

Some Truth



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Introduction

“Did that poem really happen?” For a certain value of happened, I suppose it did, but perhaps not exactly like that. Is that an answer? I have tried to write poems about other things and I end up throwing them away. I prefer my poems to have some truth in them. Something of me, something real. A memory, an emotion perhaps.

These photographs have some truth in them as well, they were taken in 2008 at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, Canada. The cover shot is the Wildcat Cafe from the Yukon. Sort of.

Kim Taylor, January 2023

Some Truth

Shall I try
as an experiment
to write a poem
about an imaginary girl
in an exotic foreign land

I tried
and I seem not to like
imaginary girls
in foreign lands
exotic or not
There is no truth to it

And if anything at all
I've always had some truth
stretched or not
in whatever I write
stretched or not

~~



That Year in Provence

Occasionally I've been tempted
to write something like
"That year we spent in Provence"
or perhaps
"The Shinkansen visit to Hokkaido"

But I've spent my life
happily
within two hours of where I was born
and like all country hicks
have never felt the need
to find enlightenment
by living for years
in a faraway land

~~

Bullied by my Bladder

Bullied by my bladder
I was up every two hours
so perhaps I was awake
at New Years midnight

I have a trick I use
to keep from thinking
about all those things
that keep me awake

It's not much of a trick
but it works
I don't think about them
I said it wasn't much

What also helps
is that I've given up
Most of what bothered me
I've passed along to others

If they don't fix it
it's not my problem
and there are strict rules
against asking me to fix it

It seems to work
and now if I could stop
that bully bladder
I'd sleep pretty good
~~

The Brunswick House

Where is that bar
we used to go to
Irene and her friends
Just a dive
somewhere in Toronto
We'd go there
and drink sometimes

I wonder how many bars
are still around
The Albion is closed
The Pennywhistle is closed
How about Riley's in Tillsonburg
The Belgian Hall in Delhi
The Paradise Motor Inn
I'm not sure what all that means
That I'm Old?

~~

Greyhound

A Greyhound, sprinting
that's how I saw you always
your arms and legs
so thin but strong
tight wound
ready to run

Your shoulders
those wonderful angular beasts
that you would roll
driving me to greater acts of love
and the hips
the dimples above your ass
A Greyhound, yes

~~



Let's Not Go There

I seem to be losing the thread
I seem to be falling behind
on all those experiences
that mean so much to life
and so little to me

When is it, that your life starts
At five, walking to school
Fourteen, and high school
Nineteen, and University
The first time you got laid
the first job you got paid

What does it mean
to wait for your life
to start
Oh let's not go there
where the perfect people go
and say it's when they say

Rather, let's ask when life ends
if we can't tell when it starts
When kids leave the house
when your wife leaves you, louse
when you last have sex
Let's not go there, let's never go there
to that place where and when you die
~~

A Stone That Belonged To Her

Somewhere in this house
is a stone that belonged to her
moved from pot to aquarium
to shelf
From house to house
Yet I never seem to know it
when I see it

Would I know her
to see her
Would I admit I have the stone
that she left when she left
Would I give it back
Would I show it to you

~~

Her Loft Bed

It was months and months
before I could go
from her bed to the toilet
without barking my shin

or hitting my head
on the overhang on the stair
Those stairs
that spiralled
that were too narrow on one side
for me to negotiate

Yet I refused
to put on a lamp
for fear of waking her
and on the third or fourth "fuck"
she would put on that lamp
with never a word to me

~~

Who Gave

You said
you gave yourself to me
but that was not true
I had given myself to you
long before
so you gave yourself to you
~~

I Will Be Here

I want so very much
to write a poem for you
a song
a book even
but I cannot
It would all seem like preaching
as a father is likely to do
I don't know how to say this
but whatever you decide
whoever you become
I will be here
I will be here

~~



Good to See You

As I walked downtown
coat zipped up high
hands jammed in pockets
touque pulled low

I happened to look up
at whoever was leaning
on the bridge rail

Aren't you cold
in a summer dress?
You just smiled at me
and took my arm

We walked off the bridge
and you pulled me sideways
along the river path
a foot deep in snow

My boots were soon full
snow turning to water
but when I looked
there was only my path

You seemed not to notice
all the snow
and your feet, in sandals
were not wet

You're a ghost, I said
but you shook your head
A memory then
and you kissed my cheek

It's so good to see you again
you haven't aged a day
As I said it I realized
it was for the first time

I had never told her
how much I admired her
She smiled then
and suddenly it was only me

~~

Someone's Cottage

Why would I remember a cottage
I don't remember whose
or who was there
I don't remember going there
I must have been one of the kids
in the back seat

I remember the woods
the shared dirt lane
the acid rain washed lake
so clear and still
I remember being on a dock
and watching the moon

A shivering line over the lake
and up into the sky
was I with someone
It doesn't feel like it
Just a kid amongst kids
at someone's cottage

~~

The Poetry of Regret

The poetry of regret
Oh yes, it is a genre
and one I know well
"Here is a woman
that I took for granted
and lost
and later realized
how much I had lost"

This is pretty much
every woman
I've ever been involved with
Some I neglected
some I treated badly
and some I ignored
All of them are gone
~~

It Doesn't Help

I slowly took offence
being waved off
and seeing a back turned
and so got angry

It was me who got angry
at being treated like a child
or perhaps as someone
worth less

It was me, and so
on being told it was my problem
I knew that it was
and yet I was angry

Then depressed
on learning that I could do nothing
of what I wanted to accomplish
due to that emotion

It was my fault
absolutely
Unfortunately knowing that
doesn't help

~~

Family Photo

The long suffering wife
the timid child
and the sour faced father
Such is life

~~



I Was Wrong

I am in the wrong
can we not just assume that
put a pin in it
and assume that

Is it really necessary
to tell me what I've done wrong
four or five times a day

I admit it
I have admitted it
I will admit it
can we not just assume
that I am wrong

and not discuss just
how wrong I am

~~

Late Night Awake

I know you are there
on the bed
and I know I could go
to visit you there
I have apologized
you have accepted
and explained why
I needed to apologize
but something hangs
just over my head
that makes me reluctant
to go to the bed

~~

Hot and Cold

We went to sleep naked
on top of the covers
drenched in sweat
from a hot day
a hot evening
and sex

You woke me at dawn
tugging and rolling me
toward the edge of the bed

You were cold
along the side
that wasn't stuck to me
And I was cold
I helped you lift the covers
and we entered quickly
~~

That Day

That day I gave you a ride
across town
and dropped you beside the bank

Driving away
I looked in the mirror
and you turned away from the door
walking down the street
to his place

Surely you could have waited
waving cheerfully to me
until I was out of sight?

