

The Time Change



*Kim Taylor copyright ©2023, all rights reserved
Photos Kim Taylor copyright © 2023, all rights reserved*

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Another Season.....	3
The skies are grey the rain is coming down the snow, dirty, ugly is being washed away and it's five degrees I'm happy I've made it to another time change which means the days are getting longer the weeks getting warmer and I may see another hot summer day ~~.....	3
Bat Shit Crazy.....	4
Living in Greece.....	5
How Many Years.....	7
Copper Pot.....	8
Not Huggy.....	9
The TV Whine.....	11
Nicer Places.....	12
The Old Shower.....	14
In the Rain.....	15
To Trudge.....	16
So Very Tired.....	18
Maybe Next Month.....	19
Where Was I.....	20
David F.....	22
Our Cats.....	24
The Red Clock.....	27
Last Century.....	28
I'd Forgotten.....	29
To Be Here.....	31
Gracious Host.....	32
Folding Towels.....	33
It Seems Fine.....	35
Grandfathers on Ice.....	36
Suddenly.....	37

Clever.....	39
My Nurse.....	40
The Golden Knife.....	41
Unfair Hair.....	42
She Asked Me.....	43
Down To The Sea.....	44
What Does It Mean.....	46
Listen To This.....	47
Root Cellar.....	48
The Universal Truth.....	50
Discrimination Failure.....	51
What I Know.....	52
Insect Steps.....	54
Point Source.....	55
Someone New.....	56
Clots.....	58
Bitching is Never Fixing.....	59
The Peacock.....	60
Feral Dog Kata.....	62
Instructions for Desire.....	63
The Simple Life.....	64
Like an Old Lost Love.....	66
Big Yellow Bus.....	67
Moon Maiden.....	68
The Ant Who Ate My House.....	70
Nice Underwear.....	71
I Wanted You.....	72
In a Small Town.....	73
Snip Snip.....	75
Two Kids One Name.....	76
Buddha Dog.....	77
Drag Queen Step.....	79
Running Across the Street.....	80
A Handshake Once More.....	81

Lake Erie.....	83
Grandfather Talisman.....	84
Personal Space Lessons.....	85
Not a Great Biography.....	86
Not What I Learned.....	88
Black Dog.....	89
Once Again.....	90
Settling For Me.....	91
Edna's Pressure Cooker.....	93
Authors Who Are Too Fond Of Words.....	94
Double Issues.....	95
Why I Write.....	96
And Then He Got Better.....	97
London Dry Sherry was Cheap.....	98
Insect Apocalypse.....	100
Sacred Things.....	101
Remission.....	104
Mother at a Retreat.....	105
Last Thursday.....	106
Spring-Like.....	108
My Opinion.....	109
Everything All At Once.....	110
God's Country.....	112
The Cafe.....	113
I'm Good At Space.....	114
College Dorm, 3:07am.....	115
Unwitting Mentors.....	117
Ambiguous.....	118
But Still, It Does Not Jump.....	119
The New Boss.....	120
Getting Somewhere.....	121
I Really Don't, You Know.....	122
Deadpan Inside.....	123
Thirty Years... Gone.....	125

The Crows Are Watching.....	126
Old Fashioned Morals.....	127
I Can Forget.....	129
It's My Fault.....	130
I Can Learn, Can You?.....	131
It's Nice to Help.....	133
Four O'Clock.....	135
Cruel to be Slow.....	137
Machete.....	138
Amphibian Apocalypse.....	139
A Green Lawn.....	141
Laundromat Entertainment.....	142
God's Will.....	143
Not Reading That.....	145
Guarding The Wife.....	146
Fifty Years of Shit.....	147
She's Restless.....	149
Inside My Head.....	150
No Fun.....	151
Dave's Chinese.....	153
Self Indulgent.....	154
She Was Made of Rain.....	155
Working it Out.....	157
Craftsman.....	158
Old Neck.....	159
Rich Man.....	160
Emotionless.....	161
Politically Incorrect.....	162
My Collection.....	163
Light Heart.....	165
Our Tontine.....	166
Ecosystems.....	167
Lost and Found.....	169
They Remember.....	170

Family Swim.....	171
By Spirit Rock.....	172
Gone Forever.....	173
Just a Sprinkler.....	175
Keep Going.....	176
1975.....	177
Still Have The Scar.....	178
Hitching.....	179
Perhaps Tomorrow.....	181
Snow Snake.....	182
Late Winter.....	183
IP Warning.....	184
Thoughts and Prayers.....	185
Manufacturing Power.....	187
Take It All.....	188
Shipwreck.....	189
Nurse Boy.....	190
The Rules.....	191
Alone Again.....	193
Small Justice.....	194
To Get Along.....	195
The Right Sort.....	196
Angry.....	197
Is That My Culture.....	199

Introduction

In Spring we spring ahead, only to fall back in Fall. It's not all cycles though, sometimes we decide that times have changed, like when we decide that those with mental problems don't really have problems at all, and they walk out of the institutions onto the kinder and gentler streets of our cities.

~~

Kim Taylor, March 2023



Another Season

The skies are grey
the rain is coming down
the snow, dirty, ugly
is being washed away
and it's five degrees

I'm happy
I've made it to another time change
which means the days are getting longer
the weeks getting warmer
and I may see another hot summer day
~~

Bat Shit Crazy

Jack Karouac figured
either he or the world
was crazy, he picked the world

Me, I figure the world is just the world
and what's crazy is the people in it

Not just those who rant and rave
but those who give them power

Jack dropped out of the world
I just dropped away from those
who were bat shit crazy

~~

Living in Greece

Why can't I write a song
about living in Greece
with Leonard and Joanie
or maybe living in Paris
with Gertrude or EEC

I mean aside from the fact
I didn't live there
Have never been there
Surely I could read up
surely I could fake it
~~



How Many Years

How many years
do you have to keep
an ex-lover's stuff
Ten, fifty, a lifetime
is there a guideline somewhere
on Wikipedia maybe
or ask on Tic Toc
or Twitter
Yes, surely that will do it
send it to the hive mind
they will know

Now how many years
do you have to remember
an ex-lover's voice
or the smell of her neck
the feel of her hair
as it slides across your back
Ten, fifty, a lifetime
Should I ask on Facebook
or Tumblr
Maybe Instagram, Telegram?
Surely someone will know
~~

Copper Pot

She stood naked
in an old copper canning pot
the ones you see in antiques stores
the one that's usually there
in an old cottage

It takes two
to bathe in a canning pot
One stands still
tries not to shiver
and the other gently gathers soap
and water on a facecloth

Slide it up slowly
and down the legs again
inside and out
Get off your knees
bend to get ass and back
carefully wet
~~

Not Huggy

I was a big man
when I was younger
or so I have been told
and apparently
not very huggy

But I remember
a few times
walking down the street
and she would step close
to hug my arm
That was nice

It made me feel wanted
it made me feel protective
it made me feel liked
perhaps even loved
I can remember her warmth
as she hugged my arm
~~



The TV Whine

When I was a kid
I thought I could hear
the electricity going through
the radio or the TV
I wondered why nobody else
ever heard it

Years later I learned
all about tinnitus
and I wondered
if it happened to me
when those boxed ears
got boxed

