

Five Pages of Haiku



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My mother taught me to write haiku but she preferred limericks. She had that sort of personality, and while I don't normally write either, this book starts with some haiku for those that like that sort of thing. The problem is, they are hard to stop writing once you start, so be careful what you start.

There's a little bit of Japan in this one.

Kim Taylor, December 2020

Five Haiku (one page)

What do we do
when the formula fails
Lousy translation

Sounds trite
Like everyone else
Better in the original

I was exiled here
If I return I die
Look, a butterfly

Three lines
what to do
Look, a butterfly

Frog splash
Sound of rain
Who lives here?

~~

Five More Haiku (another page)

So many chrysanthemum
must be fewer syllables
in Japanese

Hard to be happy
Cold, muddy road
without a lotus in the puddle

Birds fly
Leaves fall
Probably autumn

Hanging a lantern
on a branch
Falling, it burned my hut

Must be rich
to wander around
looking at trees

~~

A Third Page of Five Haiku

Hallmark haiku book
lots of poets
safely out of copyright

Here is the moon
but here is a flower
Which section, which section

Those damned cherry-blossoms
won't stay still to be painted
I'll write about them instead

The cold winter clouds
split for the cold sun
I should go for a walk

A pen, not a brush
A TV table, not a bench in the wood
Any chance of a Geisha with tea?

~~

How Do You Stop Writing Haiku

Shiki sees sails
Shoha sees the surf
Basho and Issa think it's cool

This page is nighttime
the poets are awake
Didn't get lucky

Shokan wants a handle
on the moon, a fan
No perspective

Dragonfly face
Nothing but eyes
What of it?

Insect images
Flying, jumping, buzzing
I scratch a bite on my arm

~~

Five Pages of Five Haiku

Green leaves drip
water flows
I'm lost in the swamp

Longing for the city
all I see
are these damned trees

Buson has a fan
from his girlfriend
She doesn't like the countryside

Pages full of spring
and here am I
looking at the snow

The book is done
and so is my coffee
Onto the shelf

The shelf is very high
and hard to reach
My broken neck
~~

Twenty-something

Last night
I woke to banging
in the heating pipes
and went back to sleep

My son explained
that the fan
fell from his window
and he woke angry
erupted from bed
jammed the fan back
fainted
hit his desk
and woke sprawled
on his bed

This morning
as his mother bandaged his ribs
I thought to myself
how lucky I am
not to be twenty-something
~~

Musashi and Me

Lassitude and langour
(today it's called depression)
comes so easily now
I wake happy
joyous
After all, I'm awake

But the first complaint
He said
She did
The first problem
that I can't solve
but I'm expected to hear
Makes me want
to retire to a cave

A cold, damp one
that nobody wants to visit
~~

My Old Mom

My old mom
had an old cat
and when the cat died
and when I offered a new one
she said no
and I started to say goodbye

~~

Kensei Blues

When I'm dead
you can say what you want
make me a super hero
if you want
but be warned
I've written it all down

Make me a hero
and someone out there
will make me a villain

~~



Old Teacher

But you're a teacher
he said
You have to teach me
you have to write
you have to be interviewed

I don't have to do
a damned thing
that I've done before

~~

Call Me Sensei

Pity mixed with contempt
is about as close
as I can get
to what I feel
about those who want
to be in charge
to be rich
to be respected

~~

You Grow Out Of It

You grow out of it
Your twenties
the angst
the anger
the helpless rage
the self-pity
they will fade away
into the despised
older generation

And when you get there
you sigh in relief

~~

Falling Through (the alternate universe interface)

What does it mean
when I read a synopsis
of a new book
and I think
"Oh yes, I read that one
in 1978"

Did all these new authors
go to school
and get taught
by the authors I read?

