

Spring Must Come



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Photographs taken in 2003-2004

Introduction

Winter will end, Spring will come. The year begins, ends, and begins again, as do our lives. The year is born and dies much faster than we do, but this is to give us practice.

We have our Spring, and when our Winter is over, we must understand that Spring must come, we must move aside so that Spring will come.

Kim Taylor, April 2022

You Made This World With Me

You made this world with me
and we live inside
It's a nice world, very cozy
and we love it here

Should we get some curtains
maybe a couple of pillows
the kind that are no good for anything

Or shall we leave well enough alone
Shall we wait for the couch to fray
Please let's be here until it frays

~~

Real Smooth

It's the middle of the day
and I want to go shave
I have a nice safety razor
that goes real smooth
and today it would be nice
for something to go real smooth
~~

I'll Be Back

She leaves the bed
with such a coy look
"I'll be back," it says
"and you'd better be ready"
it says

The sort of look
that brings comfort
to an old man's
old age

~~



One God

Hey there Coyote
There's only one God you know

Yes, says Coyote
Me

No, no, this God is invisible
and he's in charge of everything
every little bird, every leaf

Really, says Coyote
That's annoying
And he sings the world away
and starts again

~~

The Old Are Religious

They say you get religion
when you get old
and are getting ready to die

But I never got religion
when I was young
Never figured what it was for

So now I don't think
I'll be getting it

I mean, as I figure it
you get religion
so you can live forever

But you see
all I know of time
is what passes before my eyes

and so forever
is from when I noticed
to when I don't notice

I've already lived forever
and tomorrow, that will be
Forever and a day

~~

Doggerland is Gone

Doggerland was a great place
fertile as fuck
Lots of people
lots of animals
lots of food
and of course
you could walk to England
and the best part was
It wasn't named England
it was just that place
a bit further over

And then those damned Canadians
with their Ice dam
across the St. Laurence
and the good part
was that it wasn't named the St. Laurence
Or Canada
It was named the melting icy stuff
That ice dam
melted through and the water rose
And the damned Norwegians
who weren't named Norwegians
with their Storegga tsumami
and Doggerland was gone

You may not believe
in climate change
said the survivors of Doggerland
but climate change
believes in you
only it wasn't named
climate change
it was some God's wrath
~~

Pretty Good Wheeze

Pretty good wheeze
says Coyote to Bear
We convince the middle classes
that it's damned dangerous
in the woods
and tell them it's only safe
in the Parks
where they pay to get in

But as usual
Coyote gets it wrong
and soon the only woods
are in the Parks
and Bear has to dance
for handouts from the cars
as they drive by with cameras
to make sure they remember
they were there, in the woods

~~

The One I Got Told

I love the story
of sky woman
who was pregnant
and fell from the sky
and landed on Turtle
and all the animals
went hunting for mud
to make the world

I would like to believe
that story
if it isn't too rude of me
if I'm not appropriating
if it's not inappropriate
if I say please
can I believe in that
It's better than the one
I got told
~~

The Riverside

I walked down to the riverside
and sat with my back to a wall
put my arms around my knees
and cried

I was done with life
done with all the pain
done with all the strife
never wanted it again

I sat down by the riverside
with my back against a wall
had my arms around my knees
and cried

I looked up through the tears
and watched the water run
I thought about stepping in
and cried

I closed my eyes and sighed
I gathered up my life
and felt a gentle hand
on my shoulder

I opened up my eyes
and looked into her face
Why are you here my love
Come home

~~

Hotel Bed

You took me to a hotel
big bed
white sheets
cool summer night

And you lay on that bed
the covers thrown down
at the foot
arms and legs wide

They didn't touch the sides
and I never saw anything
as beautiful as you
on that hotel room bed
~~



I Was So Proud

We would walk downtown
from our small apartment
and I was so proud
to walk beside her

I would hold her arm
and she would lean her head
against my shoulder
as she walked beside me

And she would laugh
throw her head back
and laugh
at one of my jokes

Best, was after a rain
when she would run ahead
and with both feet
jump into a puddle

~~

Forever Moment

She stands in front
of a wash stand
under an open window
She is naked, beautiful
the sun is coming through
and her skin glows

I lie back on the bed
watching her bare feet
on the stone floor
thinking of how lucky I am
to be able to see this

~~



Kishin Shinoyama

Let's do some work
in the style of Kishin Shinoyama
I would suggest
to my model
and she would say "who is that"
but I was prepared and showed her

Very nice she would say
let's do that today
but somehow
best intent in the world
we would end up doing
something else

~~

The Male Nude

I taught nude photography courses
and each set of classes
I had one that was the poorest attended

I made them pay anyway
for the nude male session
and I would nod to myself
as the four of us
would have a great session

~~

Am I Really Old

The palm of my hand itches
is it the cancer?

