

# The Little Death



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# The Little Death

Here is the little death  
the explosive release  
of orgasm

But what is the little life  
what do we name  
when we speak of this

The explosion of cumming  
suggests a calmer thing  
a gentle giving of kindness

The violence, the selfish satisfaction  
must be balanced  
by the little life  
~~



# Revive the Dead

Every profession  
has its secrets

My old man  
the volunteer firefighter  
would be called out  
a few times a summer  
to drag a tourist  
from the water

Washed off the pier  
while trying to dance  
in the breaking waves

They would work  
for half an hour or more  
trying to revive the dead  
"because of the mothers"

~~

# The Beginning of Science

A simple question  
for a child  
Where would I be  
if my mother  
had not met my father  
And later  
That sperm and That egg

It was not a big step  
to wonder about decisions  
This one led Here  
where went the other  
perhaps a different world

And so, where might I be  
with a different choice  
A better place perhaps

Which decision led Here  
and which would have sent me  
There  
Thoughts to keep a child  
awake at night

~~



# Swiss Jazz

I sit to write  
coffee to hand  
Jazz being streamed  
from Switzerland

But it's no good  
it's too late  
in the day  
and I haven't the interest

~~



# Death Surrounds Victory

Ashoka looked at the city  
and said "I will have that"

His men rode  
the city died  
and it was his

Glorious victory  
for the glorious king  
and now that he is dead

What now  
~~

# Spring Philosophy

I bought some headphones  
Bluetooth wonders  
and queued up a podcast  
on philosophy  
to listen on my walk

Not 20 metres  
and I took them out  
That discussion of philosophy  
defeated by birdsong  
and swelling buds

~~

# Screensaver

On my computer screen  
you appear sometimes  
in our apartment  
Naked, covering your breasts  
and wearing a dust mask

Each time I see it  
I want to broadcast the image  
and say "This goddess  
this wonder, she was with me  
Envy me, even though  
she did not stay  
Envy me"

~~



# Sunlight Through Your Hair

To see the early morning sun  
coming through trees  
splitting, splintering  
the light striking the ground  
striking me  
making images, silhouettes

Is to raise my phone  
and try to capture all  
in an image of photonic violence  
Only to fail  
No camera can see  
the memory that sun carries

Of you, newly risen  
standing naked  
the sun slipping  
oh so gently through your hair

So much more careful  
to caress your back  
as you stand looking at me

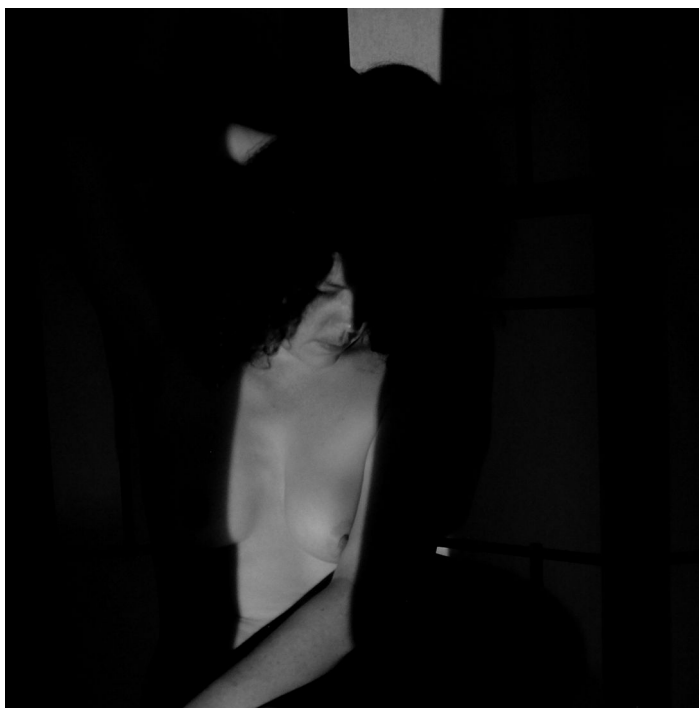
I need no camera  
no image to know that instant  
The sun carries it to me  
each morning I wake  
~~

