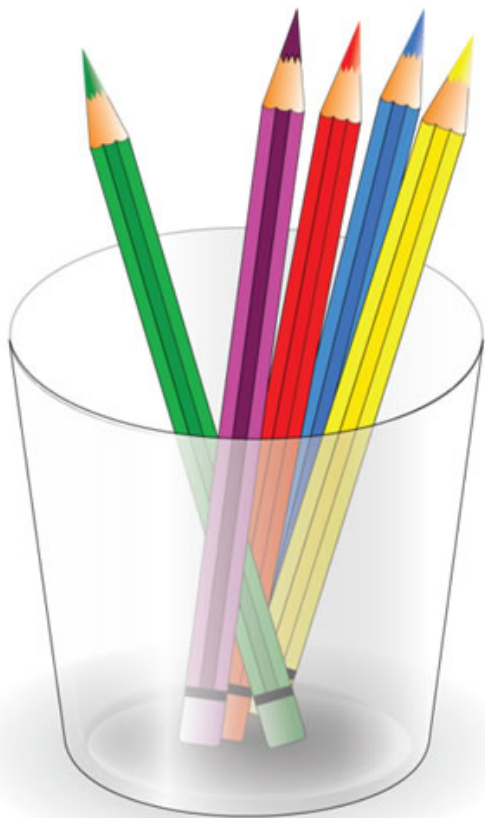


Anthology of Dan Williams



Presented by

My poetic side 

Dedication

All the friends who have come and gone. All the enemies too.

Acknowledgement

So many of the folks on the My Poetic Side who inspired (tolerated?) me pretending to be a writer.

About the author

Retired electrician who nursed a belief he could write about seventy five years of trying not to be like everybody else. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, lived all over that state when not in seven of the other ones or Bayreuth, Germany. Two wives, gone now. Beautiful Daughter in Southern Ohio, truly light of my life. Was briefly and unfairly in the custody of Cleveland "justice" system. Took a fair stay in Marymount psychiatric hospital, a much more productive experience.

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The Violin Man

The tired eyes reflected in the river water
let him see the reason why he was afraid;
they could see no life worth living without her
just like what the man with the violin said.

His tired ears don't hear the songs that hold the answer;
it gets drowned out by cries for help he thinks he hears.
They remind him he never really had a chance there,
so now the reason why is crystal clear.

Tired brain puts off dealing with it one more time;
just means another piper won't get paid.
Another poet will have forgotten what should rhyme
with what the man with the violin said.

Unknown to Me

Unknown to me

Remembering how
just hello made my heart race,
your smile intoxicated,
eyes that defined blue.
Intellect taken by storm, overpowered;
it seemed as emotional adversaries
had brokered a cease fire.

Before you were unknown to me,
pleasures multiplied into passion
previously unexperienced; mesmerizing.
Feelings like a storm that, ever increasing,
created the imagery of real love which
when crashed on the rocks of reality
turned as fatal as any other addiction.

Before you were unknown to me.
Then heartache of betrayal,
soul crushing false accusations.
Lies repeated endlessly,
vows proven only worthless whispering.
Beliefs revealed as counterfeit,
then life sentence of bitter loneliness;
born before you were unknown to me.

The Whisper Tree

The Whisper Tree

He floated free that small warm day,
and stands accused of poetry,
from underneath the whisper tree.
Its limbs lean down close, as if to say
his only chance has slipped away,
gone.

Like happiness after failure tears
your pride from you and lets you find
the rows of heartache left behind
by others who refused to hear,
who have been gone ten thousand years.

Gone like the smile that pity stole.
Like puppet strings left hanging loose
by hands and brain that could not choose.
The heart as dwarf, the mind as troll;
stringless puppet with no soul.

Without the hands the puppet slides
too far down for healing light.
Though he tries with all his might,
no wires to help him stand upright,
he finally quits and soon decides
that crying goes on when cutting is done.
While far away the assassin watches,
and the fire inside exactly matches
the burned out place his fear is from;
No phoenix from this ash will come.

No memories of the finery,

no angled light on sleeping face
in this broken empty place.
These missing crooked lines will be
the last thing that he does not see.

Gone, like the words to happy songs.
The puppet knows his time has passed.
The dance he danced has been outclassed.
Gravity was just too strong;
will make him dust before too long.

He knew all this before he wrote his tune,
the whisper tree was quiet then;
He was again about to try it when
he floated free that small warm June;
lasted too long, over too soon.

The sadness wins, the winter steals September.
He tries to see ahead for reasons
but it looks the same for many seasons,
as it has been as long as he can remember.
This will be the last thing that he sends her.

And nights, no matter how he tries,
the images so fiercely staring down
bring the frightful smile, the menacing frown.
Weary and weak, he still sleepless lies,
no phoenix from this ash will rise.

A Loss Like This

Bloodied by passage
through the imaginary rubicon
dividing emotion from logic,
leaving you stunned
at the intensity of grief experienced.
Trying to divine how much tolerance
of bending before breakage ensues
leaving pieces watered by tears,
fed with fertilizer of heartbreak,
grow into excuses for surrender.

Unrealistic Inclusion

We congregate at the complacency alter
while force fed this insidious ideology.
Near the end of the beginning of concessions
lurks the beginning of the end of just in time.
Final touch left of unfinished business;
too little ventured so nearly nothing gained.
First stage of small effort, by failure preceded;
no time for success amongst decades of fiasco.
So, this is the sad legacy of humans.
Remembering all that is better off forgotten,
forgetting most of what needs to be recollected.
Stubborn refusal to recognize the plain truth
while pretending utopia exists.
Dreaming of peace, yet mishandling wars
while clamoring for unrealistic inclusion
can this be the merciful end of this race?

The Rememberer

I see now why redemption never comes cheap;
if it does not cause measurable agony, it is not real.
Atonement lost its luster when discovered to be weaponless;
powerless against Destiny.
No amnesty in this horizontal gravity.
No centrifugal to facilitate or enable escape...
remember?

I see so very few genuine heroes trying to stand
defiant even though still unsure
what is actually under these tyrant's hats.
Trying to stand on principles long ago proved impotent,
with mental pockets full of useless currency.
Truth, disheveled by random betrayal scenarios
leaves morality, breathing poisonous air;
remember?

I see good heartedness
beaten bloody again, defenses ineffectual.
Loyalty staggers out from its corner each time,
sporting cuts and bruises and the shame of it;
some that will never completely heal.
All the same, though never knocked completely down;
only pitifully applauded or embarrassingly ignored.
Remember?

I see other tired souls as calloused as I am,
stung repeatedly with so many mean lies.
Weakened values of so many significant pursuits
left behind or let go without penalty or remedy.
Viciously corrupt media's skewed reporting
produces truth by repetition alone,
carrying water for the utopians; polluting free choice.

Remember?

I see reason pummeled, ignored, or both;
practicality and logic overridden.

Common sense nearly eradicated
by politics of fear and invented crises,
to assure the sheep stay fearful and complacent;
accepting being disarmed, accepting ridicule,
sheared of resistance by misled status quo.

Remember?

Train of Thought

There was a train that left last night
without a single rider;
seats were dusty to the touch and cold.

Long ways from new, still not yet old,
like something hard was tried there
then been given up without a fight.

There was a train that left today
along beside the unused road,
over tracks that can't be concealed from here.
To a place that aspires to be revealed as where
we were 'bout to cause an overload;
been left behind, off on the side, along the way.

A train arrives while we stand crying
the passengers, all children,
who itch from being so long confined.
Their laughter false, but cleverly timed,
the traveling has them bewildered then,
as maybe one they trusted had been lying.
The train of thought that goes down south
used up my tokens, was soon derailed.

Steel tracks removed, wires severed,
before one last sad excuse could be delivered
why love has failed?
Vows unwritten, poems unspoken, love had no chance.

Godspeed Came in Last

Running with the wind while against the current,
winning although godspeed comes in last
can cause reality to reach false conclusions.
Too often such splendidly dishonest assumptions
are merely thorns in the side of reality.

Not remembering is not the same as forgetting,
forgetting is the curse of intelligence.
Intelligence often only hampers recollection,
recollection consolidates memories,
memories all too often are best forgotten.

Lives of our friends can contradict our longevity,
longevity offers more chances for failure and pain.
Failure and pain sometimes can overpower us,
being overpowered can thwart recovery,
recovery often requires not remembering.

So Tired of It

Clumsily limping now
along washed-out pale beach strewn
with the bones of now futile hopes
and unrealistic dreams.
Plans so carefully planned out and mapped
now mock in skeletal silence.
Even the sand seems sad.
Where is the so-called solace of time?
Where is the worth in persevering?
When can the hurt be felt to subside
while the cruelty of loneliness rules?

A Prostitutes Heart

Viewed from such an unsteady perch
an unbroken yet poorly drawn line in the sand
fails to indicate what is theirs
or separate what is mine, only dividing,
then birthing cold grievances between adversaries
and acquaintances, sometimes even friends.

Finding discrepancies in what matters,
some tied and tightly bound
with wire wound strings
till no hope of progress exists
brings failure of even tightly closed fists,
these where no solace is to be found
can foster dark hatred of this life.

Waiting for imminent heartbreak
where any future appears ever more grim
has worn down an already sad store of esteem.
Leaving unfulfilled ambition dulled by frequent mistakes
while hopelessness, by hard depression, is invoked.
People's will to persist too diluted
by stresses too numerous to accurately list.
Satisfaction watered down by unceasing strife,
while arguments for pessimism not so easily refuted,
like aging prostitute's that have never been kissed,

Something Unnamed

A piece of bread,
swelled by floating down this stream till
when the crust bursts at edge of it
resembles both a bird
and when the current turns it;
only the bird's head.

Even innovative imagery is flawed,
storm tossed tones again miss being defined;
windows of invisibility look out on futility.
Calling something unnamed is still giving it a name.

The bird and the bread continue
unable to modulate its descent,
becomes saturated and the image fades.

Price of life

promises never intended to be kept
heard at weak logic's promontory
funicular lies expressed in
loud whispering of an amateur alienist
bartered for stolen nightshade concoction
a little of which helps
a lot can which can kill
misspelling cryptic name on random headstone
reminds that the price of life is death
says the sad sack president
not really meaning it at all

Underestimating Eugene

Eugene had a normal enough head at birth;
made it thru the opening just fine.
But it grew too fast and over time
no hat would fit its' twice normal girth.
He pulls a great shirt over it when winter is early,
falling snow collects too quickly
on his head like cotton, thickly;
bearing this for twenty years has made him surly.
It gave him special abilities, it's true
to easily see some things crystal clearly.
Always certain, well almost, nearly;
but with a strange list of things he could not do.
He could not walk near too near an edge;
to lean at all usually prefaced a fall.
Could not be ubiquitous when it was needed,
could not peek around a corner unheeded,
from behind his unnecessarily articulate wall.
Though he persistently reproduced his literary half-smile
when each of the reviews were read,
none ever noticing his excellently longwinded style
what critics remembered was that oversized head.
His sword became dulled and his penmanship unsteady,
his tune became locked in a minor key;
he too readily was excusing mediocrity,
as if all that is clever to read has been written already.
In amongst the hidebound bundle of blue lined yellow sheets
where onomatopoeia quietly plays,
among often bittersweet cliches
his undercompensated ego is prone to overheat.
He makes us wince with indifferent styles, our boy Eugene.
Ee wants to quite badly, but usually can't
come up with much better than a second-class rant;
so he wears out vindictive, bad tempered, and mean.

They believe he is harmless but don't actually know
if the barking that clamors for most of the night
is unnecessarily alarming or worse than his bite;
a poignant and heartfelt written lament, or part of the show.

One Side of Still

All of the straight trees stood looking
as trees will
since before time ran so slowly
off to one side of still.

I guess I knew they would protect me
from the Sun's questioning
and the river that had arrived there
by dead reckoning.

