

It's Always Something



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Introduction

When Spring arrives, there is that night when the temperature rises and you wake several times in the night, sweat soaking the bed.

Or you find something to niggle in the back of your mind, to keep you awake so that at 4:30am you are up editing your latest book of poetry.

You wait so anxiously for Spring and when it comes... “It’s always something,” my Gran used to say.

Kim Taylor, May 2022



Too Much Silence

The cat yells loudly
Brenda scrapes at her yogourt cup
and now the cat is drinking loudly
from the kitchen sink

Soon will come the thump
and more yelling
but thankfully
Brenda is done with her yogourt

~~

Archaeology

Here is a jawbone
likely to survive the years
pulled out of the floor
of a cave

Tell me what colour skin
this man had
What place on your scale
do you put him

And then please move here
to our dinosaur display
Was it scales or feathers or fur
was it green or blue or red
~~



The C Word

Another visit to the doctor
and we discuss a bump
on my hand
a rash on my wrist
and my sore knee

I didn't mention the itchy bumps
on the inside of my leg
because I assume they are athletes foot
got lost up my leg

Or the bumps and lumps
on my head
that I slice off with my razor
or numerous pinpricks of pain
that play a random game

Everything but "that" thing
and the "other" thing
a relief to us both
to speak of that
which will "not" kill me
~~

A Book To Read

There is a scar
on the hinge of my mouth
A sign of spring skiing
with a dull edge

There are several scars
on the outside of the fingers
of my right hand
where I became angry
and slammed a door

A sweet little scar
on the fold of a knuckle
on my left hand
where a kite string ran
and then cut deep

There is a large scar
on the back of my shoulder
where I was sunburned deep
as a child on the beach

Oh, and the scar in my groin
on the right hand side
where a hernia was stitched
so very long ago

My body is a veritable book
of the misadventures of my life
and you can read it
if you wish

~~



Talent-Less

Was there ever a museum
A temple or a church
where I did not feel small
talent-less and stupid

Each and every one
battered me to the ground
and for that
I am grateful

~~

Sort of Like Me

In front of me
Dusty
Stained
bashed about for forty years
holding up my monitor
is a speaker stand
Bought for long-gone speakers
by Lorna, my first wife
Speakers bought for me
by my mother, long-gone

I cannot describe to you
the comfort this gift for a gift
brings to me each time
I notice it there
Dusty
Stained
Bashed about
~~

What?

When you speak to me
Forgive me
For I will say "what" or "eh"

My ears are not
what they once were
and, although I fill in
what I don't hear
with words that are much more fun

I worry
I may miss something important
and so, when your speech
moves into the surreal
"What?"
"Eh?"
~~



Who is Important

I was meant to write
about someone else
a wife who supported a husband
who may have been more talented
but maybe not

But that's not to be

Far too strong for me to deny, the thought
that without the women in my life
any vantage of creation
any claim to talent
would be a lie

~~

Consider this.

You have five years. No more, perhaps less. Of that five years, you may have all of it, or there may be periods of time that cannot be used.

Assume that creation is important to you, writing, painting, composition, sculpture, or perhaps dance. Five years.

What do you do?

Do you spend your time becoming successful, networking, doing interviews, creating publicity. Or do you create, with no thought to becoming known, certainly no thought of fame.

Have you worked through this question?

Now comes the work. Why did you make the choice you did. Think hard, this is the core of your thoughts and action, the answer behind the answer.

~~

More People Means...