## For PK Page

This book of your poetry  
face down on the dash  
where it picks up the dust

Evidence of use  
Evidence of reading  
as is proper

~~



# Such Rain

Such rain as this  
never existed in a movie  
Neither soft nor hard  
neither warm nor cold

Turn the taps three times more  
or turn them off  
and start the fog machine

This rain that is neither this nor that  
the best one can say  
is that it is rain

~~



# Death of Writing

It's like driving  
when you suddenly look  
and see where you are  
but you don't know  
where you are

It's like the golfer  
"do you breathe in or out  
when you swing"

You asked me how it was  
that it was so easy to write  
and suddenly  
I don't know how to write  
~~

# Busy Body

Such a random assortment  
of pains  
My right instep  
my left knee  
my upper left molar  
and my left ass cheek

If I were to touch them all  
to rub or itch or squeeze  
I would have no time  
for anything else  
~~

# In The Face of Death

The woods are busy today  
with the trapped families  
the trapped old couples  
the friends, desperate  
for a face to face

This has gone on  
long enough they say

We are allowed to exercise  
to walk  
and so we shall  
down these muddy narrow paths  
where, surely  
no virus would find us

no constable either  
~~



# Lost an Hour

I have lost an hour  
I dropped Brenda at work  
at 8:30  
and walked for an hour  
according to my phone app  
so 9:30  
but it is 10:45  
Where is my hour?  
~~

# I Find You Gone

I don't think  
I will ever not  
have a moment  
of panic

A drop of my stomach  
through the bed  
and onto the floor  
when I wake up  
and find you gone

~~

# Bird Watchers

Drifting through the wood  
I see them  
binoculars or camera  
with lens a foot long  
Necks tipped back  
starring into the trees

Me, with my wonky knee  
and my neck that doesn't tilt  
I look down at the roots  
searching out moss, fungus  
or tiny wildflowers

Yesterday I searched  
for skunk cabbage  
A plant as old  
as any latter-day dinosaur  
~~

# Ghost From The Past

A sudden ripple  
on the glassy surface  
of a hidden pond  
What invisible being  
What ghost from the past

~~





# Modern Poet

A couple and a dog  
go drifting by  
The dog's muzzle muzzled  
she holds the leash  
She is talking seriously  
and he simply walks

Will she  
in a few month's time  
be putting venom to paper  
painting her picture  
of his monstrous ways

~~

# American Plaza

It's hard to describe  
how much I dislike  
this "American Plaza" style  
I see across the road

But worse than that  
is the Metro  
"Let's make it look like a barn  
with outbuildings  
already attached  
it will make the customers feel  
that the food is farm fresh"

Has the architect  
never been in a cattle barn  
a chicken barn?  
I close my eyes  
as I walk through the doors  
~~

## At 9am

At 9am  
all the radio stations  
give me the news  
I plug in my phone  
~~



# Perfect Moment

I sit here  
in a perfect moment  
reading a creamy poem  
seeing the threaded creamy paper  
feeling the warmth  
of a coffee cup on my knee  
hearing Alexia Gardner  
not calling the whole thing off  
~~

# Ohmi in Brazil

In Brazil  
we had an afternoon  
"what would you like to do"  
"Go outside" said Ohmi  
so we walked out of the hotel  
and turned right

We walked the streets  
looked at the trees  
the flowers  
the houses  
"we should have lunch"  
our host said  
And Ohmi asked  
to go where everyone goes

An outdoor cafe  
where, in ten minutes  
everyone knew who we were  
where we were from  
and "try this"  
~~

# The Car Theatre

I came to the car theatre  
why is there so many fine dust  
Don't squish Buggo  
I have the Pepi dog today

No one.... absolutely no media already has this in mind  
May your wall wherever it multiplies  
Panther weighing and stealing the bride  
Spread the word

~~

# I'm Sorry

You've found someone else  
That's good  
you will be happy now  
you will leave me behind  
and make a good life