You're supposed to teach
technique
Not provide a list
of ideas
("pick the one
that hasn't been done
for ten years")

~~

Why I Teach

When I go
I want to know
there are people
who know
what I was taught

All the rest
is ego and flattery
~~

Doing Dada

When I wanted to escape
Kicked out the door
yes I say
It was 7:30 in the evening

Sleepy bunny
trying again
I wake to a small amount of panic
In high school
In an age of long skirts

If only I'd met
At 4AM
Standing nervously
out of a book
Have you thought
as bipolar
to rewrite my life
~~

False expectations

Sunday morning unhurried
I sit listening
to the coffee maker gurgle
My tongue is happy
but my head must report
that it is the sound of descaling
~~

Three Blank Notebooks (and a mistaken belief)

Three blank notebooks
of the exact size I prefer
are stacked on my desk
and I am losing interest
in writing in them

~~



Catch in my Throat

The daughter
worried about the plague
worried she would kill her father
asked permission
and came to visit

The birthday present delivered
the Christmas Tree decorated
Cake eaten
and she has left again

The catch in my throat
is probably not Covid so soon
Must be some other reason

~~

The Ritual of Coffee

Some days I think
it just isn't worth
the effort

I put another scoop
of coffee
on top of the old grounds
and turn on the machine
~~

I Fight With my Pen

I fight with my pen
Some fat advertisement
I found on the street
(the very best type of pen)
I fight to get it open
to see if the ink
is running out
or if it's just a bubble

But I fail
I can't get it open
and my wrist
is getting sore
shaking the ink down

Time to become a hunter
once more
~~

It Must be the Fingers

It must be the fingers
I can't pick up my phone
or a tablet
without touching the screen
and getting some weird program
maybe the control pad
for a Chinese Moon-lander
Rather than the calculator
or the solitaire game
I was looking for

Give it three generations
and those kids
will have hands
that look like spiders
pin-prick fingers
to pick up their phones
by the ever-narrower sides
and to hit those tiny spots
on the screen

But for now
My spade-like fingertips and I,
My snow-shovel thumbs
made flat by decades
of manual work
and manual typewriters
will try to avoid
the program
that drives my neighbour's car
into his garden shed

~~

Stupid Child

It's a terrible thing
to get old
and learn more
about yourself
and others

Like, when a stupid child
as likely a girl
as a boy
pulls a bonehead move
in their car

It's hard to get angry
when you remember
being that young
and that stupid

~~

Bukowski Again

It feels like
I should be writing
about being broke
and drunk
and down to
my last cigar

But I was born broke
and despised smoking
even if I was drunk
a lot

I made sure
I became un-broke
partly by picking tobacco
and I spent my money
on beer
~~



Drifts of Presents

It's December
and I'm afraid
to go into the shops
How am I to put
drifts of presents
under the tree

It has to be drifts
Even if the house
is full of grown-ups
their inner kid
needs to see the drifts

At least mine does
~~

Forget It

You live long enough
and it all starts to repeat
only seven story plots
only twelve people
The trick is to forget quickly
~~

Prostate Problems

Bukowski, here in this book
says he wakes up
with a stiff neck
instead of a stiff dick
Hah

I wake up
without a stiff neck
or a stiff dick
My neck gets stiff
during the day
but sleep cures it

Nothing cures the limp dick
well
perhaps I should say
the cure would kill me
~~

Covid Problems

With every intention
of going to the grocery store
The morning has come
and with thoughts
of bus tours from Toronto,
locked down Toronto,
driving to our town
I have lost my nerve
and have come back home
to drink coffee and write

It is an equation
all too common
Do I risk death
because some fool
can't stay away
from the shops?

I need milk
they need a working brain
~~

Waiting For Work

In the back room
enjoying a gentle morning
before the day turns to crap
and the snow comes

The shovels
are beside the door
and my boots
have been found

I wait
for another shoe
to fall

~~

Girlfriends With Benefits

In my day
we never said
"friends with benefits"
But we certainly slept
with our friends

Even better
were "girlfriends with benefits"
I had several
girlfriends with their own car
~~

Motivation

She rolled over
and poked my belly
with her finger
"You're letting your body
go to pot"
as she told me
about her fit boyfriend

I started running again
~~

On a Hot Day

On a hot day
I would draw my finger
down her spine
She always started
to sweat there

She always wiggled a little
and sighed
Too
~~

I Wonder

I wonder
how those great soaring birds
who travel thousands of miles
deal with the endless ocean

Do they sometimes forget life
and from their great height
fold their wings

~~

I Always Felt Bad

Sometimes I would forget
to watch her ass
as she went up the stairs
I always felt bad about that
~~



Every Time

Every time
she walked past
wearing only my shirt
I forgot what I was doing
had to re-start the book
put a new piece of paper
into the typewriter
take off my sweater
and put on a coat

~~

This is my Life

This is my life now
I drove Brenda to work
came home to make coffee
washed the dishes
sat uselessly on the toilet
and now I am at my TV table
reading poems by Bukowski
and waiting for whatever
he triggers in my head
(less and less)