My muscles jab me like needles
is it the covid?

I get a bit wobbly when getting up
is it the diabetes?

Today I was short of breath
is it the fibrillation

Surely not
I have pills for all of those

Am I old?
Am I really old?

~~

Plants On Her Windowsill

On the windowsill were plants
She grew them from seed
and they were lush and healthy

In her kitchen, the pots and pans
shone, the counters neat

The fridge didn't have
that funky odor, like maybe a mouse
crawled in and shivered to death

and the bathroom had an absence
of greenish mould with fuzz

And yet, and yet
she moved into my place

~~

While I Can Say Thank You

I grow so frantic, so frightened
that soon I will be helpless
or worse

That I will be that old man
waiting to die
in a bed with tubes
and creams for the sores
and a port in my arm
through which the pain meds flow

Throw me over a cliff
after making sure there is nobody below
let the ocean take me
let the fish eat me
Don't wait until I cannot beg you
Do it while I can still say thank you
~~



With a Wet Ass

A long, empty, sand beach
and I stand skipping stones
along the smooth water
Stones I have gathered
from across the country

There is White Rock
There Vancouver
There Whitehorse
There Whitecourt
There is Calgary
Regina, Winnipeg
Kenora, Sudbury
Quebec, Halifax

And I run out of stones
before I get home
so I sit, ass wet on the wet sand
and I wait for her

The one I left
the one I came back for
I wait for her to come
with a single stone
One with my name on it

I wait, with wet ass
for her to come

~~

A Rusty Knife

How difficult sometimes
to make the words come
How like cutting off fingers
with a rusty knife

Scraping the inside of my mind
with that hook the Egyptians used
to fish the brains
out of their kings

~~

New Summer Dress

She had a new summer dress
her first new dress
and we walked past a fountain

She held out her arms
and spun 'round in a circle
making the dress billow out

Then she looked at me
a kitten in her eye
and jumped into the fountain

Laughing and watching me
she scooped hands-full of water
and drenched that dress

I had to go get her
she would have stayed
She came home with me
~~



I'm OK

I'm OK
if I never look in a mirror

and if I catch a glimpse
Still fine

if I can say quickly enough
"Who's that?"

and answer
"I don't know"
~~

It Is Not Time Yet

It is not time yet
for the writing of the poetry

The author is much too cynical
disgusted with the world
with sentimentality

In years past
three or four shots of whisky
would have set the mood

Now, it's just a crap shoot
Maybe later
~~

Am I What?

My mother once asked
if I was angry
that she had me circumcised

I looked at her in confusion
Why would I be angry?

I was told the pain remains
that you are traumatized
that you will miss the foreskin

No, I said, I don't think so
searching my resentment files
No, no problems here Mom
~~

Twenty Rolls

David Hemmings jumping
into a convertible Rolls
with his camera in hand

A model running behind
doesn't make it
and is left to pout

Oh how I wanted to be that
A fashion photographer
able to afford film

Oh how I wanted film
enough for twenty rolls
per shoot

The fantasies of a boy
who could barely stay fed
Twenty rolls of film

~~



Orange Skoda

When I was a young man
someone in town
had an orange Skoda

It went well
with the Lada
which I think was also blue

I never saw them moving
Only parked

~~

I Become Depressed

When I become depressed

I doom-scroll
and click "hide forever"
on meme after meme
after meme

And slowly
I feel like I need a shower
and when I take a shower
I feel better

~~

Dearest Darling

Another book of poetry
from the thrift shop

Another loving inscription
and I wonder again

Death, or just a breakup
~~

An Extended Life

I write about thousand year old people
and think about their lives
and slowly, day by day
my life extends, I am at about a hundred

I wonder how much older I can be
how far I can stretch
during the next few years
that I may have in which to write