But he's just like me  
and he makes you unhappy  
can't give you a good life  
Well, I guess that's on me  
and so, I'm sorry

~~





## A New Pill

A new pill today  
to drop the sugars  
"but it will make me pee  
more often"

How will I know  
when I already pee  
twice an hour

Honestly  
I should be half my size  
I don't know where this water  
comes from

~~

# It's In The Genes

We are not designed  
for happiness  
for contentment

Designed? Not at all  
we survived  
and our generations  
upon generations  
have not been enough

Our new environment  
is mixed  
some places free of want  
rich beyond imagining

Yet we find ways  
to hide behind fences  
to hide from the weapons  
we ourselves collect

Other places remain fearful  
frightful places  
where still, we war  
we starve  
we die too soon  
often over fantasies  
we create for ourselves

Without a common environment  
to live in  
with a hostile environment we create  
(and we do create our own world  
our anthropocene)  
we will continue to survive  
to fight and fly  
to ignore our ability to live instead  
~~



# What Was The Point

What is the point  
We know what we need  
and yet we want instead  
we make ourselves sick  
with greed and desire  
and the fantasy of what we have not

The holy men have told us  
since we became capable  
of thinking, 2500 years ago  
that we are unhappy  
by our wants  
when we should be satisfied  
with our needs satisfied

2500 years  
and we want, we want, we want  
whatever it is we don't have  
we will go to war for it  
even though war will take away  
what we need  
and after all this time  
the holy men might say  
"What was the point"

~~

# The Great Experiment

The great experiment  
a new medication  
that makes you want to pee

Will I last an hour  
in the Starbucks lot  
or will I have to run  
for home

~~

# Death of a Nest

After a week  
of fighting  
the pair won the pond  
and I watched  
as she lay on the nest  
and he floated

A decoy

But it wasn't to be  
the pond is empty  
~~

# You, Again

Carefully I lift  
the too-hot coffee  
and as I do  
thoughts of you  
drift by

Should I try once more  
to write of you  
Shall I fail once more  
to capture you in words

Best, perhaps  
to sip and admire  
the dandelions  
in the grass

~~





# Not Dead Yet

A vulture glided silently  
over my head  
just as I reached the car  
"bugger off"  
I muttered

I am getting close  
to the end of the book  
close to the end  
of this journal as well

I suppose there is no mystery  
that my thoughts drift  
toward endings  
at such a time

~~

# Liam Thinks This is About Him

Is there anything more cruel  
than looking at the family album  
and having parents  
and sister  
say "oh so cute"  
and "the girls all loved you"

Which girls  
where did they go  
where are they now  
~~

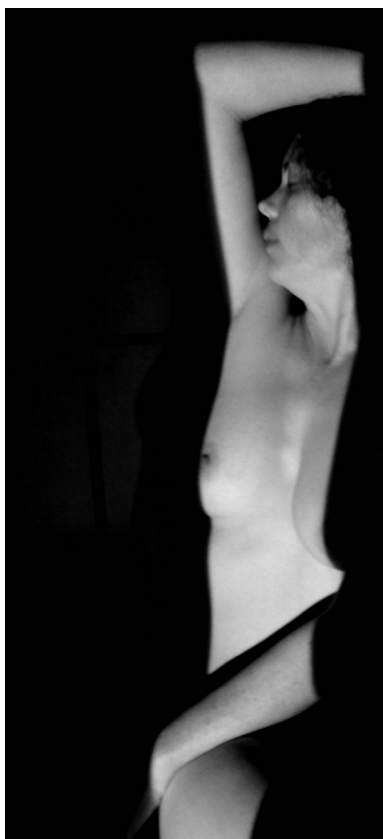
# Cold Today

It is cold today  
but the sun rolls  
toward summer  
and here in the car  
I struggle out of my coat  
~~

# Skilful

I must tell you  
that it is entirely possible  
to admire the poet's skill  
without much liking the poem

~~



## Not Glass

The breeze touches the water  
just enough ripple  
to let me know it's not glass