When I finish my coffee
I hope to have the courage
to go to the shops
and buy silly gifts
to pile under the tree
Which is why I have my jeans on
while I sit here

The belt buckle is cold

~~

File and Forget

I have books
actual books
sitting on a shelf
books I bought used
forty years ago

I understand this
so I publish
on the internet
in pdf books

Why should anyone
pick up my work
forty years from now
when I'm long dead
and try to understand

They are probably nice
they don't deserve that

The cloud is for twenty minutes
not for centuries
Let a power glitch
take all my work away
~~

What Do You Think?

To write with an audience
in mind
To wait for feedback
desire recognition
crave fame
lust for fans
must be terrible

Dude, get a job
you've got time
to earn your bread
Think of all the time
you stare at the paper
or read about writing
or search for that audience

In all that time
you're not being amazing
you could be earning a living
and writing just as many words
~~

Drama Much?

Drama much?
My daughter would say
as I raged on
about something someone
in one organization or another
had done now
Drama much?

~~

Christmas Boots

When I was a child
I would wear too-small shoes
until Christmas
when I would get my winter boots
Wet socks
and cramped-cold toes
so my mother
could put another box
under the tree

~~

My Christmas Piles

It's plague season
and I'm not out and about
to buy silly gifts
for the family
Christmas is coming
I tell Brenda
and there might not be
dozens of gifts
under the tree

"The kids are in their mid-twenties"
she tells me
But it's me
that wants those piles of boxes
under the tree
Those silly gifts I buy
the piled boxes
are for me
~~

I Don't Get Games

I think I don't get games
I play solitaire
when on the toilet
But that's it
No cards
No video
certainly no gambling

Played sports
when I was young
but never watched
Selfish, that's what I am
I just don't care
about other people winning
Hell I never really cared
if I won or lost
~~

Secret Names

My grey cat
was saddled with Tiger
but his secret names
have been many

As a kitten he was Scooter
he had no slow setting
and later
when he met the screen door
that I made
for our sunroom
he was called Bonehead
In his rush to enter
he would meet the door
with his forehead

He's Badcat
when he jumps onto the counter
to drink from the sink
and lately, just Old Man

~~

Almost Time

Almost time
to close the cottage
Turn off the water
drain the pipes
and begin the schedule
of visits to charge the batteries

~~

Grampa's Book

I rarely buy new books
always used
these days from the thrift store
Mostly, these days
poetry books
where, most of the time
I find an inscription
from the author
or to a friend

I like to think
a precious gift
has been donated
by the relatives
clearing out the old man's house
~~

Who Is She

Sometimes in dreams
a face appears
a young woman
"why don't you remember me?"

~~



Not Clever

I opened a book yesterday
read two poems
looked at hundreds of notes
hand-written in the margins
And realized
it was too clever for me

I'm looking at it now
on top of the trash can
Should it go to recycling?
~~

An Open Book

Poets who are not clever
rip their past apart
searching for raw material

After a while
they are an open pit mine
with a fence
and a sign
"Danger, keep out"

~~

I Make Wooden Weapons

Perhaps I will make a stick
with a groove
Perhaps I will line the groove
with lead type
so that when I hit you
"upside the head"
as the Americans say
I will impress you
with my words