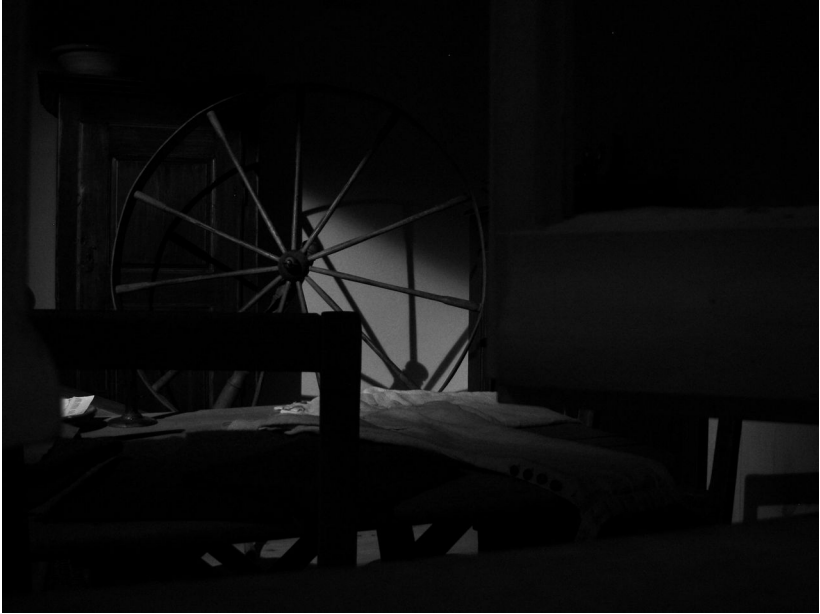
~~

Psychic

You ducked your head
and as you did
I heard the whoosh
of something moving very fast
right over our heads

You ducked before you heard it
and it came from behind us
how did you know
that terrible engine of death
was coming at us

~~



Big, and White

Some gigantic white building
all stairs
and exposed metal truss
has drifted into my head

Oases of shops
arrived at by strange paths
through and around
multiple stores

It must have been Japan
where else such a place
Did we eat there
perhaps pirogi

~~

Let Them Run

A pack of twenty kids
all chasing a ball
two standing in goal
watching the herd
thunder here and there
across the field

And you want to stop this
you want to have tactics
you want to split up the pack
and make them guard territory
teach them strategy
Shame on you
Let them run

~~

Swayback Barn

The swayback barn
and the house
strangely askew
as if racked by the wind

There is light in the window
no, a lie
a reflection of a passing car
headlamp yellow

This old farm
so long abandoned
the fields machined
by an agribusiness

All run for maximum profit
by a venture capital group
putting their money to work
making more of the same

Almost an afterthought
the food from the land
cleared, plowed and fed with tears
until the last generation surrendered

And what is left
This swayback barn
this house, askew
as if blown by the wind

~~

My Mother's Car

Looking past the frost fairies
etched on the winter glass
all I see are dots, streaks
and the wind moves the snow
past at an angle

the light from the window
reflecting briefly back to me
from the driving streaks
of snow

I wait and watch
for that hole of light
that will happen
when you drive up the lane
your headlights shining
directly into the window

In the meantime
my breath on the cold glass
makes more frost
that in the spring
will melt and wet the sill
~~



I Am Amazed

Cold, even with mitts
and the mitts in pockets
All I think of
is the warmth of your belly
your breasts

As I arrive at your apartment
stamping the snow off my boots
hanging my coat
I walk to your bedroom
and you, under the covers

Stripping my clothes
I slip under the blankets
and stop
Cold as I am
Warm as you are

I can't bring myself
to place my cold skin
upon your sleeping body
and so I wait shivering
to warm up

As I wait
you reach for me
and pull my frozen body
into your warm embrace
and once more, I am amazed
~~

That Couch

When I think of you
it is on that couch
I was never able to discard
these many long years

the one you folded your leg
and sat upon
the other leg stretched
half way across the room

Panties and a sweater
You sit always, reading
some complicated book
I would never pick up

and I watch you
from across the room
having just stepped in
You have not yet noticed
~~

Lonely

How odd it is
to be lonely
in a house full

I sit at my desk
trying not to disturb
and at some point
I realize I'm alone
in a house full

For decades now
I've asked "would you like"
and the answer was no
I want to sit here

Very well, go yourself you say
but I'm not built that way
if I'm alone
I'll be alone here

Being alone somewhere else
is a waste of money
and there's never enough
of that

I have lately
gone to the cafe
to sit with strangers and write
pretending I suppose
that I'm not alone

~~



Sometimes I Understand

Sometimes I understand
that I'm a useless, broken
dying old man

Mostly that doesn't bother me
but sometimes

Sometimes things fit together
sometimes I look in the mirror
sometimes when I get shit
for something that ought not matter

It all fits together
and I become a useless, broken
dying old man

~~

Continental Divide

I stood on the continental divide
one foot on each side
like I was supposed to do

and tried to look hard
at the mountains around
tried to remember
as much as I could

Like I should

~~

The Belgian Hall

We played pool
in the basement
of the Hungarian Hall
and we drank at lunch
in the basement
of the Belgian Hall
The Polish Hall
the German Hall
were never there for me
except maybe
for weddings crashed

Life in a small town
life in high school
wasn't really so bad
as I remember it

~~

Ennui

Why do I live so much
in my past?
I suppose it may be
that I did things there
that I don't do now

Yesterday I scrolled
and scrolled and scrolled
hoping to find something new
There's never anything new

I wish I was a video-game kid
I wish I had a comfy chair
and a quiet corner
to sit and read
I wish I had some ambition

Go and exercise they say
but that seems selfish
something to do for me
Worse than that
I have no desire to move
That went with the testosterone
~~

Icicles

Would you suck on icicles
hanging off the roof of your house
We did

Mind you
we got a bit of dirt
but no micro-plastics
no airborne toxins

I'm not sure I'd eat one now
Provided I could find one
Icicles from the eaves
and frosty windows
seem to have become extinct

~~



Christmas Tinsel

The first fake Christmas tree
I ever saw
was my grandmother's

It was silver tinsel
not even pretending
to be real
and a spotlight
with a rotating wheel
turning it blue, red and yellow

Other folks had real trees
and metal tinsel draped
that they would be pulling
from cat's asses
for weeks afterward

~~

The Forests Burn

Please don't tell me
the glaciers have moved
way up the valley
from when you were there
twenty years ago

Or the forest so very green
has dried to brown
and burned away

I don't want to hear it
and neither do those
who are driving their cars
heating their homes
and making money
in their factories

After all a glacier is just water
and we have lots of that
and burned forests can grow again
unless we build houses
where they once were

It's all good
and I won't be here much longer
to worry about it much longer

Anyway, we all know
the glacier melted
the forest burned
We don't need to be surprised
We don't need to be told

~~

Cure for Cancer

If a sea cucumber
had bowel cancer
would it be advised
to find a big fish
that wanted to eat it
and spew that cancerous viscera
onto the sea floor
to be eaten by the fish
Subsequently the sea cucumber
would grow new guts
presumably cancer free
~~

That Time

That time
that unhappy time
when she has what she needs
and she doesn't need you
any more

That time
when you are there
but an annoyance
an inconvenience
a bother

That time
when you are taken for granted
you will always be there
how could you not
always be there
~~



Eunice

We worked the research fields
in midsummer we hoed
and in the fall
we threshed

By the end of that year
I had decided
that dirt and dust
streaked with sweat
on the tanned young skin
between your work boots
and your shorts
was the sexiest sight
in the county

~~

What We Must Do

Remember my dear
how you can't eat chips
without finishing the bag

How you can't drink
without getting
falling down drunk

How you can't like someone
without loving them
and then hating them

How you can't grow lettuce
and leave any water
in the Oglala reservoir

Even if seven other states
slowed down and stopped
you would grow your lettuce
~~

That Was The Day

That was the day
when you stood up
in the full of the sun
and I saw the moisture there
on the inside of your thigh

~~

Content

Your head on my shoulder
your hands on my arm
I hear you sigh
This is where you want to be

I won't move
as long as you are there
and soon
a shudder moves through you
You are content

