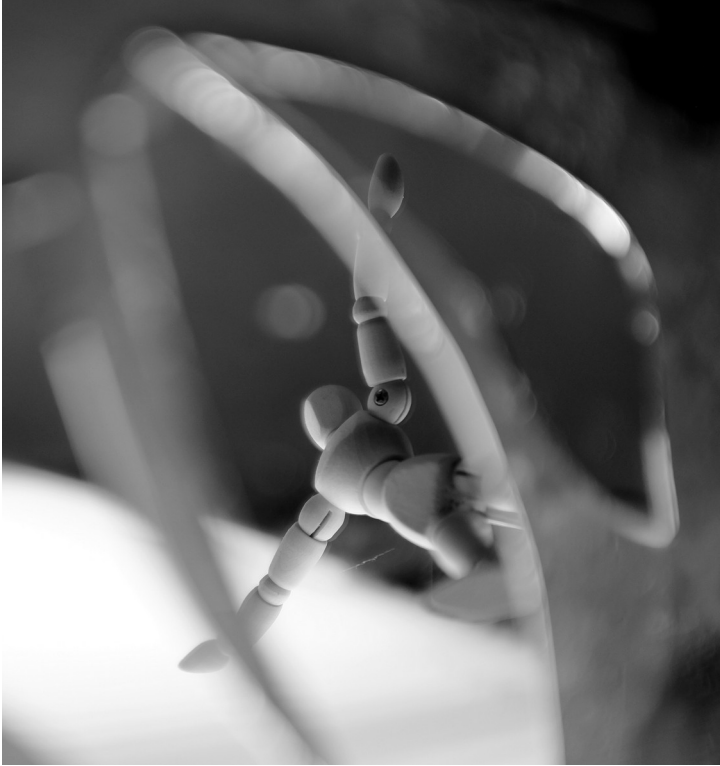


# **More Poems About Women and Sex**



**(And Sons and  
Fathers)**

Who knows how much time we have to share stories. These were written during the first two weeks of a cold April, during a pandemic. I hope you enjoy them for what they are.

Cold, cloudy thoughts from a gloomy time.

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# Rising to meet me

In a dangerous time  
as I worry  
An image appears

You, lying under me  
raising your hips  
to meet my thrust

It was a single thrust  
and then it was gone

What fear can I have  
of death  
When I have seen your face  
rising to meet me

~~

# Lovers in Paris

We were never lovers in Paris  
it never crossed our minds  
we were here in Guelph  
content enough  
warm enough  
We never had to ride the Metro  
we lived a block from downtown  
so we could walk  
When we bothered to get out of bed

~~

# And you too

I lived on a beach  
and I thought about the sand  
and the water  
only if one was in my shorts  
and one was over my head