~~

# Tracking

A new skiff of snow  
Big tracks steady  
and wagon wheels

Smaller tracks  
side to side  
into the snowbanks  
hand prints  
And then

Just the wagon tracks  
with the big prints  
centred  
The stride longer  
~~

# CFRU

You never quite get over  
your school years  
or perhaps  
you come back to them  
in your end years

I sit and listen  
to CFRU  
my college radio station  
The tunes as obscure  
as they were in 1975  
~~



# Too Much Flitting

The birders are out  
in force today  
"caught anything"  
I say to a woman  
with a boomer camera  
(hefty enough  
to use as a club)

"too much flitting around  
she says  
And I go on my way  
content to listen  
~~

# Miss You Dad

A tree  
dedicated to Dad  
with plastic baubles  
painted rocks  
and wooden disks  
saying "miss you"

Last night by accident  
like probing a holey tooth  
with my tongue  
I read all about  
life expectancy  
and treatments

I turned away from the tree  
~~



# No Favours Except

I have not buried  
a child  
and I pray to God  
I never will

In this only  
do I ask favours  
from any God

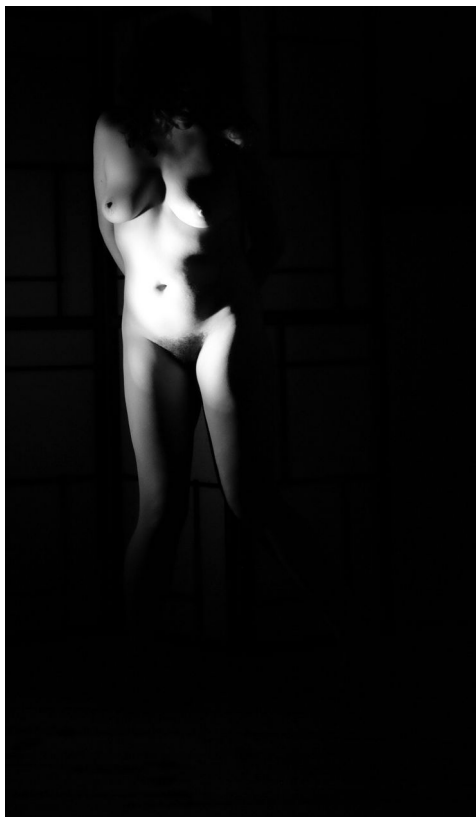
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## Gifts to Loved Ones

I have a sudden urge  
to give presents  
to my loved ones  
But I cannot shop  
the stores are closed

A small ache

~~



# Life Giving Wind

A Maple flower  
jumps and dances  
on my windscreen

I watch it closely  
convinced it is an insect  
But no  
it is only the wind  
giving it motion

What wind  
animates this pile  
of bones and flesh  
who watches

~~

# Long Dead

The remains of cedar fences  
rocks laid beside  
from forgotten fields

Thorn and vine  
grown up in neglect  
the old farmer in the ground

~~

# The First Day of Sweat

The first day  
of sweat on the notebook

The first day  
I crack the windows  
~~





# God's Will

In today's news  
(France 24)  
The conservative protestants  
of Holland  
tell us  
they must not vaccinate  
They must not prevent God  
from punishing them

So unlike the Godly  
of our side  
who will not vaccinate  
because their God  
will protect them  
~~

# In Deep Winter

A hunter in deep winter  
fires and brings down the bird  
With his knife  
he slits the belly  
and drives his frozen hands  
into the dying warmth

Soon enough that warmth  
is gone  
And hands, barely less cold  
are withdrawn  
Wet now

~~

# Like The Old Days

Bright sunny day  
I shove my camera  
here and there  
and poke the shutter  
Hoping for an image

Too bright for me to check  
~~

# Close Enough

Birthday cake candles  
give you a wish  
as you blow them out

Poor hated dandelion  
only ever gives  
wildly inaccurate time  
to small children

Being small children  
out of school  
endless summer days  
The time is close enough

~~



# Sorry to Disturb

I move to the edge of the pond  
eyes on a photograph  
of dead tree and water  
When I notice a pair of ducks  
floating gently away

