

The Autumn Rain



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Autumn is a melancholy time for me. I quite like the cool weather, the autumn rain, the grey days, but it all means that winter is coming, and it means the season I worry about our off-grid cabin in the woods. Deep snow can cover the panels and kill the batteries. As I say, it's a bitter-sweet time for me.

Kim Taylor, October 2020



The Autumn Rain

The autumn rain
made mirrors of the roads
the streetlights were doubled
as we walked side by side

You scuffed your feet
making the leaves jump and dance
as you laughed, spotting a puddle
Of course you stomped it
soaking my pant legs

And then, as I scowled
you hugged my arm
tipped up your face
and fluttered, yes, fluttered
your eyelashes

~~

Serious Girl

You hated it
when I teased you
Such a serious girl
so keen to be grown

I tried, I really tried
but your face
so angry
when I stopped
just before you came
~~

There Are My Boots

There are my boots
on my Son's toolbox
Strange patterns of wear

There is something
deeply satisfying
about passing along
my work things

~~

I Think I Was Handsome

I think I was handsome
when I was young
At least
I don't remember a time
since I turned 18
where I was without
a woman interested in me

Or perhaps
it was because
I was always
interested in them

~~

Stroking Your Leg

Stroking your leg
to wake you up
your eyes open
then narrow cat-like
and that purr
that half-smile

~~

Just Looking

The best time
was when she sat cross-legged
working on the couch

Looking down
into her lap
That slight frown
of concentration

That was the time
I could just look
just watch her
quietly
wondering
what I had done
to deserve her company

She would look up
"am I amusing you"
"Just looking"
I would say

She would smile
and go back to work

~~



The Ratty Fall Gardens

As the ratty fall gardens
pass me by on my walk,
an old man with a stick
going a bit tatty
a bit seedy myself,
I feel, more and more
that I would like to thank you
for being a part of my life

Not in person
grey-bearded, shrivelled
as I am
But as I was
as you, perhaps, remember me

I remember you
all full of beautiful fire

If you happen to read this
that boy
this old man
loved you, still loves you
And I thank you
for giving me a little bit
of your life

~~

Not Clever

Sometimes I think
that I should be clever
and write clever things
But I leave that
for you bright young things
For myself
I simply want
to remember

My life was long
and not clever
but it was rich
and full of those
so much more clever
than I

Let me sit a while
and remember them

~~

She Was a Solid Girl

She was a solid girl
and when she walked
she attacked the floor

I always knew
where she was
But now
I only hear
that thunk-thunk-thunk
in my head

And I don't know
where she is
~~

Dressed Like Harlequin

The trees are dressed
like harlequin
As the leaves
flutter down
a flight of geese
crosses near the horizon
and the rain
begins to fall

It was like this
so many years ago
when you followed
those geese
on a flight of your own
"Will you return
when you learn to fly?"
You were silent
~~

In My Car

I sit and listen
to the tires hiss
SSSSssss
dopplering across
my windscreen
jumping and jerking
I could clear the rain
and the leaves
but why, on a day like this
would I want to see clearly
~~

They Stop Barking

Taking off my glasses
and lifting my head
That broken-healed neck
protests down my back
and I wiggle the muscles
out of spasm

Just then
behind my eyes,
your face
You, who spend
so much time
pushing and prodding
those muscles into shape
and like a dog
threatened with a rolled magazine
they stop barking

~~



What I Miss Most

What I miss most
in this time of plague
is the time spent
in the bar
after class
half-listening to the talk
while I clear the junk
off my phone

~~

Good-Bored

I suppose it is silly
to sit, cold in my car
drinking my morning coffee
when I could be home-warm
But the car is boring
the street is boring
and I just noticed
the coffee has stained
the glue squeeze-out
down the seam
of my take-out cup
~~

I Was Going To Marry Him

She called me
years after she left
to become a pilot

"I was going to marry him
I was sitting in his mother's house
knitting
Can you believe that?
Me, knitting
But I found out
he was screwing
one of his stewardess'
the bastard"

She was getting louder

"And her name was Bambi
Fucking Bambi"

Lord I loved that girl
~~

Mussorgsky Was Drunk

Mussorgsky was passed-out drunk
in a ditch
when his friend
Rimsky-Korsakov
poked him with his cane
and said "get up
clean yourself off
and get back to work"
Somehow I feel
there's a lesson in there
But I'm damned
if I can see it
~~

Cat Videos

Cat videos
I am reduced to watching
cat videos
to balance the news
"oh this poor little guy
he was so brave
dragging himself around"

Brave?