Now I can't feel the sand at all  
I can't feel the cool touch  
of the sea  
Their absence is so keen  
that sometimes my chest hurts

~~~

# Will you go

Once more I feel  
someone is watching me  
Once more I glance over  
and you are watching me

You watch me  
as if it may be the last time  
Will it be  
Will you go  
with the memory of my face  
to keep you company

~~

# Was it

Was it you in the crowd  
thickly streaming  
against my efforts  
Was it you, did you see me

In the corner of my eye  
The way you tip your head  
I looked  
but could not see

Perhaps it was not you  
Perhaps you were swept on  
Perhaps you ducked your head

~ ~





# You were there only a moment ago

I rest my head on my hand  
and think “warm”  
Slowly I move back  
to that day  
The sand burned  
not a breath of air  
We never dried  
water becoming salty  
on our skin

I reached for you  
did not feel your arm  
and when I opened my eyes  
to look  
You were not here

~~

# **I never asked**

I never asked  
about the other men in your life  
Why should I  
You are here with me

What would you like for breakfast

~~

# Rum and Coke

It used to be rum and coke  
in the bar  
in my hometown  
where I'd chat up the waitress  
and anyone else who would listen

Tonight, it was coke and water  
to cut the carbonation  
and dilute the flavour  
The bars and the girls  
are far in the past

I don't miss them much



# Jacquie

Ah, I have you  
long legged brunette

Forty-five years  
I had forgotten

We went to a formal  
Did we go to bed after?  
It would be nice to think so

~~

# In the morning

Sometimes in the morning  
I pretend to be asleep  
so that you get up  
and make breakfast

It is a little lie  
and usually  
by the time it's ready  
you have to wake me up

~~

# Over my shoulder

You are looking over my shoulder again  
watching what I am doing  
Your hair brushes my ear  
your breast against my arm  
your breath on my cheek

You know it annoys me  
I know you're trying to make me stop  
and come back to bed  
You know that I know  
and you know it will work

~~

## In the restaurant

In the restaurant  
you always drank your water  
and then reached for mine

I saved my water  
for the end of my meal  
so I could have that last sip

That was us

~~

# Your arms around me

Sometimes at night  
when I can't be still  
I move to the next room  
to let you sleep

Sometimes at night  
I despair  
I cry as quietly as I can  
In the next room

Sometimes at night  
you come soundless  
and I feel your arms around me  
as you hold tight

~~



# I played Satie

I played Satie for you  
while cooking eggs  
and sausage  
and brewing coffee  
for the both of us

You said it was lovely  
and I never asked  
if you meant the music  
or breakfast



# Most Romantic Photographs

I look up “most romantic photographs”  
on the internet  
and find thousands of shots  
of someone hugging someone

Not a single image of you

~ ~

# By what authority

By what authority do you demand  
faithfulness from me  
All the love from me

The laws of man?  
Not good enough

You'd better have a God  
to back you up  
He will be cruel  
he will demand obedience  
as you demand of me  
He will be vengeful  
incapable of love  
or compassion

I will leave you to your true love

~~

# You cup my face

You cup my face  
with your hand  
gently you hold my eyes  
with yours  
and say to me

Boy, in years to come  
you will remember tonight  
you will remember me  
but I beg you  
do not remember the morning

~~

# You want to surrender

You want to surrender  
into that long sleep  
of union with another

You want to forget yourself  
and become him  
a fish, in his ocean

I understand the urge  
I have surrendered myself  
But I beg you

Not him



# I wear my hoodie

I wear my hoodie  
like a monk's robe  
I'm so cold  
without you here  
and too much  
of our apartment  
is in my sight

Maybe with tunnel vision  
I can get some work done  
Maybe if I don't see  
the lamp we bought

Maybe if I don't see  
you

~~



# In the corner of my eye

In the corner of my eye  
a lamp I made  
years ago  
and named "Campfire"

looks like sunlight  
coming in the window  
and filling the corner  
where the lamp sits.

~~



## Two years before (1973)

Two years before  
we would have snuck  
away from the porter and  
around the back of the residence  
Maybe I would have climbed  
up to your balcony  
or squirmed in a window

But that was two years ago  
and tonight  
drunk as lords, laughing  
hanging on to each other  
we go in the front door  
and up to your bedroom

~~

# To edit my life

How very easy  
it would be  
to edit my life

The only person  
ever to read my poems  
was my mother

But at the end of your life  
honesty is just about  
all you have left

Far from being embarrassed  
at that 20 year old poet  
I am one of those  
who laugh most cruelly

~

## How is it

How is it that the hair  
on my ears  
grows so fast  
while the rest of it  
hardly needs shaving

And those earlobes  
I swear  
they are almost as big  
as my Mother's  
and hers were huge

~~~

# I watched my father

I watched my father work  
circular saw in his hand  
cigarette in his mouth  
He would breath in through his mouth  
and out through his nose  
the smoke curled up  
into a squinting eye

I watched a drop of sweat  
move from his brow  
to the end of his nose  
and fall on the board  
he was cutting

~ ~

# Sons and Fathers

Suddenly I have as many poems  
as I wish  
about my father  
but I am reluctant  
to write them

~~

# Mountain Dew

I helped my father  
build a covered dock  
for the marina

We were working on the roof  
when he sent me for coffee  
“and get something for yourself”

I came back with three coffees  
and a Mountain Dew  
I sat on the roof of that dock  
and surveyed my domain

Nobody gave me hell  
while they got back to work

~~

# Sometimes I couldn't do it

My father never cut me any slack  
he would send me to do a job  
and expect I would do it.