~~

Welcome Sleep

Of course there were times
where I lay awake, angry
or profoundly sad

But night, and sleep, have been friends
all my life
No matter the trouble
no matter the pain, the exhaustion

It all left me as I drifted into dreams

And now, as I reach the end
and wait for that long, endless night
I do not fight against sleep
I embrace it as an old friend

The naps, the overnights
I welcome them all

~~

The Discovery Of Love

I walk the streets
and sit in coffee shops
watching young lovers
and thinking about their lives

Living again
those first discoveries of love

Wishing them luck
wishing them knowledge
to understand how special
how unique their love is

~~



Banked Fires

Oh she said
your fires are banked
you no longer rage with lust

How wrong she is
I cannot imagine nights of sex
but I can still get lost
in the face, the eyes of a stranger

The lust is still there
but no longer the lust of fingers
trailing over flesh

It is the lust of eyes
trailing over a face
wandering from chin to throat

Where once the rise and fall
of ecstasy would take weeks
or perhaps days

My love and loss is now
there and gone in minutes
or perhaps seconds
as she passes by

~~

A Red-Checked Tablecloth

Some find pleasure
in the game, the chase,
the will-she won't-she dance
of seduction

I never wanted that
I simply wanted calm
an easy drift from meeting
to the bed

From the bed
to coffee in the morning
a red-checked tablecloth
and her sleepy face opposite
~~

Night and Day

The head thrown back
the scream of orgasm
the feeling of a job well done
is a minor pleasure

The first sight in the morning
a sleepy grin
and a stretch
perhaps a sound like a purr
Now that's worth a lifetime

~~

An Old Lover

Sometimes I would meet
an old lover on the street
and a smile, not of greeting
but of remembered lust

Sweaty, sleepless nights
sheets torn and crumpled
with furious passion

A smile of memory
before the polite words
of old lovers

~~

To Hate What You Loved

Once loved
can you ever stop loving
can love really die

Two bodies can drift apart
for reasons known or unknown
for insult, injury or irritation
But must the love felt so deeply
ever turn to hate

Not once have I felt that
Most distressing of thoughts
to hate someone you once loved
seems to invite a death
of the soul

~~

The Caress of Memory

Deep wrenching despair
nights of blackness
Mouth open, the wails unsung
Only the abyss

Those days of youth
days of education
in the ways of the heart
have faded with age

Where once I saw no hope
I now find fondness
a tender caress of memory
and a smiling melancholy
~~



The Magic

Can you not see the magic
in the world
Can you not bend over
and look at the strangeness
that happens in a lawn
or even in the cracks
of a sidewalk

Surely if I
brave scientist
stoic cynic that I am
If I can see the wonder
on the inside of a cactus
Surely you, brave dreamer
can see the magic

~~

Half an Hour

In half an hour
I have been promised
She has promised me
I will see her again
in half an hour

How does one remain still
How does one not run
Run toward her
try to make half an hour
twenty-five minutes
~~

Mike In The Only

Mike will be at The Only
in two hours time
that lovely home
away from his home

I sat in The Only
not so long ago
and wondered at the women
painted by Modigliani
The posters of my youth
and an advertisement for Bass

At noon today
I will think of Mike
sitting in the Only
sitting with his friends
and I will, at least in my thoughts
sit with them

~~

Coyote and Amber

Coyote lies at her feet
an old, smelly dog
his tongue lazing out
of the side of his mouth

He lies curled on her feet
and Amber, reading her book
stretches her hand downward
gently grasps an ear
and gives it a little tug

~~

The Barista

Liam wanders in
listening to a song
and says
Mike played this often
in the coffee shop

I wonder if Liam misses
the coffee shop in White Rock
and the ocean you can see
from its patio
My lanky son, the barista
~~

Tired Old Man

Lauren visited yesterday
and I am exhausted

Whatcha doing, I said
and she told me

Students to teach
Records to record with the band
videos to shoot
Courses to take
Orchestras to play with

Stop, stop, I beg you
tell me no more my love
You tire your old man
he needs to rest

~~

A Small Voice

A small voice in the night
quiet, like a mouse is quiet
a small voice beside my ear
"can I sleep with you guys, I'm scared"

~~



Delicate Pets

I never had a sensitive dog
the ones who pee themselves
in a thunderstorm

I guess my family is too rough
too low-born and crass
to have such delicate pets

~~

A World of Enemies

What is it
that makes a man complain
from the first breath
to the last

Everything
the fault of someone else
Everything
in the universe conspires

What could such a life be
but stress
The self-inflicted pain
of a world full of enemies
~~