~~

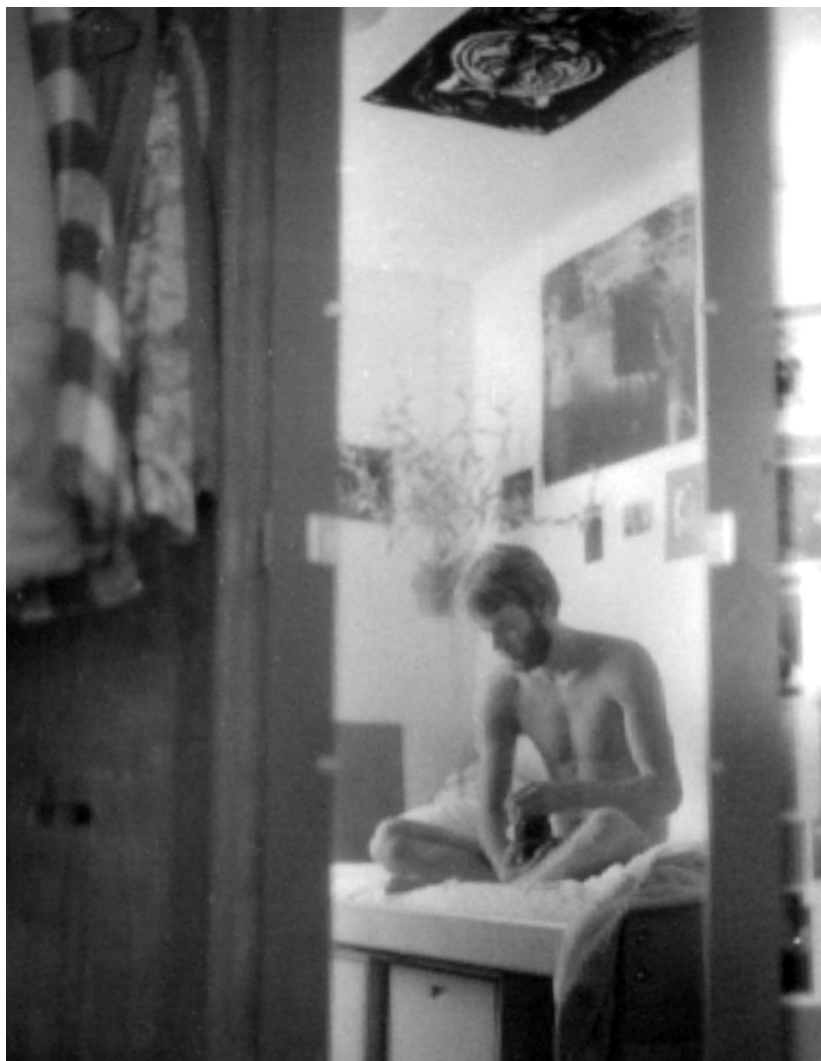
Silence

I have never understood
the flight to some place else
to take a break
and think about a relationship
I have never had the need
If I need silence
I am silent
Perhaps I got that wrong

~~

Done Soon

She stood in the doorway
wearing one of my shirts
and said to me
"will you be done soon"
I was done very soon
~~



The Habit of Looking

Somewhere
during many relationships
I lost the habit
of looking
Maybe that's why
it makes me happy
to pick up my camera
and to look closely at faces
~~

Not So Hard To Understand

If you've never been
in a long term
live-in relationship
You may worry about the shorthand

This is a conversation
hmm? ah
To translate
hmm? : why are you taking my covers off
ah : Oh, you're horny
and I'm about to get laid

See? Not so hard to understand

~~

Waiting

It seems that half my life
was spent waiting
waiting to find a girl
waiting for her
to come to bed
waiting for the next argument
the next girl
waiting for the kids
to get ready to go
waiting for a call
from the kids who went

~~

The Leaves Have Dropped

The leaves have dropped
the geese have flown
in their V formations
(some may have migrated)
The black squirrel in my yard
is fat as a bear
and I keep watch
for a glimpse of the sun

The snows will come
and the vigil
of the buds
will be upon us
The waiting
for the swelling
that is the promise
of spring
~~

Moon Viewing Morning

Somehow you have kicked
the covers off
The sun is shining
through the window
and I circle the bed
watching the shadows
curl over your back
and onto your ass
Searching for the perfect angle
to view those twin moons
~~

The Stars, So Heavy

Looking up
in the pure darkness
of a cabin in the bush
The stars, so heavy
make me duck my head

~~

Once There Were Letters

Once there were letters
paper messages
that you could put in a box
and discover 30 years later
Looking through my computer
I found years-worth
of newsletters
in WordStar format
Soon they will be unreadable
Even now I lack the tools
~~

The Clarity of Silence

Once it was important
the exact words
the precision
with which I said
"I want you here"

Now it is enough
to smile and nod
Not looking for trouble
None is found
~~

Mousetrap

The mice in the trap
look so sweet
their soft brown fur
black eyes
and expressive tails
silent

I have no hatred for them
no disgust
They do their thing
shit on the dishes
chew the boxes
nest in the beds
And so, I do mine
~~

Frontier Skills

You can tan a mouse hide
with their brain
Ours too, our brain
is enough to tan our hides

I think "who remembers that?"
I think "our big brains
are good for something then"