~~

Nicer Places

I've been nicer places
the slap-your-back friendly
of Alberta
and the laid-back vibe
of the coast
Except Vancouver

I've seen the how-are-you kindness
of the East Coast
and the wait-until-winter tolerance
of the north
But I probably won't ever move
to any of those places

I've come to understand
that hello is hello
and if I want a new best friend
I can introduce myself
I suppose what I'm saying
is I was born in rural Ontario
where everyone hates Toronto
and the eddicated elites

Just like the east
the west
and the north hate Toronto
You find yourself
wherever you are
~~

The Old Shower

There was a shower
in that old farm house
with no insulation
and no central heating
But I never saw it run

Wait, I lied
there was central heating
an oil burner
in the centre of the coal furnace
with two pipes
to the kitchen and the parlour
It drifted slowly to the other parts

When it was time for a bath
an old galvanized tin tub
was put down and filled
and us kids were dumped in
in age order and scrubbed

Maybe the adults
got to use the shower
but I never saw it run

~~

In the Rain

The first time
I held a naked girl in my arms
in the rain

Of course it was a balcony
of course we were hot, sweaty
and the rain was so much better
than a shower

She smelled of new mown grass
spring flowers
the dirt, freshly soft after the snow
nestled around the roots

Oh yes, I remember
the first time I held her naked
in the rain

~~

To Trudge

To trudge
I never understood that word
for fifty years
I thought it was something else
for someone else

One day I looked up
from the ground I was carefully watching
and the sound of my dragging feet
told me what that word meant

~~



So Very Tired

So very tired one night
I rolled onto my side
and said to her
You do you

Her eyes got wide
I nodded and gave my best leer
Her hand slowly drifted down
until it was between her legs

She looked at me
to make sure I didn't look away
I didn't look away
and I saw her eyes roll upward
~~

Maybe Next Month

This isn't working out she said
and I knew it, and I said nothing

I don't know what's wrong
but I don't love you
I want to, but I don't
I said nothing

I like you, I like you a lot
You're kind, and the sex,
but I don't love you
I nodded, but not in agreement

It's nice here, here with you
your bed is warm
you love what I cook you
But this, this isn't working
I think maybe we should consider
ending it
I nodded again, meaning go on

Maybe next month, OK?

~~

Where Was I

God, where was I?
The image of an old tap
an ancient tap
on an ancient bathroom basin
and the water came out
like old blood
clotted, rust from the pipes
How did I come to be there
in a place like that
with a tap like that?

~~



David F.

They found him where he worked
Hanged himself
and I thought back
on all the times we'd talked
in the high school
the lunch bar across the street

He told me about his flying lessons
Later he went to school in Europe
a private school
where he got kicked out
something about a girl and a scooter

We ended up in University
and at a party once
filled a hall light with water
so when it blew
in the dark
it would soak someone

We drove back to our home town
a hundred miles an hour
and two cars
Stopping at each and every bar
for one beer

That two hour trip took six
He graduated
he got married
he had kids
and in a hall where he worked
he hung himself
~~

Our Cats

We've had a lot of cats
brought to us by my mother
who lived in the country
They would find their way
to her door
after being dumped
and she would feed them

I can't keep them
if you don't take them
I will have to take them
to the vet to get put down

Bring them to us
we'll take them
relax, calm down, it's fine
I know your old cat
won't let you have them
bring them to us

I've never known another way
to get a cat
except for the one who showed up
stayed for ten years
and then left

Or the one our kids brought home
from somebody else's house
somebody else's litter

My mother is gone
My kids are grown
This cat is twenty years old
I guess when he dies
we wait for one to adopt us
~~



The Red Clock

The red hands
on the red clock
tell me it's time

stop writing
stop

it's time to cook
time to make coffee

Those members of your family
who actually make money
will be home soon
looking for food
looking for java

and it's time for me
to get up

~~

Last Century

There was a time
when I could feel a girl
running her fingers through my hair

It wasn't last week
or even this century

but I don't care
I felt it once

~~

I'd Forgotten

I checked my pockets
looked in my backpack
there was something
something I'd forgotten

I couldn't find it
and thought about going back
but there was noplac
to go back to

and then I realized what it was
I had forgotten
that there was noplac
for me to go back to

~~



To Be Here

I write to get it out
and when it's all out
maybe, maybe
I will no longer need
to be here

~~

Gracious Host

My place has no heat
can I stay with you
Of course, I said
I have an extra room

No, I mean with you
I'm frozen to the bone
and I think I need a body
to warm me up

Of course, I said
~~

Folding Towels

Yesterday and today
I wanted to photograph patterns
of sunlight

A hopeful signal
a promise of spring

but somehow
I never got around to it

Life is like that
a glimpse of beauty
a decision to preserve it

and then folding towels
or washing dishes

~~



It Seems Fine

Is there sand
sawdust on my desk?

Each mug, cup or glass
I set down
gives me the sound of grit

Yet when I brush my palm
over the surface
I feel nothing

I got a pin
and poked my palm

it seems fine
~~

Grandfathers on Ice

What is a grandfather
whose children's children
have grown up
He is of no more use

A waste, a drain, fit for the ice
go, meet the ancestors
and protect us there
you are no good to us here

Your wife, take with you
we have all she knows
she has taught us well
take her to keep you company

~~

Suddenly

I fall asleep while I read
the mouse slips from my hand
and falls onto the floor
waking me
reminding me
of just how old I am

No amount of coffee
can save me from this nap
that will come upon me suddenly
like I would hope death would come
suddenly

~~



Clever

Here, here is the clever line
arranged avant garde
so that it is apparent
just how clever it is

but comes my grandmother
who would look
at what I had done
and she would say
"That's not clever you know"

Once more I am conflicted
and avert my eyes

~~

My Nurse

When she loves me
the touch of her hand
will cure a headache
release a cramped leg
calm a racing heart

But when she does not
no amount of touching
will solve anything
what is bad stays bad
what hurts, still hurts

~~

The Golden Knife

Once, I saw a golden knife
it glistened, it shone
the edge as keen as any steel
it beckoned me
and I slid my tongue
along it's rich, rare length

The blood that flowed
the pain that bloomed
was no different
than from any steak knife
you'd find
in any kitchen drawer

~~

Unfair Hair

Honestly
I can't grow hair
on my head
or my chest
Not any more

But no matter how I scrape
or how the personal groomer
moves over it all
the next morning
there's another hair
sprouting from my ear
~~

She Asked Me

She asked me once
and I said no
I said I didn't want to
I said it wouldn't be so

And she asked me again
expecting that I would change
something would change
It must change, she wants it so

But there are some things
that are not for sale
some things that can't be
some things that will never be so

~~

Down To The Sea

Written on that strange paper
made of plastic
that will never wet
never fall apart
never sink

I let it go
down to the river
where it lay on top
and was carried off
under the bridge
through the culvert

It may be moving still
like some NFB toy
paddling to the sea
that paper, that poem
that hopeless plea
for a little bit of love
~~



What Does It Mean

Piercings and tattoos
cuttings
and a tongue split in two

It is all there
all the pain and suffering
of someone who doesn't like
what they were
what they are
what they might become

Who knows
Or is it fashion
just a new shade of lipstick
I never know
I never ask
~~

Listen To This

I know a man
who hooked up his penis
to a sensor
so he could hear
what it sounded like
as it got hard

"Listen to this, listen to this"
he would say
as he pulled out his phone
~~

Root Cellar

My mother's house
had a front stoop
several steps
to a cement landing
and underneath
the root cellar

And why not?
the basement was laid out
with a bulge for the stoop
why not insulate the basement
and leave the bulge cold
just attach a door
build some shelves

~~



The Universal Truth

A few sun-maddened men
wandering in the desert
and suddenly the earth
is six thousand years old
and the sun revolves
around it

Imagine the surprise
the universe must have felt
to know these truths
when for billions of years
all it had known
was a lie

~~

Discrimination Failure

Another evening spent
in a noisy bar
another few hours
of deafness
of trying to read lips
of cupping my ear
and saying "what?"