The stupid
I don't know what to do
with the stupid

You can't beat thought
into anyone
they have to decide to think

Is there a twelve step program
for stupid
Hello, my name is Kim, and I'm stupid

You have to want to think
before you can even try
to get over stupid

~~



Status Quo

Always ALWAYS
the rich and powerful
will have their abortions
for their mistresses
while they preach in the church
and pass laws in the government
to condemn the little people
those who are beneath contempt
whose salaries are too small
to obtain manumission of their sins
The sin of poverty being the greatest of all
~~

Brazil

Brazil is wasted
on a Canadian
We cannot appreciate
the gift of heat
the gift of lush foliage
Being shaped by snow
and mono-cultures of cedar
or pine

The food is too rich
the booze too strong
The men stand too close
the women
well
the women we run from
Brazil is wasted
on a Canadian
~~

Yearning

The infinite sadness
of a newly built planter
standing empty
in our back yard

Neither dirt, nor seed
seems to be present
just a void, yearning
to be filled

~~



Time for One More

My bladder, insistent
becoming more so
but I sit

Just one more poem
I'm sure I have time
for just one more poem

Is it now?

~~

Only The Best People

Only the living
can fear death
and only the living
can make glorious castles
in the clouds
for themselves to live in
after death
Glorious castles
with only the best people

~~



The Veteran's Club

The bar at the veteran's club
has been open for an hour
and in that gloom
smelling of cigarettes
(who is going to say no
to a vet that needs a smoke)
are three old, old men
each at the bar
with several seats between them

Not because they hate each other
or for fear of Covid
but because those seats
were someone else's
He's not around any more
but the three can still hear
so they stay in their own seats
and perhaps speak up a bit
or tell the barmaid to tell Joe
what Jim said

You should have seen the place
thirty years ago
there were even women
and a dance floor
Through the cigarette haze
the band played and there
on the other side of the room
there she was

But she's long gone
and the band
Hell, even the dance floor
All that's left
are three old, old men
spread around the bar
an hour after it opens
Watching their beer
in case it does something

~~



Actinic Action

Jesus the spots on my head
are hurting more and more

I put lotion on them
and try not to scrape too hard
but they never go away
and they are tender

so that I rarely rub my head
the way I once did

The way I enjoyed the bare skin
and the noise the stubble made
~~

Never Left Guelph

Forty seven years ago
a scared boy arrived in this town
determined to be someone else
and glad to be somewhere else

He had companions
some stuck
some didn't
and he remade himself
into someone he never was

Forty seven years now
he's been in this town
but his kids have been here longer
been here all their lives

~~



Can I Say It's My Fault?

Once again lumped into
a group that are evil beings
Once again told
that an apology is not enough
So

Um

~~

This is Your Tree

At birth
they are bonded to a tree
a small cut
and a drop of blood on the root

The child is told
this is your tree
and they love it
they shelter by it
when they are sad
and they tell it their joy
when they are joyous

The child grows up
moves away
perhaps never to return
but the tree remains
its slow thoughts
come around to 'nice'
of 'nice to meet you'
about the time the child
brings its own child
to bond with the tree

And so the generations
spin on within the branches
within the life
of the tree

~~

The Old Man She Loves

He lay asleep in the chair
his book turned over on his lap
his glasses on

She found a shawl
in the front coat closet
and carried it out to him

Carefully she removed his glasses
and the book
put the glasses on the book
on the deck beside him

Then she lightly draped the shawl
over his lap
covering his hands
and his bare arms
with a silent wish that he stay warm enough

~~



Hello

I picked up the phone, Hello
She said
“I don't know what to do
he's gone out and hasn't come back
and my husband left last week

I don't know where to look
or who to call
do you think he's at his school?”

Although I wasn't the person
she thought she was calling
I said
Perhaps he is, it hasn't been long
perhaps he is just slow
you know how kids are

“Yes, perhaps you're right
Oh, there he is
thanks, have to go now”

Bye, I said
~~

These Budo Books

My library
I have gathered
accumulated through visits
to book stores
and second hand shops

Forty years of search
and I must have most
of what's important
in my chosen field

All of them have been scanned
some read carefully
and placed on shelves
scattered across the house

And when I am no more
these precious books
this carefully acquired library
will be auctioned, donated
or otherwise thrown back
into the world

For, like me, they are important
only to a few
and for the rest, perhaps
a purchase to fill
an empty shelf
We can always donate it back

~~

My Role

As the father
they handed me scissors
and said "you may cut the umbilical"
And so I cut
feeling the grind of flesh
separating under steel

It was only decades later
that I wondered at this
the father
separating the mother
from the child
Is this what was meant?