~~

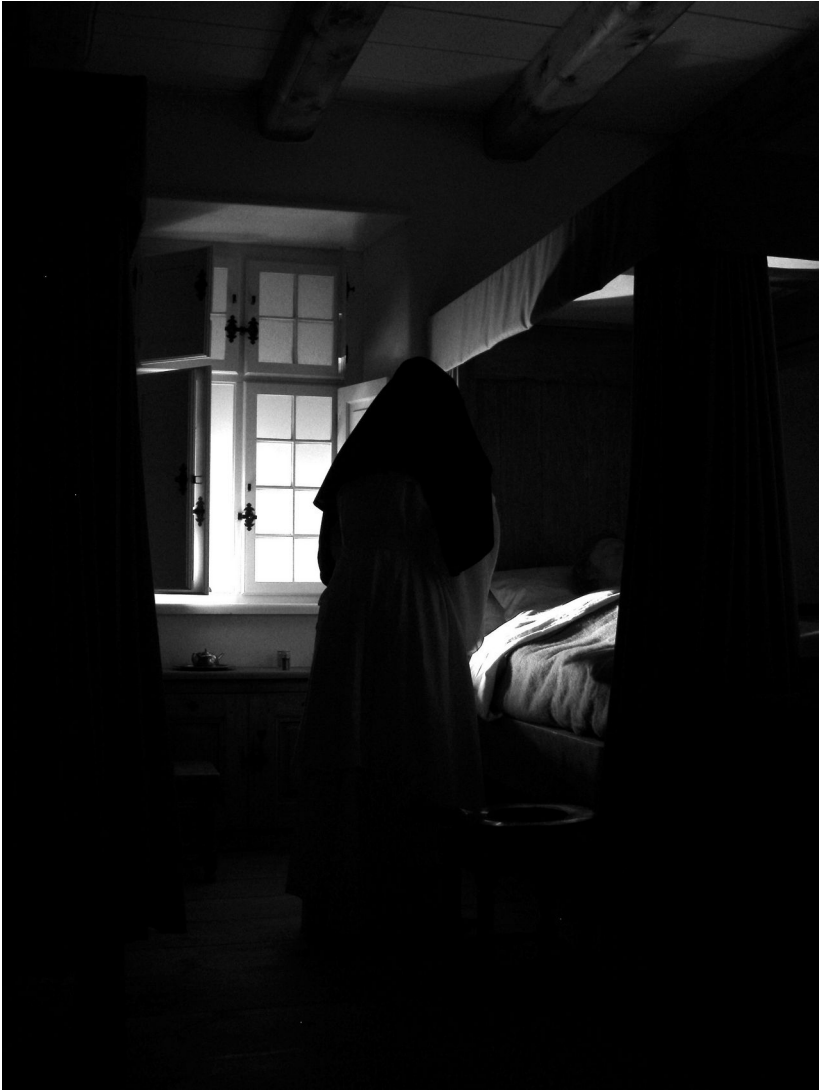
Even Then

It is 1940
and a couple, floating on a lake
in a boat
are watching the sun set

They are naked
having been for a swim
out of sight of shore
and as the sun goes down

She turns to him
kisses his shoulder
strokes his cheek
and dives in once more

~~



A Simple Solution

I can't get over
two actors
both over 70
suing a studio
for the glimpse
of a boob
and an ass

A movie made
in the 1970s
the era when porn
went almost mainstream
The European director
used to nudity
thought nothing of it

She was young
as was he
but both were actors
and it was the 1970s
I have no idea
what wrong they are addressing
or if they need money now
in their old age

But in this age
of sexmail
or whatever it's called
I see a simple solution

All of us
we adults
every one of us
over forty
should put nude photos
of ourselves
onto social media

Every single one
to show our children
that there is no shame
that nude photos
are not worth ten cents
let alone hundreds
or thousands
or a life
~~

Remembrance

I sit and read the words
of a man long dead
put onto a page
put into a book
and later converted and stored
onto the internet
Where I took it
and read the words

Will my words survive me
There is no hope at all
as they are not on paper
and at the first glitch
the first hiccup of the cloud
they will be gone
Forty years of writing
gone in less time
than it takes to snap a finger

~~

Sometimes Isn't Always

Sometimes the world
gets too close to my face
and it is hard to endure

Sometimes my body
fights back at me
pain erupts
and I often want to end it

Sometimes I am sad
for no reason
other than I am sad

Your naked flesh
pressed against mine
my face in your shoulder
my hand across your chest
my hand on your breast

These trials
these tribulations
melt away like chocolate
between our bodies

~~

I Would Watch You At Parties

I would watch you at parties
floating through the room
talking with anyone
who caught your attention

I would imagine your breasts
your ass under your clothes
Imagine them as you talked
to anyone you wished

I would try to hear
what you were saying
but seldom caught anything
sometimes I would ask later

Mostly I never bothered
you would tell me
in our bed that night
if you thought I should know
~~



If I Miss It

If, at night

You roll to your side
showing me your shoulder

If I miss it
don't open my eyes
to see it

I am saddened

~~

Professional Job

I had a few paying jobs
as a photographer
Not many

I remember one
where I was to photograph
the girls of the massage parlour

The brave first girl
tolerated the session
and paid me at the end

but I doubt anyone
ever used the images

~~

I Am In Wonder

I am in wonder
of those who understand
the quantum universe

and those who can identify
the constellations

those who can name
each bird and beast
that wanders by

Those who know every character
in Lord of the Rings

and those who can recite each line
in a Monty Python skit

I am in wonder
for I have not the skill
nor the patience
~~

Don't Plug me In

If I will die
if you unplug me
Don't plug me in

I don't want to be
one of those guests
that refuses to leave

Stands chatting in the door
letting in the winter wind
while the hostess taps her foot

Let me go out the door
when the natural time for that
has arrived

Shoes and coat on
Kiss kiss, good bye
and out through the door

~~

It Takes All Kinds

Having walked in shirtsleeves
to the back yard
to start the sauna heater
I think to myself
it's not such a bad winter

But in my head
the Pamurai sighs
It's horrible
too warm, too wet
When will we get the cold

It takes all kinds

~~



Room in the House

My children are still with me
at least one of them
and this does not feel strange

However if I had stayed
with my parents
past the age of 18
it would have felt strange

What we do
what we expect
changes with time

Was it any easier for me
at thirty-one
than it will be for my kids
to buy a house?
I don't know

But this house is large
there is room to get lost
so why not stick around
~~

An Empty House

A day in an empty house
and at 1pm the cat
banished out the door
The silence soaks in
to my being

Later, documentaries with noise
fill the house
and I can listen
without the irritation of rubbers
in my ears

All in all, including a nap
not a bad day at all
and another
to look forward to
~~

One Use Plastic

I have used this Salty Spiced
Lassi bottle
for water for two years
The label is worn
and I worry the plastic is breaking down
Can I throw it out now
with no guilt
over one use plastic?