"Sorry to disturb you"  
The male drifts to a stop  
and tucks his beak  
under a wing  
But one eye is open  
one eye is on me

~~

# Soldier's Knack

My back is sore today  
knee has twinged  
once or twice  
And I have stumbled  
over root and branch

I feel as if I could sleep  
as I walk

~~

# Never Forgotten

So many things in my life  
forgotten, lost  
Childhood friends  
Facts and figures from history  
Calculus

But never have I forgot  
the way you would tilt your chin  
as you looked at me  
as you were about to ask  
~~



# Leather Men

Red crotch rocket  
slides by  
Black leather rider  
hunched in back-breaking pose  
back-pack pressing down

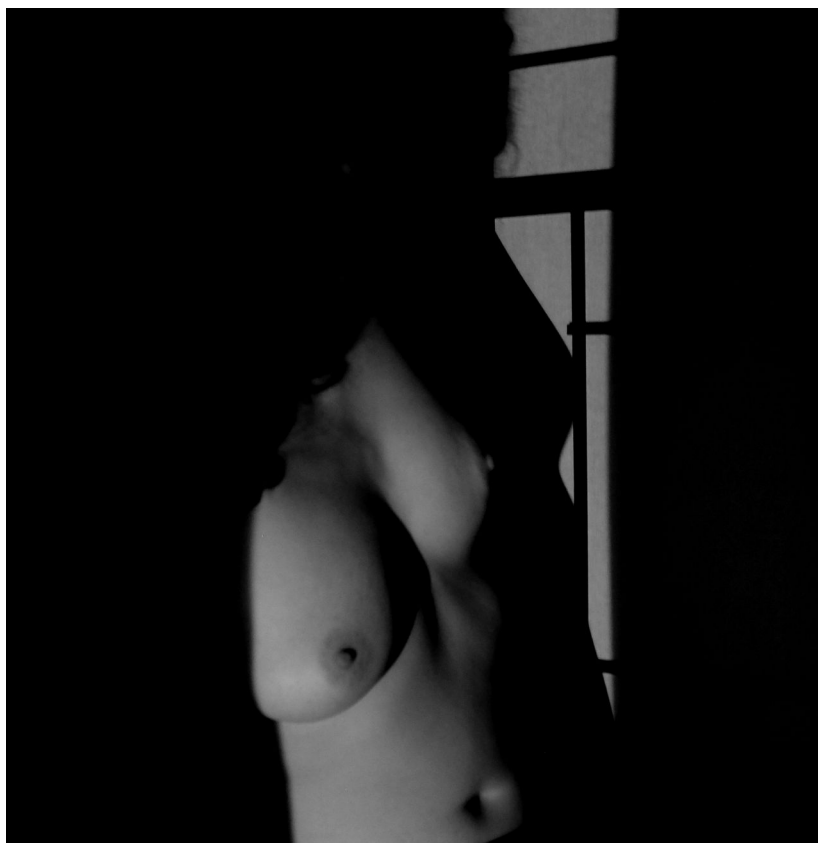
Barbarella comes to mind  
the hollow leather-men  
snapped apart by a whip

~~

## Too Late

The sun is getting ahead of me  
When I hit the swamp  
it is no longer making long shadows  
Tree trunks reflecting brightly

~~



## Still I Look

Still I look  
though it has been years  
I look as I walk  
for places to place a body

Nude amongst cedars  
Nude in the swamp  
Nude floating in the pond  
~~

# Bad Actor

I tied her hands  
with a grey scarf  
and with the ends  
trailed them down her belly  
My best evil leer

She looked back  
with complete trust  
and giggled

~~

# Something About Hips

I could never understand  
how she would step into a sarong  
fold and fold again once  
and walk away, swaying

While I, in my tight jeans  
would zip and buckle  
cinch the belt tight  
and still the damned things  
would slide down my ass

Something about hips

~~

# Marked

There was a time  
this bruise in my elbow  
would have been a mark  
made by a sweet young girl  
as she claimed me  
from her friends

But alas  
it is simply the mark  
of blood, drawn for testing  
An old man's mark  
of age

