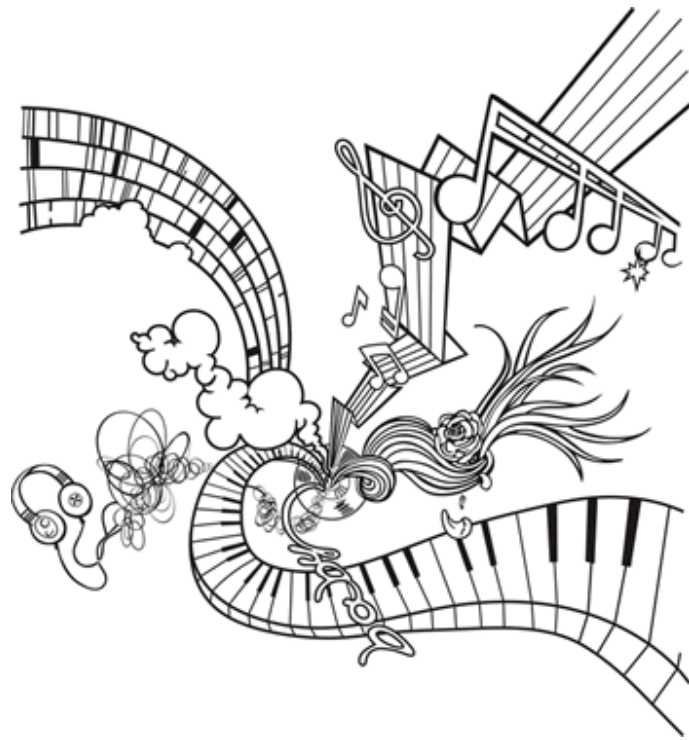


A Calculated Mess

Collected Poems

Thomas W Case



Presented by

My poetic Side **P**

Dedication

I dedicate this to my children.

About the author

Thomas W. Case was born in Oxnard California. He has published three books of poetry. His latest book, Seedy Town Blues Collected Poems is available on Amazon.com His work has been featured in Lyrical Iowa and Poetry in Public Project Iowa City multiple times. He has done many poetry reading on Public Access television. You can find his you tube channel by searching Thomas W. Case /poet. His writing style has been compared to Charles Bukowski and Leonard Cohen.

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And Then The Night Comes

And then
the night
comes flooding
in, like
a spilled beer.

Fear is a
rabid bat;
fatally
infecting.

Loneliness is
an ice cube
in a bathtub
melt-
ing
slow-
ly.

Love is a
flat toad in
the road of
life.

Hope is a
broken dish,
an empty
pocket,
a shattered dream.

Life is a sparrow
in the cat's mouth,
an abscessed

tooth, with no
antibiotic.
It's a whale
in a frozen
ocean;
an eagle in the
city.

Insanity is
digging for the
courage to
continue
day after
day
after day.

Artichokes, Avocados, And Van Gogh

I slept beneath
a mad hatter moon and
dreamed of a big blue
tarantula swimming in
a yellow moss
covered pond. A rat
terrier passed me a note:
Mercy and love
are
fleeting, they fade away
like the
tangerine sun; they
are lies like
the dead bulls under
a bloody red
Spanish sky.
I asked his name,
"Mendacity" he said,
then turned into a
pack of
cigarettes, no matches,
no lighter...

I drank from the
pond and became a
sunflower.
Vincent shot
me with his
lonely cornfield gun.
He sat down and smoked
his pipe, as crows
lied
lied

lied.

He said with sad, iris eyes,

"It's impossible to fuck

a mermaid, or eat

a starry night."

It's the impossibility

of a thing that

drives one

mad;

like a mustang

caught for the

circus, but always

dreaming of escape to

the thundering

fields of its youth.

I saw toothless

orphans throw rocks at

his soul, as those beautiful

eyes saw way too much...

I want to

pound

it in,

drive it dripping

home through the

core

of a rose, to the

bottom

of the tulip. I'll

get drunk on

nectar of the god's, then

reject immortality. (Who wants to live forever?)

There has been a drastic

Mistake.

I see it at the

zoo in the

monkeys caged,
glazed eyes.
No wonder they
throw shit
at people.
"Such lies, " he said.
"The artichoke, avocado, and
algebra; the small of
a woman's back and
the emerald head of
the hummingbird."
"If the artichoke and
avocado are lies" I said,
"then truth is the
tight, tasty, creamy
green line that
refuses to settle or waiver;
delirious, delicious."