If you want to get
from here to there
and you have to drag
your useless legs
you drag them.

My gentle wife said
"in our day
they'd just kill them"
And I agree
And in our day
I'd be dead too
~~

I Love You

I love you, I said
Wow, I never thought
I'd hear you say that

You didn't know?
All the years
I've put up with your shit
You didn't know?

One thing I know
is that she never said
she loved me

~~



The First Two Months

For the first two months
after she moved in
she walked downtown
to the bus station
to shit.

She wasn't very experienced
with this living together thing

~~

A Little Askew

Everything in my life
is a little askew
Not emotionally
no such poetic point
but physically

From where I sit
I see two paintings crooked
and one straight
the clock? Crooked
the bathroom fan
somehow twisted
Not to mention the toilet
in the corner
Speakers made of warped wood
Furniture split at the seams
the hand-rail installed
with a swoop in the middle

Everywhere I look
things are tilted
OK yes, you are correct
That's been my life so far
~~

Ya Mon

Punk-chucka, Punk-chucka
Punk-chucka
A little reggae in the morning
never did anyone harm
~~

Wabi Sabi

I built a creak
into my stairs
a bounce
into my deck
There is a wiggle
in my arbour
and patches
in my paint
What is new
is flawed
and what is old
well, is old

~~

The Teeth of Boreas

Somehow I feel
it's time
for some social commentary
But what would I say
where would I start

There is a change
in the wind, in my feed
I see more lovely photos
more gentle notes
sneaking into the noise
the roar, the hurricane
of social commentary

I think I'll stay here
in the lee of my notebook
rather than fart
into the teeth of Boreas

~~

I Can't Look

I can't look
without seeing jobs
that need to be done
and they chip away
at the energy
I have left
They chip away
at the time
I have left
And what I should do
somehow
never gets done
~~

Waiting

Even here
at the end of it
I feel like
I'm waiting
for my life to begin
~~

Marimbas

Marimbas, xylophones
were what I heard
when you were near

Sharp notes
floating over water
impossible chords
Reverberations piling up
as the sounds layered
Never really fading away

I hear them now
I carry them with me
even now

~~

Do You Remember Our Apartment

Do you remember our apartment
with the overhead pipes
and the stone walls
with windows set so far back
you could stand in the frames

Do you remember I painted
the walls four shades
of the same colour
so it would always be light
the walls opening up
And the pipes overhead
were painted darkly
so they would show up
so high in the air

Do you remember the floors
I refinished for us
The rented drum sander
making so much noise
you ran out the door
when I turned it on
But you came back
to help me paint

Do you remember the headboard
I punched through
in anger and frustration
and the dent
I put in the plaster-lath wall

Wanting to hurt myself
more than frighten you

Do you remember the countless nights
we made love under the quilts
when the winter wind
found its way in
And the summer nights
we fucked on those cool floors
and the couch,
the kitchen table,
the arm chair,
in those deep windows

Do you remember the day
I realized we had to part
I was washing dishes
and you pushed the buttons again
I spun around
and my hands were on your neck
that neck I loved so much

I let go instantly
and walked the streets
trying to think of some way
we could stay together
Knowing that it was over
~~



Ledger

You keep things neatly in a ledger
when you pay at the restaurant
when you make the bed
when you pick up his clothes
when he doesn't say he loves you
when he gets angry
when he comes home drunk

It's good to keep a record
it's good that things balance
that's important in a relationship

~~

Stumbling In The Door

Stumbling in the door
sweaty from her run
She would grin
and jump onto my lap
planting a sloppy kiss
on my ear

It didn't take long
before I started
putting on my workout clothes
when she put on hers

~~

Distraction

You walk naked through the room
pulling my eyes from my book

~~

Approaches To The World

When our room-mate
started to play his music
I would turn mine off
She would turn hers up
Two approaches to the world