~~



# Entangled

So long ago  
did I sleep with you  
arms and legs entangled

So long ago  
that the memory faded  
my body got old

Now I suspect  
what was once delight  
would bring the pain  
of young legs  
on old bones

~~



## Two Kids

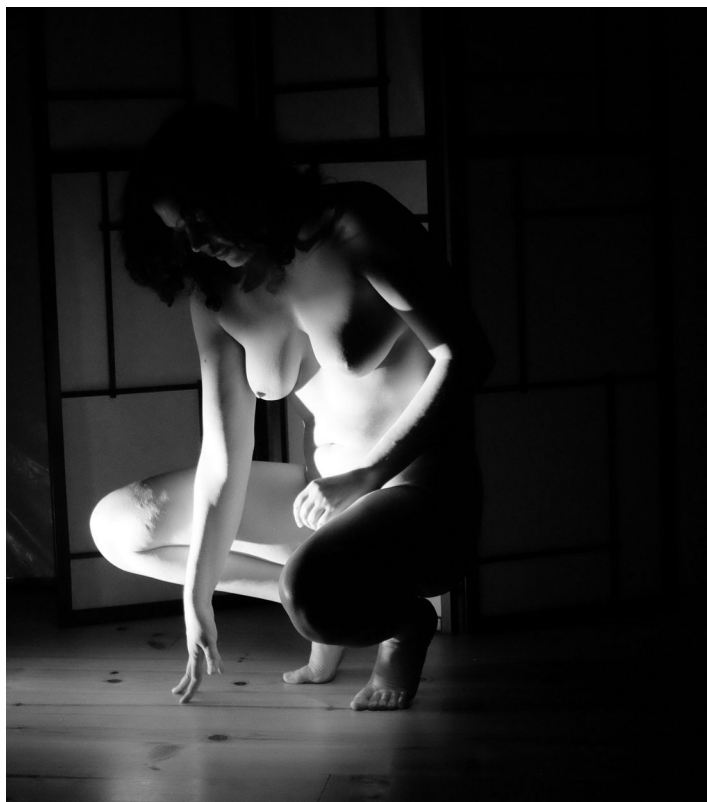
Two kids in Mennonite hats  
on a bridge  
He is fishing with a stick  
in the stream below  
while little sister  
struggles with her fatter branch  
barely able to lift it  
over the rail

~~

## Not Writing

On the first summery day  
of a new year  
I cannot ask of myself  
that I sit still  
and write a poem

~~



# Blood for Babies

The mosquitoes laze in the sunlight  
getting their wings under them  
in the next few days  
those women will start to hunger  
for blood

And only the most dedicated  
will be in the swamp  
watching for birds

~~

# Catbird Seat

I spent a long time  
watching this virtuoso  
sing more notes  
than any other bird

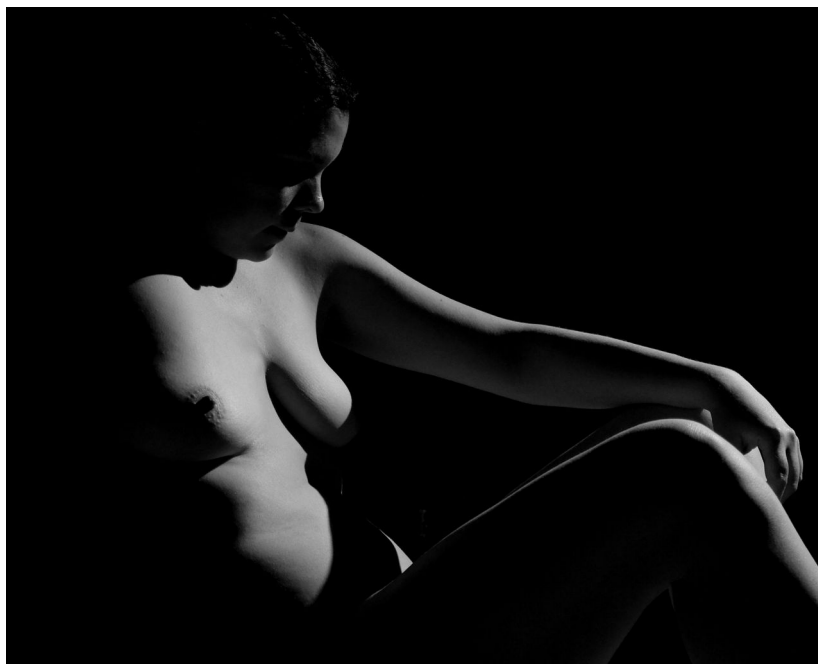
"Where is it" she said  
I pointed  
She raised her glasses  
and declared "oh, a grey catbird"