"No" he said, as
his hands stroked
that lice ridden
crimson beard.
"It's conception and
growth, then cast
out
bloody and naked
cut from the
cord,
and a lifetime spent
trying to return
to the womb, cock first,
but only spilling and
spreading the
nightmare of being,
the fever of living, to

**another
sorry soul that didn't
ask for it.
I woke up,
drained the elixir,
and starred at
Vinnie's self portrait,
the one with
bandaged ear, and
I
thought...
Yea,
God is into practical jokes.**

Orpheus Rebooted

Just like Orpheus,
I descended.
Though,
my digression was
for different
reasons.
Yeah, I tried to
rescue you from
your hell.
Bring you out of
the degradation,
the debauchery.

It smelled like
vomit and piss.
The swine squealed.
The harpies shrieked.
And,
I looked
too long.
I became you.

Thank God I escaped.
Fate dragged me
out by the scruff
of my neck.
I will never
visit your
underworld
again.
You've made it
your home.

Seedy Town Blues

The nights are
filled with corrupt
doctors and cops.
Justice, like a dog bite.
Madmen prey on
the weak and needy.
This seedy town ain't got
nothing for me.
I'm heading out west,
get a longboard
ride the breeze, and
taste the waves...
all the way to
Hawaii baby.

Apathetic, Empathetic

The conversation lasted into the
long tooth hours of the night.
She read her textbooks and then heard a mouse with its
tail barely caught in a glue trap. It squealed as if it were dying.
In my heart I believed it was savable.
In the agony I imagined him dreaming of fields and insects and seeds.
She had these cold gray eyes.
In one quick movement, she took off
one of her clodhoppers and smashed its brains out.
She cleaned her shoe with a tissue, she said,
I neither hate the mouse nor love it, it's just a thing.
At that moment I was pretty sure she was psychotic.
We're both drunk, I kept watching her ass in that
tight black dress.
She said in a very automated voice, I suppose you want to
fuck me now and then slithered out of the dress.
Pussy is pussy
But I couldn't do it. I told her to put her clothes
back on and not kill anything on the way out.

Dawn Flies Away Like A Mockingbird

I flirted with
the sun as it
blushed
pink
through the trees,
their naked branches
spread wide,
wet with dew.
Sticky sweet
dawn
winked with the
promise of a new day.
Swans mate for
life
and die in the spring.
And she
lied a little less than
the moon, and
the fog, and the
wet cat drunk on
feline dreams.
Her eyes looked like
they hated her face;
like they
wanted to
leap out, and
roll down the street,
find a mountain brook to
wash off all they had seen.
She saw too much...
felt too much,
as the fractured dawn
laughed

**and flew away like
a mockingbird.**

4 Walls

I have come through
the wildfires and
abject poverty.

The sardine days filled
with ghoulish women and
cowardly men.

Now, I have four
walls, and a table to
write at.

I've decorated my castle:
pictures and tapestries,
a raven figurine sitting
on a stump by the aloe vera.

I have a bookshelf from
the curb; all my
favorites are on it.

I turned my brother onto,
A Confederacy of Dunces
I hear him laugh from his
4 walls.

He escaped the
parasitical nights and the
neon souled undead.

It's a great life if
you don't succumb to
the crowd and the slugs that
just slide on through.
Now, it's the simple
things that bring me pleasure:
house plants, coffee brewing,
and the sound of my
neighbor watering his grass.

**I think I will get a goldfish.
All perfect and orange.
And on the fringe, I hear
that feral cat, howling in
the night, without his
4 walls.**

Waltzing Through Memories

I'm lonely as a
dancing ghost in
empty Halls,
waltzing through
memories of a
Banquet set for
many, yet no one arrived.

I long for
her on winter nights
when Christmas is a lie.

In Retrospect

Maybe I'll find
a 100-dollar bill amidst
the burnt umber
maple leaves.
Maybe the ambulance will
come disguised as an
ice cream truck.
Perhaps I'll find a
warm forgotten can of
beer in the dryer.
Maybe, I'll blow
up the moon.

I'm losing it.
My pants won't
stay up, and I haven't
got a belt.
I'm being devoured by
the autumn winds and
the grackles.

Insomnia is crushing me.
Febrile and ferocious,
I stalk the university streets,
too sick to work.
Maybe this abscessed tooth
will kill me.

I used to pound out
12 hour days in the
hot July bean fields.
Farmer John always
smiling and shaking

his head.

**Life is a
bologna
sandwich, and
I write these little
poems in yellow
mustard.
And I wait.**

Just wait.

Shakespeare Won't Look At Me

What has become of me?

I've turned into such
a reprobate.

Watching porn, and
neglecting writing.

I think of Nin and
Henry Miller, turning
lust and clitoral
stimulation into
erotic literature.

And here I am...

Cum stains on my
laptop, and looking
sadly, at the miniature
bust of Shakespeare on
my writing desk.

Even he looks disgusted.