Once again I wonder
how much I have missed
it gets worrisome
there's some paranoia there
What have I missed
Is it important

and like a mantra
I think to myself
"It's a bar, how important can it be?"

~~

What I Know

It's my fault
it certainly is
this distance created
by an action
she sees as nothing at all

Yet I can't get over it
the cascade of pain
that goes off in my head
the anger it creates
drives me from her
~~



Insect Steps

There were bugs
on the window
seeking warmth no doubt
seeking light
and the boy
seeking understanding
seeking knowledge
pressed his ear to the glass
hoping at the least
to hear what insect steps
sound like

~~

Point Source

Ah the stories we tell
I like the one
about that single point in time
where I said one word
that messed you up forever

Or the one
where you were told by your mother
to shut up please so she could hear
what was being said to her
on the telephone

Maybe the one
where he walked out the door
and left you there
with all your health
all your youth
all the food in the cupboards
and all your education

Me, I like the one
where I was home with a cousin
and there was nothing
nothing
not even flour and water
That was when I understood
we were poor

~~

Someone New

I wonder
when I refuse to look at her
if I am setting myself up
to look at her
and see a whole different person

Someone I'm not fighting
someone who isn't angering me
in short
someone new to get to know
until once again
we're fighting

~~



Clots

How much blood
can these nurses draw
how many bruises
before one of them
breaks off and floats
into my lung

Let's hope that's where
these veins lead
Where they can lodge
and not paralyze me
not strangle the blood
that keeps my brain fed

~~

Bitching is Never Fixing

The self analysis
of a short form poem
the catharsis
the self healing
that we desire
while we know for certain
that bitching is never fixing

~~

The Peacock

There is a peacock
somewhere in my head
walking across a green lawn
I can hear him
But I'm damned if I know
where I saw him

Surely some posh lawn
with some posh owners
but that's what confuses
I am not posh
I know nobody who is posh
certainly nobody with a peacock
~~



Feral Dog Kata

Last night I was told
that the seminar after I die
will be my wake

Did someone step on my grave
that I felt a chill
I don't really want that now

but when I'm dead
I won't have anything to say
so make a happy occasion sad
if you really want to do it

Just don't, whatever you do
don't watch me fade
and eventually die
I'd rather be placed
somewhere in the woods
and forgotten

to draw my last breath
in peace
or perhaps in feeble attempts
to fight off feral dogs

~~

Instructions for Desire

Hang a pendulum
filled with ink
and give it a tap
to start it swinging

Put a book
your favourite book
opened to your favourite page
underneath
and let the ink drop
for three days

No more than that
Done, let it dry
for at least a week
and then close the book

What is there
is your deepest secret
your most secret desire
The love of your life

You must never open the book
~~

The Simple Life

Do four uncomfortable things
that will make her happy

Three things that you dislike
that she likes

Do this for no other reason
than that you don't want to do it

There, isn't life simple

~~



Like an Old Lost Love

I don't quite know
what to do with a bum knee
It's been with me
since high school
Grade 9 football in fact

Went all through University
but went away
perhaps to work in Germany
during the years of iaido

The other pain
in my knees
from extra weight
may have covered its return

But here it is, back again
like an old love lost

~~

Big Yellow Bus

I spent a lot of time
in the back of that yellow bus
playing Euchre across the aisle
cards being handed over
to rest on a lap

I was never very good
but it passed the hours
as we gathered the country kids
and left them at the town school

~~

Moon Maiden

She was pretty
and she smelled nice
but she was from the moon
I know this, because
each time I talked to her
she spoke to me in English
that never made sense

Years this went on
but finally I understood
she must have been from the moon
I took to looking for her
in ponds and puddles
where the moon lives
and sometimes
I thought I saw her there
~~



The Ant Who Ate My House

They are small
too small to see
but you can see their movement
these ants
who come to visit us
each spring

They eat the catfood
and scraps on the floor
until the food outside
is ready for them

These ants I don't mind
they bother nobody
and they're so much better
than the carpenter ants
who ate my sun porch

~~

Nice Underwear

A new set of underwear I thought
throw out the old ones
and get some bright new patterns

But I can't do it
Old men need dull, ripped undies
and I could never throw any out

not while they have a bit of wear
in them

~~

I Wanted You

I wanted you, she said
although I'd never met you
I wanted you
I read your words

I watched you from afar
saw how you moved
like Godzilla, all mass
all power
and I wanted that

But there were too many
who got there ahead of me
and I didn't want to fight them
I didn't want to fight

~~

In a Small Town

I grew up in small towns
where you could ride your bike
down every single street
in a couple of days
Where you recognized everyone
if you didn't know their names
you knew their faces

A place where everyone knew you
where no matter where you went
what you did
Someone would see
someone would tell your granny
and you'd get a whipping
the harder the better
in a small town

~~



Snip Snip

Did it ever upset you
that we circumcised you
My mother asked one day

I was confused
Why would something so long ago
something I can't remember
bother me at all

But there are men now
who are complaining
who say they are damaged
emotionally

Well I'm not one of them
I've never heard of such a thing
Please, mother
stop thinking of such things
I never have
~~

Two Kids One Name

I don't understand
my mother said
There seem to be two
with the same name
to the same parents
It makes this hard to see

I nodded
not much caring about those
dead a hundred years
even if I carry their genes

I get it now
my mother said
a few years later
I checked the dates
and one only lived three days
so they gave his name
to the next
~~

Buddha Dog

One of the few vacations
I ever had
with the family
(As opposed to seminars
where I learned or taught
and they did other things)

Driving through a small town
from ferry to ferry
and at lunch we spotted
Buddha Dog
(make me one with everything)

An unplanned stop
the fourth in our family history
and we piled out
to get a Buddha dog
one with everything we wanted
~~



Drag Queen Step

I miss, oh I miss
those days on the beach
where it was too hot
to walk in bare feet

All of us kids
ran with a kind of mincing
toe tipping
drag queen step

And we didn't care
as we settled down
on our towels
to let the sun bake us

~~

Running Across the Street

In the big city
to practice swinging sticks
at each other's heads
A break for lunch
and across the street
for all day breakfast

Time to return
time to swing some more
and suddenly we're all
running across the street
I'm running across the street
I can't remember the last time

I ran
Now, the tricky part
is how to stop
without blowing both knees

~~

A Handshake Once More

At the end of my visit
I stood up with my doctor
and he said it's good to see you
you look good

and I took his hand
and I said
it's good to be able to do this
once more

~~



Lake Erie

I was born beside a lake
a big one
and so I never think about it

Water, that is
it isn't special to me
like to so many others
who romanticize the shore