~~

Little Bit

"Little bit" she'd say
when I asked her
"are you hungry"
"are you horny"
"would you like a neck rub"
Little bit
~~

I Would Buy a Pie

I would buy a pie
and eat one piece
put the box on the fridge
and forget about it
She loved pie
One day
I looked on the fridge
and found a mouldy pie
with one piece gone

~~

The Clock Ticks

The clock ticks
and the house
the empty rooms
warming in the sun
tick

This afternoon
as the sun goes down
the house will tick again

I don't listen
for the tick
but I hear it
~~

She Has Secret Thoughts

She walks by
with an enigmatic smile
She has a secret mission
I'm not cleared to know
and she has secret thoughts
I'm not allowed to ask

She keeps things
to herself
That way she knows
she is herself
not just part of us
~~

We Dream Ourselves

We dream ourselves
in and out of being

Call it us
we, a partnership
a relationship
It's a dream

as in
When I was with her
it was like a dream

Or maybe
Being with him
was a nightmare

This us isn't real
we join only in sex
and in our imagination
And we have to make it up
as we go along

~~

My Mother's Hands

The skin on the back of my hand
is wrinkled
and spotted

These are my mother's hands
when she was old

But when I make a fist

~~

Waiting For You

Such a rainy day
as I sit with a coffee
waiting for you to get up
and my life to begin

~~



I Lie To My Cat

I lie to my cat
when he looks for you
I tell him
you've gone out for coffee
After all
that's what you told me
~~

Listening

I sit quiet
listening to the wind
and the rain
first one
then the other
on the tin roof
while I sit warm
and snug inside
~~

It Must Be The Plague

It must be the plague
for 15 or 20 years
nobody asked me
Now I'm getting requests
for interviews and articles

With no classes
folks must be bored
"Let's write that book
we always talked about"

Thing is
I don't need the publicity
I don't want the fame
My missionary days are over
and I've said everything
I ever wanted to say
~~

Squint

Squint
to see the lights and the darks
to see the barest forms
Squint to see the composition
to lose the details

You were like that
I saw the composition
the broad washes
of emotion
but I never got the details
~~

Goya's Dog

There is a print on my wall
that looks like Goya's dog
That mutt
behind a hill
or sinking into a wave of mud
Howling into the void

From here
it's hard to see
what the artist intended
Is it even a dog?
Later, when I get up
I will take a look
if I remember

~~

Magical Realism

I want to write
in the style of Magical Realism
I think that would suit me fine
Now, I need to know
what that is

~~

That Wing-Back Chair

I never knew
where that wing-back chair
came from
A new townhouse
full of students
one per room
two in the basement
and one in the living-room

This dust-filled monster
in the tiny common area
was ideal for nap-time
and often doubled
as another bed
for some friend
too drunk to go home

~~

Lost Amongst The Townhouses

Lost amongst the townhouses
drunk, trying to get home
I had forgotten the number

Street after street
of the same shape
the same colour
Small town boy that I was
I thought houses
were supposed to be unique

One after another
I went to the front door
hoping I would recognize mine

Since the place
was a student ghetto
I suppose I could have entered
any one
and slept on a couch
~~

Nose to the Window

Another rainy Fall day
and I feel like a kid
with his nose to the window
wishing he could go out
and play.

~~



The Markets of South America

The markets of South America
are endless
the colours of the displays
painful to look at

I remember them,
in the grey October days
sliding into Winter
in my Canadian home,
I remember them
as the leaves turn colour
doing their best

"Sorry, we have to go"

~~

Existent Cat

My cat is close to twenty
he sleeps more than he used to
doesn't move as fast
and often seems to forget
where he is

But I see no signs
that he agonizes about his life
or worries about his future

Not for him
self-improvement podcasts
or existential angst
He exists
and that is sufficient

If he can convince me
to drop a piece of cheese
or a bit of meat to the floor
then bonus, life is good
~~

His Daily Routine

The fellow
in my son's podcast
is telling us
his daily routine

Meditation and
exercise, even if he is sick
and lots else
that reduces his stress

Stress?
If you can spend
that much time on yourself
every day
Where's your stress?