A Caring Man

Walking by the wall I ask
What is that mark
what is that indentation
the bricks worn
the mortar broken

That is where a caring man
beat his head against the wall
Thirty years he stood and hit
His forehead against the bricks
and finally, before the wall broke
he, forgotten then and now, died
~~

Small Town Night

Walking into a small town
somewhere out west
4am it seemed
maybe earlier
but the place was dark
deserted

Lights on the street
shed thin pools of light
that illuminated nothing
but the dust and cracked cement
of the sidewalks.

Having no reason to be there
no girl I was chasing
no job waiting
I kept walking
past the empty downtown

Out of the lights
feebly reaching toward me
out to the highway
to a truck-stop diner
A meal to trade for sleep
~~

Pam Dancing

Tired, another meeting soon
she drove quickly

and as she did, Jethro Tull played
Aqualung

and she played all the parts
dancing down the road

~~

Impossible Dream

On a ferry deck
Blue paint over steel
and the warmth of the day
combines with the throb
of the engines
and the pulse of the waves

I drift off into a drunken dream
and you are there, impossible

You have not sent me away
you have not reassessed us
you are here with me
on this hard deck
the warmth underneath
the cold above

~~



Three Women

Three women to live with
one almost 40 years
Countless others
not impressive numbers
just more than I remember

A life as free as it could be
Money enough
Children, one of each
and arts to create with

This is the life of a lucky man
the life of someone with no regrets
A live worth living
A life worth leaving
~~

Is This It?

Waking suddenly breathless

Is this it?

Is this my end?

No

only her hair

my nose so close

I can't breathe in

~~

Not 20 Any More

I dig the scissors under the tape
that has reinforced my wrist
for five days

Cutting it across
and tearing it off fast
I lose some hair
but not as much as once I did

Is it healed
my wrist abused
by pretending I was 20

So far the fresh air
on whitened skin
feels good
The wrist feels good
Perhaps, perhaps
~~

Spring Will Come

Spring will come
I know for certain
The sky lightens
shortly after six o'clock

The solar heat
makes hot water
that we used for dishes today

The solar power
has topped up the batteries
at least so says the gauge

The propane shower
on the deck
was used last night
without a major chill

Yes, spring will come
I am certain
more certain than a month ago
when Winter seemed entrenched
~~

I Woke to Movement

I woke to movement in my bed
and we were making love
and I fell asleep once more

In the morning she asked
will I see you once again
and I said
I don't know your name

She shook her head
gathered her things
and went to another room
to dress

~~

The Hardest Question

Was I a good father
I asked their mother
when I was weeks from death

The hardest question I ever asked
The most important question
I ever asked

~~

My Old Friend

I do not embrace stress
as I once did
Like a drinking buddy
buying the next round

I no longer drink
no longer self medicate
The doctors medicate enough
for three of us

And stress
it unbalances me
so I stumble, something I rarely did
drunk

And my feet swell
my muscles stab with pain
and I wish no longer
to embrace my old friend Stress

~~

Fat Snowflakes

Stupidly fat snowflakes
settle on the trees
and the bushes
while melting instantly
on the roads

Will spring not come
must we endure these taunts
It will happen
it must happen
but with no grace or class at all
winter clings and clings

~~



The Last Poem

What will be the last poem
before my death
will someone make note
or should we assume
no special significance

Let's admit it now
I will have no idea
that it is my last poem
and so it may contain
no special significance
No need to study it well.

~~

You Have To Die Of Something

Death holds no secret
and need not provoke fear
In all the eternity before my birth
There was the same condition
that will apply after my death

I knew not
and will know not
Only this brief few decades
and the certain thought
held carefully my whole life
You have to die of something

~~

What Bucket List

What bucket list is possible
when, many years ago

I woke in the night
and looked out an airplane window

to see the full moon
reflected in curve after curve
of the Amazon

~~

Never Unloved

Was I ever unloved?
Not while my mother lived
and after that
Even before that
were women who lived with me
Children who grew at my feet

No, in my entire life
I was never unloved
In my darkest hours
I was never unloved
In my most frantic self-pity
I was never unloved
~~



Is It Love

Is it love that keeps you here
or simply habit
The desire to leave
smaller than the urge to stay