Me, I figure it's there
to grow fish
that fishermen can catch
and sell

I never think about the sea
or the shore very much
but it's in me
always in me

~~

Grandfather Talisman

Somewhere in this house
is a fox-fur rug
Doubtless covered in dust

complained about by dozens
of women saying "ewww"
and "throw that thing out"

But I never have
the fox was trapped
skinned and cured
by my grandfather
who added a scalloped fringe
of green felt

Somewhere in here
it lives, draped on something
I'm sure it's up high
away from the animals
and the women

It is like my medicine masks
a talisman to protect them
these dozens of women
who never appreciated
the work it has done

~~

Personal Space Lessons

A WASP boy from the country
I knew little of the world
but I knew a little more
when the fellow from Nigeria
took my hand as we walked along
and talked

~~

Not a Great Biography

I wonder about Saturdays
where I wait around
for someone to do something
and finally realize
nobody is going to do anything

Fair enough
they work all week
a day of nothing is allowed

but I think back on my life
and that huge chunk
of my autobiography that says
"And then he spent thirty years
going to work and coming home"

Doesn't make a great book
~~



Not What I Learned

Things I've learned
as an old man

From a long time student: It's OK to cancel a class if you feel like it.

From a colleague: If you don't want to deal with it, ignore it

From a guy in charge: It's OK to lie and break a deal if you're busy

You know what?

I'm not thinking more about that

There are some lessons

you really should not learn

~~

Black Dog

Full of words
but empty of anything meaningful
A brain that didn't understand life
a brain that only collected phrases

That cycle of despair
that spiral of depression
because there was nothing there
nothing meaningful
to stop the slide

~~

Once Again

I hated those times
late at night
when she'd be crying
"But I love him so"

He doesn't love you
"what's that got to do with it?"
Pretty much everything don't you think
"But I love him."
And what about me?
"Oh I love you too."

We've been here many times
Why not try what I told you to do
"I tried, I just can't forget him"
Talk to him
"Oh I can't do that"
Tell him what you feel
"I could never do that"
Because he might tell you to bugger off
"But I love him"

Sometimes all the way to tomorrow
all the way to morning light
and she'd be exhausted
and she'd be depressed
and I'd wonder why I was there

~~

Settling For Me

You know how a woman
will settle for you
when she can't get
the one she really wants

It was like that I suppose
with some of the women
I knew

But most often
they wanted me
and when they got me
sometimes they'd find someone
they wanted more than me
and retroactive like

they'd settle for me
~~



Edna's Pressure Cooker

Brenda has made brisket
and roast veg
potatoes, carrots, and cabbage
An irish meal she says

Corned beef and cabbage
in a pressure cooker
something I remember
going up the stairs
to my grandmother's place
I could smell it

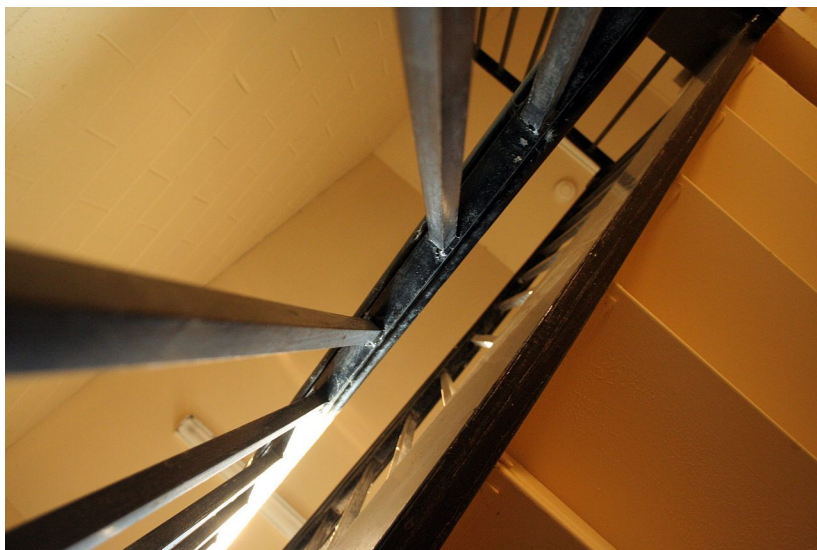
It feels like that
and for afters
Brenda has made pound cake
and I will eat a thin slice

All so much better
than the slop I cook
~~

Authors Who Are Too Fond Of Words

Too many words, I said
as I clicked away
from the author interview

~~



Double Issues

I can hardly wait
for the July/August issues
when all the editors
and the writers
take off for the beach
with their kids

~~

Why I Write

I would write to empty my heart
to put all the pain and despair outside
where it would dry up, turn to dust
and blow away

But no matter how much I wrote
no matter how much I got out
there was always more
waiting to come in

~~

And Then He Got Better

Brenda thinks the cat
has only got a few days
perhaps she is preparing herself
perhaps she is right

I have a bet
with the noisy thing
as to which of us will go first
but I don't really want to win
some victories are not

When she said that
I was instantly filled with regret
for all the times I threw him out
for making too much noise
Well he can make as much as he likes

~~

London Dry Sherry was Cheap

How many parties
too many to count
There must be
I don't remember them
and when I try
there's another one

This party I remember
crowded
drunk
and in the corner
in the shadows
cast by a single lamp

Something moved

~~



Insect Apocalypse

Never last summer
do I remember bugs
on the windscreen

They would coat the thing
many years ago
and when you turned
the wipers on
they would smear
you would see their white
and yellow insides
spread in an arc