Some I could  
Drilling holes in the bottom  
of a cement cesspit  
for the worm farm  
he never started  
He was going to use coffee grounds  
from the restaurant

But sometimes I couldn't do it  
I crawled under the house  
with a gasoline blowtorch  
Got half way across  
and got stuck  
He said "come out" and went inside  
to have a drink while my nose ran  
like a river as my dry sinuses let go

He told me to straighten The Building  
on a cold snowy day  
half inch nylon rope  
and an steel come-along  
I snapped the top plate (carpenter ants)  
and that half inch rope (it missed me)  
I went inside and said "I can't, it's frozen"  
He gave me the look  
"I'll come back tomorrow and try again"  
When I did, the walls came upright  
as I leaned on the rope

My own son damned well better figure it out

~~



# Little Pete

I was always Little Pete  
when I would be sent to the restaurant  
by my grandmother  
to have breakfast  
with my father.

I would come in the door  
and the town's workmen  
would shout "Little Pete"  
and let me sit with them  
at the work table  
No tourists ever sat there  
before 8:30 in the morning  
But I did

I ordered pancakes  
and a bacon tomato sandwich  
The men would joke  
"that's a big breakfast for a little guy"  
I would finish it  
I had a hungry childhood

As I was taught  
I picked up my plates  
and took them to the counter  
The men laughed  
but the waitress said  
"leave him alone,  
that's lovely manners he has"

I was Little Pete  
and the contractors  
and the fishermen knew me  
And my father  
bought me two breakfasts  
and had a second coffee  
and waited for me to finish

I was Little Pete  
I belonged someplace

~~

# Why wasn't I

Why wasn't I David Bailey  
when he met The Shrimp  
and they spent all that time together  
making photos, changing things

~~

# My stewardess

She was on the fourth floor  
my stewardess  
with the red hair

I would come back from the bar  
and climb over the balconies  
to knock on her window

She would let me in

~~

# I see

The holy men  
The spiritual men  
write poetry for their gods  
They speak of the union  
the ecstasy

And then  
they speak of women

Do you see a problem

I see

~~~

# John Wayne spans you

It is hard  
this sitting beside you  
letting you read  
while I write

There are other things  
we could be doing

Yet we sit quietly  
listening to do-wop  
watching John Wayne  
spank another woman

I saw that little smile  
Go back to your reading

~~

# I am looking

I am looking at a photograph  
you in the chair  
that you liked to straddle  
as you straddled me

You are stretching  
looking out the window  
Naked and content

The image is a bit grainy  
a bit underexposed  
but it is well loved

What? You say,  
I am writing  
and that photograph  
is in the box across the room?

I need no eyes  
to remember you  
in that chair  
by that window

I will hold that photograph  
in my hand  
forever

~~~

# You look at me, disappointed

Girl you look at me  
disappointed that I can't remember  
your name

It will take a long time  
for me to remember  
and in a long time  
I will forget it again

You are not the first  
There are women I've lived with  
whose names I cannot recall  
even as I remember  
the shape of an ear  
the feel of a finger  
on my lips  
the smell  
of that hollow  
at the base of a spine