Or was it simply something
that father could do
to feel perhaps less useless
in this most womanly time
that he has been allowed
to see

~~



A Teacher's Guilt

I move this evening
for the first time in two years
away from the Friday evening zoom
the Iaido class

I will miss it
for the only good reason
To see my daughter play
in the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony

Two years attendance is good
Yes?
There is a substitute teacher
Yes?
I will be back to teach next week
Yes?
~~

The Habits of a Lifetime

The long years of pain
of effort and stress
and strain

So many of my companions
along the way
wandered off

And now I remain
the habits of a lifetime
keeping me here

This dojo around me
it travels with me
and I endure, hopeful

That another companion
will arise
or perhaps stumble in

Until then, I remain here
on this wooden floor of the mind
and carry on
~~

Soon, I will not be

It has been a while
since mother, father
or others long gone
have come to my dreams

Am I close enough now
that they feel no need
to visit me
After all, I am going to visit them
soon

And yet I cannot believe that
I will not be
And certainly will not be visiting

Perhaps, then
we have said what need be said
and we can leave it alone

~~



The Rock

There is a secret code
we men have
that lets us know
who is a father
and who is not

Known to all of us
who are fathers
it is called "the rock"
and that's what it is

Is he a father?
wait until he stands alone
there, he rocks back and forth
imagine his arms bent
Yes, now you see

~~

Next Year

You've got lots of time
she said
We can do that next year

I don't really feel like doing it now
we'll do it later
she said

And I have seen the end of my life
I'm in extra time
and to be told next year is alarming to me
~~

To Fix It

I am an old man
I did my best to fix it
The world became kinder
for a while
while I was alive

Please, please, please
tell me you will keep fighting
rather than coasting along
saying "it's all fine
I don't have to pay attention"

Let me leave this world
believing it is getting better
despite what I see

~~



I've Pasted It Here

I don't know if you will see this
I've pasted it here
on the wall of the bus
But I know you ride each day
I hope you will see this

I want to thank you
for the times you listened to me
and the times you didn't want to listen
For the days together
walking hand in hand in the woods
For the nights together
that are nobody else's business

I know you had to leave
I understand, I really do
and I just wanted to wish you well
to tell you that although I cried
I knew you would be happier
without me

~~

Why I Nap

I went to bed early
just to cut the day short
I nap for the same reason
to make the time go away

You'd think I would savour
every minute
And I do
but sometimes the day just drags

Soon enough, the days will be gone
and that will mean I've gone
but I won't know
Like in sleep, I won't know
~~

How Is It

How is it
How is it that I have missed you
I ride this bus every day
and I have just seen you
and you are worth seeing
is it that you are new
or is it that I am old

~~



I Remember You

I remember you
I remember you not in moving pictures
but in a series of still images
a book full of photographs

You in your new coat
you in your underwear
you in the kitchen
you in the bathtub

I don't know why you don't move
in my memory
Some people do
Perhaps I want you still

~~

Am I Here?

Mreaow
My old deaf cat
asks often for attention
He doesn't want anything
just to know he's still here

You snap at me
for distracting you
for my annoying questions
for my stupid observations
Me and the cat, Mreaow
~~

Hush Child

Hush child
your father has gone out
to the woods
to find us some food
He said the night was calm
but the storm has come

Hush child
your father will soon be back
with a fat rabbit
or a lovely bird
He said the night was calm
but the storm has come
~~