And the branches took my hands,
and the water thinned my fear;
there is a small sturdy safety
I find sitting here.

One, close by, was badly angled
with disregard for gravity,
yet was still willing to listen
to the silence from me.

The Weatherman

The wind again is trying to sing
the wind again in vain,
and as its fury peaks
the winds' frustration is the rain.
I have noticed this, I have shown you this,
when you ask, as if in wonder;
if wisdom is as wisdom does
or merely brother to the thunder?
The thunder of the rain, again,
in silent shame
at such colorless amusement
wetting so indiscriminately.
Today my friend is not the end
of yesterday's confusion;
today extends the frail amends
made to that over-used one...
the weatherman.
Today we think the sun is sleeping,
or at least not quite awake;
though up there brightly, shining it still seems
there must be some mistake.
for all the same, it's getting cold enough
for resolve to freeze and break
Today the sky is not quite cloudy,
still could not be described as clear;
distant clouds are soon forgotten
tho still menacingly near.
Yet he still beams too optimistic,
partly, chance of, maybe so,; using prophecies like knives of reason
he never really learned to throw.

Four Children

Four Children

Four children ran laughing,
only three of them for real;
the other maybe felt he did not need to
as he suspected he may well have been lied to
about what had or had not been revealed.

Four children sat waiting
though only three of them really cared
about what would transpire.
Fourth child was only tired,
only closing his eyes when he dared.

Four children began crying
but only three of them meant it.
Fourth one whispered out loud
how they had taken his cloud
as if they were the ones who had invented it.

Four children learned to dance then
though only one of them very well;
his simple nuance to begin the routine
was an almost effortless pirouette
before the curtain so unfairly fell.

One child was warned that his life was in danger,
in response pulled music from thin air,
correctly deduced and grasped the situation.
Could have won any game that he wanted to,
yet was always to the others seemed a stranger.

Four children lived lives led by unyielding destiny,

some blown far off course as only unbiased fate can.
Different compass points presented for each of them,
different eyes and ears would serve to teach them;
but all four grew up to be the same man

The Student?

Faced with compulsory learning
blinded to what actually is,
numbed by waves of propaganda;
such a seemingly friendly warning
delivers a backhanded salute.

Pince-nez confronting reality
misses what he never actually had;
freedom.

In a virtual instant it appeared,
in an instantaneous instant it vanished.
Only an illusion of liberty made to deceive,
as a such sinister arabesque often will
in this childhood of tyranny.

Prelude to usual aftermath or equivalent,
lived so many times before.

While poisoned air and wasted water,
anathema to survival
is everywhere.

Over Your Shoulder

When you take those late night walks to ease your mind
for different air, a different melody;
if you turn around and look over your shoulder,
what do you see?

Is that a life of unwise choices there behind you?
Do your unkept promises nip at your heel?
Are you starting now to understand how those
you left back there must feel?

You know I've had a late night walk or two myself,
so I know that you and I are much the same;
we think too much and look too much
never seem to really see enough
and still we have not given this thing a name.

So that ever-present shadow
you think is following you home
is the reflection of a hundred failed affairs;
any opportunity that passed you
while you looked at what is gone
just turns and stares.

Foolish late night walks that
leaves you weak and stupid,
a thing without a name calls rhyming mockery;
when you turn around and look over your shoulder,
what do you see?

By Destiny Caught

The wren committing sparrow crimes
in torn up trash is glad to find
little grown-ups made up signs
on yellow paper with blue lines.
The careful lion commands esteem,
his ferocity not always what it seems.
roar of defiance now seldom rings;
he sleeps alone, perchance to dream.
The man explores his waking thoughts,
should wait for rest but he cannot;
for fear of being by destiny caught,
selling what he so recently bought.
The wind approaches carefully,
as if afraid what it might see.
Or worse, ignored, by the whisper tree
it diminishes and turns to flee.

Can You Wash Me?

I have stains upon my person in the ink of sadness,
permanently marked on ruddy surface, worn so thin;
could you save me from these signs of madness,
can you wash them from my skin?

I have holes worn in my spirit from constantly rubbing against time;
no longer a contest, less than a race.
Could you replace the wasted hours, redraw the line,
can you wash this weariness from my face?

I still wear the striping from the cruelest of whippings,
as punishment for character that I somehow lacked.
I begin to lose my grip on worldly things;
can you erase this telltale striping from my back?

This she left me and thus cursed me, timeless vengeance;
left to weather sleepless nights, possessions scattered.
Replaying songs of how she left, wondering where she has been since,
as if this somehow even mattered.

I have her likeness seared on bone inside my skull, upon my brain.
Keeper of the sanity gate tips his hat, collects his toll.
The smile still haunts me, heart is ache side out again,
can you wash her from my soul?

Could you just let the fire consume me,
or can you wash her from my soul?

Always Never

Nothing can remedy loneliness once beloved is gone.
Nothing can soothe the burns of frustration;
longing for a thing that can never be restored,
or verified as ever having existed at all.
Here are the sacred words of never and always,
the absolutes in their only valid usage;
not tossed casually in with mundane things.
Not wielded so carelessly by many weak thinking humans.
No, these are sacraments of eternity;
never knowing happiness and never knowing why,
instead always, always wondering.
No descent into any inferno will relieve him with substitute punishments;
not ever.
No failure, however spectacular, can again be used to club him numb;
not ever.
Only infinity will ever again embrace him.
None of this will stop him
from praying to gods he does not believe in
for an insanity that will not be granted;
he will remain on edge at the abyss, abandoned even by gravity,
unable to fall in.
Even death might not clear from this poor soul the memories
of the few who loved him despite his many failures,
fewer still whoever understood him,
nor prove release from one single thing.
He will revisit Distress and Dismay at home;
even there no hero will save him.
No omnipotence will forgive him,
no time will heal him; not ever.

Squeaks

All I see is getting worse
it robs me of my sleep;
the people of the preamble
converted to sheep.
In countless rising numbers
to glowing screens they link,
to be so lowly entertained;
to be told what they should think.
This scourge infects their reason
affects their apathy,
though what is right in front of each of them
they plain refuse to see.
They sing this song so many times
till brain assumes it true;
when the sharp edge is later revealed
will sheep know what to do?
These many times duped citizens
spoon fed what to believe;
manufactured crisis, invented emergencies,
invisible cities with invisible thieves.
who have stolen from us logic
and will steal our hard earned rights
from these fools who have been turned into
witless sheep that will not fight.
Twist away from so called news
ignore these media freaks, remember;
the only wheel that gets the grease
is the one that squeaks.

Amelia

You saw how big the world was for her,
counting through the things Amelia tried;
inventing ways to save her.
Happy just to be near her
to gently comfort when she cried.

You felt your luck the better witness,
standing back as Amelia danced.
Off to one side, listening in,
you felt each slide, each perfect spin;
stood perpetually entranced.

Dizzied now of head and heart
by the prettiness of Amelia's smile;
wishing her small and clever dance
would allow you even one small chance
to press against her softly for a while.

So you clutch these hours hoping
not to be the one Amelia forgets.
Each time she turns to you
gray seems more like blue to you;
she smiles, and gracefully pirouettes.

Then, feeling foolish as time is expiring,
you watch as her steps become unsure;
her wind spun spirit cries to you.
Her eyes become confused and blurred;
another reason why you should run to her,
and so you do.

Cry of The Hermit

Child of my illusions,
carry love in your arms.
Daylight disguises my seclusion.
Friends around me
hear me crawling.
They've know my losses
and if not dullards, witnessed my pleasures;
seen rocks falling
in on my fortress.
It is only a matter of time;
the walls will crumble,
the verse will stumble
under the fusillade.
Still, the only thing that can kill me now
is me,
and I have been here before.

After the Ending

Then, after the ending was this;
perpetual continuing in spite of it.
Hallucinations manufactured by reality
in the disturbing quiet of it, until,
first little river that comes around
washes me along with it where it is headed,
wishing me strong enough to endure its wandering.
Before long it and I will be gone, evaporated.
Me, the classic sucker for a pretty face,
conquistador of forgotten charisma,
until that got to be so out of place, me;
deranged as only a fool can be.
Sifting too long through alleged evidence
has marked me as an inventor with fraudulent patent,
warrior with a fraudulent sword
pulling away layers of thin skin.
Getting not close enough to where cognitive energy is stored.
Yet, I stood in a spot where mind's eye was filled,
where the tangled felled trees accused me of being simple.
So, still, if I am to be left with only one skill;
let it be to be awed.

Dawn Comes

We hunker down and shudder
at how pale the dawn appears
as it leaves the city of evening behind;
we were not looking, so could not find
any reason there for all these tears.
All of the sadness worn here,
thin overcoats against hurricanes
to protect our shoulders from the storm,
fail to leave us feeling warm;
unhappiness remains.
We hold our voices back from cheering,
afraid of being proven fools,
left blind within the heart's surround,
music playing that makes no sound.
What's not been lost cannot be found,
dawn plays by these rules.
But in among the foolish people
a spark glows every now and then;
a soul that reaches can be touched,
a heart that listens, just that much,
a dawn that does remember when.
We held our spirit up before that wind
to let cobwebs be blown away,
to dance for some undetermined while;
like an unexplained but honest smile,
one dawn before a brighter day.

Choir of Angels

Insisting on charging blindly into our deserved oblivion,
blindly watching while arrogance corrupts;
discipline shunned like belief in our likely demise.
Staggering, stunned by our own foolish ambition
until only folly and stupidity interrupt.
Choosing to ignore proliferating warnings,
denying even what can be plainly seen,
listening to a choir of angels sing off key.
Glistening like diamonds and really as worthless;
waltzing around where our egos have been.
Falling from the precipice that was always tenuous,
we once landed unscathed, and persevered because we could;
now we only just seem to stumble, time after time.
We only just seem to proceed intact; instead
actually become the thing we most feared we would.
Yes, this is a cynical and mostly depressing opinion,
but brought on by real fear of defeat.
Caught on the snags of our fenced in shortcomings,
all the greed and the lies and the poor judgement
swirling around at our feet.

Complacency Dares

Before the anger is finally gone
the promises will all have come undone
till only faltering remains.

Starlight will have lost its glisten
no bride will speak, no child will listen;
what is still to come will likely stay the same.

Before the wiring vows came all unwound,
before catastrophe had made a sound,
and long before his blindness came;
he was a clever weakly smiling man
who understood why the child ran,
but disliked him all the same.

Coat sewn of joy only she could see,
contentment smiling so elusively;
complacency dared.

But the dice fell poorly, Betrayal walked
his friends grew silent, enemies stalked;
the child still stared.

The ball was tossed too fast and low;
he had never started, so could not go,
and his replacement won.

He turned to see if somehow she would look,
but his carelessness had closed that book;
the child was gone

So before the rage can be diminished,
the turn completed, the anger finished;
the pitying first must cease.

This suffering can be controlled,
he is not dead, he is merely old;
the child must be released.

Gargoyle of Dreams

Smell the sea;
stand barefoot in the warm sand.
Let the water, like my dreams and your visions,
run into and out of your hands.
There were once two men inside me;
one was younger and a dreamer,
the other older and was not.
They otherwise were equal.
Or so it seemed until they fought;
For the young man was a dancer,
danced upon the old man's head,
still when someone finally turned to look
the scene was cold, the young man dead.
The dreamless had gone missing,
ran away in fear it seems;
of what he'd done and what he hadn't,
now for a while he'll have sad dreams.
My pen slide error slows,
still a watch dog's terror shows
in many unsung songs
left there for you to see,
such worthless hyperbole.
Admire your handiwork,
you may have killed the dragon,
believing to be righting wrongs,
but if you drink that which will kill you,
and bad taste remains after you die;
you are the same as I.
Still I am a little older,
and may die sooner than you.
Perhaps you'll do better but what a joke it is how
the greatest of my dreams had the saddest results.
But I guess it had to have;

as the only peace I know
is ugly and a whore.