What is a name remembered  
compared to the sweat  
just below a breast

The taste of it

~~~



## Hummingbird (for Nate)

Hummingbird checks the empty feeder  
and drives straight  
for my face  
hovering so close  
I can't focus

I – will – put – your – eye – out

I move for the kitchen  
to boil some sugar

~~

# Are we keeping score?

I feel I should write a poem  
about disappointment  
and heartbreak  
and at the end  
the big reveal

It was She

But I can't  
I suspect  
it was more often He (me)  
than She  
and if it was close  
I probably gave  
as good as I got

~~

## Like so many romances

I was once in Madison Wisconsin  
It sounds now, like a romantic place  
I know for sure  
I was in the Lands End outlet (I got a bag)  
and a coffee shop (I got a poem)

I was probably there  
to present a poster  
surely not a paper  
so I was probably at the University

And that's about it

~~

# I don't know what this is

We sit content  
listening to music  
from instruments  
I have never seen  
I have never heard  
Before I lean into you  
I try to think  
what you mean to me

You are music  
from strange instruments  
and I have no idea  
how to respond to it  
or even  
if it's a good example  
of it's type

I remain silent

~~

# That's what loving you feels like

It was 1974  
I was drunk  
slumped  
in the back seat  
of a green Plymouth Roadrunner

We hit the curve  
The S-curve  
by the teacher's house  
the one with the pretty daughters  
Way too fast  
I clawed my way up  
the back of the front seat  
rested my chin  
and looked at the speedometer  
just passing 115 miles an hour

~~~



# Why I don't like to travel

It's all flashes  
images drifting in and out of focus  
I have done my travels  
hitched across the country  
hiked, biked and slept on the decks  
of ferries  
I've slept on couches  
cut wood for a meal

I've broken bathrooms in Japan  
photographed a pretty girl  
in Uruguay  
Seen Pablo Neruda's house  
in Chile  
Practised Jodo in an aircraft hanger  
in Brazil

I've ridden delirious  
in the back of a car  
in Northern England  
so sleep deprived  
I woke up face first  
in my spaghetti

But it's all just images  
Flashes, photographs  
grabbed from a speeding car

~~

# Naughty

You visited last night  
you haven't aged a year  
from when I knew you  
as a callow frosh boy

In my dream I held you  
and told you  
how beautiful you are  
how wrong it was  
for others to hurt you

Which is odd  
You were beautiful  
you were strong  
nobody hurt you  
while I was with you  
Except perhaps me

I certainly did little  
to comfort you  
stupid, selfish boy  
too concerned  
with my own damage  
to see you  
to see how much  
you were helping me



The blindness of “me”  
What is the difference  
between being kind to myself  
and being a selfish ass

If only in my dream  
please allow this old man  
to comfort you  
for the hurt that boy  
gave you

~~

## Your car

Your car is parked  
outside my apartment  
and my heart swells  
my soul rises  
thinking of you inside

But at the pit  
of my stomach  
a small, frightened voice  
says quietly

How long this time

~~

# Circus Girl

She was a circus girl  
born and raised  
We met in a bar  
where else?

She took me home  
and asked if I was fit  
I thought I was  
and said so

Good thing I wasn't lying  
I barely survived the night  
She almost broke me in half  
three times

~~

# The way she went

The way she went up on her toes  
to hug my neck

The way she would tilt her head  
and grin

The way she flapped her hands  
when she thought I was silly

Yes, I remember all of these things

How could I not

But I don't remember the reason  
she's not with me now

~~

# The capitals of Europe

The capitals of Europe are empty  
Streets, shops, cafes are empty  
Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Rome  
all empty, the people inside

Waiting for the plague to pass  
waiting for science  
waiting for medicine  
Waiting

No flagellants parade  
from town to town  
rending their flesh  
for God  
To atone  
for the sins of others  
To gain favour, exemption

Instead, the Europeans  
are inside  
the streets empty  
Not for the glory  
Not for the appeasement of God  
but for each other

~~

# Important to me

Hello, is it you

Yes, how long has it been

Long enough  
listen, I have been reading  
your poems of apology  
to your old girlfriends  
and as one of them  
I would just like  
to reassure you  
that you didn't hurt me  
as you are afraid you did

You see  
You just weren't that important  
to me.

