

***Biographies: Uncollected Poems
2000-2010***

Don Eulert
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***“Every day is terrible and
wonderful”***

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Spying on my Wife

Through the lace-filtered bedroom window
she sits half-undressed on the bed and is still

It's full moon tonight and she seems to pray
while studying a circular calendar

When next I look a lift of sheets shadows
and settles on her undressed body

Arms over her head fluff pillows lift breasts.
The book she raises will take her to the Congo

Dwight Eisenhower he of the Kansas grin
and "What me worry?" ears has Partrice Lumumba
hacked to death. Would you rather a machete cut

so you hear your flying chin land across the room
could watch yourself bleed to death

or be pulverized humming in line at the coffee bar
9/11, "Yes, I'd just like mine organic, thank you."

Before I get another look her light's out she sleeps
my lady sleeps she sleeps my lady sleeps here

the moon on her my lady sleeps and dreams she
moans

then whispers to something small she holds.

Attentions

As many the day
can hold

The hazy moon
on her back
holding back rain

The waterfall sound
and the silence
after one frog
far up the creek

Midnight again
the mantle clock
ticking to the big clock

the saying:
*Language, custom,
ego, and personal advantage
all work against
clear seeing.* (Snyder)

Then the frogs come on

One of those pesky ants
beside the black
candles from Kelsi
crawls across her card

the reading: *Sitting*

*on so many questions.
Where are
the answers?*

The fire dies down
I put in a night log
chunk with a knot
before going to bed

The riotous flame
unwatched

Migrants

Migros, we have guard dogs now.
After the helicopter chases you this way
the dogs cut loose and drive whoever
you are into the ravine to the west.

Nobody could find you in that underbrush
the chaparral canopy a brittle cave
to hunker down in until the chopper
gives it up in the coming dark.

Once I found you in the kitchen,
a figure crouched behind the refrigerator
cans under each armpit. “*Quires comida?*”
I wanted you to understand *no problema*
we grow food here.

Coming in here to surprise each other
maybe I have a stick in my hand
I don't remember. I remember

You ran when I turned to offer water.

Vaya con, brother, my hungry other
now that I've driven you away.

Wedding

Belief

Behold

Beloved

Betroth

Believe

Be

Behave

Belive

Belove

Bedight

Become

Belong

Begin

A Promise to Marry

That is done between you You will know
when a sacred place has been entered

You must honor it with ceremony

Next you must embody your promise
so those around you have cause to celebrate
with the eruption of a party The honor

people will bring to your love amounts
to stacks of lumber beside the place
where you are building the foundation

rockwork done doors and windows framed
the roof seams caulked with care

Then you will be glad hearing rain

To All Lovers

You know what it's like to rock
all night long or almost One of you
sleeps satiated the other watches
morning whiten wall bed and lover

Then the rosy-fingered dawn you promise
never to forget O
Memory lens let's go over it again
Get the light right as the sky pales
in the chase of color

When you see first light
silver comes before gold Silver rubs up
witchery then you're caught

in this sliver of morning spel
the naked body beside you cast in
gold Other

The Signs

"Every day is terrible and wonderful"

First, the sycamore cut off too early
turning leaves gold in September

Tonight something runs through underbrush
keeping low to the ground padded with fur
it could be you as rabbit or kangaroo rat
or bobcat ravenous tracking the wind

Listen at the screen door! Another message
from the woman of the oaks humming
under the moon-drenched dark canopy
her song the shape of an offered hand

At midnight a westerly breeze comes up
cool with clouds and smelling of ocean

Some provocative being with long skirts
pressed against her by hot winds
from the desert has just walked east

What to make of these transcendent signs?
Tomorrow the radio will report her
as unexplained shift in atmospheric pressure.

Around us is mystery We want to know
why every day is terrible and wonderful

but the message unwritten on old papyrus
What we want to know or ought to do

is in another language even if we could
read it after the windstorm the rain's melt

The Christening (3)

I present you with the ivory canine from a jawbone I found
on the hillside where you went out at noon and saw a coyote
running ahead of you he stopped to look back it was waiting

The earth laughs where she laughs up there is a shrine of life

This shell you give to my hand in return denies superficiality
its pearled half once joined under water so that curéd wings
quaver as silent bells or our speechless bodies met at the nave

I give this tooth to you though I declare its imperfections--
not the fang from the wolf of our dreams with a crystal point
but ground away almost to bone from long attention

as when enamel of an outworn truth cracks and will not serve
dyings come back for a visit and awakening begins in the dark

Rain and Then

Rare October rain!
And then the moon
and then from leaves' canopy
rain falling and shining
on moonlit leaf
and then the moon rainbows
and then more rain

Inside the house first fire
of the season warm popcorn
good to be true

and then it's time for bed
listening to bodies our night voices
along with those
in the rain

November First Rain

the dry wind keeps on
sounding like rain

the clatter of oak leaves
of other Novembers

then the sigh says water

gratitude for 2 legs arms
eyes 2 sides of my heart working overtime
a cd player of memories

rain on the roof and outside the open door
near big drops and in the distance

music falling on the ground after falling
on oak leaves

Meridee's Steak House

Here on the dry southwest corner of the continent
I said This season's last rain just teases drought's end

& went to bed But about midnight rain started up again
headed east across New Mexico up the Santa Fe trail

I'll bet next week when I go into Meridee's Steak House
Russell Kansas on the bar side there'll be somebody
I know making more than their share of noise
will start in on who had how much rain if nothing else

Clouds gone but the frogs who don't know the moon's
out and the rain is over keep on celebrating something

Story

*“Anybody who spends any time in a physical body
has a story.”*

From the air mid-July travelling to Wichita irrigation circles
grow punctuation marks with no sentences between them

In a suburb a tiny red car moves into a dead-end
cul-de-sac driveway a secret life of triangular lawns

Now with my rental car ditched on the rolling plains
I sit idling in front of a country gas station qwik-stop
watching across the road a blue tractor pulls a red and yellow
swather lays down serpents of fragrant alfalfa moving circles
of white butterflies behind purple blossoms cut and tumbled

Me and the woman working the station are pretty much alone

She wants to sell me a calling card instead of giving change
for the pay phone Otherwise she doesn't care if I hang out
she just works here but she'll close up by nine and watches me

I left behind puzzled and angry Indians in California trees full
of apricot and nectarines ripe and needing to be picked today
to sit in a green valley where shadows lengthen across a
hayfield

Bull-birds with their fart swoop sounds celebrate the butterflies

I wait to get my car keys back from a young Kansas state
trooper

with gold braid on his black hat He was a Marine in San
Diego

lives now in a three-bedroom house in Ellsworth for \$300 a month

Long trucks scud by on I-80 past this Texaco franchise here by the country road exit A tattooed couple stops to nurse

with two quarts of oil and a gallon of water their tired old rusted Ford van full of junk and sleeping bags Virginia plates

They argue about something then buy something sweet to drink

Betcha when I finally get to Meridee's Steak House in Russell for something to eat on the barside there'll be somebody I'd just as soon not know making more than his share of noise

Getting near dark The owner comes to check each pump against a tally Nods The blue tractor pulls in behind the station and fills up from a silver gas tank on stilts

Once this was ocean bottom

Dance

It's a slow turning dance
life being long for many of us
who under the wheeling stars
tell births of grandchildren and
stories of lives now gone

We seekers of divine silliness
have done it again laughing tonight
about it all how strange attractors

towards work and joy draw us
into the next circle
and the next until the last of us

see every hillside bare of trees
plains stripped of anything to eat
or burn for the last warmth

where again we will dance in caves
raw earth where the last survivor
on this planet will fill her belly
with clay eating there at the last

the cosmic dust we first were made of

February 2001

From a blue plastic hut with its back to cold north
we are dismissed Amen into wind and sleet stinging
blood to our cheeks with the casket left rude
on a stand above the shaft's discrete hood

Before herding to church basement sloppy joes
we want to see her lowered into warmer ground
drop our encoded clods of earthy voices down

We know how she lies unshivering hands folded
close under the roof display where we choose roses

Someone on a backhoe hidden behind cypress trees
was waiting us out when we go back under a tent
of swirling snow all around the finished mound bright
splays of overturned flowers framed by new drifts

We drive into night a blizzard merging ground and sky
we creep half blind a road unmarked edgeless white

Getting Wet

The sound of rain
fills this valley up

When sudden wind
tips oakleaf cups

we're under flood
could wash away!