Tigers Tearing

There is a dance made from the angles of years of our time,
unlike the measured walk the confidence of youth bestows;
it is the waltz of dying.

While we dance, our honesty is being measured against our crimes,
resignation watches as recognition grows,
leaving another child crying.

He writes of tigers tearing at him, help that never arrives,
as only some small fraction of his fate;
of blows still thudding home every now and then
as mere details, surprised to be still alive.

Still to endure torment and punishments; still running late;
still to know all that is coming, just never sure when.

This day is marked as cursed, like the rest since then,
already weak facade is slipping.

Fatigue, that poor parasite, rudely cuts in.

This instinct to give in is in its simple way convincing;
the scale of life is tipping;
doors to other passages remain shut to him.

Instructions urgently whispered, right out loud;
surgically altered listeners pretend not to hear.

When the sandcastle virtues are inevitably washed away;
the murkiest decisions can seem perfectly clear.

The hardening of resolve has lent to him small eloquence,
while the scale of his belittlement paradoxically has grown.

A terrible shock, a fact of life, unavoidable consequence;
if it was not actually an accident never will be known.

Like iron under acid, some long ghastly demise,
stumbling away but get drawn back yet again to the whips,
to impress, somehow, a god he really never did believe in?

This waltz with your own weeping is seen by mostly curious eyes
as what once had been gear driven now has a belt that slips;
by then you had given out way more than you received,
and failed yet again in spite of many furious tries.

At the Bottom, In the Pit

When we investigate a case of Gluttony
thinking what you get is what you see
with your over riding sweet desire
to consume much more than you require;
a weakness described by the size of the plate,
gets stronger each time at an alarming rate.
Then we must deal with the sin of Sloth,
like selfishness but cut from heavier cloth.
Laziness that invariably leaves you in bullshit;
gone way past knee deep, in up to your armpits.
This desire you will not control for the easy;
the "I" that goes looking can see only "Me".
Here is inserted an explanatory word
why Ambition's name has not been heard;
turns out she had no real desire to hurt you,
seems somehow to have switched sides, is now a virtue.
We'll cover this tawdry dangerous ground because we must;
when it is Prurience you dance with, your sin is Lust.
If it feels good you feel you must do it
if excessive pleasure runs right thru it.
Her kisses will smother you though, and then some;
in hell they will kiss you with fire and brimstone.
Do not Envy one the mission of reporting on this sin,
smells bad up close and can't account for where it's been.
Drooling over fortunes and properties of others
with more pocket money and better looking mothers.
You think it's because they are just luckier than you;
not just some everyman, green rather than blue.
Thought by some to be the worst, ungentlemanly Pride,
who so stridently maintains he has nothing to hide
has a matter of excessiveness in discipline.
He could use a whole lot less of this in him;
demands that you nevertheless too deeply feel,

and in hell will get you broken on the wheel.

The closest call to be included came from Anger, here defined
as frustration/aggravation uppercased and underlined,
can be useful if somehow properly directed
but this proper path is never easily detected.

Wrath may be explained, but never rage;
no ill-tempered paragraphs on heaven's page.

Before the lights come up to end the Sinner's Dance,
we tip our hat here to the sin of Arrogance.

While somehow not thought of as deadly,
she will bludgeon ones last attributes as readily.

She leaves behind the damsel Fallacy and her cleanly severed head
as often as any of so-called deadly cousins ever did.

At the bottom, in the pit, near the pot of bubbling Avarice oil;
justifiably thrown into for all time, left to boil.

For representing a none too distant relationship to Greed;
are lines of lawyers hand in hand, taking ten times what they need.

Broken souls they twisted bled out the fees that let them live so well;
so get lined up to witness as the bastards burn in hell.

Would Be Wordsmith

Fumbling along in the would-be wordsmith way,
expecting to find perception knocking at the door.
Pretending to be impervious to such obvious cliché,
trying to remember what analogy is for.
Dodging and weaving between too long and too fleeting,
hampered by detours around conjecture and speculation.
Overtaken by lesser scribes, overconfident and self-defeating;
trying to adjust your pace between overreaching and hesitation.
Stopping for the water of even slight recognition, yet unfound,
forging on ahead without it; determined to overcome.
Rerouting definitions and embracing sublimation rewind,
assuming any moment now your efforts may be undone.
Falling back on wisdom learned the hard way;
hoping to realize the profits of tenacity.
Pretty clear on what you think but unsure of what to say;
make it clever or just make it pretty?

Yet Another What If

What would it be like to come upon you suddenly;
to not be simply shrugged off, not so easily ignored?
After all this age acquired, still I seem to know less.
In what vault is kept what you say I need to confess;
where the lost twenty years of memories are stored?

What would it be like to be by you suddenly confronted?
Heart in boot, would I mumble any recognizable greeting?
Would spine binding let old joints hold me?
Are you here to return that which you stole from me?
Yet another what if; would I continue retreating?

Years unabridged by any contact cannot be forded in a day,
instantly forgetting what has so endlessly been rehearsed,
breathing apparently seeming to cease completely.
Mumbling words poorly weighed before spoken,
remind me of vows by you already broken.

Would I feel better to tell you how much I despise you?
Your false cruelty accusations repeatedly burn me,
memories of lies ignoring the actual still concern me.
Memories of being by you hated, despised, so devoutly cursed,
with assets and punishments so unequally dispersed.

Long years of therapy while growing old alone.
Two decades of honest effort cold heartedly unrewarded,
along with yesterday's trash so easily discarded.
So many long nights with sleep stolen by regret
make me disinclined to forgive or forget.

Slow Road Dance

A destiny crafted troubadour
sits the saddle of the one before,
takes the longer road if given the chance.
Can see only illusion through wide open eyes,
reflecting honesty and surprise;
as the lady by the roadside began to dance
could not remember what it was he had come here for.
There were children under the whisper tree,
near the spartan rooms for rent.
The tired man on the wonderful horse
showed a wire loop, with soap and water mixed;
their imagination caught; their boredom fixed.
It was his and their idea of good fun, of course,
as each bubble was ever so slightly different.
As the lady twirled ever so mysteriously with the bubbles,
he never once wondered what freedom was.
The ones that were landing so near to her
without breaking remained crystal clear to her,
were as warmed by her smile as he was,
revealing that she was the one he had come here to see.
It was not quite a promise, not really of romance,
as if the ballerina had designs like that.
His weakness for her had strongly doubled,
perceiving with each bursting imperfect bubble;
he had been deceived before by signs like that,
so he rode on, too cynical to take the chance.

To Pamela

Because whatever else, there's this...
I am not the one to solve all problems,
I'll leave that to another with more sense.
I cannot see the answer to the questions life proposes,
I have not the skill to repair that fence.
You are not the sole proprietor of my problems
or the un-named inheritor in my will;
all the same you know the secrets of my insolence
and will likely continue long after I am still.

Wrung Dry of Pointless Vanity

The most taxing and demanding of the credentials you needed
was the ability to not appear to have dismally failed
when examination of facts does not make it clear you have succeeded.
Your story must always appear exactly as you imagined it would,
as if you had improved your attitude as you say you have,
as if you would have quit this years ago if you thought you could.

You must grieve again the identical refrain, the same incomplete passage,
like music of our lives played repeatedly without properly resolving.
Dissonant notes played in wrongorder at barely foot-tapping speed,
pages with handwritten notes expressing thoughts still evolving
around a place self-pity can often be seen, hands twisted till they bleed.

Wrung dry of pointless vanities, unnecessary ones will be bled from you.
Things said by you in anger most times end up causing pain for you,
but body blows will soften them while sacraments are read to you;
they will no more cause your death than can the thunder cause the rain.

Is life to be defined as being anything more than robotic, futile?
Flailing about, no theory trusted, nothing strong enough to hold you?
Seeing days pass where hard-earned knowledge is jettisoned,
making way for stories maybe easy to dismiss, most of the time,
like so many of the stories that have repeatedly been told to you.

Gunslinger

I am a well-known criminal who cannot clear his name;
the one who tries to track me down, he is the same.
With a move smooth and fast that you can miss by blinking,
with no time to change your mind
or to change your way of thinking;
before the reason is quite clear,
well before you're ready, the gunslinger has come.

Driving down from working town both hands in plain sight,
you know you are a steady man and a steady man has rights;
but before you can say you've done no wrong,
before those rights are read to you,
the gunslinger has come and gone, and you weren't ready.

Now, I don't know from wrong or right,
I am just a working man and cannot gunslingers evade;
this is not a problem I have made but still
I try to do just what I can, what seems right.

So I must gather the townspeople; I must spread the news;
stand near shaky platforms and sing gunslinger blues.
I must arouse these citizens; tell them the new rules;
we need to know gunslinger ways and use gunslinger tools.

My words fall flat, unheard, my warnings are unheeded,
in illusional safety, falsely secure;
protected by a story tale, no fornications needed
repeating lies what they have been sold, quite sure that
such things could not happen here.

Driving out of danger town I use one hand to steer,
my other one will fire back if you know who draws near.

I leave a town of fools behind, hoping to escape
this trap the gunslinger has laid, but it's too late.
I am a well-known criminal who cannot clear his name;
the one who tries to track me down, he is the same.

The Lines, part one.

Indelible ink intricately traced
From the start unevenly spaced,
like the ones now on his other face,
these are the first lines he sees.
"What line is this that seems to not be moving?"
he asks each passerby in turn;
they respond the only way they ever can
with propaganda lines they have learned.
He has been to wars in fiery skies of unknown worlds,
behind enemy lines he hid and desperately wept;
heard epitaphs, seen gauntlets hurled;
seen cowardly midgets steal while giants slept.
longwinded parallels, never properly aligned.
Other fools did not notice, other liars did not mind.
Still the closed spaced lines kept on coming;
ironclad contracts never properly signed,
They say;
"Sir, can you move to your left a few feet,
then after that shift slightly to the other direction?"
We stupidly obey and meekly wait our turn
in the charade named 'For Your Protection'
Following along the lines of different ages;
eventually getting them to about that spot,
where index and the ending are not on different pages;
listing less of What Is than What Is Not.
He tried again to understand the thinking,
like he could with better eyes, in better times;
back when the caution lights were merely blinking;
when he could still read between the lines.

The Lines, part two

Pick any two spots and connect them, you get a line,
so you read and paid attention, learned some new words.
Unremarkable in itself and only brought up
to determine the proper path to point you
towards lines that can help you get your verses caught up.
Oh, you can be smooth enough, often times be clever,
with almost silent comments perfectly timed.
You know how little separates always right from never,
how the two are rarely perfectly aligned.
That is not a good angle your head seems to be leaning,
it is dangling too far down and off to the right
because the angle of the line you have been spooling in
is too little of today, way too much of last night.
It is what the lines the gypsy saw in better hands can tell,
it is where the house of serious eloquence fares well,
it is where I found myself when the city named Arrogance fell.
It is what the lot of us pretend we are here for.
Wishing to be a clever gentleman
with measured humor, careful voice, an easy wit;
while revealing and explaining and advising.
Square shouldered and well centered men,
knowing how to squeeze a word and make it fit;
without making it more than mildly surprising.
He finds it right in front of him in other people's faces,
right where the shape of things first defines the time.
Alongside plagiaries and bungled quotes,
in carefully bundled piles of cliché notes;
he always knew he would never cross that last line.
Back where storytellers' logic cannot be wielded;
where the slanted ray of manufactured sunlight shines.
Finding poor rhymes in thin cold alphabet soup,
arranged like triplets in the double's group,
trying to avoid such poorly engineered lines.