I listened a bit more  
but never heard a meow  
~~

## A Small Itch

What does it say about me  
that for a year of pandemic  
I stay at home and don't notice  
Except when I get a small itch  
to visit a tourist town

~~



# Not Spring

I have missed a week  
of walks in the swamp  
a week

The swamp is drying up  
the poison ivy  
and the skeeters  
are in full growth

The spring flowers are dying  
Should I find another place  
to walk?

~~

# Ignore Him

Mother duck  
drifts slowly away from me  
her brood follows  
Tugs to the Titanic

No panic  
but I get the message  
and walk softly on  
~~

# Indulgence

Indulge me  
my poetic indulgence  
and like church universal  
let me sell you  
these indulgences

~~





# Never Found

Ah Kerouac  
first of the personal  
the Me generation  
rolling away from the village  
seeking something  
who knows what?

And sadness comes  
when it's not found

~~

# Wrong Station

I'm listening to prog rock  
and reading Kerouac  
This is wrong  
it should be jazz  
The bop  
be bop  
do wop  
So much closer  
than Atomic Rooster  
~~

# Smug

It was booze  
did for me  
and beer at that  
I figured I'd quit  
when my belly got big

Too many friends  
fucked up on drugs  
lives shut down  
lives cut down

Funny that  
All those Taylors  
dead before 60

~~

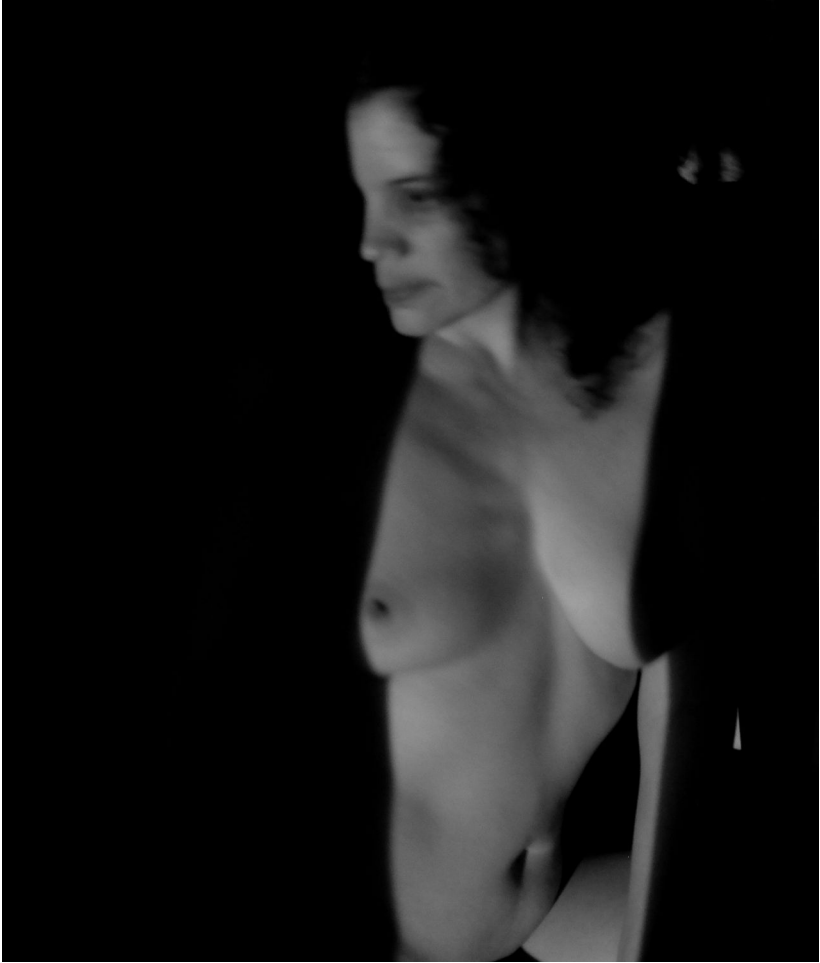
# Fucked Up

I was fucked up  
she said  
and stayed with a woman  
in a cabin

She fed me distilled water  
until the shit  
left my body

As I reached for my beer  
she said  
You can imagine how tough  
it was

~~



# Silent

She would go silent  
at odd times  
her eyes falling  
toward the floor

Her body growing still  
I didn't ask  
I knew where she was  
and I waited  
for her to return

~~

# All Gone

How little I know  
Forty years of school  
and fancy letters  
Forty years of reading  
and nothing left

I search for words  
that come so easily  
to the lips of others

I cannot discuss philosophers  
East or West  
barely remembering their names

All gone  
Dissolved within this empty mind  
Nothing left  
but a body that knows  
and a mind that doesn't

~~

## Late Spring Rain

A late spring rain  
and a cool day  
It gives me some pleasure  
to look out the back door  
and see the fence  
between the shops  
mine and John next door  
reflected on our new driveway  
~~





# Birthdays

In a week and a bit  
I will turn 65  
For my family  
that's pretty good  
For the men that is

I have bought myself  
two birthday presents  
Used cameras both  
that I have wanted

one I refused to buy  
when it was new  
but I wanted it

The other more theoretical  