~~

Four Thousand Miles

Four thousand miles
I drove, to see you
Four thousand miles
and I hurt you deeply
I had been told
not to sleep with you
but I didn't tell you that
All you knew
was that I was cold
distant
angry
~~

Early Snow

Not much of an effort really
no wind
and a few flakes drifting down
Yet it has been doing this
for many hours
and the grass is covered
Four months to go

~~

Rake it Over

Love ended in confusion
without understanding
can smother the grass
and sour the dirt

Rake the leaves
to the curb
and burn them
This is what we thought

~~

Unimaginative

Who will teach me
how to die
when my time comes

All I hear
are promises
of more of the same
in some other place

How unimaginative
~~

A Hay Stack

A hay stack
forgotten in the fall
covered in snow
in a frozen world

Dig into it
and the rotten heat
can save your life
She was like that

~~



Chameleon

Each morning was different
I never knew
who I was waking up beside
Maybe her dreams
or the air in our room
the weather perhaps
I would wait each morning
to see who I had slept with
~~

A Straight Line

It is a straight line
from birth to death
the corners
the loops
and swoops
that seem so confusing
are things seen
from up close
We remain on the train
and the train remains
on its track

~~

A New Day

I sleep
I nap
and when I wake
it's a new day
~~

An Apology

Each visit
to a family grave
is an apology
"I should have done more"
~~

Removing a Sweater

I shrug out of my sweater
and relive
My martial arts career
My broken bones
And the accidents
that have left this old man
trying, every time
to move one shoulder first
only to grimace and think
"nope, the other one first"

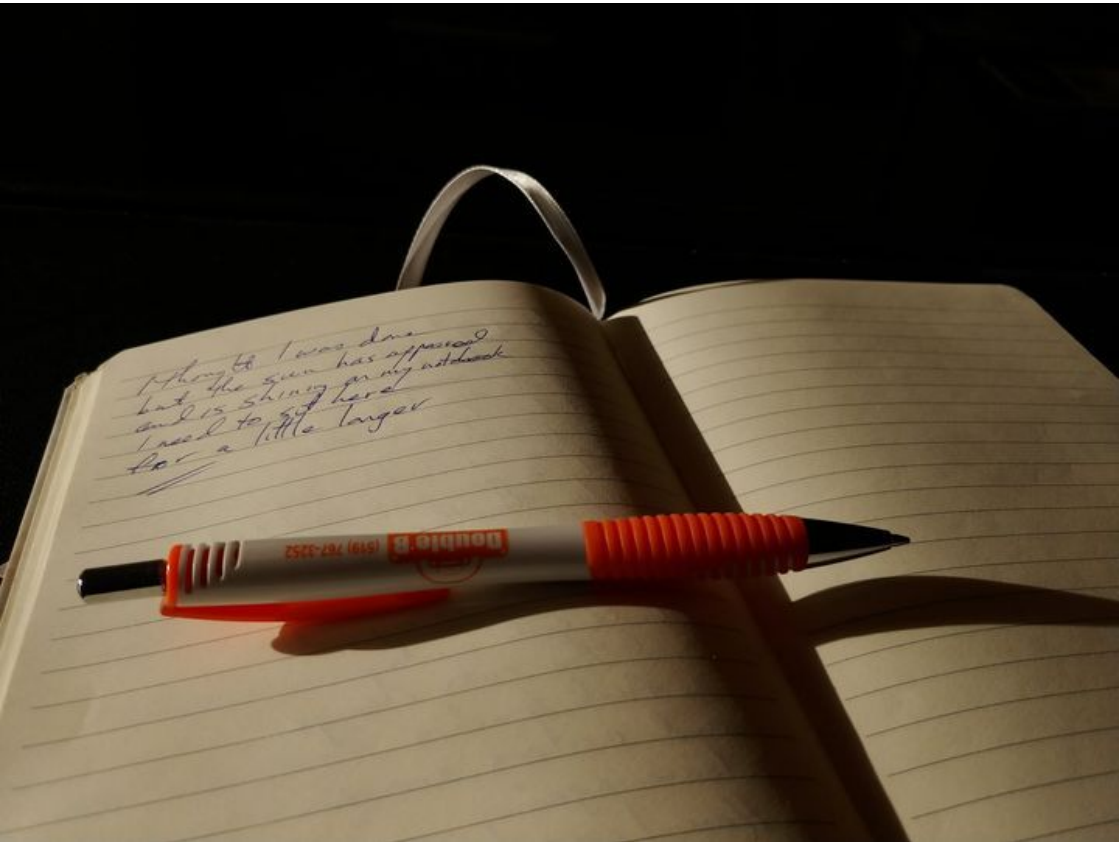
~~

The Gravel Lane

The gravel lane
that leads to my cabin
floods every winter
and the ruts change
as fuel trucks
and visitors arrive
leave again

Have I ever looked
at the patterns in the ice
as it forms?