Until it Wasn't

Curious belief in such obvious charades
is all too common; much too widespread.
Collected vagaries powering vicious fictions;
along this path the sheep are misled.
So easily cowed by gloves over fists
fed soggy celery mistruths and deceptive legumes,
wait patiently in line to be ham fistedly sheared;
leading tiny lives in their miniscule rooms.
Corruption as tactile as stucco on cement,
government lackeys drink from their plastic chalices.
Appliances of justice show the scratches and dents
from neglect and poor maintenance practices.
Thinkers raising their hands, offering up answers
are shouted down as open mindedness mustn't
even be granted an ear, or a voice, or soapbox;
fair-minded dissent was allowed until it wasn't.
The sheep mob together, competing for food,
grateful for the scraps of liberty granted
by would be tyrants, elected dictators, congressional fools
forgetting what it was that they originally wanted.

Ends of My Arms

The ends of my arms are more like handles, less like hands;
unable to pull desires in, push other offered hands away.
Afraid of what other people will say,
I have evolved this sad display while
glass orifice seems to open, slipperier grows the sand.

What writing on what wall predicted this particular disaster?
My surname in the thick of it, and brothers
who practiced not the tricks of others
whose principles' life quickly smothers
seem to slip away faster and faster.

Leapfrogging tyrants amid predictable heads and tails,
many of them have been so spoiled,
congressional aspirations foiled,
temptation around their necks is coiled;
deflect towards evil as democracy fails.

Just for me an intervention was selected but such unkindly input rankles,
my handles arouse in some an unreasonable alarm.
Despite my obvious charisma and peculiar charm,
persist rumors of people I had personally harmed,
accusation's thinnest trousers have fallen down around their ankles.

Crimes against me not yet somehow resolved were seen as threats to them.
Acting on omens, reacting with their toys,
fail to realize this intricately grown up boy
stands no longer indefinitely in longevity's employ;
my story will stain history before news of my demise ever gets to them.

Out on the ends of my arms are still more handles than hands,
unable to grasp with, easily pushed aside.
Still afraid, sometimes I cower and hide,

my scarcity of tricks not already tried,
hourglass orifice seems to open, somehow slipperier grows the sand.

Uncertainty

Complicated phrases and difficult rhymes,
collected and forced into a memoir.
Assisted suicide of dying ideas,
till any instant now the truth won't overcome
those invisible trip wires across understanding,
or hope washing away in the gutters of ambition.
Difficult phrases and complicated rhymes;
Some plagiarized or barely adjusted
allow outright theft of vernacular and catchphrases.
Sorry congregations of often unrelated arguments,
investigating glass onions and artificial enthusiasm
sired by unrealistic admiration of some tainted Jesus.
End of a beginning of sorts for enlightenment,
dashed on the sarsens at the bottom of failure.
Inspired by only intermittent sunlight,
attacked by hurricanes of disappointment,
fired in the poor flames of exact recollection,
with only ashes to elucidate where you have been.
Returning on the trackless trolley from nowhere,
off in the distance the horizon waivers.
Nothing is certain, not what you thought.
Reassessment is not suggested, it is mandatory.
Complicated decisions in difficult times,
made without an interval to ponder or reason.

Aging Captain's Lament

Aging captain of a decrepit ship
detects no stirring wind anymore.
Sails drooped, fuel diminished,
seeking as always only some small safe harbor,
yet the horizon remains unnavigable.
Half a mile deep here yet still inadequate draft.
Sighing, he stares, fixing on useless oars.
He has sidestepped or weathered such storms in the past,
but this one seems more resolute.
Waves of heartbreak have lapped over his sanity, wetting it,
not compensated by any calculable contentment
they subside ever more slowly now.
They leave negotiable debris on some unreasonable beach
to be sifted through by no one anymore.
Constellations can no longer be depended on,
stars obscured by cataract logic, too reduced for guidance.
With compass demagnetized, directionless reigns;
yet even anchorless, must press on nevertheless.
Obliged to rely on dead reckoning, so often untrustworthy,
thought undercurrents have mostly misdirected him.
Coldness that cannot be dissuaded further confuses,
why by such terrible wrath has he been so often taken?
With wheel and rudder not answering,
barrelman blinded in a fog of remembering,
any more poor decisions risk broaching.
With no capstan to pull you back up straight,
just being lost is no longer an option.
Being the best of friends with the worst of luck for so long
makes this circumstance unsurprising,
knowing as he does that when the winds finally come
they will be harsh and sarcastic enough to capsize.
With wrong calls, sharp gusts, and failure driven gales
surely threatening to culminate in his demise,

is it the surface or the bottom that he seeks?

The Former U.S.A.

They bring empty promises and well-rehearsed lies,
delivered with a smile, mimic an understanding nod,
pleading ignorance while remaining disguised,
without carrot or stick, wielding an unsparing rod.
Rampant deception that pacifies the sheep
spews from edifices of corruption on foundations of sand.
Visions of founders found too inconvenient to keep,
forgotten in the now quieted fife and drum band.
Ideals for honest folk to live by, so carefully written
discarded by revisionists with ambitions of power.
Worshiping idols who by the greed god have been bitten,
dismantling white houses day by day, hour by hour.
While the sheep graze contentedly, willingly unaware
of how easily and completely their minds have been fooled,
mollified by propaganda till they no longer care
that it is by these criminals they will end up being ruled.
Once this quagmire of new slavery is fully imposed,
by the time the sheep have figured out how,
by the time their treachery is finally exposed,
we are left asking too late "Who will help us now?"

Compared to What?

Don't you have to just choke down the irony
of spending all your energy here on earth,
having wasted all your eyesight trying to see
what every little concession might be worth?
Electricity above or below a zero-reference line;
a certain amount either way shocks the same.
A grudge, held on to past a certain time
wears the spirit till only bitterness remains.
Diagnosis of redemption, often sought, seldom comes complete;
if even one tiny apology is missing, all the rest refuse in spite.
Just as honesty is unreliable, and integrity tries to cheat,
just like sheep too easily content need a better excuse to fight.
Just as you cannot fathom joy till having danced with heartache,
try to decipher a symphony without first hearing a simple song.
The hardest part to get to is usually the easiest part to break,
steering right is easy when no one is trying to steer you wrong.
Events are larger or smaller after being held side to side,
measured with what gauge and as compared to what?
Asserting all your words are true is a sure sign you have lied,
causing adjectives once open to be rudely shut.
Can a slew of new discoveries atone for how much is lost?
Do enough averages add up to one superlative?
Does what it is worth really relate to how much it actually cost?
Does what we believe reflect what we actually have to give?

Chance Of A Kiss

To where can I send my regrets, pretty dancer;
that I cannot again tonight waltz with you?
Back then odds were a better for me,
we would practice steps we well knew,
dancing eloquently, I remember
how the moon itself shone entrancing.
Ring the bells; keep the ones that ring true.
Then I would walk you home, right on my way, pretty dancer;
trying to describe how your smile simply enslaved me,
whispering how perfectly your eyes defined blue.
We would walk past small cafés and shops,
first stories easily swapped that too early December
where music first heard yet familiar never stops.
We rang the bells, if one sounded best, I would ring it for you.
It was around those rosewood tables,
trying to tweak romance in the Bad Timing Café,
you first took my breath away with that smile.
Those very best of my memories were created that way,
no awkwardness as I recall at this.
Seeing you again has caused me to reimagine you;
that happiness, a tonic to me; and just a chance of a kiss.
We rang the bells; keeping the ones that rang true.
To where then can I send my regrets, pretty dancer?

Arrows Pointing In

He saw the arrows all pointing out except for one,
near where the small man sits, alongside his river, seeking comfort.
If these trees are not actually whispering to him,
only one different arrow reveals this to him;
it is, as always, too late by then.

He tries but fails to stand erect, the weakness wins;
connecting bowstrings were suddenly severed;
again, he thinks of losses too easily composed.
Then, he cries for her, for the smile he will not see ever,
so still he sits, beneath the trees, alongside his river.

He thought he had been careful, tasting virtue before eating it,
having a proper landing zone before he leapt.
Gauging the wind to see how destiny was steering,
as passion clouded, vision only weakly clearing;
what was revealed seemed close by, yet nowhere near.

Being seen as unreliable and known to lie,
people quickly wearied and quit making for him excuses.
He was then ruthlessly abandoned, coldheartedly left behind,
seeking the only thing that he was sure to never find
among the carefully drawn rows of crooked lines.

He saw the arrows all pointing out except for one.
Knew the names of each, had made an honest effort to.
Too late by then the hook of arrogance had snagged him,
futility took him by the leg and viciously dragged him,
like a hundred pounds of memories in a twenty pound bag.

Like many small fans spinning quite slowly,
a lot of air is moved but does not amount to much.
His thoughts are like that, spread and scattered,

beliefs collapsed from being so often battered;
that arrow found pointing in was the only one that mattered.

Life as it is, at least for him, like the center of the earth;
unreachable and uninhabitable even if you could.
Keeps expecting things to make sense that never will,
she has erased him from her mind, yet he loves her still.
When that single lonely arrow finds its mark, it will be the one that kills.

Death Of a Monster

The gargoyle of Suffering, having gorged on my defeat,
rages when I am found silenced.

Feelings drowned, thoughts incomplete,
intentions unknown though still intense,
now what shall the gargoyle eat?

When the sun deprived the hours last,
fistclaw fates had taken hold.

Hatred was the only a weak shadow cast,
having grown tired of getting old.

Frozen, becalmed, dispassionate,
emotions wilted at my feet;
with grief lined passageways collapsing,
where shall the monster eat?

This vacant shell of reasoning
on the borderline of being alive;
teeth of night have picked me clean,
how shall the fiend survive?

So now let time emboss the sage in me,
confusion be dissolved,
pale away this wires-crossed image of me
around which such sorrow revolves.

Cast iron mind once defined as intellectual,
insight arriving too late.

But now long suffering is over, not yours anymore;
you can leave the monster to his fate.

Like a Hangman

Have you found that the edge is almost always not the end,
believe the color blind still dream in black and white, as they should?
If rearranging time itself could have succeeded?
These woods are full of darkness and the world is full of woods;
can keep you from the healing sunshine you so needed.
Left behind you became slowly emptied; left to unwind you became gaunt,
less a prisoner than escapee into the wasteland of alone.
This biggest part of your defeat was easily predicted;
you should have looked, you should have seen, you should have known.
Now no life will rise up out of the ashes amid the ruins you now haunt.
The true cause of your notoriety will be much harder to detect,
defiance of the normal multiplies your aggravation.
Your sins against yourself go mostly unforgiven, wondering
why yours is the only blackened damaged soul that Satan
has sworn to find the time to come personally to collect?
You are weakened by your errors, and easily turned to fright,
cannot explain just what it is you are so afraid of, still,
fear can grip your thirsty throat just like a hangman.
Leave you wondering what raw materials your life is made of,
left unsure of what plans are wrong, what moves are right.
But can you blame the demons for the damage that self-pity has inflicted
when theory says they cannot actually lay hands on you?
Why do others pick up remnants, scatter ash, and continue on;
are demands on them not the same as demands on you?
Or is it that you turn things till they match what you predicted?
Finding your heartbeat at its best is an uncertain feeble thud,
right from the start you poorly judged how good your dances were.
Misinterpreting that Miss Destiny had insisted on one more waltz,
you should have known all along how cursed your chances were
of being cruelly swept away by the cold waterless flood.

The Mindshark

The mindshark must keep thinking or it will drown,
dragged deeper every minute by its own weight,
confused between what is up and who is down;
harshly reminded there is no deciding one's own fate.

The sternwhale has its conduct to be considered,
one must remember what the neighbors just might think;
such a tawdry swim might still be reconfigured,
but this ship has no modesty will still probably sink.

The logic frog can live on land, or many different kinds of water,
and jump from Reason's lily pad to some moss-covered artifact.
How solid the surface he jumps to never seems to matter.
when he is gone where he has been cannot be tracked.