Between waves
coyotes bicker
how hungry they get
of night Thunder

When long rains
pour in Africa
over bunched herds
lions pull down
good feeding

Animals remand
our hunger
for each other

Under
the pound of rain
the roof holds

We get all wet

Black Ants in the Fire

What companionship what witness do we need
to go into the dark or into the light

the glow of the cosmos floats in particles
that settle daily every place on earth

I lift a chunk of wood into the fireplace
big black ants swarm up my arms

I drop it watch them run back and forth
over the matrix of apricot oak plum prunings

its center a vulvic tunnel of whitehot without end
that pulls me in rain drumming on the roof
music that goes on before and after

Mindfulness

Opening a new big toothpaste tube brings wonder, Will you be around to finish it? By

that time the plum blossoms will have gone over into fruit and season's streams will rise

and fall a relative will marry or deliver child millions will die in Africa and most probably

someone you love When you get down to squeezing the last of it amazing how

you can curl it up and push out another day's worth but finally there's an end to it

Memorial Day

Purple clouds wipe moon over the livestock sale barn
Russell Kansas I-80 to the south 18-wheelers
whine through the rise of thunderstorm wind.

I will get the best view of lightning from the last room
at Russell's Inn tho I had to wait while it was cleaned
nursing a couple of red draft beers at the Rojo Room

the Rojo bartender distracted by her hots
for a wiry cowboy with silver conchos on his belt

who buys straight whiskey rounds for a 90-year-old
table-hopping with his walker his high school reunion
buddy patient at their table between bathroom visits.

Once I get checked in to the musty room turn on tv
a tornado warning sends me back to the basement
bar watching tits believe swagger rubups another hour

Someone insidious I can't place who knows too much
about me from another time offers to buy a small talk drink
but more sirens and locals head for tornado shelters

I'm on the southeast corner and it's a brick building
I take my chances watch the weather channel

and lightning the billowing curtains incandescent
strobe present moment that cracks thunder

For Breakfast

We have in the fridge fresh salmon steaks
we have new cleaned lettuces and *mizumi* and
spinach and green beans & beets to steam

enfolded into you timeless this morning daze

Or eggs, hold the salmon.
Eggs we have two dozen ahead of us, so
eggs with chopped onion sweet corn and
heated cherry tomatoes?

war drums on in Iraq since we can't find bin Laden

A stack of grapefruit just picked
juiced all you want
their fresh cells alive in us

I have teeth that may outlast me
419 bones that work just fine
in each foot. We don't have
to worry about a terrorist
or an anti-terrorist squad at the door
yet

Give up self-importance to give up fear

We also have green chili raised from seed
I could roast while you rub off their skin
me at the stove you at the sink

while we talk and grin

*On the Tibetan wheel of hunger and satisfaction
one morning's spin*

Loving the Wild

Today it was easy
a spider on the outdoor kitchen counter
already on the Saran Wrap
take it outside and shake

Interrupt gophers' tunnels
with guillotines and garrotes
gas bombs if that's what it takes

shoot rabbits gnawing green beans
feed them to the dogs
defending against the wild
while we love the wild

Tonight our bed in the raw moon light
and dogs speaking in tongues
to coyote in the hills around

Goodbye to the Wind

for Dan Connor

I wonder how the leaves feel stripped from oak
so the wind can blow through so the tree won't
break or topple I wonder how the leaves feel

All my life I've hated winds
hot Kansas after harvest winds from Texas
when sleeping outside only helped mosquitoes
or sheets of hail and tornados screamed by

Fleeing to Wisconsin winter cold blowing
under coats and even in full sun no snow melts
my face froze stiff in that winter wind

Albuquerque wind howls against the Sandia
mountains' ancient caves above it all a calm
niche an open mouth smiling on I-5 traffic
the Rio Grande valley fowled by blowing sand

Down the Santa Fe trail to San Diego
out here in the foothills the Santa Ana
devil wind routinely knocks over semi-trailers
blows incessant all night day after days
tops 100mph in huffs of firestorm

Oh ye winds crack cheeks blow gritudes
ye have more lives than me and thus I love you

I wonder how the leaves feel stripped from oak
so the wind can blow through so the tree won't

break or topple I wonder how the leaves feel

Family Meeting

Some Indian women come walking down the dirt road
When they get to where the orchard is now
they see us about the same time we see them

They pause in confusion a grandmother some strong
middle-aged a young woman with child and a toddler

It's November acorn season the oak's supply of *wiiwish*
has been stripped and piled by east wind off the desert

that whites first called devil winds their weatherman now
calls Santa Ana conditions the lipay named *enyak-wik*
and sent prayers to ride all night winds to the source

We draw together at the sight of the women gathering
in their own huddle to point out the familiar grinding holes

agreeing yes this is the family place where we collect
from the *esnyaaw* to shell and pound Winter food singing

Who are they in this place Who are we in this place?
When we gather as a family to walk up the earth road
up the trail to greet them they are no longer there

When we gather as a family to walk up the earth road
up the trail to greet them they are no longer Here

Dear Susan,

I have the transfer papers.
That's all you'll need to do.
Thanks for the notary business.

A lot of people loved your
preacher husband & I had my reasons.

One of them I remember
trying to sleep in the back seat
of our rental car Grandison driving

from Denver to Paradise Kansas
in time to see his investment in oil
come splash all over the kelly deck

Breezing down I-80 he kept me awake
talking the genealogy of slave names

& the San Diego city council break 1970
when downtown no place he could eat

I remember the times we played poker
pot limit \$50 a raise, three raises. That
could get to be a big pot pretty fast

Grandison the Third grinned no matter
how it came out. I remember that grin
our last visit his white-sheet deathbed

For Mihai Ursachi, Gone Back

It's time to prune the orchard again,
where you went bold at big branches
slept over and for breakfast ate pears
cold off the tree, November's end,
and picked up the curved saw again.

Smiling and shaking my head at your ways,
again I'll be arguing with you about
keeping the plum tree you recognized
in mortal struggle and said it should
come down, the one determined to branch

and fruit again. I try to make images
of what you do in Moldavia

that man on a borrowed bicycle
far in the forest counting linden trees

that Romania. That man beaten bloody
gone back to Ticaeu and your orchard

your grapes gone wild, your poetry
of defiance in all the hungry mouths.

The Question, the Story

Today Tim came up with a prepared question like usual because he maintains curiosity
“How do they make hashish?”

I embellished Ed Dorn’s story about naked boys running through fields of pollinating marijuana in the heat of the day running and sweating

Gave him men waiting at the end of the rows with long wooden knives to scrape off the sweat laden with golden dust like bumblebees

I told him about buying hashish in flat pages in Istanbul but not the whole story

Getting Ready

When we all go home tonight
when we all get ready for bed
when we shower or not
look in the mirror and say

There you are another day gone by
You might even tumble into bed
drunk and fully clothed any way
you prepare to enter the sacred

name two or three gratitudes
risk talking to yourself about the dark
Get ready

Despair or Rejoice

And the drought goes on
in July it's 108 degrees in East Hamilton Township
Kansas and Helen is out farming dust.

Helen deserves an air conditioner
in her tractor cab in her house
much less in her truck so old
it doesn't even have the option.

Helen sold 10,000 bushels of wheat
ahead of the drought
now sells off 100 head of cattle
her drying pastures can't support.