But last summer
and maybe the one before
I saw only a few bird shits
and no bugs

~~

Sacred Things

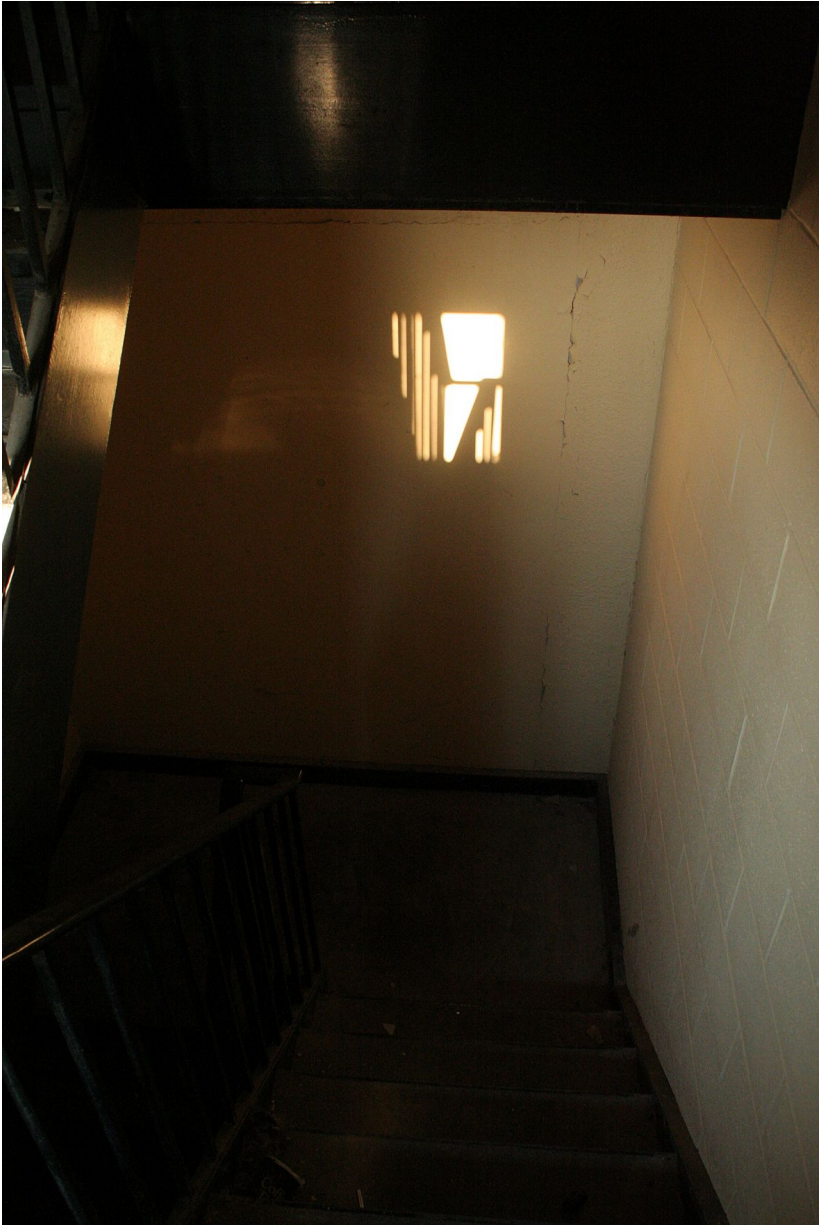
There are sacred objects
wherever you look
A pebble, the only thing to hand
in a boy's pocket
Thrown into a godfather's grave
when nobody is looking
Surely a pebble from the beach
would be all right

A hand on the chest
of a stepfather
as he lies in his coffin
becomes all the love
all the thanks
all the comfort you can offer
Your hand becomes sacred

A father's kiss
as he lies dying
and you offer your hand
his last gift to you
he who could never give much
all he had left to give

Nothing need be blessed
tokens need not be bought
these things are for priests
Sacred things are found
as they are needed
as you need them

~~



Remission

So many big men
so many strong men
I've watched get small
get skinny
their strong arms
no longer able
to open jars

And my own weight loss
alarms me
Not for me, but the family
do they see a big man
becoming small
I want to gain it back
just to comfort them
~~

Mother at a Retreat

Did I forget that, why?

My mother at a monastery
a retreat
Was it for her?

Damn I can't pull it out
but I remember the wood panelling
the small cells

Was I too young
too afraid
why is it gone from me?
~~

Last Thursday

Thursday, last Thursday was good
I enjoyed last Thursday
But the rest of the week sucked

It's too bad every day
can't be Thursday
Well, something to look forward to
as my Gran would say

~~



Spring-Like

The Robins are back in town
hopping about
beady eyes on me
like I might want to move in
on their chosen nesting sites

Not a chance bud
I've got my own place
and it's a lot warmer than yours
so keep your tree

Some guy walking his dog
says "promising day"
and then "promising season"
and I say "let's hope so"

So it's looking like spring
but I won't believe it
until we turn on the water
at the cabin

~~

My Opinion

We need a new car
and the family looks at me
as if I've got an opinion

The old one is busted
not worth fixing
Yes we've driven it, as usual
into the ground

So buy another
and don't mind me
I won't be around this time
to help decide if it's worth fixing

~~

Everything All At Once

It all happens at once
doesn't it
Things break
people go nuts
and the old grey cat
is leaving spots of shit
all over the house

And I'm getting more unsteady
bouncing off walls
and furniture
I have no idea what it means
other than I'm getting there
Maybe the race with the cat
is still on
~~



God's Country

When I come to a place
that claims to be God's Country
I turn around fast
and go the other way

I know what that means
I've been there before
and I don't like what I find
in God's Country

~~

The Cafe

This morning my favourite table was gone
and so I sat in a different place
not one that would remind me
of last week's turmoil
of that unhappiness so infectious
that I'm unhappy still

No, a different table
where the rising sun hit my eyes
with a promise of warm days
with a promise of maybe one more
summer

And surprised, I wrote
Well? I don't know, but I wrote

~~

I'm Good At Space

I can give you some space
I said
I'm good at space
I know I am

If someone isn't here
in front of me
They are gone, perhaps never were

A gift or a curse
you can decide
but I've never had trouble
getting past the absence
of lover or enemy

Gone is gone
~~

College Dorm, 3:07am

In a college dorm room
the only light
a digital alarm clock
the curtains drawn
door closed

I would wake
to look at her

She would throw off the blanket
and there, in that odd blue light
that said 3:07
I would trace the curves
of her side
with my eyes

~~



Unwitting Mentors

I was never so alone
as I might have thought
There were older men
hardly more than boys
but older than me
who looked to my life

I owe them, the one
who listened to my pain
and the one
who said "The little man in the boat?"
"Are you sure you've never seen it?"
The one who taught me to laugh
at myself
and so many more

Especially those who had no idea
how important they were
to me
~~

Ambiguous

I never liked the times
when I waited for her

and wished she would not come
as much as I wanted her here

~~

But Still, It Does Not Jump

I brush at a crumb on my arm
and feel something in the skin
A flea?
A tick?

I carefully put the crumb
down on my desk
and poke it, prod it
but it doesn't move

Did it just now?

As I move my finger
over top of it
the crumb changes from brown
to black
and my eyes say "Yes, a flea"

But still it does not jump
~~

The New Boss

It was easier for him to lie
when he smiled

~~



Getting Somewhere

I've lost another chunk of my day
to a nap
I go down so hard
I think it's morning
when I wake up cold
trying to pull up the covers
I'm sleeping on

I don't know why
I sleep so long or so often
Perhaps I am trying
to get to something
I don't want to wait for

but just what that is
I really can't say
Nothing good I'm sure
~~

I Really Don't, You Know

Another afternoon nap
as I try to kill
another afternoon
I have so many more
after all

~~

Deadpan Inside

Stop talking to me
she said
You need to give me space
and then
Shut down your emotions
when I upset you

We had very little in common
and when I disappeared
she was confused
You see
it was easy for me
to shut down the emotions
and to give her space

What was hard for me
was to make a connection
to allow myself to open up
to allow myself to talk
I had been so closed
so angry for so long
all of it bottled up
all of it swallowed away

Space? I'm good at space.
~~



HIM SUCKS
FUCK LOVE
METALL
FUCK UP

Thirty Years... Gone

I walked home in the rain
hardly noticing
lost in thoughts of a life
that didn't go as I thought

Not that it had a direction
me being from the
"go with a flow" generation
but I thought there would be more

Still, I never asked for more
never was a burden
a gift from the generation before
You put food aside, grew a garden

And never expected anything
from those who promised everything
Just get on with your life
and keep your head down
~~

The Crows Are Watching

The crows hunched
in the lower branches
eyeball me with intent

Serious bastards
who ever thought them tricksters

They'd as soon take my eyes
and tear off my ears
as look at me

Hello boys
I said to them
come on down
and we'll see whose neck
is stronger

~~

Old Fashioned Morals

Is it wrong
that I feel more akin
to my dead
than to the living

After all, the dead
understood as I did
this living thing

I suppose I've gone past
that best by date
we all have
and into mystery

How can you think that
How can you believe
that's the right way to do things
The dead say it is

Not much of an argument
~~



I Can Forget

Some things, I can't forgive
Been that way all my life
the burning acid in my guts
so bad my mother sent me
to the doctor
"does he have an ulcer?"

