing stops you from threatening
but I'm not there to hear you
~~

My

It all starts
with a small word
My
And it goes to shit from there

The moment you think to yourself
my girlfriend
or my child
it starts to slide

You can't help it
My
means ownership
even if you think it doesn't
And if you own something
it is a thing

and if it's a thing
you can correct it

A belt
a fly swatter
a yard stick
or the flat of your hand
will all do for correction

Best not say my girlfriend
best say the woman who is with me
Remind yourself always
she is a woman

Not a thing
and sure as hell not yours
~~

Coyote Said Sorry

Coyote said he was sorry
but it wasn't good enough
this time he'd gone too far
and she walked away

But Coyote didn't know when
enough was enough
he just had no filters
and he pushed too hard

Coyote was sad
that she had gone
Sorry wasn't good enough
and for that he was sorry

~~

Coyote Crossed the Bridge

Look at that bridge
Coyote said
I wonder what's over there

It's broken
it's collapsed
not safe at all

But think of what might be there
I've got to go over
I think I can make it

So Coyote went across
and the bridge rattled
and it shook
and bits fell off
taking a long long time to land

But he made it
Yahoo Coyote said
now I can see what's over here
and so he looked around

It was the same
as the other side of the bridge
and Coyote was disappointed

It's the same as that side!
as we turned to go for a beer
Wait! I'm coming back over
~~



Coyote was driving

In Northern Alberta
you drive in the ditches
just for fun
and one night
coming back from the bar
they let me drive

I have no idea
why they let me drive
but as we were at the bridge
just before the camp
I decided to ditch the truck
Don't Do It
they yelled

but too late
too steep
and we were in the swamp

We tried to get the truck out
with a front end loader
but it was no use
and we left the loader
blocking the bridge
and we went to bed

~~

She Was Good To Me

There is a picture
of three of us
Harry, me
and the girl
who gave me \$300
as we started out
on the bike trip

It bothers me now
that I don't know
who took the photograph
More than it bothers me
that I can't remember
if I ever paid her back

~~

I Am Here

In 1975, I left my home
the home of my mother
and went to school

Of course I went back
to visit
to get my laundry done
but there was never a thought
that I'd move back

You didn't do that
if you were an 18 year old boy
in 1975
You left, and you were gone
you didn't live there any more

Thinking back
all those many years
I wish I had gone back
to know my mother
just a bit more

But there were no jobs there
nothing for me to do
and so I stayed here
from that day to this
I have been here

~~

Coyote Gets a Bath

Uh oh, Coyote thought to himself
I know what that sound is
He heard the sound of water
running into the tub

His walked quietly to the door
his hand was on the knob
and he said
Just going out for a beer

She called out
Coyote, come on in here
let's have sex in the bathtub

~~

Coyote Goes for a Beer

Half the time
Coyote didn't know
what the arguments were about

He didn't really keep track
but he knew when they happened

Coyote wasn't always on top of things
but he knew that arguments didn't happen
when he wasn't there

~~

Old Toys, Old Games

Beside my driveway is a bush
and in the bush, a giant snake
a blue snake, with comic face

A toy unwanted
by my grown children
and so for many years
he has lived in that bush
sometimes his head is down
sometimes up

Reminding me of a tiny mouse
magnetic
that hid in my grandmother's house
and then my mother's
we would move it in turn

Now it's someplace in my house
cracked, tail missing
and the only person who moves it
is me

I have to admit to you
that it is I who moves the snakes head
~~

Intergenerational Trauma

Trauma is a funny thing
we remember events
that might seem odd
My mother told me the story
many times, actually
of dropping a doll
the ceramic head breaking
and her mother yelling

I suppose I had dropped
something of hers
and she tried to assure me
that people dropped things
but what she did
was pass along her trauma
to me

~~

I Want an Angel

All I want is an Angel
he said to me
and I thought of those things
in the bible
horrible accumulations of eyes
strange wings and rings
You don't really want that
You want your mother
with big boobs

~~



Intergenerational Bad Habits

You try not to pass along
the things you realize are wrong
to your kids
but you end up doing it anyway

I would find another job
another activity
at the first hint of boredom
and end up with too much

Now my daughter is here
and not here
and here again
working in two cities

Tired, so very tired
and I want to give her some rest
but I can't do that
much as I wish I could

And I can't go back in time
to say, Not so much
leave time for a nap
let boredom come

~~

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