Oh Lovely Moon

Oh lonely moon
stay, stay
do not hide behind the cloud

For I need your light
to return home
and the wood is dark
the snow is deep

Stay oh lovely moon
bide, bide
do not ride away on the wind
~~

The Fish Market

She jumped
and gave a little scream
as we walked by the guard
to the fish market

A crayfish, waving his claws
as if to say
Show me the water
and nobody gets hurt

She looked over the fish
the clams
the snails
and finally the crayfish

And, reminded,
she told the vendor
who picked up the runner
and back into the box

~~

She Looked

She stared at me
and looked into my eyes

She saw nothing romantic
no twinkling stars
no placid, limpid lake

Only grey matter
nothing but gelatinous goo
Nothing she wanted to see

~~



Nothing More

She wanted me
and I her
and there was nothing more

No great sand dunes
to ride across
No stormy seas
to sail fearful

Just a girl in a bar
who wanted a boy
and a boy who happily said yes

~~

Euni's Daughter

Today I saw the daughter
of my second wife
in the cafe

I didn't actually ask her
but Christ on a stick
she looked just like her

My hesitation came
from the mullet haircut
I mean really, who wears their mother's haircut

So maybe not the daughter
of my second wife
Maybe just a coincidence

It happened before
I saw a girl in the weight room
who was the spitting image of another old girlfriend

Her I asked
Is your mother...
No
~~



Word Processors

Do you remember word processors?
the young fan says
and the writer says
To be honest, I could never afford one
it was a typewriter
A typewriter
One of those things with actual keys
and a ribbon with ink on it
You had to put a piece of paper in it
And you typed the words onto the paper
That's right, no printer needed
It was a writer and a printer combined, yes
and with stuff called white-out
White Out
Yes, you could put liquid paper
over a mistake
and type the correction
White-out, yes
Invented by the mother of Mike Nesmith
The Monkee
No he wasn't a Monkey
He was in the band, The Monkees
Daydream Believer
Last Train to Clarksville
Well never mind

No, I never owned a word processor
I went from a typewriter
to a personal computer
Because up to then computers were in barns
and owned by corporations
A Tandy 1000
No there were no hard drives
There were floppy drives
They were floppy
Mine had two drives
So the program was on one
and the writing was on another
Floppy
Yes, I guess it was pretty funny
Yes I'm sure that's why they called them
Hard Drives
Yes, well it was good talking to you too
~~

Pro-Status Quo

In the sock drawer I found a condom
and thought to myself
What can I do with that

A practical item
that every boy should have
especially in an age
where women are killed
for being pregnant

Any boy who does not have
a preventative in his wallet
should be rejected and beaten
by any woman who knows
Including his mother

But this one is un-needed
by an old man with cancer
an old man who is chemically castrated
as the doctors so cheerfully put it
so another use, perhaps

If I owned a soldier's gun
I could use it
to keep the rain from the barrel
But no soldier I
with gunpowder prick

I could fill it with water
and drop it out the window
if I lived high up off the ground
but two floors is barely high

I suppose I could fill it with cotton
and pyrethrin
lay it out in the garden
and let the mice build nests
that kill the ticks

~~



Reached for her Ass

I knew a girl
who seemed to have shortish hair
but when she washed it
the hair would unfurl down her back
and over her ass

I loved that hair
that reached for her ass
every time it got wet
It was like me
every time I wet my whistle

~~

Look After Her

Look after her
he said
Who? Who should I look after
Your new girlfriend
he said
I'm her ex
and I'm asking that you care
that you keep her safe
that you protect her
In general? Is there something specific
No of course not
he said
I love her still, but you're with her
Please look after her
I will
~~

I Saw Nothing

In the blackness
of a moon-lit night
deep in the bush
I woke, and saw nothing
Blind, I groped
hand crawling across the bed
looking for

She is here
the rising panic falls
as I fall
back to sleep

~~



Blue Striped Bee

A blue striped bee
moves, flower to flower
gathering food
incidentally pollinating