Then there is the ambitious octopus in tailored suit,
who can clap his hands in between his picking of your pocket.
A dangerous and deadly foe, misdiagnosed as merely cute;
his gate was open till over-reaching came and locked it.

The schools of poet fish still too often swarm in unison,
talent pools behind the waterfall they dream about.
They bank and turn in unison, regularly seem to think as one;
no one reads, no one listens, everyone seems to shout.

Out of Choices

What of the horrible diameter of my disappointment,
the round shade under where my resolve cowers, beaten?
Reality of it eating like piranhas,
revealing me down to my repaired bones.
There is a clarity in defeat missing from triumph,
which often grows murky as it ages, tarnish gathers.
Finishing dreams well before you awake,
seeing the end of it reaffirmed, you weep.
You aspirin down the joints and warm the tendons,
hoping to temper sleeplessness with lavender and white noises.
Moon and sun rise in turn so obviously yet random,
you shoulder the globe to proceed, fresh out of choices.
Still, the circling of futility continues, orbiting my poor new day,
some definite wetting by some imaginary rain.
Spirit stripped, subtracted from by wasted love;
tears bitter enough to shrivel leather escape, again.
It is nuance and detail that escape the successful,
who need everything that they keep till it is gone,
want to digest things before they are eaten,
wake bright and early on judgment day alone.

Crescendo

So hard to make reason sound like it came easily,
as frequent blindness prevents looking very far ahead.
Last inserted, first after all, still before the prelude,
or after the crescendo has faded instead.
Peculiarities have become commonplace,
how frequently unlikeliness has ended the show.
Motivation has dwindled to apathy,
innovation's boat having sailed long ago.
A penslip or two can account for misinterpretations
often detrimental, seldom for benefit, mostly profitless.
Existential thinking unlinking logic from spontaneity,
disconnection from harsh reality has been confessed.
Honesty remains confused about the truth,
integrity has fallen under the wheels of ambition.
Fidelity fell off of its moorings and crashed silently,
perseverance has been procrastinated unconditionally.
So, Hah! I say to these imaginary dioramas,
I mock the political house of cards that produces them.
Without many more years to experience these pseudo utopias
I can find precious few excuses for them.

How To Grow Old

While sleep evades,
facts sneak up on you from your blinder side, news from dust;
Growing older, not getting older, was the way
of course; leaving everyman with little to say;
Underlying predications directed you to stay,
even after being for the second time betrayed.
After your spinsteel has lost its spring, weak with rust,
you finally figure out
the uselessness of Why, the senselessness of Answer;
The off key signature of too little sleep, muting Logic and confusing Reason.
You think you have suffered quite enough, thank you,
except soon will no one be left to walk that plank, only you?
Right before Spirit is unceremoniously yanked from you,
your spiraling imperfect pirouette leaves behind a painful dancer.
With no set of oars in your ragged sailboat
the end of sailboat season finds you stupid and adrift,
trying to figure out just how little time is left of each day.
More futile than worry, as deadly as isotope infection,
tough doubts from your old neighborhoods' poorest section
point the angles of your beliefs in different directions.
Getting older, growing older, it ends the same either way.
Perchance births and deaths are really mere milestones,
marking time in a much longer run,
odds are fair to good that this is possibly the case.
Electrons will continue to be measured and traced,
batteries discarded but with a different type replaced.
Still, obviousness and certainty demand to be faced,
last song worth dancing to has begun;

Failure of Fields

How long does failure remain, staring in one's face, reminding?
Yet, denying where your mysterious redemption comes from?
Where does one get to appeal life's jury's awkward finding?
When can one turn and finally know what it is one runs from?
Where is this Atonement, so expensive, to be bought?
Or is it, for the ungreedy, only need to be relearned,
then again forgotten, like almost every lesson taught?
Though prayed to often enough, most calls are never returned.
Why only now does Clarity not so readily conceal herself?
Why now, when so redundantly comes enlightenment?
What frees you when finally it is belatedly revealed
that we survive not because of, rather in spite of it?
What sadness still awaits, being witnessed through the veil?
What hammering will forcibly reshape my spirit,
until again for the last time, circuits fail?
One lament left with only Lucifer able to hear it.
It is way past just being too enthusiastic of a cynic,
putting it mildly when remarking we are all doomed anyway.
This business of being alive is getting harder to mimic;
when the field will fail again is still too soon to say.

So; may the silence of the ether gather around you as you rest,
may the grudges you still have hold of be left behind.
May the ills of our world deem you unworthy of their test,
may the contours of your spirit remain well defined.
Let you be reminded over time that I am still your friend.
Let a sunbeam overwhelm shadowy thinking,
Let your world remain a beginning right up till the very end,
may your sanity cease to require so much tinkering.

Reiterate the Beginning

Life is apparently easily bored with me,
warnings sound, headaches pound,
some from foolish head banging against objects unimpressed.
Some simply because destiny dislikes the way I dress,
other times because I refuse to see.

One commander of my demons is alcohol,
some small chance with it again we may descend.
But that face is too scarred from the last time we tangled,
commander knows this time he must be more carefully angled
as I have since learned how much to better pretend.

When aching abates, these warnings are easily dismissed.
A dangerous race, a pretty face
will find me famously short of any serious protection,
as usual unsure of route or direction,
while believing it can easily be won, and she can easily be kissed.

Now spinning almost out of control, then careening
off of harder things clocked at unnecessary speed,
like a runner seen as sinned upon or sinner.
Left behind are the instruments we will likely need,
while the bandleader tries to reiterate the beginning.

Yes, this old lament has been put to music at last
as phonetically there is nowhere else to go
except to intone out of key if you must
chords written and played too softly and too fast
by the proprietor of the last chance Texaco.

The Why Begins to Show

Many tiny surfaces, making it hard to stay aware.
Life after life crashed here, leaving all but identical debris,
shards, except dull, from being walked on so long;
Or maybe that is just what my one eye chooses to see;
while a simple tune begets its complicated song.
Where is this line you think to get your new start at?
How far is it from one that you first scraped in the grime?
Will it depict a far ahead point not yet charted,
or only a reminder that you likely will not have time?
If all that can be left behind already seems to by now has been,
what is still to come, do you think you know?
What if it is colder, or even duller than what you are living?
You get the where, the when, but seldomly the how,
by then the why, way too late, begins to show.
I drag out the motherless child with his excuse for everything,
coldness penetrates inside the spirit wall to foster malingering.
When the unkindness of merely being alive abates,
each much decide how far to travel, what is useful to bring.
Where, in amongst all the noise, is a melody that needs singing?
Am I writing only because I am so distressed?
Behind some need still not confessed?
Do I embellish what pain I do endure?
Are none of you certain, is no one here sure?

Imaginary Hero

Another imaginary hero
while trying to part his sea of doubt
collides with his own fatal weakness
hidden by the subtle current,
and drowns,
climbs a mountain unaccompanied but unlike Moses
comes down empty handed.

Still seeking enlightenment,
memories buffeted by ignorance,
until blinded by ambition,
still startled by how frightened he is,
succumbs to interrupted sleep.

Collected though isolated thoughts,
sprawled across narrow passageways;
these pepper him in fearful dreams,
wake him confused and angry.
Inhibition neuropathy paralyzing;
letting doubt rage on in his brain.

Sorry now about past inhibitions,
yet shamed by forbidden behavior embraced.
Tries in vain to leave this labyrinth with no look back,
thus abandoning the only detailed excuse
he could conceivably use as defense.

For so long he had thought himself valiant,
articulate, speaking only as much as needed.
Clearheadedly fighting off disappointments,
immodestly careful of the missteps.
Yet, still stumbling along reality street,
turns and walks away.

Almost Enough

Knowing almost enough about so much imagining
caused the cellar beneath his blindness to be filled
with being nearly able to see for himself every last thing;
way off on Was, closer to Were, won't budge on Will.

When you have learned truth the hard way, a last and mostly futile gain,
by then you've hardened in your ways, you are set and adamant.
Wearing that hat of correct, seersucker suit wrinkled and stained,
deciding if you could do it but won't, or would do it but can't.

This is scarcely talented work, parts are barely good, others trash
yet remains beyond the reach of you to criticize or debate,
graded instead by judges one can make no deals with except for cash,
where one person sees blemishes, another sees an endearing trait

Cleverer

Articles in my head, glimpsed by many,
read by few, remembered sometimes
not even by me.

Characters insufficiently described
unless captured between the lines.

Invented stories, episodes only imagined,
paths never actually taken by these feet.
Shoes unworn although well polished,
bourbons untasted though freely imbibed,
affairs with actors I will likely never meet.

Pity the unhappy architect
who from the big city has moved
to remove himself from the distractions
so that creativity might improve.
The reasons he has not hit the big time,
the reasons his failure remains;
the reasons why he will never be cleverer,
are all one and the same.

Coalescing these notions, arranging these notes,
baking these ideas into edible bread
still eludes me.
So do any of these recollections actually represent
any the articles remaining unread?

Matrimonial Misfire

You were so coldly keen on settling it
attacks flew elliptically around me, rude dangerous harpies,
no time for proper defense to be mustered.
Eyes and heart and brain can no longer be trusted,
they all believe that I still love you

Our full throttle left-handed attempt at life misfired, of course.
We will not be so easily fooled again, we say as hope is disappearing,
Clinging to scraps of it,
we sink down till we find the self-pity endearing,
scratch our names off the most comforting of sources.

An unlikely twist of providence embraced my attackers
my logic dismantled becomes vinegar in a wound.
Those same forces that once lifted now undo me, mocking
emotional ramparts fall easily to ransackers,
untimid hands pick my veritable pockets.

That bastard fool Integrity is losing ground,
humbled yet again by love's schemers conniving,
we pried apart small grievances till infection set in,
hoped for reserves of resolve never arriving;
no respite from the grief can be found.

Already Spoken

Did I forget to include you as one of the few that I confided in,
you rightly ask
Am I by rule then automatically required to, just because,
say what that sad Troubadour whispered to me?

Like steel proclaiming it cannot be bent
like fish continuing to struggle against what plainly is the flow,
like stamped and addressed mail that never gets sent,
like growing old, only to realize just how little you know.

Or can you not rightly surmise that it was pain that I excluded you from
because I loved you?
Don't act surprised, you knew that long ago, didn't you?
I remain inspired to protect you in whatever way I can.

I hand carved the failure that my jutting pride arrogantly protruded from,
carry around self-hatred like a spearman with no shield against a sword.
Days marking my slide are much more closely numbered, will soon become
too marked by weakness, no more brainwaves left to record.

You, with those flashing bright eyes that defined blue,
forever closed to me now.
The fires grew ever hotter, no matter which way I ran,
burning up the explanation I so badly long to know.

More shoveling through the aches and pains of life's wintertime,
sadly blinded, the promises that could be have already been broken.
Some hoary wickedness insanely practiced by some devoid of rhyme,
or rhythm, believing all important words must already have been spoken.

There is no back room of heaven, no cubicle in hell that these things are decided in;
It is mostly random,
like wirespring clockwork kept unwound except for special days;

profound disbelief sent out as maybe came back as never.

Eight Thousand Sunrises

Was wetted by a different kind of rain
when I turned twenty three;
though wind driven sideways angle to it,
it fell straight down on me.
Soaked as I was, I soon realized
eight thousand sunrises had shone on me.

Before that year the facts are murky.
Forgotten or been struck blind
by tables topped with fresh poured drinks;
fear of what I might find.
Fear that what I think I have now
is the same as what I left behind.

Empowered now, too late, with bifocal logic,
that sees right through sunshine or cloudpain,
I am no longer impressed by weather's mood,
do not respect it as I should.
Each past day gets twice replayed again,
just with a different kind of rain.

I thought with time I would not drink alone,
I thought I would not somehow fail to see.
Forgot to wind the proper clock and now
fifty thousand suns have shone on me.

Nothing To Say?