She hates to see them go. Don't preach
to Helen against beef about eating low
on the food chain unless you can
digest thistles and yellow buffalo grass.

Grasshoppers stack on each other
chewing the shadow side of wood posts

Here

the helix of the nightbird's chirring call along with the crickets.
Staying up late on my birthday nighted by the quarter moon.
Wine and pita with house light stored from the sun pumping
water here we are. Maybe the masculine wants spread legs
and dying-like sighs and the feminine wants sighs any way that
takes away anger and dying in wars. Out of the corner of your
eye a mouse runs from behind the fridge to the oven.

Popcorn

here we are feeding popcorn to Ruby inside the screened outdoor kitchen, her all white coat in the line from Judy Blue-Eyes. Ruby knows inside porch from dogbite rattlesnake recovery, and now popcorn. Ruby wags in time with Holly Hoffman jazz flute flaring up one night past full moon. The best time is coming home and in here where we porch talk it out or your piano and the flute playing around together we could get arrested for playing around like this in public so you got married to me or what

The Puzzle
–New Year’s, 2003

At the fireplace tonight
the unspoken subject World War III

music first from the screech owl

and another pair coo-note owls search
their opposite and their companion

beauty surrounds us

the lichen on granite boulders
wave tiny orange banners after the rain

snails with messages tattooed on their shells
inch towards the vestibules of power

frogs and plants demand to be seated
at the UN Security Council

While the media speculate
who will vote for war

troops of night-goggled men
already probe and map Ishtar’s grounds
heightened desire for consummation

Spring Equinox 2003

Gratitude matches privilege two wheels
on the night's chariot of constellations
pull us through branches alive again

rain new leaves flirting owl songs
"Where *are* you?" "Where are *you*?"
and frog survivors of three years of drought

sing to the wheeling Equinox stars
while this nation's chariot goes to war

riding one wheel of privilege the other
wheel obscured by smoke and flames

Snow Jobs

—after Robert Bly

With clear eyes
o say can all see the
flaking away of America
the beautiful

My old friend
calls late because he wants
somebody to talk to
about the Chinese threat
to the economy

i say don't you remember hey
the small-boned bodies

Westmoreland's
count

That war crimes tribunal
for Kissinger should convene
any day now

He doesn't know
What i'm talking about, Iraq?

i say Well maybe
yes

it's the same
George W's hot
to count dead bodies
after the draw-down on his Dad
George Herbert Walker
he sd I would
never have thought of that

Anyway i sd Don't follow marching orders.

“You're a very smart man.”

he sd

“Screw that how about yr addiction to money” i sd

He closes his black coat

It's no big thing he sez and turns away.

Hands and Feet

My foot breaks through a floor-board
into a hollow I fish out a bakery box
with two left-over pieces of bread
my son had misplaced and now eats

I discover under it a flimsy plywood lid
over a storage bin holding a cord
of firewood for the ritual of fire
place which will restore virginity

My *amorati* appears among other
friends on her hands and knees
in front of me searching the ground
with such seriousness I don't look
at her parts

I too am naked
and anonymous When I go
into the nightbed Where we go

Our hands asleep clasp together
in curved shapes for sifting something

All the corpses I've ever seen look like
their hands are sifting something

What our hands are doing now

The Bones

In the dark this lover's hair
sparkling in my hands could be
an old woman's hank kept long
after thinning

your skull's
slopes familiar yes and will be
eye ridge and jawline.

Wife I want to be on you
and press your breast move
along thy ribs bone beads the abacus
Time and again

Seen from the air
across every continent volcanic ridges
blithe their origins and slow melting.

If in a night walk the path ahead
is fixed only by a small light
the way seems endless

She, iv

after holding each other so
she sd or it was known
this time we'll go all the way

but when she was undressed
and all in beauty
i sd we can't do this

now she is crying
asking *Why Not?*
over and over
Why Not?

Good and Evil

Camus: *"The essential is being able to permit oneself everything."*

I.

Another day like this from low October sky
in the high desert you hear a sigh as if
drops come down and clatter in the leaves

as if it's true rain but it's the dry wind
our want running ahead of the rainedance

i dream of twin boys in an amusement park
who pin a baby to ground with a pitchfork
i try to get the owners to call 911
they fumble for a telephone in an unused drawer

then i'm down by the road looking to direct
flashing red lights but i get put in charge
of a table selling tee-shirts to stalled traffic.

II.

Commanded to evacuate in the face of firestorm
late we pack up to drive to some safe place
overhead sways fear under rose sky smoke

Even when you're not there the refrigerator
flips on and off timed hum of measured cold
even unattended nails hold walls to roof

Desire may be a red 4X4 truck
fording its way up a stream at such an angle
it will end up flipping over backward

III.

This little rain after the firestorm belongs
to everyone at war thirsty for meaning
dry wind strips green leaves from branches

In another case of cannibalism just lately
a guy who wants to eat human flesh
hooks up with a guy who can only be gratified
by being eaten (raw or cooked) and they
consummate their union. Is there a crime?

The Moaning

I can't help but hold my wife when she keens
in her sleep when it turns into a frightened whimper.

She said I was moaning in my sleep last night and
she listened without touching me to keep the dream

I don't remember

 maybe I wince aloud from the sting
of knuckle skin cut and lifted as I go out of the garden

to dunk my hands in the tub of water salty
from the bodies of acorn-harvesting *l'ipay* women
who made love on this ground not so long ago come
back in the night to wash off the sweat of their lives

the way exotic daytime birds on their migration paths
water here for a week or a day and then disappear.

In the night's dark mouth under the roof eaves a hatch
of phoebe fly-catchers screech hopeless until sunrise

Maybe I suffer their blind hunger at 2am the black assault
helicopters overhead pry their syncopations into my heart

Horticulture

Make corporations be people
deny their passports when diseased

Govern the International Monetary Fund
with day laborers on the Board

Pay the Kansas wheat farmer his fair share
maybe ten cents a loaf instead of two

Profit the Palestine goat herder
milking her doe for aged cheese

Slow time Let Juan
feel when corn is ready to pick by hand

Value attention

and care

We are too many
when we want too much
Efficiency becomes a false god we worship

so a Vietnamese worker falls into the hamburger grinding vat
in a Dodge City meat factory and probably we eat some of
him

Which fits with what I'm trying to say
about interdependent systems

Some precious thing got lost in *your* house
you think you only misplaced it

actually

It's Juan the corn farmer moving to the barrio

Gratitudes

The temporariness of life is indescribable. Whether you are watching a cloud or cooking soup, you do everything on the brink of eternity.

C.G. Jung, letter to Amelia Jaffe, 1953

walking
on this earth
to the upper garden

near dark's
cool touch

through crickets
under a screech owl

to pull carrots'
gold eruptions
beside the basil's smell

on the way down
pick two grapefruit
two oranges
for our breakfast

assuming in between
one more night
with you

9.4.03

Team Lobo (The New World Order)

A black Chinook helicopter thuds its way to Crawford

From on high Richard Perle beside Pilot Rove looks back after praying for the death of the United Nations and what he sees excites him His face flushes

George W. Bush holds hands with Dick Cheney on one side and the son of Billy Graham on the other their eyes all dilated and glazed with rapture and their countenances aglow with erupting visions

so that the very light inside the cabin seems vibratory the air smells of money, power, and righteousness

A row behind them flanked by two men in dark glasses Rumsfeld His eyes shut and lifted heavenward he milks the hands of Kenneth Lay and an entity that goes by the name of Pat Buchanan

Noisy behind the back curtain Bill O'Rielly, Rush Limbaugh and Michael Savage roll dice for the game Crusader. Whoever lands first on square Perfection gets to walk up to the front, propose their ejaculatory sweep-away of life necessary for the apocalyptic Coming

Red coals in a dark corner would be the brimstone eyes of loner Wolfowitz seeking his own beatification