~~

One Roll a Week

When I began to photograph
I would print
making sure to include
the border

For those who don't know
what I just said
there were those in my day
who figured it was done correct
the very first time
or it wasn't worth printing

All this cropping
and dodging and burning
were for those who were rich
and shot on 8x10s
with darkroom assistants

We 35mm boys
with our one roll a week
we had to do it correct
we had to do it full frame
36 images a week

~~

Burn Down the World

I have an idea
for a character
He is an ogre
but with a magic spell
that would burn the world
and everything in it
including him

He is taking over territory
slowly, slowly
and drains the land dry

The other characters
those who don't want
to be eaten by the ogre
must find a way
to beat him
without pushing him
to burn down the world
~~



Cat With a Pub

There is a cat
who owns a nice pub
and all the cool boys
go to drink there

The one thing only
that nobody can say
Never never, is
“This beer tastes like cat piss”

~~

What You Know

I know now why
author-educators say
"write what you know"

If you don't
you spend much too much time
researching

In the fear that
if you get a fact wrong
someone will notice it

Now, there are solutions
like "oh this was on Earth-295"
or "long ago and far away"

Better by far
to write what you know
or what you think you know
~~

Very Soon

I never tried it
but I know for certain
it would have worked on me

The suggestion
late at night
"Have sex with me
for very soon
we will be dead"

I feel it would work
with old folk
and those in a war
~~

Stalkers

I wonder
do the Virgin Mary
or Amida Buddha
ever get tired of the stalkers
all those who chase them
muttering words of worship
never giving them
a moment of peace

~~

Waiting For Her

I stood in darkness
waiting for her
straining for her
and there, pale
obscure object
moving slowly closer
growing slowly clear
a face floats past
Not her, some passer-by
not even a nod in greeting

~~



Impressive

Those empty snail shells
I suddenly think of them
in the middle of winter
I find them in the garden
empty

Did the snail get tired
of the weight of the shell
and decide to be a slug

Or did some bird
pick that shell clean
as if scrubbed with soap

I can't resist a whistle
~~

Local News

The girls who cut fish
or sewed tobacco leaves
onto sticks
Would gossip the day away
and in the evening
that short time
between eating and drinking
the men would catch up
on the news of the town
~~

Smoked Eel

In the spring
the Lamprey Eels
would come up the creeks
to spawn

I never thought about it much
but I had a cousin
somewhat removed
who paid for his schooling
by smoking fish

Now I wonder
if I could have paid for College
by smoking eels

Can you eat Lamprey
Shall I look it up?
No, the time for that
is long in the past
~~

A Twitch and a Sigh

Beside her in our bed
I would lie with her
both awake

I would feel my heart slow
as hers slowed
and my breathing
would match hers
at first faster
then slower

until a twitch
a sigh
and that soft buzz
that meant she was asleep
~~

The Peeper

This summer
I missed the tree toad
or perhaps he was there
and I didn't notice

That little peeper
calling for a woman
Here I am
Here I am
Here I am

And I put my arm over you
thinking to myself
There you are
There you are

~~



Do I Remember

I was less than five
Do I really remember
the pear tree outside the window

that bay window
above the front hall
where I swear I remember sleeping
Was I really there

and if so
did I watch the hornets buzz
eating into the pears
Getting drunk
and forgetting how to fly

~~

The Promise

Captain, she said
Take me with you
and you shall have following wind
and make a record run
with all the money you can earn

The captain was clever
and he let her board
Soon they were flying
ahead of a strong wind
that blew them to their destination

As they drew close
the captain said thanks
now ease the wind
for we must dock
But she was gone over the side
~~



Voice from the Past

My voice
on a thirty year old video
Just "unh"
in response to the man
demonstrating sword technique

Such a young voice
steady and strong
at the start of my journey
at the start of my life

Many years before that
I gave my grandmother a tape
and a recorder and said
"tell me a story"

I never listened to it
after she died

~~

In the Lake

Tell me not
of horrid insects
fish or bacteria
that move from water
up the fleshy pipes
if you dare strip down

Tell me instead
of the fun to be had
out in the lake
beyond the kids
with the in-laws on shore
Making love with your wife
~~

The Real Reason

Do not tell me
of dirty old men
who marry younger women
or those whose mistress
is a, what do they call it
a trophy

The answer is simple
and not so vicious
not so immoral
as you would have it

An older man
with a younger wife
will not mourn her
He will die first

~~



Ministering Angel

Asleep, sprawled on my stomach
and she approaches quiet
The first I am aware
that she has returned
is when she runs hands
up over burning muscles
and down again
over an aching back

Silent she is
as she smooths away
the hurt of the day
the knots, the grit in my muscles
slowly relaxing, releasing
as she works gently
and then roughly
to drive a stubborn lump
from where it should not be

~~

Coyote and Me

I rode my bike quickly
down a narrow path

Came around a corner
and met Coyote

I pinged my ping-ding
repeatedly

and he grinned
starting to run

I gave chase
and we flew down the path

until he grew bored
with our game

and disappeared
into the brush

~~

Did I Do Well

I waited forty years
to meet my children
and it was worth the wait

Such delights
such fun
for a middle aged man

They grew up
they grew away
and I worried

That I was adequate
Did I do well
as a father

I asked the question once
of their mother
and she nodded, puzzled
~~

Not Complaining

I never had the courage
to go with the harvest gypsies
who wandered the continent
picking vegetables
picking fruit
picking tobacco
following summer's end

I had my own life
of school and job
of house and family
The plans of a young man
who may have dreamed
of wandering
but never let himself go

~~

Brave Orion

I know little of the stars
and less the constellations
but every fall
I watch as brave Orion
with his sword on his belt
rises into the sky
signalling the chill air
of winter

signalling also
the start of another school year
another crop of students
to show how to perform
the tricks of the martial arts
so that they too
can wear a sword on their belt
~~



Oh Lucky Man

You lie on the couch
your cheek on my thigh
your head in my lap

I am reading
and you, you are asleep
or as close as makes no difference

I put a hand on your shoulder
and feel you breathe
astonished, amazed

That such as you
could be here with me
your head in my lap

My hand on your shoulder
rising and falling
as you breathe
~~

A Sudden Memory

I was there, wasn't I
at some time
long long ago
on the edge of a mountain
camping in a thin tent

What seemed a mile below
a stream rushing to the Pacific
and above, a cliff face

How this ledge came to be
I don't know
Someplace
I think there is a photograph
~~

A Warm Spell

The town is shrowded
cloaked in fog

No wind
except what we stir up
by driving down the road

The temperature is rising
and the drizzle of several days
is moving into the air

People move from faint
to solid
from colourless
to hues

As we move along
trees fade into view
and then are past
~~

Next Week

With her once more
out of duty I suspect
I squirm under polite talk
of what we will do next week

Next week
I would like to be forgotten
left along the path
shrugged off like an old sweater

Next week
I would like to be guiltless
no more obligation
to make her happy

I drink my tea
and smile and nod
wishing I had never
promised to stay
~~

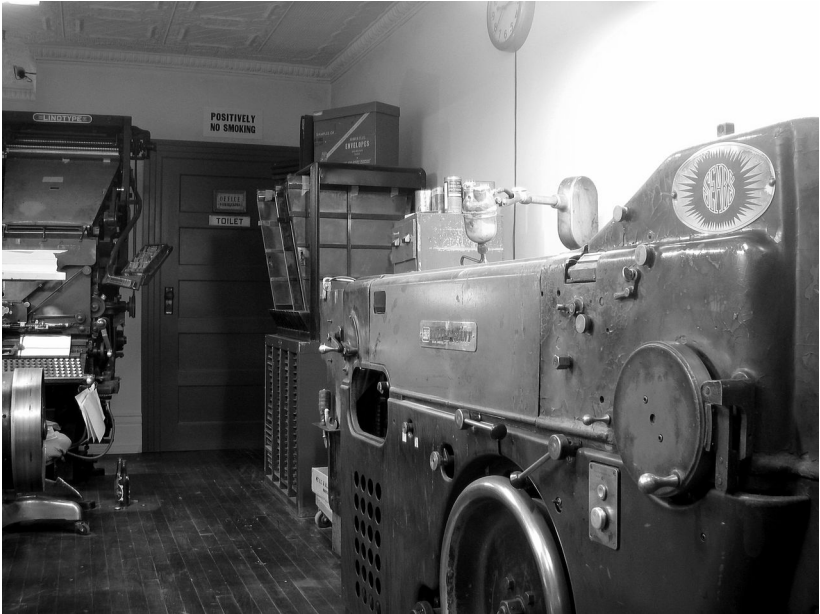
Tired of Being Sick

Glancing up above my desk
I notice papers
I usually don't see

They have been there
all along
but I don't see them
most days

Today there they are
Medical notices
tests to be had
meetings to attend
and I am so very tired
of being sick