Is it love that keeps you here
or simply inertia
It matters not
Love, or not, you are here
More than enough for me

~~

Alternate Universe Interface

Is there a world somewhere
just beyond this one we know
where I should be

Did I miss a turning in a hall
a softness hiding a passage
through the back of a wardrobe

Was there a portal
I was meant to discover
where I would enter and find my destiny

It was never found
and yet, I do not miss it
I have been to countless worlds

I have entered magic portals
and flown the stars
been swept away by magic

~~

Another Breath

When the time comes
will I tremble and plead
Just a few minutes more
Just a few minutes

And for what
what is it that will be undone
that I have not done
Another breath?

I have known final moments
I sat seiza for ten minutes
on the day I knew I would never again
and I thought, remember

And I know, with terrible certainty
that I do not remember seiza
and when the final breath comes
and goes, I will not remember
~~

What Makes Me Cry

(I should have died for you)

My regrets?

I regret, that on that day

so long before we met

I was not there

to save you from that pain

you held the rest of your life

Or even to be with you

a single friendly face

who tried, and failed, and died

I regret I was not there

Even at the cost

of the rest of my life

I regret

~~

The Nature of Time

My sermon on the nature of time

Not enough

You must not hesitate

~~



The Poet's Uniform

Every so often
there is a post about a poet
An old fart

wrinkled
whiskers full of whisky
and the smell of cigarettes

I can never remember his name
because there are 12 of them
who all look the same

~~

A Great Truth

My fingers drift
over bare flesh
in the aftermath of desire

The slightly sticky feel of sweat
the blooming of goose flesh
through a small breeze
or my touch

How can there be a greater truth
than this

~~

And Even If

Come back to me
sweet memory
and comfort me

For time has moved
and I remain
still, no longer an arrow

And even if she returned
that time is gone
and memory all that remains

~~

Here

How long this journey
how difficult this road
to come to this
after half a century

To come to a balance
the pyramid upended
all of my life above

This moment, this memory
grounded and still

Nothing remains
Nothing was ever there

I am here
this perfect balance, here
~~

That Brilliant Smile

That brilliant smile
and I look upon her
with the memory of lust

Nothing else remains
Nothing else is possible

But in my heart
I give her everything
All that is left
of a youth fully spent

~~

A Glass Bell

Where is that young man
who searched for pain
longed for it
as the muse is longed for

Where is he now
that the old man wants nothing
wants silence

and the clear, glass ring
of a perfect moment
Heard over still water

~~



A Single Grain Of Sand

No longer do I seek distraction
no music
no book
no video
No longer do I have need

For the horror
of my silence
has slowly ebbed away

The desires, the longing
the cravings for life
have, with life
flowed elsewhere

And what remains
is a single grain of sand
on a windless beach
content, un-moving
~~

The Night-light

The night-light of my childhood
that defence against the darkness
and all contained within

The monsters in my dark heart

That night-light still burning
in my old age
simply to prevent stumbling

From the bed to the toilet

~~

Will They Come

Will they come
those women I knew
Will they come
in the last hour of my life
To say good-bye

Impossible I say
they will not know
when that last hour is
or where I am
As I know not
where they are

But perhaps
like the Goddess comes
They will each visit
from the deeps of my memory
to forgive me
in that final hour

~~

Death is Easy

Death is easy
that final hour
a blessing, no more pain
Or a sudden ending
to simply be no more

It is life that is hard
and the more of it we have
the more difficult

From the innocent goodness
of a toddler
we add and add and add
until a bitter old man appears
unless by constant effort

We prevent it
~~

And Yet, Love Remains

So much of my love is gone
wrenched away by the deaths
of those who held that love

And yet, love remains
could it be that love
is not a finite sum

Could it be that love
is an infinite blessing
to be spent and spent and spent
~~

Death Is The Maiden

I see my death
so many years afraid to look
I see it now
and my breathing quickens
my pulse races

Just as I once looked
to a beautiful woman
and my being longed toward her
Death now seems that maiden
and I welcome her embrace

But the pleasure was always
in the delay, the chase prolonged
so I will play hard to get
and death will play her part
And we will dance, we will dance

~~

There Will Never Be Time

Will I have time
to finish
To finish what
Whatever I have started

Never, there will never
be time enough
for life is full of starts
and they all end suddenly

~~



The Taste of Bread

I wish I could show you
the lessons of my life
but lessons are learned
not provided whole
not served like a meal

What I have learned
is like planting seed
harvesting
grinding
baking
and finally, not bread
but the taste of bread

Can you see?