~~

When Are You Grown Up

How do you know
when you're grown up?
When you show a beard,
or when you lose your cherry,
or get a sore back?

Perhaps it is when
you put down the self-help book
pass by the advice mags
and start thinking
how to make someone else
happy
~~

My Grandmother's House

My grandmother's house,
to a small boy,
was the stairway
up to her apartment

Steps covered
with a linoleum runner
perfect for sliding
bump-bump-bump down
behind my sister

When I was sick
the doctor, whose name I carry,
would climb those stairs
with his fat black bag
and for my cold
he always had a sugar pill

A special treat
was to watch the ice man
rising in his slow heavy tread
up past the railing
The ice came first
held in the tongs
Then his broad shoulders
covered by a leather pad

And over that stair
was a circular fluorescent bulb
on a pull chain
dink-da-dink-dink
That bulb never burned out
perhaps it is there still

~~

I Never Cried For My Dead

I never cried for my dead
not then
not for years afterward
I wasn't there
when they died
I never said goodbye
~~

House Full of Loners

In a house full of loners
it is good they all
have a room of their own
I wander from place to place
and with barely suppressed frowns
they drift away
seeking their lone company
it's not hard
to distance in this house

~~

Write Another Love Poem

Write another love poem
she says
write something profound
about the human condition
Write another poem
about nothing at all

Shh I say
I write what comes
so that I can see it
clearly on a page
Wait for me
what you want
is bound to appear

~~



I Lean Forward

I lean forward
into the sunlight
reflected off the floor
The beach of my youth
where the sun
came off the water
Even while I shaded my eyes
with my hand

That peculiar squint
with my cheek bones
and without my forehead
must have been learned
while I was trying
to get a better look
at a girl

~~

A Shadow Flicks

A shadow flicks
across the sun
on the side of my face
I would like to imagine
some soaring bird
that will lift my heart

But I know
it's a piece of foam
that has come out
of our tin roof
in a place where
irritatingly
I can't get to

If the sun doesn't move
I will have to
~~

She Is Dancing

As I drive Pam's car toward the cabin
she is working beside me
but movement in the corner of my eye
reveals she is dancing

They say that you should dance
as if nobody is watching
but she sees me watching
and gives me a nod
and carries on

The whole world could watch
as far as she is concerned
I turned back
to my driving
~~

The Sleepy Cycle

I

When I went to sleep
it was always at an odd angle
She would snuggle close
and grab my thumb
or hug my arm
or sometimes put her head
into my shoulder
and there I would stay
for most of the night
until she moved

II

At odd times
during the night
she would roll into me
and of course
in my half-sleep
my arm would go around her

Often she would throw
her leg over mine
This was a signal
and sometimes I would tease
that I didn't get it

She would take my hand
and move it to her crotch

III

Once, in a dream
I thought I was pulling
a ribbon caught in a door
I woke to a complaining sound
to find I was pulling
her pubic hair

To this day
I remember the feel
of that hair
and the curve of the bone
below it

IV

If I got up at night
in that cold apartment
she would roll into my spot
to keep it warm
and when I came back
she would hold up the blankets
to let me slip under
Then she would wiggle close
to let me put my cold hands
and shivering chest
up against her warm welcome

V

In the mornings
I would stroke her back
and she would purr
that mmm-mmm-mmm
I loved so much

I would slip out of bed
and make coffee quietly
so that she would wake
in her own sweet time

VI

Sometimes at night
the monsters would come
rising up from her past
I could feel them come
and I would wrap her close
and breathe with her
The best I could do
leading her breath
back to normal
and sleep

VII

If it was light
when I woke
I would sit on the bed
and watch her breathe
That was a special time
when all was right

If the roof had fallen
at that moment
I would have caught it
and held it up
just to watch her sleep
~~

The Story Will Change

Often at night
when I'm reading
the story will change
as I drift into a dream
and the reader will slip
through my hand
jolting me awake

Normally this is fine
except when I'm lying down
in the sauna
and that reader
is headed for my nose

~~

You Stuck Your Feet Out

Do you still sleep
with your feet
sticking out from the blankets
You would un-tuck
the bed
and between us
it would all go astray
making me upset
as I woke up uncovered
and cold