He sleeps alone
in a crack in a rock
but may find a mate
and procreate

But otherwise
this solitary bee
wants only to eat
cares not for man's praise
~~

Point Made

Hot sticky night
no sheets or blankets
I flopped down
on my stomach
saying
"I assume you don't want to touch"

She said "ah"
and flopped onto my back
like a tiger might flop
and stayed there a few minutes
until she rolled off again
point made
~~

Their Birth Dates

I don't remember the date
my father died
or my mother
or my grandparents

I barely remembered my own birth date
except that now I'm asked it
several times a month
many times a hospital visit

When I was younger
I lived in terror
of child services visiting
and asking me
the birth dates of my children

They would take them away
if I did not know
And I did not know
~~

Dead Woman's Dress

Out, O' bravely out
into the Saturday afternoon
of a warm spring weekend
and out into the path
of those who build gardens
like they build careers

Nobody get it their way
or be run down
The carts slapping into my heels
the wives apologizing
the husbands, head down
charging toward that garden hose

And in the Ethnic Supermarket
the overweight white guy
so keen to get at his combo
of noodles, sugary chicken and
sugary beef looms
over my shoulder
his face helpfully uncovered
every alcoholic pore
on his nose revealed

And the parking lot
insane with freedom
no rules of the road
in the private land of the parking lot
Only the rule of look out for me
look out for me
as bargains take up the brain
no cells left to look out for others
in the pursuit of what must be there

That dead woman's dress
in just the right size

~~



Like a Bonsai

Like a Japanese Bonsai
I was once deeply rooted
but little by little
the soil was taken away
and my nerves exposed
like roots over a rock

Deeper, always searching deeper
for a safe place to root
you give me less and less
until all I have
is a small layer of self
requiring daily watering
daily misting

And daily terror
that you will go to the country
for the weekend
without designating a friend
to come water and mist
my poor frayed and exposed
nerves
~~

Mark Yourself Safe

You mark yourself safe
from another shooting
in another city

and I wonder
how a people get this way
All countries have problems
all countries have men
who reach for a weapon
when they have imagined their limit

But only one country I know of
allows the weapon to be without limit
I know we have our own men
who want the fully automatic
assault rifle..... for hunting
and I prey (pray?) they never get it

~~

Democratic Rights

When you got the government
you voted for
When you got the righteous
and the holy

You spent ten years
with your hands tied behind your back
and your knees tied together
so that you remained still
in the proper attitude

Until it seemed to be right
It seemed to be proper
and you would vote for it again
~~



So Busy

“We are so busy
although we'd like to visit”

And I hear what is being said
You don't really want
to visit a dying man
and I approve

I don't want to visit
this dying
and to be reminded
by kind eyes
and tut tutting voices
forcing my face toward the grave

No, I approve
of being busy
of wanting to, but can't
especially if I don't have to hear
about how it will be so much better
In the next life

~~

Commentary

It was a rosary
obviously flung deep
into the bush
beside the cemetery

It was hanging from a tree
and when I found it
I looked around

Sure enough
there were three more
flung into the trees
to hang from the branches
~~

Age Spots

I check the mirror
and the back of my hands
Freckles, I wish they were freckles
but no, they're age spots
I never had freckles
and although I'd like to pretend

They are age spots

~~



There Is No God

I watched her wade to the boat
We were going to paddle around
our small pond

As she walked out from shore
she raised her skirt out of the water
and I prayed

I prayed that the water was deep
and she would have to lift the skirt higher
There is no god

~~

She Stood Still

She stood outside the lighthouse
red hair streaming away from her head
She looked up
as if trying to see through the clouds
but there were only clouds

I yelled from the door
come in
But she stood still, and still
she looked up at the clouds
I don't know what she saw there

And the rain hit
soaking her to the very skin
Surely she will come in now, I thought
but still she stood and looked
Until I had to go get her

~~



The Breeze

The swamp was over her boots
but she didn't notice
She was talking to a woman
sitting on the grass