~~

# I have it now

The great men of the world  
seek more, to add to their grandeur  
Their way is not my way

The wise men of the world  
seek truth, to add to their knowledge  
Their way is not my way

I seek nothing  
I wish to add nothing  
It is enough to be with you

You who are greater than the greatest  
wiser than, well, the wisest  
You, who allow me to hold you  
who allow me to breathe the air  
that you breathe out  
when we sleep

What more can I add  
What more could I want

~~

# It is you

How can I say this  
it is you  
You who can heal  
my fears and my wounds  
without looking at me  
Just being here

It is you  
who can teach me  
the deepest lessons  
the highest ideals  
simply by asking  
Asking what?  
Ah, that is a great secret

The secret of a great religion





# A truth

My dear boy  
she said  
It falls to me  
I suppose  
to tell you a truth  
You are arrogant  
This is not good

Do you suppose  
that I left you and wept  
Do you suppose  
that I spent my life  
thinking of you  
Longing for what  
could not be

Arrogant boy  
consider well  
which of us spent a lifetime  
thinking about the other

Consider that lifetime  
Do you see  
Do you know the truth

~~~

# Such is emotion

There is a great longing  
that has no name  
There is an urge for connection  
that none can teach  
and none can learn

Such are the feelings  
I have for you

~~

# No reason was given

There was a man  
who rescued a bear  
from a dragon

When the bear was free  
he turned to the man  
and broke him in half

Another man  
seeing this  
asked  
why did you save the bear  
when you know the nature of bears

Because there was a need  
said the man  
because the bear was in need

Would you have fed your arm  
to that bear  
if he was hungry  
said the second man

There was no answer

~~

# I am content

Here, here is my money  
take it all  
Here is my house  
live in it  
Here is my heart  
tear it in half  
and eat it

Take my arms  
my legs, and my head  
throw them out back  
into the yard

When there is nothing left of me  
then, then I will ask  
is it enough  
are you content

Are you as content  
as I

~~



# Secret teaching

The secret teaching of my house  
is to open your arms

Not to welcome

Not to gather in

But to give

There, now you know as much as I

~~

# I lie to you

I lie to you  
I tell you that I give  
in order to receive  
That I am kind  
so that I can collect a kindness

It grieves me to lie to you  
I lie so that you can understand  
I wish that understanding  
was of the truth  
and not of your culture  
not of your learning

I give  
I am kind

There, I have told you the truth  
Now there is a frown  
on your brow

I apologize, I lied to you  
just now

~~~

# Mother's love

I open out  
into the world  
and it begins to burn

The world was never meant  
to be inside the skin  
so it burns

You come to me  
in my pain  
in my anguish  
in my surprise at this pain

You open your skin  
taking it off  
like your shirt  
and you put it on me

Holding me in your arms  
you say  
It is not time yet my boy

~~



# A warm muffin

What is it that you want  
the priest asks  
What is your ultimate desire

A warm muffin  
I reply  
Baffled, he turns away  
from my deathbed

But it's true  
my ultimate desire

~~

# Tourist town in Australia

I feel like a tourist town  
in Australia  
when I talk to you

Burned over  
then closed by the plague

Just can't catch a break

~~

# Waterfalls

Do we really need  
yet another photograph  
of a waterfall

Well, yes  
We start, hesitantly  
with a fascination, then reverence  
and finally worship  
of falling water

Let's face it, it's awesome  
and it is only after learning  
what a waterfall really is  
that we can get to the father religion  
that we can get to the point  
where we dam the river  
and starve the waterfall