I didn't know then
that one day
I would miss the sight
of those toes
at the end of the bed
~~

I Plunge Into You

I plunge into you
like a pool
at the bend
of a mountain river
the shock so great
that I can't breathe
My face numb
my eyelids numb
and I can't open my eyes

~~

Pam is Out for a Run

Pam is out for a run
and I am in the cabin
making chili
I've started a fire
so she can warm herself
while she eats

When she came in
of course
she was too hot
to sit by the fire
and stripped instead

~~

Sleepy Bunny

My sleepy bunny
is well-snugged
under the covers
pillows on all sides
and the quilt pulled high

It looks as if
she might be
down for the winter

~~



Go to the Corner

Go to the corner
where the BA station was
and turn right
Just past where the big oak
used to be
you'll make another right

Yeah, just by the covered marina,
the one I worked on,
the one they tore down
fifteen years ago

Just across the road,
that's where my girlfriend lived,
where we played Ouiji

~~

My Other Grandmother's House

My grandmother's house
had a screen door
that was often latched
but if you slapped it hard
just by the hook
it would jump free

This was the side door
into the kitchen
We didn't use the front door
the one between the dining room
and the parlour
That was for company

Once when I was grown
and long moved away
I used that door
It wasn't my house
and I was a stranger
~~

Nothing to Offer

With nothing to offer anyone
it is plain that I've never
had anything to offer

A poor boy
who became a poor man
Not famous
Not the man
who invented that thing
that everyone needs

I have drifted
down the stream of life
bumping along
from bank to bank
with nothing to offer
except, perhaps,
my heart
~~

Burning Man

The first burning man I saw
was during the Vietnam War
a monk, on a street in Saigon

Since then I have seen
many burning men
and women too
Those who were protesting
and those who received
Winnie's Necklace

They are all
my Burning Man
Those who burned before
and those who will burn after
are not mine

~~

The Entrance

The Entrance,
eyes barely awake
steps short and careful
shoulders a bit hunched
against what the day
will bring

Carefully
through the bedroom door
and to the bathroom

~~

Bare Feet

We played volleyball,
our whole team,
in bare feet

We had never seen
volleyball shoes
or basketball shoes
or running shoes
There were flats
(not even an arch support)
and spikes

So we played volleyball
in our bare feet
until someone told us
the rules said shoes

~~

The Best Part

The best part
of sex with her
would have to be
the way she reacted
to the brush of my fingers
over her back

The little sounds
and giggles were great
but the absolute best
was when she would drum her heels
like she was running
when I brushed her armpits

I would spend half an hour
just to make her giggle
and drum her heels

~~

Never Write a Biography

Never write a biography
for a writer
It doesn't help

"He wrote some lovely things
but he was a jerk"
is a fancy way to say
"a human wrote this"

~~

Young Lions on Campus

When we young lions
hit the campus
we were more free
than the generations before
and we pushed for more

Today, on that same campus
I see less
Less freedom
Less pushing forward
Instead I see polite requests
to my generation (in charge now)
"Mother May I?"

Where is the education in that?
Where is the change to come?

~~

I Read a Poem

I read a poem
set down the book
have a sip of coffee
take off my glasses
and stare
at the other side of the room

I don't like poetry
I don't read poetry
I don't write poetry
don't study it
don't think about it
and yet
when this eructation is done
I'll pick up the book

~~

Domestic Terrorists

Dreaming last night
of domestic terrorists,
little fascist boys
scared, but with big guns
in need of a strong man
to comfort them
with lies and promises
while he keeps them scared
and steals their money

They want this
and I realize
the elite that they hate
is anyone who thinks
But, being an elite
there aren't enough of them
in a democracy
and the government the people want
is the one they have

When I awoke
there was the taste in my mouth
that you get
when a dream is boringly real

~~

At Any Moment

At any moment
The next heartbeat
could be the last
the next breath
who knows how many
we are allowed
And yet
And yet
because we disbelieve
we can disbelieve
we want to disbelieve
We imagine eternity
and we claim it
for when we die
And so
we are bored
~~

I Didn't Have to Vote

In my country
I didn't have to vote
This was when I was young
The men who ran for office
were men who had jobs
This was before politics
was a job
The parties were not far apart
all of them wished to govern
for those who elected them
Not for those who paid them