~~



Time to Trim

Wanting to trim my nails

I reach for the clippers
and a spray bottle
of alcohol
to kill the toenail fungus
that may be there

I take off one pair of glasses
and put on another
then turn on another light
so that I can see the nails

Such a lot of fuss
no wonder I don't bother
until my fingers slide around
on the keyboard

~~

Cruel Time

I remember a time
where I would run
bare chested, bare shouldered
for miles in the summer heat
and think nothing of it

Oh cruel time

I no longer go out
in the bare sun
but make sure all is covered
by shirt or by lotion
and running is a thing of my past
something to be remembered

I once could do that

~~

A Tree for the Future

I planted a plum tree
in our front yard
and for two years it yielded

On the first, ladies
in the neighbourhood
would come by with bags
and after a look both ways
would fill the bag
and walk guiltily away

The second year
my son and a kid
from across the street
got into the tree
and threw every green plumb
out onto the road

After that
the carpenter ants
got into a crotch
and dug and dug
until they killed the tree

~~

The Cat's Ass

The cat on the counter
is licking the meatballs
and spaghetti sauce

Only my son
is left to eat
and he comes in to say
he's not sure he can

It's just the cat's tongue
I say
He licks your mother's oatmeal
and she's none the worse

But he also licks his ass
and I don't want to eat
what's been in contact
with the cat's ass

Well shall I cook you something else
I said, all good father
but here he comes
spaghetti and meatballs

Oh what the hell
I'll eat it anyway

~~

I Picked Worms

Once or twice
I put a tin can
on my ankle
and fixed it there
with an elastic band

Going out at night
with flashlight
we roamed the golf course
looking for dew worms

Did I sell them?
I haven't a clue
I remember hunting
and picking
but not why or for whom

But now
so many decades later
I can say
I picked worms
as if it were interesting

~~

Gulls

When I was young
I watched the fishing tugs
come into the harbour
and thousands of gulls
followed along

When I was older
I watched the tractors
plowing across the fields
and thousands of gulls
followed along

~~



Old Mill

The old mill is silent
grain dust piled
in the corners
The belts
and the stones
are motionless
Old grain sacks
thrown around the place
and the sunlight
through the dirty windows
sparkles in the air
~~

Not Like That

This morning
over oatmeal
we watched Japanese TV
and saw a story
on crippled children
who are cared for
six hours a day
so their mothers
can get some rest

I looked at my companion
and said never
never let me get to that point
where you have to care for me
all day and all night
You know what you must do
I'm begging you
Don't let me be that way

~~

Not the Answer

If it's complicated
it's not the answer
If it's simple
it's not the answer
If it's for everyone
it's not the answer
If it doesn't apply to all
it's not the answer
If it's about life
it's not the answer
~~

Fifty

Fifty
and as strong as I would ever be
my 7dan grading
with a promise of one more
in ten years
If I would just move to Japan

Of course I was done
I hung my certificate on the wall
and stopped practising to pass
Instead I practised to change
as some will recognize

When in reality
I began that long desperate
finally useless fight
to keep what I had
First were the knees
then the shoulders

Sixteen years later
and once again
I'm practising to pass
And I'm not happy with myself
I do it for those I wish to support
and never again for the company bosses
~~

The Struggle

Just a few words
strung together
in a few lines
That's all it is
and yet
and yet
I have been unable
for two days now
It takes so little
to knock me off balance
and it is a struggle
to find that centre again
~~

About Now

About now
it would be nice
to dig up some memory
of the past
where I felt the world
was going to be just fine
and I would live forever

Come now
how hard could it be
my life was full of love
of laughter and the trust
of good women
Of those who opened up
and so I could open up
as we interpenetrated
~~



Perch Roe

In Edna's house
she would collect perch roe
from her brother in law's shanty
and cook it for me

My grandmother's kitchen
had an ancient fluorescent light
Flip the switch
open the cutlery drawer
take out the ballast
twiddle it, until, blink blink
the light came on

I was young enough
not to simply replace it for her
She would light the propane stove
with a match
to warm the pan

She would bread the roe lightly
just a bit of flour
Lots of butter in the pan
and fry it gently
the butter bubbling around the sides

I don't know why
people won't eat this
she would say
as I held out my plate
for my special treat

~~

I Won't Change

My son's friend
would come into the room
and see me with a whisky
beside me on the desk

"Your old man
never seems to be drunk
no matter how much
he drinks."

James, I was drunk
but before I started drinking
a thousand years ago
I decided that I would not change
no matter how drunk

I'm sorry for those
whose old man changed
with a few glasses of rum
whisky or gin
Truly sorry

We all drank for a reason
mostly, our lives were shit
Not what we thought they'd be
I figured that was never
a reason to become mean

~~

Union Man

Out brothers out
I was a union man
and I understood the bosses
would never give in
without that threat

All my life I tried
to educate those around me
you hang together
or you hang separately

All my life
I watched as those
who bought into the company line
put their heads
into their nooses

~~

Best Christmas

The tree is still up
and I glance at it
wondering which
was my best Christmas

The answer of course
is this one
four years past
a double-broken neck

Four years past
the time the cancer
should have killed me
but the doctors said...

And I said Yes!
figuring no matter how smart
how much research I've done
they've done more

This was the best Christmas
and next year
will be the best
and if there's another...

~~

Sunrise is Earlier

This morning
as is usual
I woke at six
and I swear
I could feel the light
struggling to appear

The days are getting longer
don't tell me different
Don't tell me when
the sun actually came up
all your numbers
all the "right and wrong"
make no difference to me

This morning it felt
like Sol was returning
No matter the rest of the day
was not so good
I've held on to that feeling
Sol is coming back

~~



Cruel Joke

The very worst
the most cruel joke
is the incremental strength
that I am accumulating

All that was pounded out
is slowly leaking back
and that filling of muscle
makes me think there is time

Others too
see the improvement and say
Oh you've got years left in you
Easy to say at forty-five

I was resigned four years ago
I said my goodbyes
and packed up my loose strings
stuffed them into a suitcase

But now the suitcase has opened
the strings spilled out
as if I had all the time in the world
to gather them up slowly

~~

Terry is Here

Ah, time to take my pills
time to go to the sauna
and read some Pratchett
as I do, when life is low

New authors
old authors I've never read
all are fine when I'm good
but when it's bad, Terry is there

~~

Hold Please

Dialing the doctor's office
over and over again
trying to get through
to get a prescription
he said he renewed
four months ago
Renewed

If I don't reach him
I don't get the shot
which stops the cancer
from growing
OH MY GOD
I got through
and now all I need to do
is hold please

~~

Why Did I Read That

Why did I read that?
A question often asked
while scrolling around the net
I don't really
in my heart of hearts
care at all
who is to blame
for the latest celebrity breakup

Seriously
why did I read that
What was I thinking
Who cares about this stuff
Who are those people anyway
and
why did I click on that
~~

Oyama Happy Road

In my home town of Guelph
The Go Train has replaced bells
with electronic warning sounds
and they are almost identical
to the dzing dzing sound
of the commuter trains
at the end of Oyama Happy Road
in Japan, where I was once
Funny what you remember

~~

Succubus, don't waste your time

It was a nice try
me with a prick
and a good looking girl
at least I assume so
you made me look mostly
at her crotch

It was a nice try
but you can't get blood
from a stone
or money from a miser
and you can't get my prick
engorged any more