~~

You See Me Here

Here I am
all of me
laid out before you
for you to see all

And yet, there is more
deep into the shadows
Things I cannot bring to light
Things that will remain

But none of it matters
and if you never see
it doesn't matter
You see me here

~~

For the Rain

Come to me before the rain
before the snow

come to me in summer
when the warm sand
slides between our toes

When the sun comes off the water
and blinds us
no matter which hand we hold up

Come to me in summer
when we need no sheets

when we lie uncovered
and hope for a breeze through the window

Then, then we will hope
for the rain

~~

Safe, Under Cover

I was a mouse, a mole
running my tunnels of snow
safe, under cover

And you, you were a fox
listening, waiting
And then the leap
straight up

Straight down, nose buried
mouth snapping
on my poor weak body

And I was no more
~~



Ice Cream

We are free, she said
in this age, at last, we are free
and monogamy is over

The only sin was disease
and never the the tattling
of grandmothers over the fence

We shall not hold each other
we shall not grudge each other
Others

And I nodded, I agree, I said
and we were together
and apart
and together again

And then one day there was another
and one day the freedom we had
was ice cream
on a hot day
~~

It Comes To Me

I was going to see the world
Four years in school and off
riding the rails
working the boats
Every day a new city

And somehow I stayed
four years became forty
but I never missed the road
every day a new face
a new story to hear
and the world
it comes to me

~~

Clocks Do Not Tick

Let the clocks be damned
the alarms be stilled

Let the electronic minders
of countless millions
fall into toilets

I am with you
and the world
with all it's time
has ceased

Clocks do not tick
the sun is fixed in the sky

There is you
and there is me
and there is this room

~~

To Touch Fingertips

Our house filled
with too much air
the heat unbearable

We climbed down the stairs
to the basement below
and lay on the cement

Naked skin to cool roughness
lying apart but near enough
to touch fingertips

~~

The Artist

She sat on a plaid blanket
looking out over the sand
to the cliffs beyond the water

Her brush in her hand
a jar of water beside
buried in the sand
she painted her watercolour

Full of concentration
a half smile on her lips

It was time for me to go
my ride was leaving
my summer was over

I stood for a moment
watching her back
as she dipped, and brushed
And I said
in a whisper to myself

Goodbye my love
I turned to go

~~

Not Important

There had been men in her life
I was sure of it
but when I asked, she shook her head
Not important, she said

Was there trauma
Was there damage
that she was trying to forget
I asked, she shook her head
Not important, she said

And no man ever called
No hints ever existed of men
who existed in her life

Where are they
Where did they go
I asked, she shook her head
Not important, she said

~~



Her Window

Each day as a boy
I walked to the beach
and each day I passed
her window

Each time I passed
she was there
unchanged, unchanging
looking out that window

She was there in the morning
as I wandered to the beach
She was there in the evening
as I wandered home

Three summers I saw her
Three summers I waved
and she stood unmoving, unmoved
The fourth summer I passed
and she was not there

~~

Deity

This weekend I told my daughter
that I had turned her into a Goddess
But I lied

She was a Goddess long years before
as my son was a God
and the both of them
have remained so

despite any stories I may tell

~~

She Wanted To Help

She wanted to help
and picked up a paddle
and showed me her back

I wanted to tell her
that I would paddle
and she should turn

I wanted to tell her
to trail her hand in the water
and lay back

I wanted to tell her
that all I wanted in the world
was to watch her face in repose
~~



The Overstuffed Chair

The day that she fell asleep
in the overstuffed chair
and I took a quilt from the bedroom
and laid it over her

Not one urge, on my part
to wake her
and make love
That feeling was better than sex

I did not pick up my book
I simply watched that elfin face
and fancied I saw the moment
she began to dream

~~

Reaching for a Pain Pill

Reaching for a pain pill
I hope that it works
against these stabs
from some random pin
and perhaps these itches
in random areas
on my randomly aged skin

~~

The Last Thing I Ever Saw

So afraid was I
that she would slip away from me
that I dared not close my eyes
and in this way
eyelids glued to eyeballs
the last thing I ever saw
was her elfin face