But one thing saved me
over and over in my life
and that's a faulty memory
Once I'm away
Once I'm someplace else
I slowly forget
Not forgive, but forget

That acid is still there
but quiet
as long as I'm away
as long as I live in the now
as we used to say

Please, don't shove that hate
back into my face
and expect me to smile
Trust me
I won't smile
I don't forgive, I forget
~~

It's My Fault

She was never wrong
Could
never be wrong
and eventually
she could point
to the one who was

Mostly it was me
while I was around
and I was fascinated
at the twists and turns
that would make it
my fault

~~

I Can Learn, Can You?

What did you learn here
old man
because you're still alive
and that means
you can learn
So did you?

She said she can't change
she can't do that
Is that a shock, old man?
Are you really surprised
She never changed much
that was the reason

Except it's not a reason
it's a tautology
"I can't change because
I can't change"
and once more
life has surprised you
~~



It's Nice to Help

My grandmother would say
"I'm so glad you're here
can you thread this needle
can you find the thimble
can you maybe mow the lawn"

And I grew up thinking
it's nice to help
it's nice to be asked
I grew up a problem solver

It never occurred to me
there were people
who wanted to be unhappy
who didn't want help
who would lie
to throw you off the scent

It's hard to leave them to it
I never refused
to thread a needle
to find a thimble
to mow a lawn
It's hard not to help

As hard as watching someone
be miserable
Making you miserable too

~~

Four O'Clock

Ah, four o'clock
and a happy time
of the day

I will go make coffee
and Brenda will appreciate it
As simple as that

~~



Cruel to be Slow

I was always too slow
to understand when it was over
That was my cruelty
to let it drag out much too long

I should have guessed
when the girl became invisible
when she wasn't in my mind
when she stopped talking to me
or I to her

It was over but I stayed
It was over but I didn't know
and that was the cruellest of all

~~

Machete

I have bought a machete
for the cottage
because we have none

At one point
there were four
but they were broken
or stolen
or taken back
by whoever left them

And so I have bought another
for the simple reason
that there ought to be one
there in the bush

~~

Amphibian Apocalypse

They say the frogs are dying
I don't know
but I've heard none singing yet

Still, after a silent winter
the birds are claiming their trees
and that makes me hope
that the frogs will be there
one more year

We'll let next year
take care of itself
~~



A Green Lawn

Thinking about next summer
always a risk at my age
I think about the weeds
in my lawn

Past years I've had comments
floated over the fence
about a guy who has weeds
in his lawn

and yet during August
when there's no rain
I never water my lawn
the grass may be brown
but those weeds, they're green

~~

Laundromat Entertainment

I would watch the guy
in the laundromat
empty the coins
into a bag

A seemingly endless stream
of tinkling silver
as fascinating as any casino
where a slot machine
is paying out

And then the show was over
the coin bin replaced
and he'd be gone
out the back door

While I stayed
sat on the front window ledge
catching the drowsy flies
and letting them go again
~~

God's Will

The preacher in the big church
What do they call them
the giant ones
with no connection
to any church
but their own church

He says it's God's will
that the poor folk die
they was sinners

And I think
that whole town
that just got flattened
by a tornado
That whole town
must have been like Sodom
it was so evil

And now I'm wondering
what happened to the churches
and the preachers in them

~~



Not Reading That

Nah, I'm not reading that
I watched Japanese TV
and they talked about Taiwan
one of the little islands
fighting with the Red Chinese
and how they had Special Tea Houses
Brothels filled with Taiwanese women
so the Taiwan soldiers would stop
raping the locals

and that's my duty for today
I know about that now
I'm not reading about Tulsa
or any other shitty thing
that men have done
to each other, not today
Tomorrow I'll listen
to another shitty thing

~~

Guarding The Wife

Brenda would feed the kids
in the mall
open her shirt
drape a cloth
and let them latch on

I would stand guard
looking for anyone
who wanted to say something

It was never the men
I'm not kidding
it was always the women
who made faces
like they'd just licked a pickle

The men would nod
they'd been there
looking around, just like me
daring anyone to bitch
~~

Fifty Years of Shit

Fifty years of mystery
fifty years of getting shit
of cranky women
and it wasn't all controlled
by the phases of the moon

It wasn't chemical
no imbalance there, I was told
in loud, definite, certain terms
and so I was left to conclude
that it was my fault

Unfortunately saying sorry
as often and as quickly as I could
never seemed to do much good
the only thing that worked
was to walk away
and wait for the next time

~~



She's Restless

Less sleep than I should have
Restless most of the night
but I didn't know why
until 4:30
when I realized she was tossing
turning, restless as hell

Too much to do today
I'm guessing
So today I'm mister nice
as helpful as I can be
No complaints from me
~~

Inside My Head

I live in my head
I learned that early
Keep the mouth shut
don't upset
don't argue
if you can avoid it
and stay where it's nice

Books to read
"leave him alone
he's quiet"
Poems to write
"Is this supposed to be me
It better not be"
Books lately written

So if I look blank
if I'm not really there
Blame a lifetime of living
inside my head
~~