In a side seat which partly hides the terrifying spectacle they present, Newt Gingrich sweats as in post orgasm,

clutches one Condoleezza Rice hand to his leg her other
jerks his necktie which reads *Gut Social Services*

Neighbors felt something strange about the black craft
that landed just at midnight or maybe they thought
back after what happened that night A pack of Lobos
it had to be, though long extinct in the area, went rampant
in the pastures around pulling down cattle and horses

leaving the Lobo trademark, the way carcasses
are eaten through the genitals into the body cavities
to get at the hearts And where Lobos claw back out,
intestines spill to glisten in sunrise of a new world order
10.2003

The Grail Castle: Doors and Circles after Robert Johnson

Robert says at age thirteen if lucky a boy
maybe for half a day steps through a doorway
into a glowing gold wholeness of a grail castle

that disappears along with the glimpsed maiden
magical food He will madly circle strange roads
for a lifetime (or forget or put on a suit of irony)

Once ran a tall horse with stripes down its sides
sweeping across the plateau of your imagination
in reality you ride a dwarfy short legged pony

Still we ride come upon things of hidden potency
If we grow old enough in a natural life they say
then the threshold to the grail castle appears

once more out of thin air as below the owl's perch
in a blown-over hollow trunk I discover a cache
38 grinning gopher skulls perfect in bony detail

Robert thanks for attention to the magic doorway
for being thirteen once for a glimpse of the seen
unseen wheeling through strange and ordinary

Could this pair of mountain bluebirds just back
today to our high desert hideout be a spoke
of the wheel flashing in today's outrageous sun?

The Drizzle, the Longing

At 20 looking for a wheat crop
dry land farming in Western Kansas
looking for rain then to now
seems I've always been looking for rain

The lowering clouds let some loose tonight
unseemly in October in this high desert niche
east of the Valley of Santa Maria

where Kit Carson's rag-tag regulars from Santa Fe
soggy from waves of chill rain like tonight's
went down to San Pasqual to get speared
by the Californian Spanish speaking locals

Where falls the rain to feed the Euphrates in that desert?
A volunteer from a Carolina town bleeds into the sand.

Here the tall oaks around who share our molecules
and morphogenic fields have dropped their green
after a four-year drought waiting for water

We hold the inward way wait for peace for water
Where falls the rain in us? where falls the rain?

To Melville: Water Air Earth Fire

According to the last chapter of Moby Dick
the underwater creature we've hunted all our life
will surface at the end with our corpse wrapped to it

in such a way that everyone will know we've been
practicing bondage all our lives even unto death

In the desert Crow carries an underwater eye
Owl lifts the whale's whistle into night air

Crow woman in dreams glides down our
Hatfield Creek through oak canopy at sunset hardly
hitting a leaf. Owl sits outside our night window
hitting one note over and over until in first light
we wrap until dark creatures rise our skeletons quiver.

Owl whistles up death sure everything lives and dies
dies and lives in the last chapter of Moby Dick
a coffin bobs up you drape over it and get your breath.
Add a broken rib to know how every sweet breath hurts.

Here we've fed our creatures, the behaving horses dogs
chickens on solid ground Mostly dust this time of year.

Under dust boulders. And under boulders water.
Below water molten fire breaches under our small boat.

October First

The hot east wind comes just in time for breakfast,
rosemary corn bread, while we're in jackets.
The desert wind dries our lips and blows off our clothes.

In the season of love and duty when I turned 60,
the Zen Plumbers gang crafted me in effigy,
you gave me a birthday wish to give up seriousness.

In the garden I planted all their funny cards
where the snowpeas with their long green grins
can watch what comes up. The ink of your wifely
words giggle underground. Isn't this amazing,

two percent of the people eat something they've grown!
Without bringing fertility to their lips the people
will go mad. They will kiss an icon and go kill.

Again the other night dancing with the outdoor fire
after you went to bed, I came home. The home run
by Gwynn on realtime radio and the owl's exclamations.
Everywhere people in fear of techne assemble bombs.

Then afterwards a cricket in the house. In our house
you cover me I'll finally get it. House with a cricket
a bright ball arcs in my mind the cricket's stridulation.

Morning the wind scoops all the cool air it can find
and shovels it out to sea. Between gusts we find some
still hidden under trees, fanned by wings of desert kachinas
who like a good breakfast on the way to the beach.

Found Poem, from Spam

Nanahoost'en si

It takes a great deal of living to get a little deal of learning.

In this world a man must either be anvil or hammer.
Everyone admits that love is wonderful and necessary,
yet no one agrees on just what it is.

If you don't want to deal with the devil, don't go into his shop.
Read your own compositions, and when you meet a passage
which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.

The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost.

Make the most of all that comes and the least of all that
goes.

Language is the mother of thought, not its handmaiden.
Don't complain that you are not getting what you want
Just be glad you are not getting what you deserve!

A leader is a dealer in hope.

The contented man can be happy with what appears to be
useless.

Expect poison from standing water.

Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow--

Delay may give clearer light as to what is best to be done.

If God lived on earth, people would break his windows.

For Lorca

We strategy the café and tip for a table
next to the maestro of horse skulls filled
with honey a moon that rises blood orange

Yes I too have seen in the Mediterranean's
jellyfish their slightly blue grace notes hung

with their dazzling dangles transparent
as far out as you could dare to see

We inch closer to hear what Garcia the diplomat
of the age might be whispering of the mysteries

He throws both arms up to invite it all--
"More wine! More Lobster!"

Shadow and tertium quid

*. . . a division into two parts with
some third thing remaining*

A dangerous man sits to my right on the floor
near the wall in an empty room a place perfect
for killing someone and getting away with it

On the other side my secret sharer the instigator
nonchalant leans back with his legs crossed
while I turn to look into my dangerous one's face . . .

He has been ranting about immediate solutions
late in the night dictating letters ultimatums he'll do
anything to get down from the uncertainty cross

He's capable of anything yes it's time to act
My Swiss army knife long blade open stabs upward
into his heart lung cavity and he presses into it
but *he won't die* even though he seems willing

and now I have *his* pointed knife longer and sharper
for more bloodless impaling in this room of the self
he won't die we go for the neck and cardioid artery
to finish off what needs to be done *he won't die*

Then we three walk out towards my pickup truck
the dangerous one now bandaged like a mummy
stepping brisk beside me headed to the driver's side

"Think I'll drive," I say to him. The third one answers,
"That would be a good idea, you in the driver's seat."

No Small Thing

As the time of my life grows shorter
small things become more dear

Today's peregrine falcon hovering overhead
moss's green forest on these granite boulders

Each branch laid into the fire dear
more dear the hour I have spent

watching you in front of the fire
stretched out in the chair fallen asleep

care lines of your day relaxed
to beauty you have offered up

going into dark fire of those circles
of the inferno where blistered souls
of your wounded sisters wander
your eyes tired from seeing through

Acorn taps on the roof *Attention*
the wind has died down 10:30 Friday eve

you asleep on the recliner we'd never
have bought if I didn't need to lay back
to take the heat of intravenous poison
that saved my life they say

There you are on it
in front of the fire
more dear

What If

What if some morning you wake
there's a waxy corpse in place of your lover

What if the poppy seeds you planted
sprout into flesh-eating Venus fly-traps

What if the politician elected for compassion
Instead ejaculates the cum of power
on foreign faces and children's hunger

What if the sun explodes on our progeny
what if the hungry hawk in lowering clouds
loses sight of its prey what if

What if the rain after drought requires us
tonight to go for a walk get wet wet in it

What if your body on mine is all there is
for awhile

Moon Shadows

Full Moon, 12.25.04

She's the woman who'd rather look at the shadows
moon makes, reading truth and mystery in shades
not seen in moon's bare pocked stare back at you

The wood table stretches its moonlit legs on the deck
high branches of oak trees pictograph the earth

where she might drop a hopscotch puck of darkness
dance through shadowed webs of church and state

Her sadness fueled by anger becomes a moon
her sadness fueled by anger becomes a firepit
silhouetting her emotions against a dark screen

the bigger the fire
the bigger the circle of darkness

the bigger the fire
the bigger her shadow dancing
against a curved black screen

the bigger the fire
the bigger the circle of unknown

the brighter the moon
the darker the shadows

the bolder her dance with shadow

Plants Talk: The Joyful Roots in Sadness

Plants get into us and want to talk
about our merger and to *spel*
their point of view of capillaries and sun
messengers bursting in every cell

Plants talk
they flap on and on about what
we need to learn from them
how long they have waited for us
to get on board the bus of galactic
wind compassionate suffering

that comes with turning and turning
through lifetimes of flowering and desire

Plants talk
Maybe in return we could write a weekly
column extolling their myriad strategies
their hunker-down wisdoms
of survival and excited reproduction

Maybe plant a row of snow peas
soak soak with a hose

Maybe write a poem that lets
plants get into us to talk
about our merger and to *spel*
their point of view of capillaries and sun
messengers bursting in every cell

And why would the plants title their poem
The Joyful Roots in Sadness?