~~

Which God Offend

Oh, days like this
what have I done

which God offend
that such random torments
should visit me

And which God decided
it would be a jolly jape
that my eardrum should hurt

~~

The Peterborough Inn

The hotel room too quiet
the window, facing a wall
hinted at an alleyway below
and there
just out of sight there
someone is talking
~~

Happy Day

On days when the words refuse
to come to the front of my brain
and the images are dark, opaque
I think of her, that giggle, that smile
those mocking eyes

It does not help, not at all
but it is an old habit
I have no wish to break
I look upon that face, those ears
and feel her love again

~~



To Take The Warmth

A hunter in winter
may plunge his hands
deep into the body
of his prize
to take the warmth
that remains

In such a way

I dive into your eyes
and take comfort
from the warmth
I find there
To slow the freezing
of my heart

~~

Cruel Spring

Cruel spring, cruel April
to promise warmth
for two days
and then snatch it away

We argue with jackets
coats and shirtsleeves
but never win the argument

~~

What Lesson Is This

Such cruelty that the spring flowers
bloom and die in the heat
and yet when the cold returns
they live a few more days

What is it? What lesson is this?
If we want beauty
we must endure the cruel cold?
and if we wish warmth
beauty is denied?

~~

Life Like A Stone

I carry this life like a stone
cradled in my arms

So light, so perfect
when I picked it up
but now, now it grows heavy

and I know the roughness
I never felt at first
cutting into my arms

~~

A Perfect Poem

Behind closed eyes it forms
perfect, complete

and then I open my eyes

Gone, it is gone I cry
and this poor substitute

~~



And She Was There

In my dreams
and half waking fears
my heart sank beneath the waves
and I was drowning
suffocating

I woke with a start
I woke crying for myself
for my death, ever nearer
and she was there
and she held me

~~

I Will Be Here When You Return

There were times when she would leave
while sitting on our couch
She would be far away
in that place she went, when she was lost

I would sit beside her, take her hand
and wait for her to return
Never, never would I be absent
when she came back from that place

And when she did, I would hold her
while she cried
I never asked her, about that place
I waited for years, she never told me
~~



I Hear Her Voice

Sometimes in the softness of night
I hear her voice again
Impossible that I could
Impossible that I remember
and yet, and yet

She whispers my name
in that way she had
when she wanted something
when she wanted me to hold her
When she needed the sun
~~

Strange Mood

A strange mood takes me
as if I am angry
but I am not angry at anyone

A general dissatisfaction
Could it be
the many attempts at creation
frustrated by ordinary things

Or perhaps
the feeling that there is much to do
and I will have no time

~~

The Witch

What is magic, really
what explains the unexplained
What powers, so mysterious
are there in her

What do I think
in my aged age
Wisdom given to others
What do I think is magic

Nothing but love, of course
the woman willing
to put socks on an old man
who can't reach

Who straightens a collar
without a word
when age has taken the desire
to check oneself in a mirror

~~

Let Me Check, She Says

The soft touch
to turn the head
and the rasp of a razor
to tidy up an old man's shave

face and head
turned quietly
with a light touch
the rasp of another missed spot

~~

My Daughter's Magic

Colours dance and float
across the walls
With a shock I see them

Looking close I note
crystals hung by the windows
the work of my daughter

Such a thing
such a thing so like her

that I sink to my knees
to touch one
on the floor

~~

I Was The Bad Boy

The days, so long ago
where I was that breath of freedom
that bad boy to toy with

Certainly not the one to settle down
but perhaps the one
to settle on, until another comes along
and when that other arrives

Perhaps we'll keep the bad boy around
for when we feel the walls
becoming just a little tight

~~



End Of Term

The coffee shops have emptied out
not even the Vet students are left
Just the old men, nodding to each other

Still here?
Yes, still here.