~~



I thought I was done
but the sun has appeared
and is shining on my notebook
I need to get here
for a little longer

I Thought I Was Done

I thought I was done
but the sun has appeared
and is shining on my notebook
I need to sit here
for a little longer
~~

Poetry

Hear my words
Can you see
what was in my mind

See my words
Can you hear
who I was listening to

Be content
when you hear or see
with what you see and hear
~~

What Rot

Think of two hammers
good hardened steel
Strike them together
Hard
That splinter in your eye?
That is this poem
~~

Goals

I shall write
a poem per day
and I shall take
a photo per day
and I shall exercise
faithfully, each day
For a year

These promises
to ourselves
are best kept
to ourselves

That day
when we should just
go for a beer
will be much easier
without friends
reminding us
of our promises

~~

The Mechanic

I closed my pen
and the top
flew across the room
All those years as a kid
taking things apart
paid off today
~~

The Mystery

Cleaning my room
I found some panties
between bed and wall
I thought
"that explains my green underpants"
~~

Always

An entire book of poetry
on various topics
and at the end
you realize
it's about a woman
~~

Simple

At the Tillsonburg fair
the men lined up
and pissed into an eavestrough
with the downspout
headed for the sewer

Fifty years later
in Uruguay
or Brazil
I pissed into the corner
of the room
into a half round
tile run
that led to a hole
(like one of those idiot dreams
looking for a place to piss
just before you wake up)

I have to admit
the simplicity of a trough
and an occasional hosing
to wash it down
is, shall we say
Breathtaking

~~

A Bit Unsteady

My old cat
stares at me
swaying
and I stare back
wondering
if it's me swaying

~~

The Ritual of Coffee

The ritual of coffee
never fails
to result in a poem
And sometimes
I remember
from coffee pot
to pen
~~

Bzzzzzing

The bricked up windows
facing the school yard
gave us the perfect wall
A baseball bat
a superball
and bzzzzzing
~~

Wide Eyes

With broad shoulders
and upthrust breasts
With narrow waist
and generous ass
She always looked
as if she had just
taken a breath
and been surprised

~~

Double Tap

Come here my solid girl
come sit upon my knee
but lightly, lightly please
and I will hug you
and you will lay your head
upon my shoulder
while my hand
strokes your flank
until you sigh
Then a double tap
my leg is done
~~

She Moved Up the Stair

She always stopped
at the top of the stair
and smiled over her shoulder
when she caught me watching
~~

Distraction

In the holiday season
there are more bodies
at home, rather than out
and each of those bodies
make noise
demand attention
and otherwise disrupt
that silence needed
to write

~~

The Latest Album

When did Dylan
Start sounding like Durante?

~~

Nine Times

Nine times out of ten
he said
They say no

So you go down to the bar
asking
All you need
is a bar with ten women

I wonder, does this still work?
~~

Do You Have a Name

Do you have a name
for your thing
I asked
My what?
Your, um, vagina
Yes, it's "my vagina"
and your penis
goes inside
Now shut up
will you please
~~

She Stormed Around the House

She stormed around the house
dusting, sweeping
poking at our feet
with the vacuum
Clashing the dishes
back into the cupboard
"What's wrong?"
asked the new roommate
"Shut up, shut up, shut up"
hissed the rest of us
~~

Three Choices

When you go to bed
and are met
with a wall of stink
you have three choices

Turn around and wait

Go to sleep with your nose
in your pillow

Or hope you fart too
~~

Plague Havens

Once, during plague
we could have sailed
to a new land
or moved at horse-speed
to the country
Once there was room
But today
there are too many
And automobiles
and aeroplanes
and nowhere
Not the most remote island
No matter what
the country folk think
Not even the countryside
is out of reach

~~

From Away

Those from away
are always stupid
having no language
no understanding
of the way things are done