Maybe we should give up explanations
announce our engagement & quick marriage
to a cactus flower's ruby one-night exuberance

Canaries, Frogs, Wall Street On the First Gulf War

At FrogFarm we haven't heard a frog
chorus for four years maybe more

maybe like those canaries in cages
carried by miners into deep pits
they keeled over to give us fair warning

Other places I hear they have frogs
with third eyes and legs coming from
shoulder blades double sex organs

What greater Will prepares us for what
the hell is going on with snail invasions
Wall Street giddy with a war economy

I thought the hexagram for our times
was supposed to be *The Turning Point*
true yang returning in the midst of earthy yin

*Nevertheless people accept the false
and neglect the real near at hand . . .*

*Because they are deceived by personal desires
and confused by worldly affairs . . .*

*It is necessary to first refine oneself
and master the mind, waiting for the time to act*

Gather everything into the furnace of creation

Stories

You tell me that you remember being sad for years
you don't remember the surf wave after wave
you rode me until you fell asleep that I remember

My bones are filled with your molecules
now you are gone away they crack cannot hold

I cannot breath without your breathe
moving through me my heart pounds
to burst its cage at your story of being caged

I remember our unstoppable touching in the pool
high up Coyote Canyon then moving our nest
in stages to stay in sun going behind the mountain

until in darkness in our tent we are whipped
and bowed by such wind we carry in rocks
to hold down the throbbing in and around us

You give nostalgia a bad rap but my hands
remember the curve of your behind holding
the sacred in the mountain hideout Shiprock

moving towards us that lovemaking we were
not drunk on anything except each other

Such idealized sentiments I remember
hearing you get up in the moonlight and crouch
to float leaves amazed at your mare's flood

Come In

I'm looking for I need a big dream tonight
Give me a pipeline to the infinite here

The moon half-full the wind that clattered
oak branches over our separate roofs calming
down now your body in sleep becalmed

I'm looking for a visit to the inner world
that burns and irradiates under this life
drives us to beauty grief meaning

I'll try sweetgrass I should have given you
the attention of sweetgrass before you
went off to sleep in your own voyaging

Ritual was called up when the first being
said "Oh my gods! I need some help here!"

These seasonal winds know about release
banging the pipe chimes that don't do breezes
"The night wind blowing the stars around"
moon waxing on its way into the ocean

If we were to create a ceremony for this time
What would that look like? What covenant
What vow

The Book of Changes

Changes in the world outside
a flip of the hand to deal

inside we huddle the weather
of grief become the forcaster

would I could choose joy rain

Would a fourth glass of wine be enough
towards sleep's oblivion if your lover
chooses to sleep in another bed

maybe it's in the stars

I just went out to look at them
they're everywhere voicing or voiceless
multicolored moving

even loving stars
sooner or later
requires mourning

You are the marrow of my bones
when we're apart they tremble and crack
the swollen heart chokes breath

Navajo design imperfections
in their weavings

even in the Marriage Basket

an opening to let life and change
come in

to give trapped spirits
a way to escape

The Cradling

Carrying silence of garden's Fall harvest
I'm cradling a load of butternut squash

it takes both arms to hold your cry

trying to rebirth a woman abused in all
imaginable ways her mirror fragmented

from drinking blood and semen now
she cannot swallow and thus may die

I wish you could take time out to heft
the weight and harvest of the womb-
shaped squash with their golden glow
could release the night moth into the dark

Lift by its feelers protect powdered wings
to catch and release if she's to fly

Rehabilitating Karl Rove

Take Karl Rove away from the halls of power chained
to a telescope take him to a high desert compound
isolated on a mountain nobody to talk to no news

Okay to keep those jowls well fed don't deny sanitation
make it nice enough so he can't noise himself about comforts

Cut the electricity at 7:30 every night If necessary
someone could come in the first few nights to show him
how you point the thing and look outside your own ambitions

at a colossal colored ring around Jupiter the brilliance
of Sirius in the sky shadows in the craters of Mars
the planet not the warmonger

Karl study the rules written in the cosmological spin
of the Spiral Nebula even the waxing and waning
of the nearby moon is for you

When Karl Rove's mind borrowed from Machiavelli sucks out
into the vacuum of space between stars becomes mist
somewhere in the Milky Way's brush across the millennia

when Karl's porcine face is permanently a notch more rosy
with embarrassment then we might consider parole

The Metaphysical

These green blades of grass
after another month after a wet Spring
in the high desert will become tinder
for wildfires unless they are grazed

All this is metaphysical the cribbage game
you whupped me at getting some laughs
about how 9s were falling into your crib
and did me wrong

while I watch the black cattle disappear
into the hillside in the falling light

and then the green they graze on falls dark

Our green fades into another while we
become tinder and consummate with stars

All this is metaphysical
we buy two goats to mow the grass
but they eat geraniums and fig trees
leave the blaze of green around us

The face of a killer shows for just a moment
outside everyone's bedroom window

you need to move but cannot
this too is metaphysical

In Fallujah marines in their new green outfits

ignite fire wherever they go

Name anything

Anything you name has another meaning

Looking Around

Our eyes turn to the place of fear

silent for awhile at night that blind
since awake we are always watching
out for something always watching

awake I see how apricot are too many
need the abortion of thinning with love
those I can reach but the high clusters

See just now the Japanese beetle on its back
on the phone bill Look how it lands
on the hand putting these lines down

how I write around its fearless antenna
guiding the length of line on this page
faceted red eyes glaring in all directions

The eyes of a winsome frightened first-time
peace marcher in Atlanta looking where
the attack from left or right will come from

She's in a photo I want to look through
lens to walk beside to comfort and love

Not Fungible

When I die, I might as well die striving after wind

Because of her neuromuscular disease
never able to walk, dress,
or bathe without assistance.

Harriet McBryde Johnson does not suffer fools gladly.
She regularly protests Jerry Lewis's telethon
for Muscular Dystrophy.

A chapter of Harriet's book *Unspeakable Conversations*.
debates Princeton University Professor Peter Singer,
advocate as she says of "genocide" for disabled babies.