There is space to sit
The music not quite so loud
But the place feels sad

Like those long ago Sunday afternoons
when the kids went back to school

And today, today we are not there
when they come back home for summer
~~

The Silence Between

So very many years it took
before silence was comfortable
It was embarrassing once
"What should I say, what can I say"

and later, the anger
Not daring to speak
for fear of what cannot be taken back

But long after that
the silence of sitting in a room
saying nothing
because it's been said
and need not be repeated

~~

Forgiveness Days

For all the days I am scolded
for all the abrasion of my soul
all the arguments about money

There are some
where this girl lies
Her head on my lap
her hands held under her chin
and a small smile on her lips

She is content to be close to me
and I am content to forgive her
Forgive her something
I cannot remember what
when I look upon that perfect face

~~

The Half-World

She stood in the doorway
afraid to come in
afraid if she went
she would never come again

I had said something cruel
as I sometimes did
in an offhand way
with no thought to consequence

She stood in the doorway
and looked in
as if soaking up the memory
of an already lost world

I looked back incurious
from the frayed fifties couch
my hand on the light-stand
snagged from a grandmother's house

I said not a word
waiting and watching
expecting something
getting nothing

~~

Only Ragged Paper

A loose pile of photographs
tucked into an envelope
tucked into a side table

I took them out
and fanned them
then looked at them
moving the top to the bottom

Photograph after photograph
of a couple
or a family
and his face scratched out

not covered
but scraped so hard
the emulsion was gone
and only ragged paper was left

~~

Show My Pain

Frida Kahlo lies on a bed
the sheet pulled down
her shirt flipped up
to show her back

She looks, over her shoulder
at the photographer
as if daring him
to show her pain

~~

A Woman

She sits naked
on the edge of the bed

looking back at him
asleep on her pillow

his chest rising and falling
the sheets rumped
and soaked with sweat

By her feet, forgotten
is a doll

~~

A Young Model

A young model twists
and leans
making her back show
muscles and shadow
for the painter

Such a lively pose
and yet, more than a hundred years
have passed
She is dead
the painter is dead

But this photograph
an ephemeral thing
a study for a painting
still somehow exists
still loudly declares
Once she lived

~~



Coyote Is Hiding

Coyote is hiding
he is under the bed
and his head
is under his paws
Amber has mentioned dishes
~~

Coyote Is In Love

Coyote is in love
he must be

There he is on a leash
walking beside Amber

Coyote on a leash
~~

A Tricky One

King Arthur would like to return
but the woman he hated then
is the woman he loves now

It's a tricky one
said Coyote
~~

Her Icky Brother

She waved her hands
and a tonne of mud
landed on her icky brother's head

Atta girl
said Coyote

~~

Coyote In The City

Coyote strides through the night

up one city street
and down another

The doors slam open
and slam shut again

"There's a Coyote out there
he's going to eat our cat!"

What doors, says Coyote
This is all woodland isn't it?

And cats give me furballs
I much prefer fish

~~



Fix My Mailbox

Can you fix my mailbox
It's falling over
and the neighbours complain

Sure, says Coyote

There, now there's a brand new box
half a mile down the road
and all your neighbours are there too

Isn't that more friendly
~~

Raven Will Help

Why are you down here?
said Coyote to Mole

Because I'm blind
said Mole
and I must stick to my tunnels

But didn't you become blind
because you dug these tunnels?

Oh surely not,
who would choose tunnels?

Well, said Coyote,
if you want to go above the ground
Raven has said he will take you
wherever you want to go

~~

Coyote Wasn't There

Hey Moose, said Coyote
Why are you out there
in that icky swamp

This road is dry
and not squishy at all

Not only that
but there's lanterns
that come along at night

Moose looked up
but he didn't see Coyote
~~

Coyote And The Window

Coyote was sad

When they sold me this 4k TV
They said it was like looking
out of a window

So I hung it up in a dingy room
but not once did I go out
and find that tropical beach

This is a crappy window

~~



Marmalade Coyote

Marmalade, orange marmalade
that's what you need, said Coyote

In a stew? Amber said

No? Said Coyote
but it's such a nice word

I love saying marmalade
~~

Coyote Knows How

Coyote!

Oops, said Coyote
I wonder what I've done now

Coyote, you're too big
when you wag your tail
you turn on the kitchen taps
and when you shake your head
your nose makes streaks
on the living room windows

I can fix this
thought Coyote
and he made himself small
as a purse

Aww come here you cute thing
~~

Coyote in the Bath

Oh, said Coyote
This is going to happen

and it did
He was in the bath
with the bubbles
and she was scrubbing at his fur

Smelly old dog
it's about time you had a bath

~~

Clever Coyote

I am clever, said Coyote
I have hidden the meat
and she will never find it

She looked at him in pity
Coyote, she said
It's under your paw

~~



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