I looked from one to the other
and wandered toward them
wondering what they said
and no matter how close I got

I heard nothing but the breeze
stirring the grass, rustling the reeds
I looked from face to face, lovely faces
but how were they the same woman
~~

Andrew's Window

The crippled woman pauses
a field of grass before her
and there, the house

She lifts her head, pushing up
hands bracing her searching
and her legs flowing out behind

She had been to the letter box
she had been to the doctor
she had been to see the neighbour
~~

The New Year

Half asleep, half passed out
they saw in the new year
through bleary eyes and beery hands
as they groped one another

Harpy New Year you bitch
Same to you asshole
take your hands off my boobs
and put them on my ass

~~



The Need

There was a neon sign outside the window
and it flickered for most of the night
the part where I was awake
Stupid red glow through the night

It got bad, after a year
I couldn't sleep without that light
and so I couldn't go anywhere
for more than a few hours

~~

Corner Office

He loved his corner office
He got it by dead man's shoes
The last owner retired
and he was next in line

He would sit behind his desk
his back to the windows
because the light was too much
and there was nothing to see

A tree
A cement wall
A road with cars
A brick wall
~~

The Mask

It was quite the mask
scary as hell
and she loved to wear it
when she went out

In fact, I never saw her face
just that mask
that she loved to wear
when she went out

One day she invited me in
Oh boy I thought, I'll see her face
but she didn't take it off
she put another on instead
~~



I Never Told Her

I never told her I could see her
lying on her back
staring up at the sky
behind the lattice fence

I thought, best leave her to it
if she needed a place to hide
it was to hide
and I shouldn't find her

Many years later
I asked her about her spot
behind the lattice, where she hid
I was watching you, she said

~~

Another Bad Night

She lay on the floor
beside her bed
covers scattered
Another bad night

~~



The Wrong Way

What are you doing, she screamed
You're shooting at the wrong things
have you never been here before
You must shoot the dolls
and the ducks are the prize

I was sent on my way
to the ducking tank where I threw hard
and hit the target with a ding
as tonnes of water poured
down on me

~~

Half Turned

She sat half turned
her arm over the back of the chair
and she looked at nothing
far away in the corner
unblinking

I watched carefully
and her eyes never moved at all
her hands never moved
her body never moved
at all

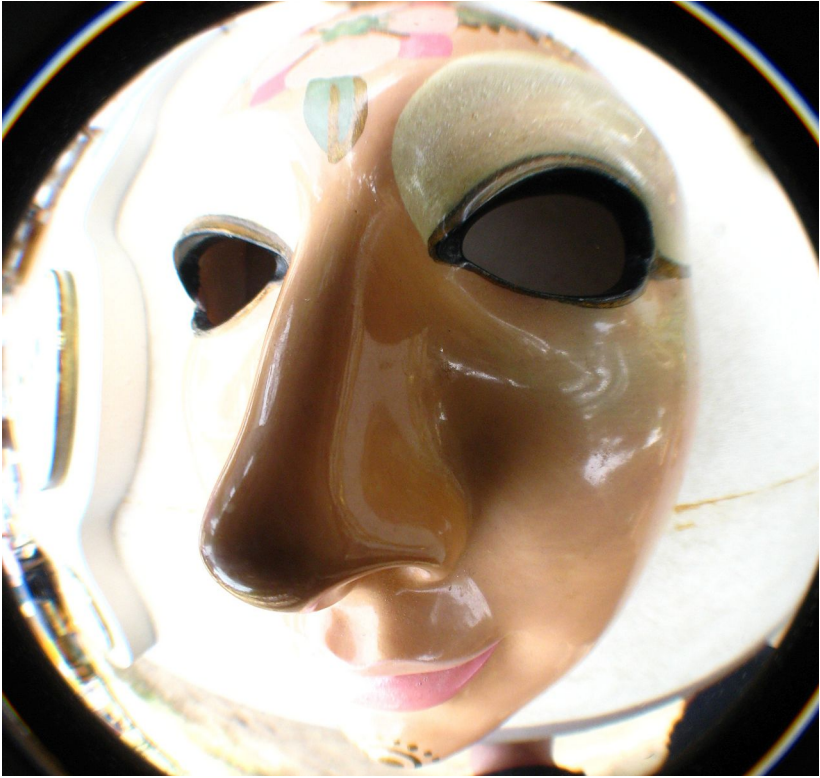
I walked to her
and touched her on the cheek
with my finger
She raised her arm and she cupped
my hand
~~