~~

I Watched Her

The way she inspected her food
every forkful eyeballed
before carefully being loaded
into that mouth
and if it was good
that little smile
the eyelids just a bit lower
I watched for hours

~~



Pond Rink

So very many years ago
that farm pond
was scraped for an ice rink

and I looked
as I walked by
but I never saw a skater
gliding from bank to bank

One, two years
maybe three
I saw that rink
but then no more
and never again

~~

Tempered Glass

The Corel plate dropped
to shatter on the kitchen floor
shards and pieces exploded
across the floor
and I barefoot
washing the dishes
collected a sliver

A transparent needle of glass
invisible to my poor eyes
there for three days
I knew it
with every step I took
"It's not there" Brenda said
"I can't see it"
"It will work out"

Not on my heel
please, light and magnifier
and a sharp tweezers
Keep looking
"Oh, something here"
Ignore my jumping
dig the damned thing out

"I think I have it"
I knew she did
the relief was instant
and the blood flowed freely
Three days for one slip
and another two to heal
To heal my heel
~~

The Cars Hiss By

The cars hiss by outside
the road wet with rain
Tonight it will freeze
and tomorrow a drive
will be an adventure

~~

What We Have

What we have as babes
we assume is the world

In my cold farmhouse home
there was a stone path
and in it, fossils
endless fossils

and my whole life long
I have expected
to reach down by my feet
and find a fossil

~~

We Went for a Swim

Late fall and the lake
looks cold as Hell
The grey of battleships
The grey of frozen corpses

And children
as children do
are walking outward
Determined on one last swim

Arms outstretched
moving up and down
with each wave encountered
as if, if only the arms are warm
the body is warm

As if to fly up over what is to come
that icy plunge
the numbs the face
and lets them say that in November
Last weekend at the cottage
we went for a swim

~~

The Gulls are Silent

The air crackles
with the smell of winter to come
and the gulls are silent

No longer the demands
that we drop a chip
for them to eat

but a sort of watchful silence
a sort of hope beyond hope
that one of those warm pieces
will be given like alms

to warm their throats
one last time

~~



Nine Hundred Pages

Nine hundred pages
the book of collected poems
of a long dead man

I flip through
with no particular obligation
to read any of them
and of those I read
no particular obligation
to understand them

The references close enough
in time
and loose enough
I feel no urge to research

What I miss
will not harm me
There will be no test
next week

~~

Kihon

The student struggles
"give me the secret please"
when they are like children
barely able to speak
trying to write a poem

The words are not there
the practice of grammar
If you have no vocabulary
you will flounder
If you wish to dance
you must learn the steps
~~

She Can't Sleep

I lay down
to rest my eyes at 1
and woke at 5

Groggy
not sure if it was day
or night

Thinking, "she can't sleep"
I went to comfort her
only to realize
she was home from work
and it was day

~~

Yucca and Gravel

Yucca and gravel
the flowering stems broken
January rains fall
on stone and green
and within the yucca
are dead leaves

~~

Cafe Toilet

The old man shuffled in
Walker and bag
wandered from corner to corner
looking for a toilet

When he found it locked
he mumbled a bit
and someone told him
he needed the key

Is this the men's
They are unisex
This is the men's then?

He took the blue key
and tried to open the door
he failed
tried it in the yellow door
and bent the key

I took the key from him
opened the door for him
and yes, sure enough
he left the key inside

~~

The Swing

Someone tied a rope
high in a willow
beside the stream
and we swung on it
out over the pool
and dropped yelling
into the shallow water

We never bothered with suits
just stripped to skin
and dropped in
My mother found us one day
and ran for her camera
By the time she was back
we were dressed

Please strip and go in again
I want to take pictures
Not a chance we said
figuring we'd go to hell for sure

I wish we'd done it
let her take the pictures
But now, sixty years later
she'd be accused of a sex crime
~~

Green Thumb

I must remember
to water the plants
they don't grow worth a damn
in the wintertime
but they dry up and die
just fine
~~



Time to Go Around

You never thought about it
as a child

There was an old pear tree
that produced ugly fruit
and at a certain time
you simply skirted that tree

The fruit was over ripe
and fermenting
the yellow-jackets were drunk
and would sting you
as soon as look at you

Never a thought to it
when the daylight lasted
a certain number of hours
or the right flowers
or that small bite of colder air
Who knows

We just skirted that tree
~~

In The Spring

In the spring
even the yellow-jackets
are friendly

They don't know
they have only a few months
and by September
they are falling apart

their joints hurt
and it's harder to find food

Like most bitter old men
you should avoid them
they have no more friends

~~

No Place to Go

For a hundred thousand years
we have eaten someplace dry
or hunted it barren
We have bred ourselves up
until there's nothing left
and we moved on

After a hundred thousand years
we are coming to that scary place
that realization in our hearts
that there's no place left
to move on to
We're stuck with what we've got

~~

The Brush

On those black tough tresses
she broke her brush
split down the middle
by the impossible demands
that a beautiful thing
be made more beautiful

~~

Still Beautiful

As she grew older
she was concerned
Lines and wrinkles showed
perhaps some grey in the hair

She need not have worried
Exactly in time with what she saw
he was losing the keen eye of youth
to find the soft focus blur of age

~~

Of Horses

She came honey-skinned
and perfum'd
To someone else
never to me

To my bed she came wet
covered in sweat
and smelling vaguely
of horses

~~

The Willow

You must bend in the wind
like the willow they said

But having been around willow
when the wind blows
and having gathered up the branches
that covered the ground
after a wind

I wonder if these sages
have ever seen a willow
~~



January Rain

I recall, as a young man
that I enjoyed the cold rains
of January

But that must have been
while I still had hair

Today, those cold drops
hitting the skin atop me
I thought

I did not enjoy this rain
at all

~~

Dishes Again

So difficult it is
to be profound
when the mundane
must be addressed

As my head
in the clouds
assembles word and phrase

my hands, becoming chapped
must do yet another
load of dishes

~~

Milkweed Wishes

I walk by a milkweed
dead in the January cold
but the pod
though not intact
was split with silk and seed
exposed to the winter wind

Transported back
to a faraway youth
when the silk minus seed
would drift through the town

and if you caught one
made a wish
and blew on it
The wish, perhaps
would come true

~~

Just Like That

"Just like that" she said
and tried to snap her fingers
Failing miserably

But seeing her desire
to deliver a mighty put down
I stuck out my lip
in a subtle pout
and lowered my eyes

~~

Dreams of a Bed

Were we just the dreams
of that bed we shared
Created of spiderwebs
to satisfy, to justify
some deep seated need
of a mattress to support
two bodies in motion

~~

Morning Grit

I spend some time
rubbing fingers
over eyelids
digging sharp bits
from the corner of an eye

trying to scrape something
off of an eyelash
Some dark distraction
seen in the corner
of my eye

That I am sick
seems obvious to me
but the only signs
are these sticky little bits
of dust and dead blood cells
clinging to my eyes

~~

What Dreams

What dreams were there
in that old bed
So many years
in the farmhouse
before it was moved
to the University town

Each night it dreamed of me
and perhaps a girl
Then came the day
there were two in that bed
almost every night
The dreams spread
from side to side

What dreams were there
during those mostly happy times
until the days that gap opened
down the middle of that bed
and that unfortunate night
that ancient bed, so long in use
had a hole punched into the headboard
~~



That Much is Understood

What can a young man understand
The words whipped across a face
like a slap
four fingers outlined in red
and the barely contained lunge
toward that girl
who just hurt him so much

No excuse, no excuse
for that urge to hurt back
and the stomach acid runs
half way up his throat
and the sick fatal conviction
that he must leave
and not come back