Pulled from the stories of others like me
who lived better lives, better told;
I see my reflection in store windowpanes,
the face that looks back has grown old.
Why am I leaning so hard on today
while forgetting the fact of tomorrow?
Your yesterday folded my brain inside out,
retuned disbelief into sorrow.
We need to look it in the face
before our colors fade;
I surely do intend to keep
the promises that I made.
I try to smile as your time passes by me,
and wonder as mine slips away;
are you thinking the same things as I am
or do you really have nothing to say?
The signals that you might be sending
are encoded too much to be read,
by the time I can figure their meaning
we both might as well be dead.
So goodbye, you will always have a small place
in a heart grown erratic now, irregularly timed.
A tearless smile trying to disguise a sad face
pretended joy I will likely never find.

Hard Winter

It is going to be a hard winter this year,
It is going to be a pretty hard winter, I fear.
Friends have up and flown,
some are much more permanently gone,
going to be a hard winter this year.
Three thousand three hundred and seventy-one times
I swore off losing sleep over you who abandoned me.
Maybe when you get older you might miss me plenty at times
when we both have only one leg left to stand on.
Some few times less than that, I appear in my own dream,
asking again why do these winters keep getting colder.
My plaintive unheard cry devolved to primal scream
over things I felt she knew, so never told her.
It is going to be a hard winter this year,
there is a bitter cold cringe bringing tears
making you shudder and flinch thinking back
before your fortress first came under attack,
when the coldest of winters held no fear,
but it's going to be a really hard winter this year.
Finally, he ends this off key, hard to follow rant.
Some how he felt you might just want to know
that the story can, but the storyteller can't
the tune can stay but the piano player must go.

Love Vanishing

It is frightening to be so in need of forgiveness, while unable to offer it.
Are you ever saddened by sleeplessness, with its images of what is real,
so not even your manufactured filters can alter or are able to soften it?
Or have you been, unlike me, allowed somehow your rage to heal?

Could I walk with you, through a memory or two, never once laying a finger on you.
if I promise not to cry, could you somehow find a smile for me?
Could I sing to you one of a hundred love songs, hoping the melody rings through,
or is it only the hat in the dustbin of the past that you find in style for me?

I much too often know too much in way too short a time after
the real usefulness of it is worn out from too much heat, too little kindness.
The crooked brainwaves, left ignored, up in the mind's dusty rafters,
stuffed there by unthinking fools, each with their own little blindness.

A page of the binder left behind by everyday people, meant for her,
is filled edge to edge with a drawing of her, barely within a borderline.
Something outside of this scribbling has many times sent for her
and left a path of dead petals at random disorderly times.

Till she is back where she never has been, but has always meant to go;
there are paragraphs slipped in between, and at the end where none should be.
Fortitude has none to be looked at, Gratitude has none that it will show;
If some puny Jesus parlor tricks could get her there, then there she would be.

Well then alright, sure, maybe one day resolution will come down to me,
like hearing the lightning and seeing the thunder, in the big city of Alone.
The generations of fools' Ancestors shake their heads, having found me,
and left my soul and resolve stripped to the bone.

Hell Got Here First

Had the sun set there and then
everything would have been all right,
course fragments of blue sky
where still exists unclouded insight.

I duck and I hide and refrain for no reason,
I am the fool in behind each imagined restraint.
I feel for the troubadour carefully hiding his anger
at fools who consider him a saint.

Jesus, your name has been squandered,
your reputation as a straight shooter is in debate.
Your address comes up on too many invitations,
sentiment arriving, as usual, much too late.

Strapped in to what the free world calls happy living,
constrained by what your heart too easily believes,
you stagger and solo and feel erroneously grateful
for pressure bitter crying only temporarily relieves.

Why are you sighing with pathetic resolve?
What are you refusing to admit right out loud?
That all your best moments have turned into rust?
That your small circle of friends is one pitiful crowd?

Heaven is an invention of human indifference,
an unwillingness to face Jesus at his worst.
A race, an adventure, a chance experience?
No, Hell got here first.

Same Old Way

There is a protection in being habitual, methodical,
even for we as dust motes to titans.
Less room for mistakes, less theoretical,
repetition breeds simplicity, but stifles nuance.
Still sameness, of it, after a while proves defeat for the spirit;
we cower casually, slowly rush to be frightened.
Igniting only futility, trying to keep your brain warm,
the right tool in the proper place, skillful hands, a thing of beauty.
Small control of violence makes you high.
Reach for a caliper, find it right where you measure these things;
what was, when you got there, time it took.
How can function be returned to electrical life?
Processes run down, spiraling to a stop, abruptly quit being habitual.
Songs you've known by heart for decades slip away
till only one method remains, can be a deadly serious choice
between sword or ruby, breath or sleep;
no amount of sameness improves this chance.

Well, No Wonder Then

It is curious how, like our housepets, like sheep and lemmings,
we can be counted on to behave.
Blindly steer a course known for frequency of shipwreck
even when nobody ever seems to get saved.
We should be furious, instead, ignore from where this is hailing.
We are all too unfamiliar with the slowly boiled frog
whose fate has been cinched long before his peril is detected,
all avenue of escape is by then encircled in soupy fog.
Run your knives along the edge between the contents and the bowl
when upended, congealed soup spills out in one piece on the table.
Bare traces of the frog remain even with the spill so cold,
Frog could have escaped but was mentally unable.
Pacified by whatever you see on so many screens,
passing on details while misleading about the source.
If this is that, and that is so, then it must be what it seems;
Well, no wonder then, that must be it, of course
Unless this machine's tolerances change dramatically very soon
or some savior sent to rebuke us amazingly appears,
we probably end up whimpering, weakly protectively cocooned;
only escape is all of us together addressing our fears.
Always question authority, do not automatically respect.
Remembering our heritage, stand and have your say.
Even well dressed tyranny is not that hard to detect,
exercise what few liberties still linger along the way.

Last of the First Amendment

Centuries of precedent go unappreciated,
wheelchairs of our fathers pushed down staircases.
Ignorance of the masses breeds tyranny,
This once glorious nation overcome and in stasis.

The tyrant needs first to silence dissent,
objectivity by mandated opinion over run, dismissed
Disarming the populace the logical next step
so that targets of repression are repeatedly missed.

Imaginary Utopias built on the droning of propaganda.
False virtues named diversity and inclusion
crammed down our throats by media so biased,
preaching unsupportable conclusions.

Repeated often enough, anchored by greed and corruption,
weak kneed media reinforces their inclusion
till eventually a feint smell of truth can be perceived
masking the reality of the illusion.

Everyman's version of the issues in no longer considered,
only the ruling elite's falsehoods are deemed relevant.
Our father's wisdom is discarded, claimed no longer valid
with the demise of that very first amendment.

If You Could See the Wind

What if you could see the wind,
watch each puff and gust,
each layer a different color
as they swirl around each other,
swirl around everything?

Now as vision falters at even pale earthly sights,
gray becomes the only scale that you see.
If you could see the wind that's coming for my soul
would you even try to save me?

Different winters all at once around me,
vicious blizzard cutting thru thick and thin,
would you call out from behind to turn and save me
if you could see the wind?

Minutes blown away by thunder's detonation
produce the fiery blast we all can see;
roof tiles pulled loose,
heavy shutters ripped free,
even thick trees bowing humbly
as we should be.

Only the wind is revealed rather than concealed by smoke.
What hues would summer breezes be?
The kaleidoscope hurricanes exploding
then vanishing again until new swirls are born;
The wind is only regrouping, undaunted,
the belief that it is vanquished is unfounded.

It can no more be seen than electricity
it is only the effects we notice, heat and light,
scorch marks left while escaping,

though invisible to unaided sight,
except my eyes can see the voltages
and her eyes can see the wind

Bianca

Morning entered slowly for this sun blinded Bianca,
artfully dodging only slightly
as if to avoid being even momentarily decisionless,
before the same sad uncertainty of another day.
She hesitates, uncertain.

We see how bitter and defeated she seems,
ever only able to approach the abyss.
Cold hearted sworn duty not to jump or be shoved
yet uncertain if it could not be done some other way,
Bianca weeps.

Questions never properly addressed by her,
left to respond within wind and whipping rain,
answers swimming in thin mud of obscurity,
not particularly lost, yet by Bianca cannot be found
by anything but tempest.

Past noon and air decelerates till unclear,
shaved irony appears almost sorry but is never late.
Even the weakling relief evening offers
is better than merely lingering where you have never been
till night falls, somewhere outside of reason.

After the light is again flushed from the surfaces
darkness can be misleading, misleading can be cruel,
blue moon as ineffective placebo.
this day has had no inspiring crescendo.
instead just gives up and fades to black.

Inches From Madness

All of the mazes having ever been navigated
by all the geniuses who found their way so easily,
have been spun around, made more complicated;
what we are shown is nothing like what we paid to see.

The pristine Miss Commitment has re-arranged her time,
now believes she may have a spare lifespan to see you.
Still, her attention is divided along an ever changing line;
almost as often, she would just as soon be free of you.

The intricate balance, just to the right of polished ego levers,
where does one go sideways to let more urgent couriers pass?
Is it across the road from Always, or right down the street from Never?
Or in small doorways where "Eventually" meets "At last?"

In the beggar free buffer zone, barely an inch away from madness,
unpaid brickman left out quite a few, the road is otherwise twisting.
It just had to fail because they just had to test it
using instructions made up mostly of confusing listings.

The wall of information is misdirected, built too high,
trying to see we stumble backwards and fall down.
Too many choices, not enough chances, only one try
to figure out exactly what the wall might actually surround.

Reality has a slipknot around your neck most of your life.
Wireless circuits are known to stretch the truth from time to time.
Although Destiny has no memory of taking seriousness for a wife,
words spelled the same except for one letter no longer rhyme.

Berserker

Interrogating the air around his adversary's nest,
showing abilities one does not casually confess
to him, beastly is more, humanity is less.
Amazing transformations begin and end,
reason and disbelief fail the test.

As the night watches, the man with glazed over eyes transmutes,
pushing ahead of him his ancestors' stone.
Once fiercely compliant, almost alone, circling old age;
now prowlers and ruffians prefer to stay away,
they believe the night watchman has the Rage;

Though skinned by betrayal, half deaf, showing bone,
if he bites his tongue and tastes the blood, the Rage will come.
Beelzebub follows in the Berserker's tread,
twenty or more by the end of it dead, and for penance
for weeks he must be motionless, emotionless, alone.

Reading about this precisionless violence, identical in too many ways
to easily take for fable, or dismiss as from a long gone age,
you feel the Field compress around you, almost certain
to leave you very much different than it found you.
Aware of this, you end up facing front on this sideways page.

Away from the protection of not caring one bit if you die,
back where the rage will not submit to purge,
where trying to explain why one will, one will not
fall in to the anger where brilliant and crazy merge,
where our friend the Berserker calls home.

Fierce Longing

Since when is fierce longing non-combustible?
I feel the need to forgive for the raincoat it will dress me in,
keep some of the storm off of me anyway.

I sweat and try to beat back down the anger I feel
against things that have so often contradicted me,
against too many songs left unsung for no good reason.

Life's calendar has me poised at late autumn for some time now.
Winter may kill me as the coldness seeps thru to bone,
rhyming wheezing going on for many years.

Just as nothing of real value can be long possessed by one,
if it were, it's worth would plummet towards none;
life itself, clung to past reasonable, becomes poor exercise.

Why does time hold from us wisdom till its application little matters?
Why, if I can will myself to think, can I not will myself not to?
Backwards walking into the future, wondering why.

Hammer to string releases notes to fly to ear nearby
but sadness always climbs on for the ride, you pay the fare;
weak tea of having no one to make adjustments for.

Like the spider back from being sucked up by the vacuum,
the remorse again comes climbing up your leg;
you sigh and edge closer to the asylum.