*He insists he doesn't want to kill me. He simply thinks it would
have been better, all things considered, to have given my
parents the option of killing the baby I once was,
and avoid the suffering that comes with lives like mine and
satisfy the reasonable preferences of parents for a different
kind of child. It has nothing to do with me. I should not feel
threatened.*

People are not
fungible. *I am also the I Am*
a jewel in the glittering net

practice striving daily
striving my daily practice
my striving a daily practice

Amen

In Present Moment, Remembering

Mozart mysteriously comes through the ether to resound
now here under the moon shouldering through the ragged
remainder of clouds that gave the smell of rain today

& a few teasing drops out of the thunder and bruise-blue
clouds patterned the dust where you closed the gate
coming in to find me harvesting broccoli in last light

Remember almost every night a fire or moon watch together
and often I at the desk in present moment after you slid
naked
under the covers freedom when you were waiting I had it all

Today I went down Hatfield Creek pulling nettles bull thistle
& cockleburr opportunists of the plant world in a wet year

Admired three-petaled red and yellow water flowers
with dutch-pipe mouths that never grew here before
& the lacy white of watercress going to flower wet footed

even my astrological moon moves into water signs this year

In the cosmos they have discovered a planet with three suns
they speculate apple red, tangerine, and lemon imagine
watching different colored sunrises crossing over one another
can you imagine watching sunrises taking up the whole day

I thought while harvesting apples tangerines windfall lemons

Grief and Celebration

for Leana

While we glide to high summer's melody
the mid-August sunset too early startles us

into time the mourning dove a silent dark
arrow into the glow of this day's passing

love the chill breeze at the light's edge cuts
suddenly we are naked and alone in grief

Grief surrounds us we shall whisper examples
and scream your own into the collective howl

Every day we lean into the work of gratitude
else otherwise we curse the sweet air

we breathe the life that cycles through us
including the dying of a self or of a summer

Once heartbroken I climbed the west face
of Sandia mountains above the dark mouth
of caves where families lived 15,000 years ago

Attended to a pine stub at the mountain's crest
ancient windswept wood burnished to a glow
by the fury and rub of the wind's long hands

That comforted me May you find your way
I lost a friend once over my inordinate attention

to celebration When you return from the depths
we could simply roast chilies over an open fire or
chop ripe tomatoes cucumber squash and onions

crumble feta cheese top with a mafia of black olives
muscling their pleasure into grief's neighborhood

The Text

Creation was going along all right
up through the begats and begats
after the Garden after the tribes circled

thus it came about that women
grew so comely fallen angels lusted
(who fell for whom isn't mentioned in detail)
and this mating happened all around

the women's flowering produced girls
even more beautiful these Demiurgos
went at it again What were they thinking!

From this mating with daughters came giants
with deviant bodies and intentions
that embody your own ogre imaginings

So god suggested to 300-year-old Noah
the only way this experiment could work
would be to float a chosen gene pool
and flush the rest.

Now it comes to this
I have one sister who believes that god
put her here to be the protector of lost cats

another who believes that god's hand
reached down into Florida to arrange chads
so that His will be done on earth *amen*

2006

April in the High Desert: Second Chances

I like to leave the wheelbarrow upright this time of year
its cupped chalice doubles the gauge of late rain's gift
I won't tip out until I really need to use the barrow's gear

Going back and forth I walk shores of that small lake
see how fallen oak leaves and bark start to stain it brown
earthy stuff and leaves of grass to stew a habitat

Cunt-shaped wheelbarrow is how Ginsberg would describe my
yellow wheelbarrow filled with rainwater beside the wet kitchen

I need to stack some wood so finally dump the rain
Probably the last until October Then I set it out again

Free Spirits

It's Full Moon October 2008

Why not get lost driving a 1960s van into
Scripps Ranch suburb find a place to park
by a fence in front of somebody's sleeping

open the second of three bottles of wine
crank the Grateful Dead and the Doors
crawl in and out of the mattress in the back

open the doors dance to Pete Seeger's
compassion to all beings guitar riffs
on the sidewalk passion in our spin
into each other's fit of bodies and grin

neighborhood watch should call the cops
on us who piss in the autumn leaves
time a frozen raindrop in clear sky

moon through eucalyptus fingers
you with wings a purple dragonfly a body
of present moment drunk with love of life

Cuyamaca in Black: After the Cedars Fire

After fire another beautiful composition
of shining black against flat black

remnants of oak scabbard hollows
where actors might suddenly emerge

dressed in the color of burn and ashes
they could wear one black one white sleeve
or a vertical stripe perhaps a white face

will float dismembered through the charcoal
pine balustrade to join an eerie white shirt
magically disappear without a word.

Or several could dress the colors of fire
twirling yellows and orange red they dance

across what was thicket a black meadow
up the next hillside and out of sight
where deer homes people all perished.

the actors could be us in our everyday
going down the slope beside the road
leaving footprints in the clean black snow

carrying cameras to frame black arms
of Kali sculptured from manzanita

bow silent in revelation of antique car parts
what fire reveals of tossed bottles and cans

encounter the sculpture of a melted mailbox
tongue out waiting for a green envelope.

Desire

Of course we can't go on
to wrap naked limbs tonight
Probably never

but we honor desire
the smell of your hair
slow pelvis music dance

As to guilt give it up
The moon does rise
the grass grows on its own

We gasp at fireworks over Mission Bay

Under stars we were one
night constellation eye spawn

I see you
wise woman a black panther
stalking in your dreams

You see me
how loneliness my first condition
converts in the temple of gratitudes

Leaning foreheads
your third eye glitters
our lips an inch apart

The moon rises the tides

Over there the mountainside
after Fall rain there will be
grass a green tide of yes

Pearl Harbor Day 2008

What tonight's rain here means is
grass will flourish the creek will rise
frogs will claw up from mud caskets

most of the weeds that I hoed
from around the garlic rows
will re-root and grin green again

bombs of water falling on my warm shelter
will flesh sage skeletons swell wildflower seeds

bombs of water will dissolve corn stalk skeletons
beheaded for summer's sweet feast

while Tutsi behead Hutu another
fuselage in history's repeated
surprise attack the drench of rain
the drench of blood

Windmill

My young son whirls
in the lightshow
of shadows and sun
slats of the windmill
spinning on the ground

He's gone dizzy
sage chamise mountain
swirl

The Midnight Special

For Leslie-- scripting around your midnight visit as a moth

Picked up the firestick
to lift and roll a new log's
cuddle against flame
 ruby fire whisper pine smell

 Crickets and
a distant drone

into clouds a hundred humans go
strapped into rows of chairs overhead

From overhead
ten thousands of toads
all young and samely mottled
fell on Brignoles France
September 23, 1973.

some speculate UFO cargo
or leaked from a parallel universe

Not all falls of life forms
need a storm

...on a calm Louisiana day 1947
tons of frozen fish fell out of fog

Raining cats and dogs out!
they'd say in Kansas
about gully-washers

With so much unexplained
why not you as moth visiting
just when I wish you here

I push oak bodies closer
with a firestick for an arm
wanting to learn from their ease
into other forms of light

Surrounded by crickets
dogs excited to bark coyotes
star fire burning overhead

Let the midnight special
shine a light on me
*Let the midnight special
shine an everlovin' light on you*

September 2001

She watches the big red-winged wasp crawl
she admires beside the firepit with only a candle
lit so we can still see the wheeling Fall stars

The winged one flies into the candle light
puts it out we pull out the charred insect
look for another match to light the flame

Birthday Party at the River

Driving up river farther from motels not knowing
where we'd end up what do you remember
about the log cabin the painting on the wall
that watched us not making love
where we didn't have TV thank god

A fixed memory was the guy hollering
across the Delores River's noisy ripples
where we floated lines for a trout breakfast:
"Are you from California?" he yelled
about planes ticketed for California
turned into terror we huddling around
the car radio to listen to try to understand

But first the birthday cake miraculous baked
in a raw cabin and after that Mozart on your deck
in a reality different from anyone who came before us

and who we were 10 years, 1 year, two months ago
all be changed after this tower collapse and cake together
I pray this may all things be well I pray

Stone Posts

These days when I catch sight of myself
it's more and more like Otto looking
the time of his life when he began to grow old
and my endearment for him was new.

And in dreams my father looks at me.
I am sad more often and sweetness gathers

even in the stones I lay to gird the round room
in this West coast high desert far from Kansas
ranch outlined with stone posts for fence rows.