Downhill

I could see in the distance
that the road climbed a hill
but right here
it went downhill
so I stopped peddling

I didn't peddle
the road kept going down
No matter what he said
the man I told this too
I kept going down hill

~~



In The Swamp

Lost again in the swamp
we always ended up in the swamp
We broke through the bush
to the clear water

A white canoe floated there
Not tied up
Nobody around that we could see
We watched as it drifted by

For the next few weeks
I kept half an ear out for news
someone lost in the swamp
Perhaps a body found

~~

Hauling Barges

Starving and desperate
I moved back in time
to take a job hauling barges
along the Erie Canal

The only work I could find
Just enough to eat
Just enough to survive
I did that until I was too old
~~

Promised Recycling

She stood above the water
on a mountain of plastic and metal cans
All the promised recycling
of her whole life

Each day the mountain grew higher
as the base washed away
empty bottles floating out to sea
and eventually, the collapse

~~



Scars And All

She was to be photographed
scars and all
and a dragonfly settled on her mouth

The photographer snapped
Neither she nor the dragonfly did

And as the snapping was done
the dragonfly was taken away
revealing her black tongue and lips

~~

She Had The Photographs

She was on a sandy beach
with the swelling blue ocean
And the orange sunset sky

She tried not to see
the sand was a blanket
the ocean a blue tarp
and the sky a backdrop

This was her adventure
this was her life of excitement
And she had the photographs
to prove it to herself
~~

Just One More

Five in the morning
and she had worked all night
She was drifting toward sleep
drunk, drugged, and used

The landlady looked around the door
knocked loudly to arouse her
and said
Just one more dear, he arrived late

~~



Balloon Woman

She flew like Chagall's balloon woman
He had to hold her hand
to keep her near the ground

When she came down he was there
arms open wide
to catch her as she fell

~~

I Move the Wine

I move the wine
from one side of the table
to the other
so I can use the mouse

I want to write about social issues
like a good social poet
but all I feel is disgust
and disgust makes a poor poem

~~

I'm Looking Toward Bed

Hunched, chilled
the furnace is right behind me
but if I turn up the heat
I will sweat tonight
and wake more often
sore and tired

Today I napped twice
or was it three times
It was more than I needed
I'm sure
but right now, barely 10:30
I'm starting to look toward bed
~~

Trying to Work

The Pamurai
barely over the seminar
barely caught up with her job
has spent the day
working on the CKF books

I had thought we would practice
she heading for Europe soon
to try a grade not offered here
but the books won out
and I tried to write

The best I did today
was a chapter in a book
I'm not sure I want to write
but it's a result
and I got about half way through edits
on the book before that

~~

My Tattoo

Every so often
I notice my tattoo
I'm quite proud of it
got it a triplet of years ago
when they sprayed my bones
with x-rays to kill what grew there
deep enough
wide enough
to let my neck break at a slip
a small judder on the ice
such as I would never think about

Not that time
I noticed alright
and through weeks of agony
and a crippled arm
I said thank you to that tattoo
and the folks who aimed the rays
using it as a marker

~~



Crapbaskets

Crapbaskets I said
getting up yet again to fetch my glasses
and Pam laughed
I know that's her phrase
Just like ufda
pronounced oof da
meaning she's flopped down
onto the soft chair
to do some more work
~~