Our worship now  
is of our power  
our glory

so yes  
we need another photograph  
of a waterfall

~~~

## WWCD

What would Coyote do?  
Well he'd do something naughty  
unexpected  
He'd shock you  
out of your rut  
Maybe trick you into eating your kids  
or sleep with your daughter

Oh, yes that's what Coyote would do  
so maybe be careful  
who you take for your example

Or maybe  
think for yourself  
Wouldn't that be a change?

~~

# Be careful

Coyote killed a girl  
and brought her back  
but her father  
took her home

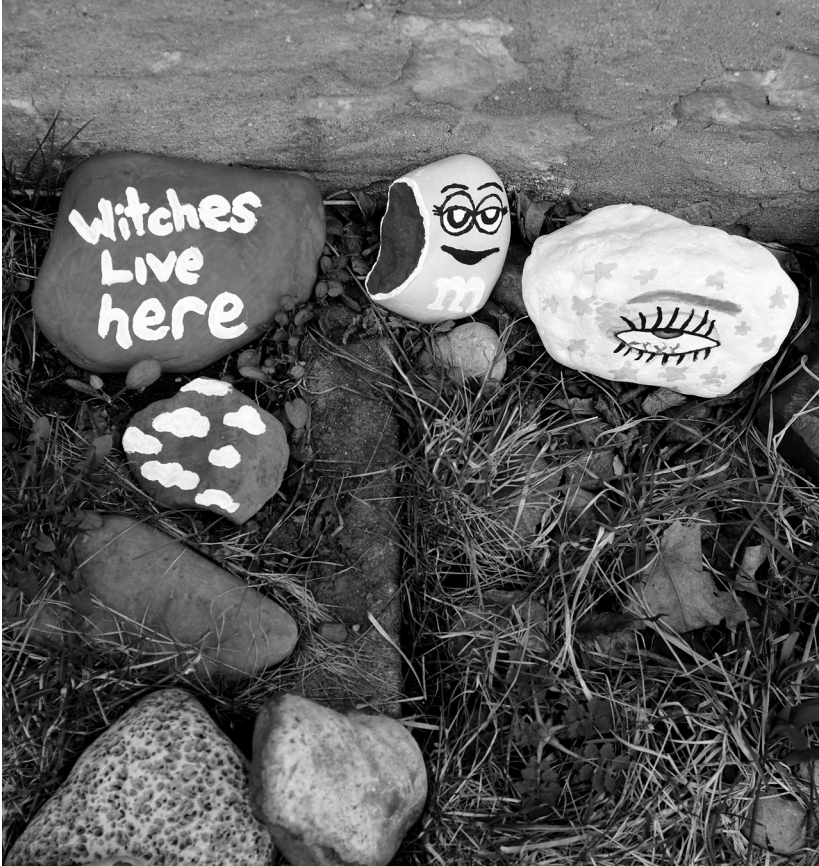
He didn't believe  
that she would die again  
if she left Coyote

She did  
and Coyote decided  
that Man wasn't to be trusted  
to bring the dead back

Coyote is a jerk  
He wanted to sleep with the girl  
but he is a jerk  
who can raise the dead

You want to be careful  
around jerks like that

~~



# You cried

You cried  
and the first drop broke my umbrella  
the second drop broke through my roof  
the third drowned me

I wish you would be more careful  
with your tears

~~

# Dads and Sons

What is it  
with dads and sons

Son – you got a giant ice cream cone  
and dropped it on the ground  
the man was getting you another one

Dad – no, I told you it was too big  
and you had no ice cream  
and you were quiet  
all the way home

You know Son  
that still hurts me  
when I think about it

When faced with a giant ice cream cone  
a boy should not  
get a lesson in expected outcomes

He should just get another cone  
maybe a smaller one

Then maybe he will learn  
(not that Dad was right)  
but that Dad loves him

~~~



## When you cried

When you cried  
and came to me  
I would tell you to shut up  
I would say  
Crying is to get my attention  
You have my attention  
now shut up  
and let me fix it.

When you grew up  
you told me  
Dad, you said not to cry  
that you were there  
but Dad,  
crying made it feel better

~~

# You grew up kind

I wanted you  
to grow up strong  
and independent  
and kind  
and smart  
better than me

And you grew up strong  
and independent  
and kind  
and smart  
and better than me

You are strong for me  
when I am now weak  
You don't need me  
when I need you  
You are smart  
as I become stupid

But  
You are kind  
and you are here  
the child is father  
to the man

~~~

# Crayfish

Is there anything  
anything under the sun  
closer to the universe  
Than a boy  
looking for crayfish

~~

# More poems about women and sex

For some reason  
I think the world needs  
more poems about women and sex

Or at least  
there is a need  
for my poems about women and sex

We'll see

~~

## Where I was

You're pretty good  
with that tongue of yours  
she said

Or at least I think she said that  
it was a little muffled

~ ~

# Laundromat Romance

Oh, is this yours  
you left it in the machine

Did you mean to do that?