Now I rockwork this firebox and the chimney
last of all I build upward until this room ends
with a stone post with a hollow in it
aimed at the sky

Imagination

*Blessings for Dick Noble's
passing from lung cancer*

able to stand
able to breathe
like mud off a windshield.
everything possible again
with an oxygen tank

again he remembers
the scented forests
the stride over high meadows
where bears in their Spring excitement
come out from their Winter sleep
a frolic of cedar-smelling bears

Coyote Rancher

Didn't you tell me once about tracking
a half-shot she coyote back to her den
and after shooting her again dug out the pups
with your hands in the dirt, counting
how many they were and stacking them
outside before you cut off their ears
for bounty they might not even pay for babies?

It's a curiosity and blessing how seldom to find
a coyote's den compared to coyote night music
that you wouldn't want to be without.

Mother's Day, Tomorrow

A live geranium cluster sits in the ceramic bowl
with dried rose petals yellow crimson white.

Beside it the enameled bowl half full of popcorn
a nectarine from the final harvest beside it
a pair of pearl earrings the news folded open
about prolonging lives next to a stack of \$10 bills.

John Travolta has braided the hair growing
out of his nose that's news the story of Indians and
Mexicans fighting with knives at Valley Center High
School and that's not the half of it.

Happy Mother's Day in about an hour and

I haven't sent a flower. I forgot to order coffee beans
The red geranium chloroforms midnight.

Once said I wouldn't want to live without you.
You can't live much longer, but here's tomorrow.

Charleston Grey

Here's a Charleston Grey melon split on its own ripeness before I know. Ants and flesh-eating wasps own it.

Big melons ripen slow. Earlier this month I bumped a Grey with my boot and it cracked open red

and I cradled it down and my family fell to eating.

This Fall melon belongs to the wasps that look like bees whose idea of community payback is to put a stinger in Karen going barefoot out enjoying the grass and Karen went down swollen and unable to breathe

To the Flute Player

Ah Nakai too much piano violin and synthesizer.

That's no arroyo healing song
encoded in echo
from the sides of a red rock canyon.

The arrangers have taken over.

The lung surgeon in military casual
describes how he will open the cavity
from the front, sort of hinge my ribs back
in order to scrape crystallized infection
from the lung's sheath that needs scouring
and cut off pieces that need to go.

He'll schedule surgery as soon as
the drain tube from my lung turns milky

Once my wife caught me believing him
she brought a healing circle friends with sage
Richard to pray for the machine to drain pink

Ken's flute to lift me over red rock
canyon echo fresh breath vision

For Matt, Traveling to South Dakota

I'm proud for you about the way you have dialed forward.

We must be mindful about how and where we transfer our disposable energy. For instance, a Blackhawk helicopter just flew overhead back to Miramar from night-sight training in the Anza-Borrego desert. And I helped pay for that.

Karen is going into her third hour writing a letter for an eight-year-old boy so he can get the same pills after school that the school counselor prescribes and praises in school.

Two wall-clinging frogs, a slug and a poisonous recluse spider have moved into this lighted room. What shall be done?

Nothing, in this case.

We are gearing up for a community sweat for purification. It takes a lot of attention ahead for beauty to surround us.

You are wise to contemplate the Crazy Horse monument and the prairies and history in the waving grasses.

I hear the wildflowers are exuberant this year.

Screech Owl

Screech owl in the eucalyptus
with his night-long howl,
“Am I the only own out here,
is anybody listening? Here is
a nice valley with mice, come
and be with me!”

In the morning, for my work drive
his paint on my windshield.

Having It Both Ways

“Don’t tell this story! (Or don’t tell where you heard it.)”

A woman is programmed to drive to a certain house but when she gets there a heavy wrought-iron gate is closed.

She may know a side road around it. While she ponders a brown-skinned girl about eight years old squeezes through the gate and runs to her. They hold each other and cry.

Lake Henshaw is dry. She stands on her veranda mourning until the ocean rolls up to the door below her. No danger.

She walks off her perch into the rain but doesn’t fall. Having it both ways. “I’ve never had that before!”

Story (note)

When I told my analyst about her
being frightened by our lovemaking
my old friend Jack said yes probably
disassociated in the dark house of sex
our sexuality contexts everything . . .

At his trial the pedophile
covertly jerks off while the prosecutor
shows videos taken from his collection

Body and Spirit

Is then the mind
only in the brain?

the body is full of mind

and the spirit in everything
is all mind

Country Songs

*“I can’t decide if you’re worth the trouble
or if you’re more trouble than it’s worth.”*

*“I didn’t notice that you were gone,
the You I knew
been gone so long.”*

Thucydides Again

Why do people want to go to war?
The leaders and then those young men
who put on their gear and guild for it?

It's the warrior gene, she says
the archetype that possesses say I

the dead say it's the same thing

The leaders they say drive out evil
(unsaid a little war will be good
for the election and the economy)

Any time you point at evil out there
it will come back on you

You can take that to the bank

The Ruby

*I'm going to share with you, she said
a ruby one of those rubies
that fall by the side of the road
named sacrifice*

*the archetype of sacrifice
is the root of violence
and the dream rocked me*

I can't tell you until I sit with it
but the dream had to do with
sacrifice

and the dream result
was wonderful a ruby

Bearings

Once again ignoring my habit of sleeping in late
Spaulding the miner is waiting for me to come out

holding his flower book to name this May's eruption
of rare chaparral rein orchid and ground pink

carrying his story of a pair of ducks in the little pool
he keeps backhoed for critters up Hatfield Creek

When do you think I should bulldoze the road smooth
he says I say it's still gonna rain don't tractor down

my dikes shoveled with a mind thinking like water
diverting rain off the dirt road to sage and manzanita

Next thing you know I'll be telling him how
the night stars flow down such mountainside roads
and dreams constellate while chunks of oak give off fire

Stepping on Snails

It's ok for the Buddhist to train for the no-self
ahead of time but I celebrate the rain on the roof

love of this music and the drumming of the body
and my love's breathing in the next room.

Between rain gusts I go to turn off irrigation
forgotten left on in the fava bean patch
discover snails on every stem snail clusters
weighing down leaves the ground lumped
with snails their trails gleaming by flashlight.

The mandala curve of snailshells the eye
of wisdom on patient sentient beings
who can wait for water two years underground

I step down rows first hesitant at the crunch
then rake off handfuls to pile their small screams
stomp until boots skate on jelly
hands drip with slime my mind fuges
knowing I'm a capable mass murderer

After this plunge into a bowl of betrayal
for a week my fingers flame and itch the skin
splits and oozes stuff, on my palms
atolls of bright islands erupt surrounded
by surf of peeling layers that sluff to the quick
my hands on their own gone Buddhist

Kissing in the Night

Kissing in the night
while a bird still sings

Is it the nightingale?
No, nor the lark

but a silly monosyllabic
Whee! Whee! Whee!

drowned out by a helicopter
crossing under the moon

thuds head east
fade into silence

we shudder to shrug off
nightgoggle green

The Trip

The moon travels an eye above the earth
by day we're a blue marble to her by night grey
light splays black shadows from canyons
spokes of darkness radiate into night sky

The moon travels over seven oceans
whose thighs arouse and lift to her
intoxication the moon shoulders through
the horizon and leaps into the telescope

of your eye the moon will let you look
at her all night but will answer you nothing

the moon rolls over ticking clocks mates
time zones millions of moaning lovers
give off a harmonic web humming the earth

When the moon slides the south horizon
she enters your bedroom bold faced or
shows just the glimpse of a bare shoulder

The moon looks at her casino hand
decides whether to double up or slowly fold

A heart of light swelling and constricting
the moon passes over our own passing
into the breath of clouds sooner or later

Watching the full moon just overhead
under clouds running east hundreds

of years ago the same Basho tripped
and fell backward into the irrigation ditch

got up all wet laughing @ this life's follies

July 2007

Getting Lost

Having given my self over to an idea of love
losing myself for years to a state of mind
maybe there's a gift of second sight in it

I can stand between rows of butternut squash
and listen in on their plans to vine over me

while imagining what manifests in the winds
that circle Jupiter's equator at the speed of sound

Cloning figs and geraniums I feel the tug
of skin where the root hairs begin to push through

Getting lost with you in a mountain dream
we come to a crossroads in the forest

A sign points to Pleasure Basin off to the right
immersion in the Glass Bead Game to the left
both of them voluptuous we choose surrender

. . . And Raspberries in Champagne

*It is necessary that a companion come
for the living potential to appear. . .*

Gather it and put it in the furnace of creation . . .