But somewhere in the '80s
the "Me Generation" appeared
Money became the goal
for some
Some who cared nothing
for the common good
for a legacy of service

And these men gained control
of a party, which was no longer
the party of our fathers
But a party for sale
And so, now, I must vote
Not for, but against

~~

As I Went to Sleep

As I went to sleep
I thought
Tomorrow I will wake
and have a coffee
It was a nice thought
~~

I Let a Maple Grow

I let a Maple grow
in my back yard
it was cut once
but tried again
at about six inches height

Now it stands
at about thirty feet
and looks healthy
Although it is a bit boring
in the fall

The leaves are yellow-brown
~~

I Told the Foreman I Was Sick

I told the foreman I was sick
and he winked
Just another hung-over worker

I left the factory
and started walking
to the mental hospital
to check myself in

But half way there
a buddy picked me up
and we drove around
until I felt better

I never did make it
to the hospital

~~

Missed a Call

Missed a call
from the cancer centre
and went through the robots
for half an hour
until a human told me
they had no idea

Later, with another call
it turned out my researcher
was checking in
with another questionnaire

Yes, I'm still alive
No changes
Getting a bit of exercise
One new drug
to add to your list
Nice to still be here
to talk to you
~~

After a Grey Morning

After a grey morning
the autumn sun
flickers weakly
on the rug
and then is gone

~~



After Thirty Years

Couples
after thirty years
have a special language
that others can't understand

It is the result
of thirty years together
so a flick of the wrist
can refer to "the incident"
of twenty years before

What they say to each other
may appear to make sense
to those watching
But be careful
what you think
they are arguing about

It may actually be something
from before you were born
~~

When You're Old

When you're old
your ass falls off
and your pants fall down
At that point
you have a choice
of suspenders
or pants that buckle
at your chest

Forty Years of Martial Arts

Forty years of martial arts
and not once, in all of that time
have I had needed to use it

Do you suppose
I've been doing it wrong?

~~

I Would Ask My Models

I would ask my models
what they did
"I work in porn
but I don't do that pee stuff
I've got a shy bladder"
"I'm getting married
to a rich dude"
"I'm a dancer"
later her boyfriend told me
"she's really a stripper"
"I'm a student
but to pay for it, I'm a hooker"

Mostly they were students
but once I got an email
from the owner of a massage parlour
"come photograph my girls
they will pay you a hundred apiece"
I did the first one
and he called
"what's this shit,
I wanted your artistic stuff
you know, blurs and colours"

They didn't want to
and I didn't want to
so I didn't go back
I just wanted
to shoot light across bodies

I didn't pay much, if anything
and I gave them their shots
And some said
"please don't use these"
but most said
"can we do this again"

There's something about
the lights
and someone ignoring
your naked body
but staring at how
that light curves
and fades
over your curves

It was a fun decade
and I met a lot of fun people
Some of which I didn't recognize
when I met them later
with their clothes on

~~

I Bought a TV Tray

I bought a TV tray
that said "it's a desk too"
and I put it together
so I could work
in the south room
in the sun

It's late October

~~

An Open Relationship

These days
I guess you'd call it
an open relationship
But at the time
it was just bed-talk

She'd tell me
about the boys she fucked
and I'd tell her
about my girls

But what I really wanted to tell her
was that I loved her
and I wanted her
to stay with me

~~

I'm Trying Hard

I'm trying hard
to think of a time
I got drunk
and was a real bastard
So bad
I got thrown out the door

I'm sure there was a time
But all I remember
is the time I walked in a door
(it was open)
to a party
to try to meet people
I knew nobody
And an hour later
someone puked
(not me)
all over somebody's
parent's bathroom

I cleaned it up
and left

~~

As Far as I Know

As far as I know
you went to a party
get drunk
and convinced a girl
also drunk
to take you to her bed

The thing is
people keep telling me
it's not like that
So maybe
it didn't happen like that

~~

Bangs and Crashes

There are bangs and crashes
from upstairs
but I won't go look
I will fix it
whatever it is
later

I'm just so tired
of asking people
to be careful
~~

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