The Dragonflies

The small dragonflies flow
away from the car
as we drive the drive
They are the light brigade
to go after blackflies and mosquitoes

Later in the season
will come the heavy-shouldered brutes
that go after the horseflies
I think I like those best
when they land on my head to rest
they feel substantial, solid
they feel strong, confident
and they go after those fat, slow, lazy flies
that beat against your temple
and rock your head to one side

~~

Ladyslipper

My grandmother had a ladyslipper
in her garden
surrounded by chicken wire

She told me its name
and showed me how
a lady could never slip into that yellow flower

I love this season at the cabin
with the Ladyslippers, so very yellow
and the Indian Paintbrush, so very red

Paintbrush is a great collector of selenium
and Wikipedia says the Ojibwe use it for their hair
making it lush and shiny

The Ladyslipper is an orchid
and has an appetite for bugs
the only occupants of those moccasin flowers

With your new knowledge of these May plants
you can appreciate the colours here
should you ever be here

Or should you ever stumble upon
my grandmother's garden
so long dug over for a new house

~~



The Shower Was Broken

Oh my look at that
11:15 has snuck up on me
and I have to shower in the chill air
of the cedar bush

To run back in
and stand shivering
in front of the fire
towelling furiously to warm up

~~

Naked Remembrance

Walking naked from the sauna
in the last of the daylight
Past the Toronto fences
separating me from the streighbours
who would have to put their eyeballs
to the wood, to see me

As I walk by the Phlox the smell sends me
back to the coal cinder flat
behind my childhood home
where I would hide amongst the stems

and further along, the neighbour's stinking cigarette
reminding me of my other grannie's yard
the adults on the cement pad
flicking their butts into the grass
where I stepped squarely on a lit one

~~

Mistimed the coffee

How terrible
how awkward and painful
to miss-time the interval
between a large coffee
and the miles to drive home

Rolling into Fergus
I thought I had it
but shortly after entering town
I realized It had me
and I clenched as hard as I could

“We can make it to the A and W”
I was sure
and as we did, as I yanked on the door
We realized it was closed for renovations
Luckily, Pam spotted another door
in the next store

~~



Ridiculous Sky

At dawn this morning
I was up
for my usual two hourly trot
when I glanced at the sky
Bright blue background
and fluffy pink clouds

I said out loud
"that's just ridiculous"
and shook my head
as I turned away
and headed for the bathroom

~~

Look At That Crazy Thing

We tried to dig a columbine
from a gravel parking lot
It wasn't easy
and we hadn't the time
to remove each stone by stone
so we did what we could
and broke the tap root
and shoved it deep into wet sand
There is not a chance in hell
that thing is going to survive
but we gave it a shot

~~

Smooth Young Skin

I scrape four day's growth
off of my face and head
and on the way slice deep
into that new mole on my cheek

Seeing the blood run down
I feel a certain "serves you right"
These brand new blights
on skin that once was pretty

I have no intention
of leaving the thing alone
I want it gone
There will be more blood
~~



Sharing the Jobs

As Pamela drove to Niagara Falls
I was driven to the doctor
who mixed the gel
and injected it into my stomach fat
said "goodbye, I'm retiring"
and I walked home again

I don't know why I remembered that
except that it itches still
and I feel the lump of gel
slowly releasing the drugs
that keep the cancer from growing
And now I've remembered
as I should, each day
~~

One Day

At the cottage I looked
and everywhere I looked
were chores I intend to do
one day

Perhaps if I continue
to find these chores
that need to be done
I can delay that one day

~~

Nothing But Yellow

As we drove
we passed miles of Canola
rolling up and down
interrupted by farms
and little else
and above that, blue sky

And I thought of Ukraine
and I thought of the Ukes
who played volleyball against us
so damned many decades ago
and I thought of nothing at all
but yellow

~~

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