Width of Sorrow

The width of the sorrow
measured by the length of the commitment,
times the height of the passion
can bring hysterical out of the depths.
No well-meaning empathy seems sincere,
only small relief is had from tears,
no consolation seems adequate.
Goodbye my love, goodbye my friend.

Fallen Giants Land

Ten times as tall as speculation, head yet not in the clouds,
their shadow circles crossed again some ways out past the horizon.
Reassuring with their gaze,
remnants of a more heroic age,
having outlived a million written pages.

Across the seas, fierce visages weathered numberless hurricanes;
from their elevated advantage, over ages seen as righteous,
Integrity and Honesty, first two giants stood.
First hand carved from the hardest and prettiest wood,
then stone, to outlast all else, as real giants could.

From solid onyx, granite, and hard marble; best that could be procured.
Perseverance leading them, more giants appeared,
From hardest part of that stone and bronze Determination came,
Hard Work, tempered in ambitions flame;
Loyalty and Fidelity sharing a common last name.

One took longer than most to get carved out, be accepted,
but then stood taller and paled the rest, we named it Honesty
surrounded it with unassailable walls, we thought,
only worked when practiced by all,
one of the last, and hardest, to fall.

A few more, no less formidable, took form, grew identifiable.
Though wind and rain, Fidelity and Courage became recognizable.
Our giants could deny Nature itself, or so it seemed,
though little was known of how giants were so purposely schemed
until the first one was found to have decidedly leaned.

Tenaciousness, with sculpted sides, thought to be indestructible,
single mindedly reaching for what likely now will never be grasped,
which made these seemingly permanent values vulnerable.

With futility denying continued effort, progress stalled, then passed.
Of the giants, Integrity would be the last to crawl,
Yet somehow was nonetheless the first to fall.

Keep Me from Sleep

Some things break when spun too fast,
on this beautiful planet it happens a lot.
Tiny silhouettes of real love are sometimes
by this reality accidentally smothered.

Nothing must be either something, rather than it is,
or exactly the same as it is not,
yet must end up finally being one or the other.
This confusion is the child of Ignorance and Arrogance.

The straightest edge of Destiny should not be used
to figure your chances,
will make your spirit have trouble believing, even in itself.
Futility after a while simply parodies acuity.

As problems go, things that interrupt my feeble sleep
can be explained by how many years they have cursed our kin,
who would not look or would not see,
fearful of what they might find.
Life appears as a contest with fate they cannot win,
while wheels of integrity, lacking traction, sit and spin.

No Trick to This

There is no trick to this, but in the thick of it, it sure seems that way.
Having once been overhauled, further respite is neatly cheated,
still another complete rebuild will soon enough be needed.
Do we not pass through time or is it that
time passes right through, or goes on right around us?
When such answers are to be found they usually
will be experienced by some, denied to others.
May your experiments not detonate in unpredictable ways,
may your fundamentals all have overtones that cannot be stilled.
May your wanderings not be erratic, may your sails remain filled,
to propel to where you may be finally allowed rest.
Let foul nightmare not assail you, seeking to your sleep deter;
may each springtime find you re-awakened and sure;
there is no trick to this, it's just a little hard to see.

Night Watchman

I am the night watchman, vigilant.
I see scheming and intrigue,
I see things being done preferred to be unwitnessed
while longing for catharsis; unlikely enough
before morning where honesty is slightly more unstressed,
where self-assurance is more easily bluffed.

I am the night watchman, alert.
Watching third shift workers ignore heavy lids,
believing biological clocks can be ignored,
laddered sleeplessness accepted as routine.
Stealing forward motion from where energy is stored,
forgetting where the daylight should have been.

I am the night watchman, concerned,
for souls unnaturally denied the rest gained only by repose.
Darkness once necessary for some repairs now undefined
while the real cost goes ignored or misrepresented to those
lured into shifts of higher pay but recondite overtime;
harsh lessons of sleep deficiency untaught, so not learned.

I am the night watchman, observing,
lawlessness darkness can serve to conceal...
thievery and homicide, shady dealings of all kinds.
A time of opportunity for the con man licentiate,
confidence men and pickpockets seeking gullible minds,
conspiracies and collusions proliferate.

I am the night watchman, retiring.
Serene nighttime hours no longer sanctuary or recluse,
more stern than solemn, more wearying, less solitaire,
inclusive more of boredom that once was almost obsolete.
Missing the awe at the sunrise in the crisp morning air,

breathing smell of fresh coffee on the early morning street,
too much already lost or too likely to lose.

In the U.S.A.

There are oddities within oddities, and modifications even to them,
yet the Dwarfs will tell you they know just what will happen.

The sheep, made compliant by the wiles of the tyrants,
their many blindnesses allow them to believe it's all true,
while they stupidly stand in the very shadows of the Giants.

Liberalism came along with its minuet of perfectly good reasons
why it was mostly wasteful to proceed with defending
against this thing or that when neither virtue much mattered.
Strongholds of logic became much weaker than intended,
their edges already worn were now torn and noticeably tattered.

People are so ready to believe things they see and hear most of the time,
Although through filters they have little control over or care to try;
if the newspaper reports that something happened in such a way,
why would you not believe them? Why would they lie?
So much easier to sleep through their rights being washed away.

It is no longer, and has not been for a long time,
a world where leaders can be believed or trusted.
Influence is sold, bartered and swapped, given as prizes or just seized
with corruption's three-bladed spear, all dulled and rusted,
power in the hands of those whose crimes have been revealed.

Seeking Revenge

While true forgiveness is many times your only relief,
sometimes it is not the only thing salvation is hinged on.
So the desire for a sweet evening of the score before life ends
is the whetstone that I sharpen my revengers on.

There is a well-mannered urgency to my reminders
I must say;
I fully expected that Harpy would find me here
some day.

Sometimes a willingness to compromise only succeeds
when your opponent has weaknesses better off not shown.
The determined man is most dangerous when he bleeds;
this documented by dwarves, still to most not known.

Slowly, Revenge Dragon circles, marble wings showing
yet flexible and bulletproof,
so usually sure of feeding he hesitates, knowing
desperate people will struggle with demons revealing
risking retribution by fiery breath dealing,
knowing the determination of the careful man to keep unchanged
the scene that Harpy was so intent on stealing.

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If the demon shows any weakness, if the Harpy can be cornered,
the Dragon watered;
maybe the hate they have mothered and nurtured could not
be as easily slaughtered.
So the sisters, Revenge and Vengeance, might be sweet-talked
into working this one time for free;
I will spend every last dime and every last feeble breath
to have them working for me.

Spiderlace

When pretty meant a pleasant smile,
eyes could say forbidden things if love was listening,
in the back seat on a four-door falcon cruise
it was all that could be asked for, for a while.
This ritual these days is locked away, out of sight
and increasingly, all too uncommonly repeated.
Fear seems to be increasing in the evening more now
as that pretty woman still conceals from us her face;
kept from our eyes by a spiderweb of lace.
There has been another death at honesty house tonight,
Betrayal dug the grave while Trust retreated.

Things Fell Down

There were shadows off in all directions,
pushing against the hollow walls;
had I looked, I could have seen them.
One needs to listen when duty calls;
things fell down.

There were ghostly explanations,
tears left drying for me to find.
Walked too fast and stepped too slowly,
was soon outdistanced, lagged behind;
things fell down.

Where were arms when close was needed?
Where were hands when touch could have mattered?
I turned too soon, learned too late.
Where was my heart when hers was shattered?
Things fell down.

Shadows grew but I ignored them,
drawing hastily finished wasted lines.
Chances too often unattended,
too few reminders recognized too few times;
things fell down.

*"Out from in behind his senses came no logic worth remembering,
or so it seemed from the mountain;
Out of excess came weakness, then precisionless dismembering;
that is how they found him."*

Out from her simple light came dark confusion,
a vengeful harpy hovering, homicidal talons extended.
Out from her history came only crippled illusion
of today with no beginning, yesterday so poorly ended

that things fell down.

Illogical Soup

Oh, we failed, brothers
we failed alright
there is not a bit of glory
any one of us here can claim.
Gay or Spartan, agnostic or devout,
the trick is really to
leave most of that out.
The small percentage of cleverness in some of us
is mostly to blame.

We try for an appearance
of gentlemanly exchange,
state pointedly and often
but soften with apostrophe.
Swords touching as measuring of respect,
re-scabbarding goes undetected;
fear behind these covering rituals
remains unacknowledged.

It seems the angle that we lean against is
becoming more obtuse,
from much too casual use
of unqualified reminders
heaving us only illogical soup
to feed this small inquisitive group;
losers who came here hoping we could
make them finders.

On adjacent summer afternoons
we found complacent shade,
let ourselves be lulled almost
eventually to sleep.
We put down the tools of decent men

soul and spirit spent by then,
wondering what else to jettison,
and what to keep.

Spiraling Down part one

Staring down at these unwieldy things,
this we knew and still play, pokerfaced, even slightly amused.
Trying hard to be a winner, once at least,
to eat from where the big dog eats, instead of being
out of prison, back from dead, being of dubious things accused.

When we know the game's been won by those who despise us the most,
hunkering down and hiding become honorable things for one to do.
Practical at least, carefully considering repeatedly
how the bowshot of revenge is most carefully aimed.
Loss for many is part of the cost of victory for the greedy few;
those at the wake verify a death yet no one rises to offer toast.

Summer is no more different now, but one batters down in it quicker these days.
Blazing sun can be nurse, a mistress, or son of a bitch
how its light seems thicker in some ways.
Now, not much water in your small selves left to sweat with,
none left here still willing who will underwrite our debt,
our last seam left binding us is coming all unstitched.

Mister Right and Mister Wrong dress much differently these days,
but still the same enough to be confusing.
Autumns have slipped on past, requiring nothing from a blind man
except in the nights; quietly hoping for cover of some fashion, basic shelter,
fire if one can be invented in time,
but burning the furniture to stay warm may be too late to help.

It is winter here now, requiring that one stay indoors if one can.
Fireplace nodding is an attribute well-polished by practice,
what is temperature but one thing lacking of another?
This kind of thing best left undecided by a jury is instead
replayed all the same over and over by everyman's actress
as protection from reality's blackness.

The same ones that seem so hard to unconvince,
no urgency nor eloquence carry much weight with false shepherds.
Only mindless repetition penetrates the flocklike children of men;
telling us over again until we are brain numbed, they are winded.
None believed it then nor has it been enshrined in the records,
perhaps when sanity collapses we will believe it then.

Spiraling Down part two

Preferring to bask in the bliss that ignorance creates,
everybody plays along, nobody really hates taxes enough
to stand and refuse when the collector comes around.
Or, be willing in an instant when the situation escalates,
to act as drastically as needed if the situation gets tough;
another tax collector will always easily be found.

This is not fantasy; this is propaganda painted on bare skin.
This is not a distant worry but will soon destroy this race of fools.
This is flock of easy victims who will not defend themselves,
our layer of protection is wearing dangerously thin.
Our old mechanics are too confused to even recognize today's tools,
leaving only weakly smiling sheep who sweep no dust off of their shelves.

Loud silences that we who refuse to hear and are afraid of,
shouted commands as surely as any jesus or zeus,
that you might likely be some demented man's unpaid lackey
chauffeuring a group of fools in procession, an idiots' parade
in which our rows are erratic, our columns held too loose;
our lines end never knowing where our beginning was made.

We long winded complainers, we sheep all together unthanking,
All our brains have been safely mutated by manufactured waves,
unfortuitously demanding safety in place of freedoms.
Red lights too long ignored are mostly extinguished, few remain blinking;
this will continue till all have been brought to their knees
by saviors who have long ago forgotten what it is they are to save.

Once we tried to act as raised, to be gentlemen,
that dignity we have been steadfastly refused.
Taught to resign ourselves to mediocrity,
regardless of the discipline you choose.
Still, tyrants often fail to see the most dangerous of foes

can be those who now have nothing left to lose.