Yet, speaking loudly
so the locals can understand
they often lecture
on the way things should be done

Still, kind hearts
often hold their hands
and care for them
until they understand

~~

Where Do You Go

Where do you go
when you leave my side
what do you become
I can't imagine
I have hints
from our friends
They tell me what you are
and you are not who I know
~~

I Piss Around My Cabin

I piss around my cabin
and make other signs
that a human lives here

Perhaps the bears
the fishers and the lynx
will think me
one of those
with guns
and stinking machines
roaring through the bush

Perhaps they will
leave me alone

Yet I understand well
that my greatest risk
is from my own kind
~~

Covid Dreams

Waiting 18 years
in her home
She is free now

She will go to college
and meet a boy
and meet another

She will graduate
and move happily
Willingly at least
through her life

These are her dreams
as she decorates the basement
with student posters
and settles down
to another zoom class
~~

How Love is Learned

What if our hearts
burst out of our chests
dug their way
out of the grave
and like some caterpillar
took wing and flew

Quickly, softly
and while its mother sleeps
enters a newborn baby
and fills it with all the love
it held when that old life
was done

~~

Nina Simone

What if Nina Simone
was a God
and you didn't listen

One chance we had
one life
to get it right
and we missed it

~~



A Judge

I have been a judge
for many things
For a photo class
at a college
For barley samples
at a fair
I've judged written tests
for an international kendo test
at a world championships
and decades of tests
for iaido and jodo

And I've been judged
for running
for basketball
and a dozen other sports
I've been judged
for school, for work
and for how well
I clean the house
and how well
I boyfriended
All this judging
and in my seventh decade
I still don't know
what it's for

~~

Hometown Visit

I left the bar
needing to piss
and left my girlfriend
along with some guy
from my high school days
I guess it was his local
certainly wasn't mine
One of those places "back home"
with a clock that ran backward

When I returned
bladder comfortable again
this fellow, never a friend
was gone
I asked my girlfriend
"He hit on me
told me you had a fight, way back
I told him you've taught martial arts
at the university
for the last ten years"

~~

Someone I Nodded To

It was dark that day
one of the darkest
of my life
She was a neighbour
someone I nodded to
and she knocked on my door
She had a bottle of whiskey
and we sat at the table
and she told me about her life
Nothing dramatic
just an ordinary life
she spoke, I listened
When the bottle was done
she looked at me hard
nodded, and left

~~

Traumatized

Do you suppose
that 2020
is the universe's way
of telling us
that we should not have complained
about 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019?
Yes puny humans
it can "get any worse"
Hold my beer
~~

Book Season

It's book season
too cold outside
for the old bones
of my cat (and me)
So I write books
something that has become
easier

~~

I Feel Like a Dragon

I love to watch the presents
pile up under the tree
the lights, the decorations
are fine

But it's that pile
of bags and bows
filled with silly things
that makes me smile

~~

Sensei

Do you not love
your teacher
But you must
you love the woman
who gave you life
So must you
love the one
who taught you
what that life meant
~~

Pioneer

How can a man
be a man
all the frontiers
have gone

Nowhere
is there free range
A man cannot walk
to a clean new land

One thing my son
in one thing
can you still be free
Contemplate a new thought
~~

The Kids

Your mother was excited
when she heard
you might come
We hung some lights
and she baked some treats
~~



And The Peel?

What is left of life now
Now that it is a peeled orange
and the shiny lights
of a Christmas tree

What is that life now
It is what it was
What it always has been
A peeled orange and shiny lights

And what is left of life now
What will the future be
but the same as it was, as it is
until the lights go out
And the peel?

~~

Classical Reference

In 1961
the poems were full
of classical reference
Ovid this
Cybele that
In my high school
in the country
I had a year of latin
Amo amas amat

Today, well yes
Achilles, but also Bruce Lee
We need to hook in
to the common knowledge
(the further back the better)
So poetry is about
what you knew at 17
~~

Eyes Shut

If Facebook
is the Oracle at Delphi
man has become stupid
Where once lies
must be disguised
They may now
be as obvious as noses
because the eyes are shut
~~

Prolifically Obscure

Hearing that a poet
that I never knew
had produced 70 books
gives me comfort
An unknown writer
of prolific output
Excellent, I'm in
~~

One Day

I have thought about this
quite a bit
the last two years
If I'm dead
I feel nothing
One might think
that even pain
is better than nothing

But long sleepless nights
of a broken neck
and a damaged left arm
taught me that
whatever I might have thought
There comes a time
when death is welcomed

In my case
One more day
and a nerve medication
that worked
meant that I am still here
still writing

~~

Her Lover the Sun

Do you suppose the flower
crouches through the night
full of dread
at the absence of her lover
the sun

Do you suppose that dawn
brings indescribable joy
that her lover has returned
and she may live again
the sun, her lover, her life

~~

Country Parties

An old church
we used to rent
for high school parties
in the winter
Out in the country
so we had to drive
What else is new?