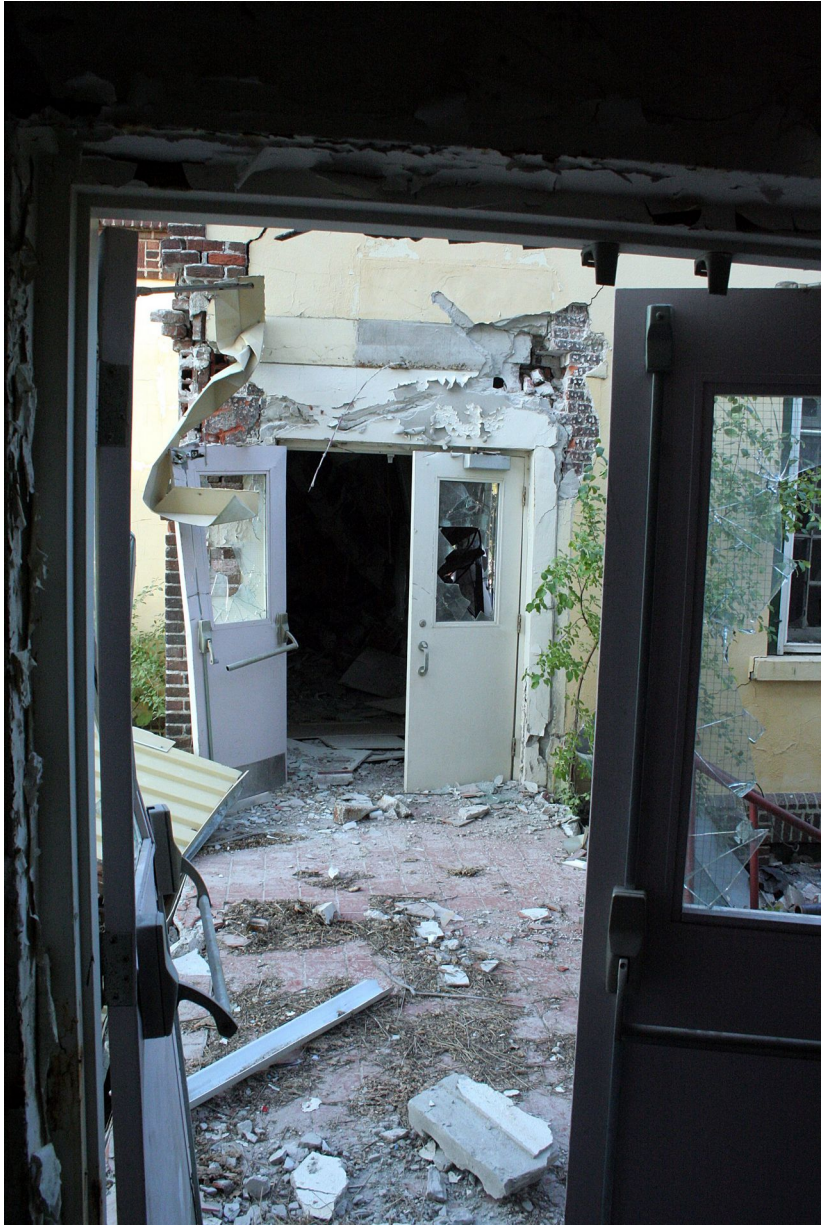
No Fun

Forty years of budo
am I getting sick of it?
Or am I just running out
of people to play with

It is play
it is supposed to be fun
but it doesn't feel like that
not lately

Am I just noticing
I mean there were always
those who were not fun
but maybe not so close
as now

~~



Dave's Chinese

Out with the boys
and at the end of the night
drunk and dehydrated
a won ton and a Pepsi
at Dave's

Then wander back
up the street
across the bridge
Two Upper Northumberland
was waiting

and sometimes
so was she
~~

Self Indulgent

In a rare bit
of self indulgence
I took our dying car
metal on metal brake
fading wheel bearing
damaged axle and
ripped boot

to the Ethnic Supermarket
and bought myself lunch
a ten dollar combo plate
of which I ate half
leaving half for Liam
to take for lunch tomorrow

Such decadence
such luxury
I felt good for an hour
watching a rerun
and eating my noodles
~~

She Was Made of Rain

She told me she was made of rain
bits and drips of water
all cascading down
toward the ground
where whatever they touched
would become mud
would become filth
would become clay
that perhaps could be used
to make a vessel
which would hold the rain
that was falling

~~



Working it Out

If only the ending
could have been
like the beginning
But then there would be
no ending
but just a continuing
that was like
the beginning
~~

Craftsman

Make me a knife she asked
one that is sharp
as sharp as a razor
but strong as the water tank
I can see from my window
and for the handle
Oh, sorry, the hilt
make that from the bone
just above your right knee

~~

Old Neck

My neck snaps
and cracks
whenever I hold it still
and then move it

I hold it still
as the internet loads
and loads and loads
as slow as yesterday
when we dialed up
and listened to the modem sing

My motionless neck
moved once more
snaps and cracks

~~

Rich Man

In the dollar store
I look for things to buy
things I can afford
So that when I pay
I can pretend to be rich

~~



Emotionless

I wish you weren't so emotional
she told me
and I thought, "really?"
I can do that

My earliest memory
is of being "chucked" under the chin
the back of my head hitting the wall
as I was accused of something
I didn't do

No tears
No sounds
Just a look as blank as the wall
that was meeting my head
with each chuck

Oh yes, I can do emotionless
and silent
and sightless
Not a problem at all
~~

Politically Incorrect

I bought "The Family of Man"
thinking who else would know
what this is

Imagine my surprise
when this book turned out
to be the original MoMa catalogue

Paper like tissue
and browning at the edges
The second photograph

Oh my
Wynn Bulloch's Child in Forest

Best get out the black marker
before my eyes melt

~~

My Collection

Who will take
my photography books
a closet full of them
perhaps they will return
from whence they came
Second hand book stores
and thrift shops

The unique thing
about any collection of books
is the collecting

Perhaps they should be released
back to the wild
to be collected by another
after I have cared for them
preserved them
for so many years

~~



Light Heart

I saw her again today
walking
as I drove by

It wasn't her
I know it wasn't

but for a moment
I was twenty four again
and she was walking there
where she had walked before

and for a moment
my heart was light

~~

Our Tontine

Loudmouth
has found his voice again
he must be feeling better
with pain killers
and antibiotics
and anti diarrheals
and saline under his skin

It is working
he is yelling
and the competition
is more complicated
Now we're counting pills
until one of us is gone

~~

Ecosystems

The crows seem quiet
while the robins
have taken over
in our back yard
but downtown
oh dear
the geese are sitting
honking on the rooftops
making the pigeons nervous
~~



Lost and Found

The lost winter gloves
run away from coat pockets
run away from their twins
are beginning to emerge
from snowbanks and sidewalks
looking sad and lonely

~~

They Remember

The Masons in their temple
where the dancers prance
and we swing sticks

And in Oliphant
the Daughters of the Empire
with their meeting house
photos of the king
two monarchs ago

and a lost flea market
with fondly remembered
bacon and tomato sandwiches
Buildings with memory both

~~

Family Swim

A forbidden place
on the top of the Bruce
a grotto, hard to get to
with an underwater hole
from cave to lake

And me
too old to go myself
young enough to forbid
my children from trying
That young kids age
too soon passed

~~

By Spirit Rock

The old abandoned house
long burned
the stones rain-washed
back to their original colours

We arrived well before dawn
before the hikers
wandering through on the trail
and she posed for me
naked amongst the stones

~~

Gone Forever

Searching, my tongue
still misses that tooth
I was too poor to fix
and it was yanked out
too rotten to keep

I move the floss
into that space
and there's nothing there
shortly after that
my tongue flicks
and retreats, lonely
and afraid

~~



Just a Sprinkler

Who hasn't watched
the kids in a sprinkler
and remembered a time
when he was that young

Does that still happen
or are there games
played on a phone
where you compete
to jump over a hose

Or perhaps it's climate
no watering of lawns

or maybe insensitive
all those photos of ghetto kids
around the open fire hydrants
in New York City

~~

Keep Going

A baby squirrel in March
and I see it cross the road
on a hydro line
flicking his tail
side to side
not quite balanced
not quite falling

I see him as I drive
and I say out loud
Careful little one
it's a long way down
and four lanes of traffic
keep going, keep going

~~

1975

My whole life
seems to be before
and after 1975
Even more specific
May 5, 1975
the day I left home
the day I entered University
the day I became an adult

Before and after 1975
the child and the man
I wasn't the only one
Some of us are gone
Some still here
the life after, stretching out
so much further than we thought
Unexpected
~~

Still Have The Scar

A young boy
a strong wind and a kite
Let's see just how high
and how fast

The string, run through the finger
and a sudden tug
I still have the scar

~~

Hitching

I wonder at those days
far out in the bush
when you would hold out your thumb
and a car would stop

There were fewer cars
fewer thumbs to wave
Is that why I don't see it any more
the wave and the ride

~~



Perhaps Tomorrow

I can't seem to find my voice today
there is nothing
more nothing
and nothing I can do about it