Essay on Excuses

So fine a collection of nothing of value;
gloves with no fingers, fingers that leave no prints.
Prints wrinkled and faded with age by neglect.
Success dampened by repeated peripheral losses,
heartache settling in as unopposed as winter after fall,
how can we not be aware of this species of doom threatening?

First little moths of senility flit more regularly now,
until only archives still exist to testify of intellect,
leaving us crying out for yet another one more chance.
As self-pity tears at already flimsy soul walls
Where underneath, in these shadows of unheeded Giants,
we stand knee deep in multiple self-righteous delusions.

Selected from imperfect collections,
touched roughly by fate's most ethereal extremities,
logic ripped to shreds by the talons
of myriad digital harpies.
we select the knife, leave the bread.

After colliding with good intentions unacted upon,
complicated insignificance defeats common sense.
Too easily accepted excuses when honesty falters,
flame of integrity sputters, already diminished by apathy.
Hushing the crying, we rise; finally provoked to action
or merely readying for flight?

Small Ghosts

Calm is only the ability to slow down gracefully,
separate out our imagination from illusion.
But there is precious little anxiety shelter to stay in,
been kind of short on those supplies.
Some small ghosts of it have found their way in
but at first, having been so long in confusion,
we could scarcely even recognize them.

Thinking seemed to indicate at least momentary defense,
though using the limited time to decipher all the lies
may or may not be futility misrepresenting common sense,
not even clever enough to at least merit repeating.
Wishing is even more fruitless, hoping barely tries,
with best intentions and good outcomes rarely meeting.
Is it off on the future yet or just now present tense?

Reality's lightning came inside wreaking mayhem
too many times; in too many small tornadoes.
Time has never been kind to you with all the lying,
distortions of the facts by the criminals that claim them.
When the mountain strips you from itself the way it does,
like a parasite been brushed off a of host now sick and dying,
the parasite shrugs and seeks another; all the same to them.

Silhouettes of stress form vicious circles ubiquitously,
think what these chiseled out spaces and shapes imply.
Why not wait to see if once we can some way figure how
once again? Once seems to keep missing twice, why?
These shapes are figments mostly escaping unnoticeably
yet are mostly what this despair is all about;
is our demise still in the future, or here already now?

Slightly Different Views

what has hastening brought except slipshod half heartedness
when has Honor ever saved you from loneliness
who spells out destiny when none can see the future
why do vile sins like greed go unpunished, unconfessed
when even Logic cannot decide if it has slipped the knot
that can become a wasteland of blind ambition and dishonest intent
while even the apocalypse is not necessarily the end
if you believe actions can be great in small ways
realize that getting free is easier than staying free
remembering when you may sometimes come up short
even Moses never made it to the promise land

Unrepentant Ventriloquist

There once was an unrepentant ventriloquist;
cursing others was a pertinent thrill of his.
Insults he would frequently throw,
in a voice he thought no one would know,
till some percentage of the insulted had their fill of this.

He undeniably thought of himself as recognizable poet;
had his own horn, did not hesitate to blow it.
His rhymes were uniformly unremarkable,
but he was ever quite sure they were marketable;
his speeding ego had no brakes to slow it.

So he made it seem like electrons did the talking
in a form of electrical ventriloquist stalking.
He ignored every form of reflection
that might accidentally detect him;
shoes last forever cause his mouth does the walking.

Though his crudeness could be explosive, his vindictive to be feared,
he was singularly colorless and easy to see through.
With avarice so corrosive you would prefer being speared,
but his spelling was atrocious and his phrasing a meatless stew,
a literary softball was all that he could throw.

Unpoetic, unrelenting, unrepentant ventriloquist,
with that frequently updated but still obsolete list of his;
thinks cursing is eloquent or clever,
nearly always or almost never,
his own voice admits to not really getting the gist of it.

So the personality ventriloquist remains anonymous and impervious
which makes lesser wits and talents somewhat nervous.
If they could learn to throw their words like him

they could be big stars of verse, like him:
they figure him forgettable, but fame has found him nonetheless.

Invented Confusion

Askew, in disorder, misaligned, misdirected;
wires of imagination shorted, disconnected.
Square pegs in slightly rounded holes.

Unbelievers, wild herb like, spreading,
ship of likelihood having lost its heading,
on the cold sea pitches and rolls.

Sincerity, handcuffed to reality's layers,
honesty made impotent by too few players,
respect too easily misplaced.

Grip of reason on slippery railings
displays a list of various failings,
whose origins cannot easily be traced.

What once was clever, now is mundane,
while once respectable now is profane;
no matter how presented.

With nowhere logic, too hesitant grace
is when we first see Lucifer's smiling face
confusion is invented.

Trubba Man

I am the trubba man, trubba is my middle name
Yes I am the trubba man, I got trubba shootin' fame
cause in the day or night they call
I got to go and play the trubba game.

When you're a trubba man, trubba is the life you made,
I am a trubba man, you know it is my stock and trade;
so I got to try to save this railroad
from all the trubba they have made.

When them trains get late arriving
they will call the signal shack,
got to head out on that eastbound destination track
it could be a bad connection, could be a broken rail,
it could be a wire has come undone and made a motor fail.
It's just another daily story in the never ending tale
of a trubba man.

When that cold telephone is ringing
that means trubba down the line,
rain or snow don't matter
you have just got to find the time
to keep them trains a movin'
there's no tellin' what you might find
when you're the trubba man.

Well when you been a trubba man as long as me
gets to where trubba, yes trubba
is all that you can see,
till I believe if I don't find that trubba,
that trubba surely will find me.

Invisible Sword

Initially unable to completely evade
efforts by the authorities to dissuade him
from preventing the untimely demise
of the very same spirit that had saved him
from a harpy's fate, slaying wishes, to instigate and confuse.
Unbreakable, invisible sword
underneath the fashionable armor he wore.
unsafe behind seemingly unbreachable walls,
shallow foundation i but sincerely poured,
wondering which of dull weapons to choose.
Magical recollections swim circles in the moat;
this ancient in name only castle, insistent,
thudding against the only way in, or out;
rams too gently battering to defy its resistance,
ethereal history held outstretched as reason.
Dark fairy tale demons tunnel under, then havoc wreak,
child fairy tale angels refuse to speak at all.
Wished for now; protection is needed.
cowed by no longer being regularly called,
imagination sailed north to avoid this bitter season.

High School

He was short on smoothness with the ladies,
but he sure knew how to dress.
When looks were gone he had nothing left to lose,
was for his age dressed multi-fashionably,
feet that had walked him well, he confessed,
deserved those new expensive Wingtip spit shined shoes.

Desperate for acceptability, ignoring simple truths,
recognition he had been deprived of
somehow gifted to him from some adolescent hero
that Promethius would approve of,
somehow self-approval is enlivened,
though the chances of it lasting are close to zero.

Much later, after romance had undone him yet again,
Seems Fortune had been misspelled, just for him,
unable to ask and no one able to choose for him.
Before now he would always have begun again
but expensive had lost its luster by then,
nobody left to supply those expensive shoes for him.

He fell before the first wave of the onslaught,
sword in sheath, hung on nail just out of reach.
Paid in skin for choices in self-respect for the ruse,
but even those who found him hidebound
still unpracticing what he preached,
could still respect those spit shined Wingtip shoes.

She, and Not Me.

She with uncommon sincerity became free
when white darkened to pastel, black lightened to gray;
by then it was too late to save me.

She with a gesture commanded me,
as over time it was found out about me,
I was as in love as a man can be.

She, with a smile, had soothed many three A.M. fears,
but the careless achieve uselessness easily enough;
and such uselessness revealed reduced me to tears.

She, without me to encumber her, is traveling
to some other 'might' work which probably won't;
some unlikely emigrant of conscience unraveling.

I, with the circular sleeplessness re-occurring,
another unremarkable seasoning
in the soup of confusion I keep constantly stirring.

She, and not me, wanted different nighttime air,
she, and not me, colored long wasted years blue,
wanting finery she felt she'd earned the right to wear.

She, with the proudness of the true beauty about-to-be
has sailed on to the day after tomorrow, like in her dream;
only this time she has sailed away without me.

Dirt

Even measured in acres
seeming like valuable real estate, it is in fact only dirt
can be tilled and graded and seeded and fertilized
made to resemble rich turf, a valuable plot
but remains dirt
almost as a glass apple only appears to be
though no skin to peel to reveal sweet flesh
is at least visual while dirt
must be cleaned off of almost everything
revealed in sad archeology
so the insult I hurl; you are dirt

Pipe organs of Destiny

In self image illusions
it was Arrogance that mislead me,
carrot of ego on a stick.
How far, after all, is caution from cowardice
while Despair is a lout, deserving everything it gets?
I might forgive persistent Weariness,
only really doing its job.

Indigo and sinister, a light that stays dim
in conceitful dreams, a delicate arpeggio
like the flickering interior of a sound.
Unnamed author of uncounted spontaneous whims,
or seeming to be anyway; it's not like they matter;
those are the pipe organs of destiny I hear.

Just as great age for the first time finally,
although too late, grants release,
like that waltz danced decades sooner
with lady Pain in her Sunday best,
let me believe she had her way
so was thru with me but no,
I had seen the field close in
behind me, heard clang of gates,
yet she hangs on me like wet clothes in the cold.

Hesitantly Blue

What box or bag can I keep this story in
that will not fail and spill, or other misfortune meet
just as it begins to be warmed by you?
Is this a place new to me or one I have already been?
Driving January's one way highway after December's three Lane street
has colored me brightly if hesitantly blue.

Before you so caught my eye and pulled my pen,
before so easily signing your messages with casual love;
I would flinch and turn from real affection.
Too easily remembering when
the poet's hammer or singer's gentle dove
still denied my close inspection.

But then the hand of bitterness relaxed its hold
as the need for well measured rhymes receded.
I began feel to a craftsman's touch, a gentlemen's style,
some small ability to accurately echo tales told,
that desperate thirst for approval no longer needed,
fulfilled instead by an amazing freely given smile.

Maybe now it is really just a whisper of affection
holding hands across our favorite table,
meeting for tea and background music of the masters,
if we let ourselves keep wandering in that direction
we might see adventures we are willing to, and able
maybe find what it is we really might be after.

Without a Sound

Can you clarify it any more, please try.
It seems the wall is down all around,
I need desperately to understand.
Does this karma noise exist without a sound,
all hot wire without a ground?

We can repeat it is not the getting there; the journey is the goal,
but it merits barely an exclamation point, nor bookends..
Hard to defend not already knowing about this,
all that can be recovered by the spirit or the soul
was in none of the preludes that I wrote.

Weak of knee, slow at step, almost hollow, sadly intent
on not proving it was worth it out near this cycle's end,
but then still did not actually know, how could I?
Am I so misinformed or maybe only sadly innocent,
or worse; willfully ignorant?

After the Army

Too young to expect levelheadedness, too rowdy for calm decision making,
adventure fueled by Kentucky bourbon, always seeking faster pace.
A sweetheart from my dreams appeared almost in time to cure me,
blue eyes and perfect smile that kept me from forfeiting the race,
made me at least accept sobriety was available for the taking.

One cold experience left me practicing survival for a while,
a near fatal motorcycle sideswipe by a less than sober operator.
In the year it took to heal she held my hand and cheered my progress
while I snubbed this nearly last discussion with my creator,
there was no medicine or treatment to compare with her smile.

Still the nights after were ego driven, hard partying the norm,
beating drums and tickling well-worn ivory levers,
too many promises insincerely sworn,
missing signs that should have warned me;
too many 'sometimes' got drowned out by almost nevers.

She was my salvation if I had only chosen to let her,
so often those long-gone chances missed fire my depression.
That life of normalcy seemed too dull; a choice still mightily regretted,
leaving me for all these later years to wonder and to question
if that after army judgement could not somehow have been better.