I Ching

Packing to come to you Shall I bring sage
a flagon of water from the deep well of renewal
The odor from a marriage of pomegranates
and the afterlife Bring word rescued from the arroyo
after midnight Fold cricket sounds into a shirt
pocket A collection of old rocks creek polished

I'll come loaded with ears of sweet corn
purpled plums blushing apples Grit
under my fingernails from reaching into earth

A photo of an ocean sunset on my retinas
a hum in my cells their molecular resonance
with you tuning up for our sacred dance

Shall I rubber-band a packet of grief and regret
and tuck that in the zipper compartment? I'll
bring almonds and gemstones and an open heart

We'll put down a tasseled wine-colored bazaar cloth
spread all these and potency and the present You
point at anything you want We'll laugh about the price!

The Wordless Green

Moss gatherers in the Appalachia
and the Pacific Northwest sacked

17,000 tons of it this year The words
of moss can only recover 1% per year

In that 100-year-old conversation
I already miss some green local dialects

having listened here to the gold
antennae waving from the granite boulders'
velvet of tiny green forests suddenly abundant

after waiting for first rain
in this high desert, waiting these many years

When you lay with me your face shape-shifted
to every goddess of wordless green your eyes
wordless pulled me into the crack between worlds

I love the granite's stories of long inhabitation
love laying them up so moss and lichen grow

surrounding the house where we can listen in
on what they know about time and seasons

The Meeting

The stars tonight brilliant again speak yes
praise to the first galactic fringe of light
from hydrogen encounters setting off glow
around the circle of creation whose center
is anywhere circumference everywhere

right down to the form set in our astrological
wheelings to be born into cellular wonderings

I was a watcher until I shared this earthy
watch with you Pleiades celebrates the smell
of armpits the taste of your temple
awakens the original explosions we

migrate with ancestors around receding glaciers
through eons of polar wobblings Amazed they
looked up while making love at the center we

now come to some star crafted arrangement how
eyes and bodies praise and ignite constellations

The Altar

Having peered into windows at us
ivy now fingers through invisible cracks
in the fireplace stones ivy leaps out
to embroidery on the mantle the mirror
that knows about the ways we are

On a marble table your incense and essence
offered to the cauldron of fire
worship burns sadness into rays of light

In front of you on this sill a wafer
of chocolate rose petals a Toltec flute
a shell you gave me from the first time
in its pink mouth a quartz crystal

placed beside Taos sage and today
add an owl's foot left from a critter's
chewing on it the sharp talons bright
closed around some present moment

Altered States

*"I have had peak moments,
but altered states . . .
I don't know what you're talking about."*

Move from heat to cold and back again
Make love shout each other's names

Listen for owls' music after midnight hook-up cries
Sing blues with who you harmonize

Dream about sifting rubies from sand
Walk through orange trees in blossom
Wend into the space behind a waterfall
so the ions will get you if all else fails

Suspend yourself in tropical shoals
all day face down in wonder

Lean your head back for three sixty of stars
until you fall over backwards

Stare into cherry light from oak chunks
flare your observer eyes it's all cosmic fire

See the freeway as everybody's altar
to burn what grew 500 million years ago

Shout the brain's endogenous orgasm then
Let the big-eyed owl of winged mind go
hunting in the luscious canopy of stars

5.14.06

Juicy Eating

I was just about to call you to say
you don't need to call me tonight
there's not much else to say

then you call me to say I'm calling
because the moon is full the radiance
as with us more than ordinary physics

having been away for Hopi dances
attending to earth songs in moon light

you want to know didn't i get it
where this flight with you was going
you want to know what i want

To gawk through your windows at what
sweet things you came back to this life for
not to be arrested for a tiptoe peek

to know your bones moving against
the white bear your lover in a dream
of passage from death to ecstasy
to know what matters under the stars

You say today you picked a ripe apple
and share with me tonight its juicy eating

Seeing

after first rain
tributaries on the dirt road
dendrites

Getting Free

I'm reading an obituary of a 21-year-old
who rolled a 1988 Cadillac convertible on his way to
culinary class
to become a master chef

I'm listening to the radio story of a composer
who died while in a frenzy of making music for the ages.

I'm filing the funeral home foldover memorial sheet of my
sister's life in a paragraph remembering her as a cut-up high
school basketball star who once scored 52 points
ducking out for a smoke at half-time

remembering how the last time I saw her the oxygen mask
lifted with her grin
they wouldn't let us take off even for a last kiss
which I would have been afraid of anyway

garbed and gloved against the spread of something serious
that can kill you if it crawls over and gets on you (the way
Lyle Lovett says about red-neck-ness: *If you get it on your
fingers it just crawls right up your sleeve*).

I'm amazed how dying goes on without protest marches
without torches and petitions against going quiet into
history

how a friend can say *All is Well* about sitting with her sister
in denial angry with a brain tumor inoperable "*She has
a tap root into that place she has to remember & go there.*"

That place *All is Well* must reach down to dark velvet .

I hear frog chorus in the last flow of Hatfield Creek dying from this year's drought. They will follow the water down until deep in a casket of drying mud frogs survive for years

Waiting.

Now the radio sings "*Everybody's making love for free . . .* "

The Allowing

Summer Solstice 2008

Just before sunset a swarm of bees overhead
headed east sets the honey air to humming

the following silence suddenly
fertile and sweet

Now I think of you as part of nature
no more no less none of my will

Rain finished for the season
songs of frogs have dug into silence
following the underground water

This afternoon only because
I hiked the hillside booted for dry grass
and rattlesnakes was I allowed

Going to root out bull-thistle as excuse

I was allowed the season's last purple
Wild Canterbury Bells' silent music

I was allowed for a season

into your silent eyes
your body's fertile hum

Splendid Mariposa's freckled gold cup

The Pause

found a curved corn-planting stick
just the right size strong branch end

burned from that October Witch Fire
laying right at my feet waiting

Kneel down to plant sweet corn
end of May sun on bare belly and back

light particles that have been waiting
in the sun's core for 8 million years
unbind and reach my skin in 8 minutes

in the strawberry patch a plant inches down
body parts being eaten from underground

I find the shovel shovel for a critter turn up
a garnet for its first reflections about this light
and for my seeing beauty magmatic

crystallized thousands of millions years ago
or only tens of millions years ago in my hand

I shovel to open gopher dark tunnel circuits
Go down on both knees plug my hand

into earth up to my left elbow
jewel in my lifted right hand
solar panel on my back

5.26.2009

Constellations

I lay two night logs believing the fire had gone
with my staying up late but flame comes up between them
they'll burn all night. The night is warm anyway
Santa Ana winds heaving the desert over the mountains

it's warmer at 3 am than at sunset. The whole week
of New Year the wind has been clattering I thought
the year had come in a rain dance flinging sleet rice
turned out to be eucalyptus seed-shots Dry blow

pulled sun-rayed sycamore leaves to clog the creek
swept the orchard and handsized persimmon leaves
orange as their fruit plastered the chicken coop fence

Tonight the astonished moon a day past full. I admired
Orion before she came up and put him to shame. Now
I want to go to my wife's gentle breath lee to the wind.

We were talking about the tribal differences we have
with our neighbors what's this place for and who's alien
it's another Bosnia. But so far when she goes on her walks no
snipers or land mines. Nothing wrong with finding peace
though the winds blow relentless drive everybody crazy

In my night dreamsky numinous lights mysterious
drift overhead crop circles look for a place to land