Do not look for work today
perhaps tomorrow will be better
~~

Snow Snake

Snow snake hissed
as I walked by
on my way from the sauna

I looked hard
at the snowbank
but he didn't show his face

~~

Late Winter

I've never seen
a more resentful winter
or perhaps it's me
and my bleak mood

Useless old man
looking for sunshine
and finding cold rain
grey skies
and not very much
to look forward to
~~

IP Warning

1914 March
Carl Sandburg published
nine poems
in 'Poetry Magazine'

Perhaps I will read them
for what I can steal
And somebody
probably Disney
will have the copyright

so fair warning
I have no money
and I'll only steal the idea
not the words, I swear

~~

Thoughts and Prayers

A love poem to Chicago
Carl is shocked
to know the violence of the city

Too bad he didn't live
to see more than a school a day
shot up in his beloved country

More than one a day
in case you missed that
Perhaps he would have said

"Thoughts and Prayers"

~~



Manufacturing Power

One dollar fifty
and you could have a year
of Poetry Magazine
in 1914

And Carl Sandburg writes
of the idols who fall
and those who rise
especially the hammer

That was a hundred plus
years ago
Today the hammers are gone
all sold to China

who is selling them
to Vietnam

~~

Take It All

You've got it Carl
let the gods of capital
take all we have
but leave us a bit of love
to take us through the night
so we may toil again

There are new gods now
grown from blue stocking'd matrons
grown fat with pride and power
who will take that bit of love
declare it ungodly
and leave us with nothing at all
at the end of the day

~~

Shipwreck

Lost
a ship that sails
back and forth on the lake
looking for the harbour
crying, crying out
in the night

I know that sound, Carl
I have heard it too
on the other side of the lake
I have heard it too
searching for a harbour
searching for home

~~

Nurse Boy

Here with the wounded women
one Covid poked
with a sore arm

and one poison'd by food
with sore guts

I watch over both
as they have watched over me
and will again

~~

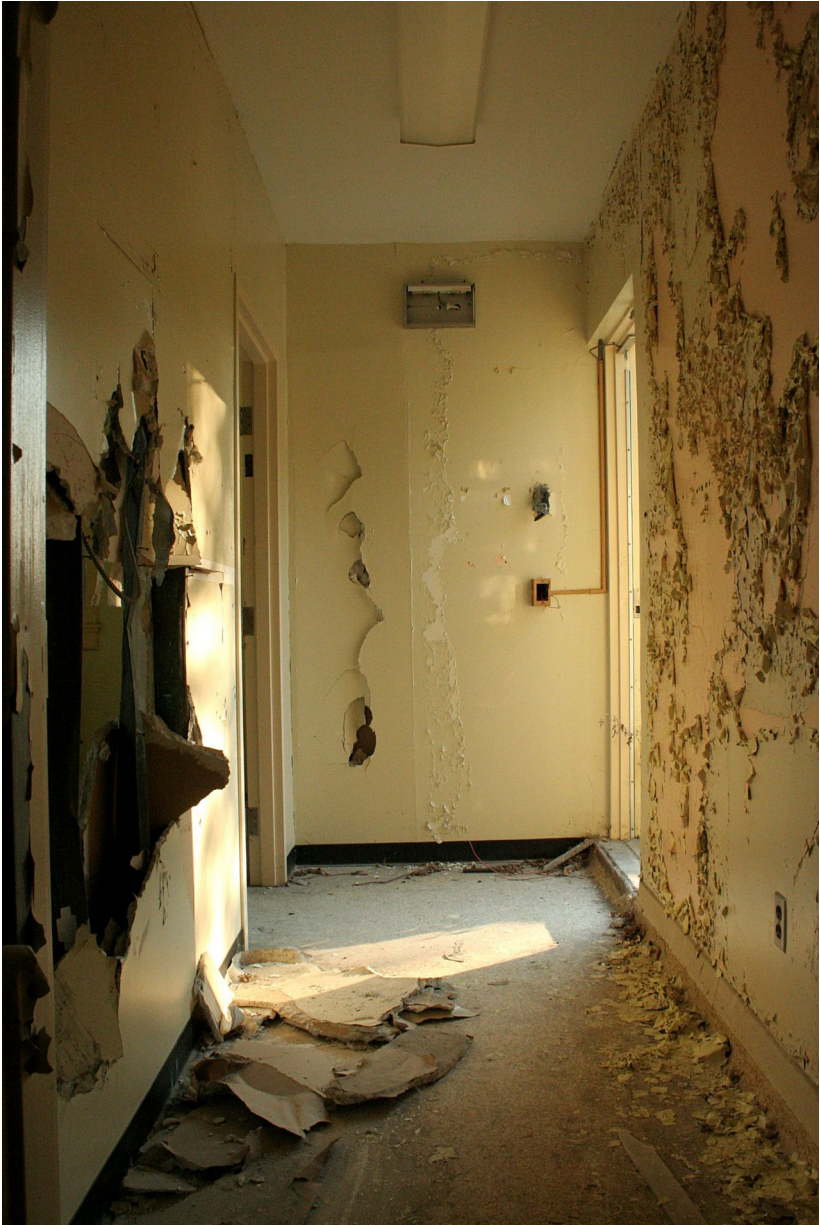
The Rules

This book I read
was read before

I rarely buy them new
often finding them
in thrift shops
for almost nothing

But with this comes a binding
You did not read it first
so you must not change
the dog-ears on the pages

Leave them be
marking forever the place
where full price
met the freedom to fold
~~



Alone Again

Sick at heart
abed, because nothing else
is to be done

I wait hopeless for sleep
while each creak
each snap of the house
jerks me aware

"Is it her
has she returned"
~~

Small Justice

There he is
the billionaire
hero of our time
a bevy of beauties
hanging on his
word

And best
best of all
there he is on the beach
frown fully grown
swatting at the fly
that until recently
bothered my poor ass

~~

To Get Along

And in the last days
the last small child is whipped
back to her machine
her limp, her scarred back
bending to gather lint
from under the loom
with death just above
her blond locks

In those last days
before this last girl
grows too old
and is thrown out to starve
we hear, on the oily air
of the factory
"You must go along
to get along."
~~

The Right Sort

We must not have
this riff-raff
these poor people
in our club

Yet the law says
we must admit them

The solution is simple
They must purchase outfits
that are quite expensive
and implements
even more so

and for their degrees
which we decree necessary
we will refuse to grant them here
and instead, they must go overseas
where only the best people
can afford to go

You see
for a clever man
there is always a way

~~

Angry

As I so often do
when the anger builds
I will walk out back
to the sauna
and I shall read a bit
perhaps nap a little
and in the end
too hot to care
I will cease to care
~~



Is That My Culture

God help me
what if that is my culture.

~~

You are going to find more writing from Kim Taylor at:

non fiction martial arts books

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual.htm

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual-free-ebooks.html

poetry, novels, and photo books

<https://180degreeimaging.com/TaylorBooks.html>

180mag (Photo magazine monthly) - 2005-2014

<https://180degreeimaging.com/180mag/180archive.html>

Iaido Newsletter / JJSA (monthly) - 1989-2001

https://sdksupplies.com/cat_manual.htm

EJMAS (monthly) - 2000-2017

<https://ejmas.com/>