~~~

# Do I want you

Do I want you  
to be fodder  
for some bad poetry

Something about love  
and caged birds  
and running through  
green forests

While you sit lonely  
eating ice cream  
and hating men

~~~

# Hot Flashes

You kick the blankets aside  
with your feet  
And I throw them off  
of my shoulders

They go for a ride  
like a roundabout  
left on over night  
after everyone goes home

Here comes the sleigh

~~~



# Same dream forever

I look in toilet after toilet  
and they are all broken  
or in use  
or overflowing  
and outside  
there are no trees  
that aren't watched  
by the old ladies  
or the little kids

Finally, I find a corner  
or a bin  
or a toilet without a door  
and decide I've got to piss

I always wake up at that point  
thinking damnit  
I've got to piss

~~

# Breakfast?

Were you bored and horny  
last night  
was there nobody else in the bar  
you wanted  
Perhaps you didn't want  
to sleep alone  
yet again

Good morning  
Breakfast?

~~~

# Don't go

I watched  
as you drifted away  
as your head  
left my shoulder  
and your face  
turned to the wall

Once more  
I was helpless  
to find the words  
that would bring you back  
to drool on my neck

~~~

# Gran is watching

You don't know it  
but she's the answer  
to your grandmother's prayers

You can't see it  
but your grandmother would  
Someone who's too good for you

Grab her boy  
before you screw up again  
and lose her

Your grandmother is watching  
as you act the asshole  
once again

~~

# Liquid blue eyes

You asked me something  
and turned liquid blue eyes toward me  
and I answered --

We drove toward the beach  
the windows down  
and you said something  
I turned to ask --

As we walked over the beach  
you turned  
the sun was behind you  
I couldn't see your face

~ ~

## The bar and your bed

Is it possible  
that a bus  
is our special place

We never seemed  
to go anywhere  
except between  
the bar and your bed

~~

# Rural Romance

I would call  
and we would sit quiet  
listening  
to the humpback whales

Click-click  
Click-click

~~~

# Internet Meme

I keep clicking  
on “never show again”  
and an hour later  
there you are  
trying to tell me something

I scroll by quickly

~~~





# Upstream

I try  
but there is a line of posts  
across a river (the river is me)  
each with a seagull  
and each seagull  
is looking the same way

~ ~

# The hunter arrives

It's OK you say  
when I apologize  
but  
why did you frown

Like Bambi  
with his mom  
just before the hunter arrives

~~



## Just this second

Just this second  
reading a fifty year old book  
I realized  
that Bobby Kennedy  
was killed on my birthday

A lot of things happened  
in 1968  
I started Sr. Public school

~~

# Don't say it

Why are there bloodstains  
in the middle  
of a fifty year old book  
of poems

~ ~

# Herring Bed

At the invitation  
of a yogi  
living on a barge  
in the middle of Prince Rupert  
I slept on the floor  
Listening to the fish

And then she...

~~

# No Idea

No, I have no idea  
who that is

I could have sworn  
she was your daughter  
I would have bet money on it

She had a tattoo removed  
I bet it was a picture of you  
and she was mad at you

~~~



# Don't mention it

Nice to meet you  
but no  
I'm happy by myself tonight

I didn't tell her  
that I had met her mother  
and I didn't tell her  
that she was due for about  
three times as many cuts  
on her arms

~~~

# Everybody wants a poem

Think about this  
Do you really  
want to spend the next 60 years  
as the sad breakup girl  
while this asshole  
goes from girl to girl

They are all young  
He gets to be older each year  
but not you  
You are forever the age  
of his latest lover

~~~

# You want romantic

Your eyes are the colour  
of the eyes of those tiny fish  
they put in the rice  
in Japan

Can we fuck now?

~~~