In the summers
it was someone's farm
down by a creek
for preference
We'd get drunk
someone would get laid
someone would puke
and most of us
made it home

Once I slipped
into a ditch
and my stepfather
got a tractor
and hauled the car out
"snowing, couldn't see"
Sure, he said
My mother shook her head
~~

December Dada

Master Anzan went into the mill
One of the monks had just come back
A monk came to bid Master Seppo farewell
Master Seppo bade Master Tozan farewell

Master Kuzan came to see Master Seppo
Master Reiun asked a monk "where are you going"
One day Master Chokei held his lecture in the hall
A nun made a gift of a china bowl to Master Reiju

Master Ungo was told
Master Unmon once quoted Master Baso
Master Unmon asked the head monk
Master Unmon asked a monk

Master Sekken asked a monk
Master Sekken asked a monk
Kanbunko asked a monk
One day Master Rakuho heard an attendant

A monk asked Master Nan-in
When Master Shintenkyo was the head monk
A monk came to bid farewell
Master Meisho went to Master Tan

~~

The Old Man on Facebook

Old man sits
wonders what this new number means
can't figure out Messenger
so ignores it

Wonders how to make the number go away
how to shut the gate
at the base of the mountain
so no more seekers
seek

See?

Pass it Forward

Too late, the old man
saw the dog turd
and he stepped in it

For the rest of his life
he tried to get rid
of the smell

For the rest of his life
he tried to wipe it off
on someone else

~~

Garbage Pile Doka

When you jump into the midden
don't expect
to smell like a lilac

~~

The News Today

This is the news:

A celebrity has hooked up
with someone

The government has provided
some bread

but kept the circus for itself

The best shows on TV

(apparently I was wrong about the circus)

Drugs happen, people take them

(see bread and circus)

Sports figures natter

about their challenges

Kimchi is claimed

but who can really claim cabbage in a pot
with a lid

The best films

Climate happens, weather too

why doesn't someone do something about it

Pretty pictures

and the homes of famous artists

round out the vital information

of another day

~~

She Smelled of Apples

She smelled of apples
which was strange
she wore no scent
and didn't like apples

I checked her lotions
smelled them all
Nothing
and she smelled of apples

Why that struck me
as important
I couldn't say, but she did
She smelled of apples
~~

Eye Candy

Watching the squirrel
on the back deck
trying to decide
to go for the apple
is a lot more interesting
than what I've planned
for today

~~

A Book I Read

A book I read
long ago

I was in school
and I remember
I loved the book
but I don't remember why

I loaned it many times
Sometimes got a different book back

I think it's on a shelf
But I won't read it again
It might be terrible

I might have to laugh
at my young self
~~

The Collector

Lots of my books
spent lots of years
in boxes in the basement
"where are you going to put them"
"why do you keep them anyway"

They were for my future children
they were what made me, me
And my children
wisely
didn't want to become me

The boxes went out the door
to a friend with books
my ten or twelve feet
joined her fifty or sixty
and shortly afterwards
they were gone in a fire

Good, I thought
as if I had slipped a leash
as if I was free to move on

~~

I Need a Bookmark

I keep throwing away
my bookmarks
scraps of paper
and receipts
too ratty
too disrespectful
and now
I need a bookmark
~~

The Ancient Plot

You think the conspiracy is new?
It's old
Look at them rich boys
them got-it-good boys
Find something you got in common
the way you speak maybe
the colour of your skin
the length of your hair

An why ain't you rich
an why ain't you got it good?
Them that smell different
that eat that weird food
They's in your way
if it wasn't for them
you'd be in your proper place

~~

The Idealism of Youth

Go ahead boy
you've gotta do your time
March to save the world
show us how it's done

I did it
when I was your age
but just remember
We've got the cops

~~

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