~~

After Retirement

How can a retired old man
have so little time
A book half written
another half ready
photos good to add

A weekend Saturday
and already two appointments
one a jolly fat walk
Dishes to wash
half-organized photographs
and old letters

Honestly, the insane idea
that you'll have time
when you retire
ought to be understood
The extra time you think you'll have
is taken up in naps
~~

The Thud of Fist on Flesh

In the early days of our lives
we welcome the slap
the thud of fist on flesh
We young men

Come hit me harder
surely you can manage
more than that
here, and I return the blow

The bruises heal
the strains mend
and the next day
Strike hard, again

Comes the day
the sad, sad day
when bruises don't heal
and strains don't mend
~~

Knit Dress

Ah that knit dress
out of fashion long enough
to come back again

and as she walks by
through the bar
every curve revealed

I can appreciate the memory
of such a dress
sliding, slowly slipping
from thigh to breast
and on over head

Revealing nothing
no panties
no bra
Nothing at all

~~

The Old House Speaks

The old house I live in
speaks to me in the silence
a pop, a creak
a scraping of leaves
on aluminum screen

The moans of a furnace fan
in need of oil
the groans of heating duct
moving against ceiling
as it warms in the hole

and the wooden floors
chattering like children
with every step I take
reminding me of those
who grew up here with me
~~

Swamp Willow

If you ask me what tree
would be my favourite
I might have to say
the swamp willow

Ugly, dirty things
leaves and twigs a constant rain
across half killed lawn
Nobody would plant one

And yet, they survive
they persist
they exist where all should die
You have to admire them for that

~~



The Cut on My Finger

Where did this cut
on my finger come from
and why won't it heal

Mysterious events
and wounds I only notice
two days hence

I whip my brain
trying to identify the cause
and fail, I did nothing

Yet there it is
certainly it exists
if I cannot find the source

I certainly see the effect
and am reminded of it
with each flexed movement
~~

Oh, That's Lilly

The boy, embarrassed
refused to speak
of his nocturnal visitor
the woman who coaxed
such emissions from him

His mother, sheets in hand
spoke to his father
showing him the evidence
of such nocturnal events
the stiffness, the crunch

The father looked up
"Oh, that's Lilly"
then realized what he'd said
"Who?"
"What?"

~~

Disco Shirts

One thing about the 80s
I do not miss
are those damned nylon shirts

Sure they were shiny
under the disco lights
but they didn't breathe

There was a very good reason
why we wore them unbuttoned
down to the navel

~~

One of Those People

There is a story I heard
it's from a friend of my cousin
who heard it from a local cop

You have to watch out
it's so horrible
I'll have to whisper it to you

Really?
Asians, and white girls
and drugs, and slaves

Amazing, how can this happen
in this day and age
Look, there's an Asian over there

Oh, not an Asian
A black man
Are you sure

Maybe an Arab
Or one of those people
who live in the next country
~~

University Job

One of my early jobs
was to measure the organs
of flatworms

I have no idea why
nobody bothered to tell me
and it wasn't my research

So I went to the lab
put in my hours
while the grad student left

with her tennis racket
to get some exercise
And good for her

I put in my hours
got my pay
and went home

Happy for the work
happy for the pay
I was sad when she graduated
~~



How to Make Tea

I know those
who boil the water
and let it sit
the right amount
Pre heat the pot
then pour over loose leaves
and glance at their watches
At the right time
pour into cups
through a strainer
Often adding milk
sugar and lemon

Me, I put a cup of water
into the microwave
and drop a bag in
Swish a few times
leave the bag in
and I'm done
The tea, getting lower
and colder
gets stronger

~~

Making Sense of You

I must be getting older
I find myself reluctant
to follow a convoluted path
a diabolical passage
through a book

I want it simple
If there is need
of a paragraph
to explain a paragraph
Maybe

But if I need a third book
if I'm now three ideas deep
I would much rather
talk to a toddler
At least I don't expect
and sense at all

~~

A Pleasant Scent

Walking through a store
artisans you know
One or two must be mixing
essential oils to perfume

There was a subtle scent
that was highly pleasant
but as I admired it
my mind was disturbed

for surely there was someone
who would object
to that which triggers a reaction
to some long past trauma
or at least was allergic

and, Imagining the fuss
I left the store
even though
I was the only one there
~~

The Rower

Having rowed for the city
so very long ago
I would cringe
and bite my lip
watching the folks
row on the machines
in the gym

I would think to myself
they are on the lake
moving a bit forward
a bit back
the blade never lifting
from the water

Then I would shout
loudly in my head
It doesn't matter
there is no lake
there is no oar
They can do what they want

But it never helped
~~

There is a Large Scar

There is a large scar
on the top of my shoulder
I'm not sure which
because it was from a burn
the sun blistering the skin
right off

So when I tan
there is a large spot
that stays pale

But so many years ago
I stopped letting the sun
get to my skin
and now I don't know
which shoulder is scarred

~~

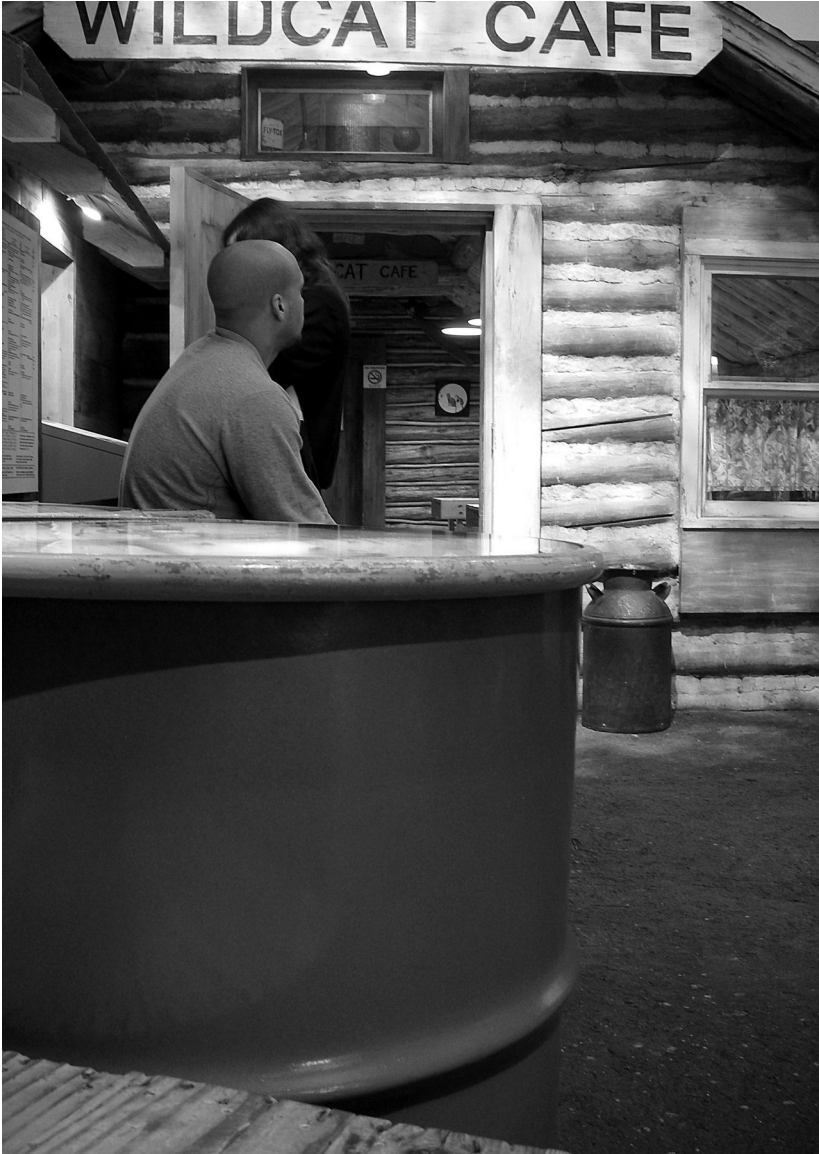
What We Notice

My computer
and my phone
both charged full
at the same time

Wow, spooky
Or perhaps not
I happened to notice something
and assigned significance