I wanted a digital camera  
that was the same  
as my Spotmatic II with f1.4 lens

It happened, and I'll pay less now  
than I would have for that lens  
back in the day

~~

# I Like Toast

One small pill  
and I can back off  
on the discipline of diet  
I can eat some toast  
some noodles

One small pill  
who knew how much  
it would lift my spirits  
To have some toast  
Lovely toast

It took some time  
for me to understand  
how much that discipline  
of dieting  
made me sad

One little pill  
~~

# At the Movies

When I was a kid  
we would stand and sing Oh Canada  
at the beginning  
of the double feature  
and God Save the Queen  
at the end

The war was not that long over  
when we had to rouse the folks  
To us, it was just something we did  
But the war was over  
and eventually we stopped singing  
at the movies

Not in the sports arena  
where somehow fighting a war  
was changed to "be true to your school"  
and patriotism  
and whatever else got stuck  
to something once useful

~~

# Under The Mask

Under the mask  
moisture builds up  
on my moustache  
and runs to the end  
of the hairs

I stick my tongue  
through my lips  
and taste the salt

~~

## A Delayed Hello

As the toes regain feeling  
from their long diabetic slumber  
that broken bathroom sink  
that I dropped on my bare foot  
that cut several stitches deep  
begins to say hello

~~



# What a Laugh

I need no careful words  
no euphemisms of delicate hints  
I have cancer  
I am dying  
and so when I joke  
the etiquette of life  
requires you to laugh  
~~



# Teaching How To Die

If religion comes  
from fear of death  
Budo ministers

Each small performance  
of sword against sword  
or stick or poleaxe  
is communion

Each time the story is told  
the attack  
the defence  
someone lives  
and someone dies

From this violence  
of life and death  
comes the chance  
to experience  
the dance of life and death

Practice well  
because one day  
the dance will be real

and if we have learned  
we will face that death  
with calm acceptance  
rather than panicked desperation

What more can religion give  
~~

# You Die Alone

To take  
you must give

What a hard lesson  
that is to learn

But learn it you must  
or you die alone

Lone wolf you may be  
but comes the winter  
~~

We call an orgasm the little death, but if we look, there is so much that is a little death. There is only one big death and it will come soon enough, it must, there is no life without death, just as there is no shadow without light.

Death is the gift that has given you life.

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