Where perhaps there is none
The tyranny of attention
should be avoided
as much as possible

After all, what we notice
is what is important
It's what kept us away
from the tiger's mouth
~~



Gaijin

Since 1854
Japan has been trying
to keep the black ships out
to keep the foreigners out

At times, the country was at risk
as wars went out of control
and foreigners won them
but didn't get in

And now once more
the leader says the country
is on the brink
Not enough babies

And in anyplace else
the solution is simple
let the outsiders in
In Japan the fight goes on
~~

Alone For So Long

Alone for so very long
I was afraid I'd forgotten
how to speak
And when I did
my voice sounded strange
alien
as if it were someone else's
~~

The Pack

Straight across the street he came
as soon as he'd seen me
and a voice followed
"He's friendly"

Certainly he was
a young dog
of medium weight
jumping and shivering

Excited to be one of the pack
and I was one, perhaps
He bolted back across the road
To check she was still there

~~

Trickster

Waiting until I was right underneath
the crow let out
a mighty caw

Knowing perhaps
that I could not bend my neck
that far

Oh very good, I said
such a trick you've played
You really got me
as I walked on, grinning

~~

Children in Love

The cold grey mornings of silence
that went on for weeks
Rising from our lonely bed
not bothering to look at you

Not wanting to see the pleading there
as you begged for a word
any word at all
and all you got was silence

If a word slipped out
it was angry
it was cold
calculated to hurt

and for all of it
for the weeks and the months
I regret

We did not deserve that
what we did to each other
but neither of us, still children really
had any other tools to use

Had no understanding
of what it meant to love
~~

As If I Would Leave

Rain woke you
pounding on the window
the walls of stone
three feet thick
gave no hint
of the storm outside

I was at the window
absent from the bed
you looked for me
then at the sound
and found me standing there

A smile
How silly
To think me gone
As if I would leave

You opened your arms
and I returned to you
holding you, saying
"It's just the rain"
and you sighed against my chest

Wriggled yourself comfortable
and returned to your dream
I lay awake a while
watching the rain
Slowly I understood
the wetness on my face

~~



Have You Cried

"Have you cried for her"
and I hated him
in that very instant
I hated him

Stupid, stupid man
as if crying would bring her back
as if I hadn't cried long enough
with her in my arms
to last an eternity

~~

Two for Two Hundred

The morning train pulls in
and it's nice to see it full
each rider taking one car
off of the highway

Some get off here
but many more get on
What a good idea
Two engines instead of 200

~~

A Zamboni

Sitting in the cafe
near the transit hub
(a fancy name for the bus station)
I watch the buses pull out
and around the corner
that most Canadian of sights
a Zamboni
Probably heading for coffee

~~

She Walks By

She walks by the window
coffee in hand
and flicks her eyes toward me
an old man
peering over his glasses
She moves on with her day

~~

Waiting for my Bagel

I sit looking out the window
waiting for my bagel
listening to the mature ladies
behind me
A nice background noise

nothing deep
nothing threatening
provided I behave myself
and out the window

I watch a girl
march down the wintry street
in t-shirt and thin pants
She's got a bag
she's heading for The Brick
so a student

Who says these kids are soft
~~

My Staircase

Today I walked past
that narrow staircase
that I love so well
Jammed tightly
between two buildings
up to a door
that must lead
to a second floor apartment
Some time
in my lifetime
they added a gate
at the entrance

I walked past
stopped
and too two steps back
so I could enjoy once again
one of my favourite places
in this town
Earlier I have been looking
at the old buildings
the ones saved from new
and thought again
How much I love this place
~~



Nearsighted

There comes a time
when looking forward
starts to strain your eyes
and looking back
gives just that much distance
that it's easier to see

~~

What Do You Want

You asked me what I wanted
and I could not answer
Did I want you forever
did I want a house and children

A better job
some sort of cause
some sort of direction
in my life

and while I sat undecided
you gently laid your hand
on my arm
and said

"For dinner
what do you want for dinner"

~~

Barely Hanging On

On the escarpment rocks
are gnarled old cedar
of little interest
neither pretty, nor big

Just a tree clinging
by its roots into the rock
barely hanging on

And yet
these poor things
some of them
are 700 years old

Consider that
if age is a virtue
these ugly, twisted things
are more glorious by far
than any works of man
that exist here

~~

Lineament

My left palm and my right sole
scream with pain
but all the bits between
seem to be fine
I suppose I should be happy
there's no more than that
They both smell of lineament
Which seems unlikely to help
but has a nice wintergreen smell
~~



Three PM

Three in the afternoon
time to start thinking
of dishes and dinner

What a drag
it's such a nice time
for a nap

~~

Waiting for Her

Waiting for her
she said she might come
and I did not dare
to miss her

I was one of many
who looked for her to come
I knew that
and knew that if I missed her
I missed my chance

So as not to seem lame
I read my book
and drank my coffee

The same line
over and over
for three hours
the coffee long cold
~~

The Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree
is still up
Proof, should I need it
that my daughter lives
someplace else

She and my wife decorate
and take it down each year
Although this year
I assembled the actual tree

I wait for them to un-decorate
to put away the ornaments with care
and I will box the rest

But for now
I am content
to see it there, bright and twinkling
and full of memories
~~

This Eternal Plastic

It was a plastic toy
one I had as a child
and I found it deep
in the far corner
of the basement

Wondering that it survived
I picked it up
and as I did
this eternal plastic
crumbled in my hands

~~

Good Night

A child confused
wonders what he has done
that the world hates him so
His mother says "good night"
and walks away
leaving the boy alone
no other champion
to face the night

~



Walking Home

Walking home through dark streets
the boy stops on the sidewalk
and watches a movie
on a television in a house

He stands for a long time
hears nothing
but he can fill in the sounds
of both movie and loving voices
speaking to each other

Somewhat comforted
for this imaginary world
he finally turns
and walks slowly
reluctantly home

~~

The Idiot Clock

That stupid clock
has never
in my entire life
been more than three minutes
to midnight

The final war is upon us
it has been upon us
ever since madmen
on every side
have had the power

The push of a button
and obedient men fire
Missiles of death
undreamed of by God
such power to kill

My whole life
that idiot clock
which pretends to mean something
has never been more
than three minutes to midnight

~~



A Job To Do

My eyes burn
and I am so tired
I want a nap
but I must make coffee
~~

The Visitor

Eyes open to see a curtain
in a city I know not where
curtains over a window
slats grading from black to grey
a woman passes in front
a shadow
a silhouette
naked and
wild hair like Medusa
No threat to me
in the dark
She comes to the bed
slides across and skin to skin
as if she has every right
from chest to knees
she takes my warmth

Soon
warmed through
she slides away
as if she has every right
and I almost forget
but again
back again
to take my arm
put my hand on her breast
and then
away once more
It is time to turn
as that time always comes
and I check her breathing
a soft buzz says she sleeps
and so I roll over

In the morning
when I wake
I expect her to be gone
but that mass of hair
no snakes to be seen
surrounds her head
I kiss her cheek
and go on with my day
~~



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