What a life

Being 16 and free,
living on the sailboat
with my Dad and brother.
I was rocked to sleep
by the gentle
waves in the marina.
Just being...the wonderful
verb of youth,
Bills came in,
Dad would say, "They can kill us,
but they can't eat us."
We'd laugh and peel
up the Pacific coast Highway
to the track,
Hollywood Park or Santa Anita,
to bet on the horses.
We'd dope the racing form;
Get chili dogs.
Dad would give us
money to bet with.

I saw some of the
best horses ever:
Secretariat
Affirmed
John Henry
Bates Motel
We saw the greatest jockeys too.
William Shoemaker
Liffit Pincay
Eddie D.

Our tiny heroes.

The thunder of the
hooves coming down the
homestretch still echoes

inside of me.

Dad always said, "winners buy dinner, "
but he always paid.

We stopped at this
steak place on the
edge of L.A.

It was dark; they had the best
Fillet Mignon, you cut it
with a spoon.

The sun sank into the blazing
ocean, and with the windows rolled
down, we could taste the salt
in the air.

Lonesome Neon Night

Angels with broken wings,
frostbitten dreams,
morphine nights,
and gangrene schemes.
She had that broken glass sadness.
The kind that gets worse with
every slammed door and every
lazy moon mad night.
The light in her eyes was dim,
like a candle in the fog, or like
a frog that dreams of flying, but
wakes up to the same old pond,
day after degrading day.
God, every time I see her, I want to
take her home and give her a bath,
feed her strawberries and rub her feet.
I want to free her from the rain slick
suffering she's stuck in, wash away the
stench of the lonely diesel strangers,
but I can't save her, hell I can't even
save myself. So I bum her a Midnight Special,
and light it for her, with a brief sulfuric blaze
of glory bereft of any lasting light...
walk away...Jack-O-Lantern grin,
into the lonesome neon night.

Nothing's Easy When You're Down

Saturn is in
line with
Venus tonight
but, nothing's easy
when you're down.
The clowns walk
around, dressed in
yellow; fast food smiles
and cheeseburger
souls, and nothings
easy when you're down.

The dancers with poles
and sadness, that Halloween,
fires burning, childhood
perfumed dreams,
kind of sadness fills the
navy blue night.
I can't find the North star,
and the jack-lanterns lie rotting
in the streets of Nebraska
and Kansas, and the candies
all gone, and the kids wait.
And I can't find
the deep blue shirt I bought
at Goodwill, and Billy Burroughs
is filled with worms and earth,
and Bukowski looks at Satan
and says, "what do you
mean, we're out of whiskey?"

I've never been much for the stars,
and family and Thanksgiving are

**painfully overrated,
and nothing's easy when
you're down.**

Analog Of The Brain

The creative mind
never truly sleeps;
it naps 45 minutes
at a time.

Even, that which
appears to be
sleep, is a fitful
state of poetic creativity.

The brain is like
a patchwork quilt
that uses the scraps of
the day's events,
trying to fit symbols
together, like a
jigsaw puzzle.

Here's another one
from the vast
analog of the brain.

The Birth of Art

A lot can be
accomplished
when you pull
the covers over your
head, and just listen.
Tune out all the
distractions and bullshit.
Let the silence guide you.

Do you see all the
colors whirling around in
your mind?
The greens and the reds?
The indigo and violet?
They are thoughts forming.
Grand, artistic, unbridled thoughts.

People will desperately
try to distract you, and keep
you from this place.
They are a stranger to it.
Phones will go off.
The crowd will knock
at the door,
don't answer, they will
always be there.

Your job is to create in
your beautiful, dark womb.
There is a spark,
electric alchemy going on.
Don't question it.
You are an artist,

and you are giving birth

Will They Remember Me Well?

Destiny and eternity are
chiseled in seconds.
Flecks of snow become
mountains.
Drops of rain make
oceans.
Thoughts tumble into
decisions, and actions,
overtime, leave a
legacy.

Birth of a Poet

One of my
earliest memories is
of afternoons in
the backyard, standing on
a wrought iron chair that
was painted
lime green.

My creativity was feral
The paint was peeling,
And the sun beat down
upon me.

I was 5 years old.
and the Genesis of my
writing career began.
Below my chair was a plastic
swimming pool filled with water.
I sang *leaving on a jet plane* I
I understood pathos,
and plot, and melancholia.
In my mind, I was a man
leaving a woman.
As I jumped into the pool
I could smell loneliness.
And I understood the
descent, the separation,
the sadness.

And in my little life,
and in my big heart,
under that hot July sun,
the poet was born.

Little gods

Some people serve
little gods.
They keep them in
a shoe box with
other odds and ends.
They take them out when
they need something.
Their gods don't expect
much of them.
I can tell by the
way they treat people.
Cold and cruel.
Wars break out,
famine hits,
families disintegrate.
And there goes Betty,
reaching up in the
cupboard for her
dust covered god.
She asks it to
make everything okay.
She lights candles for it.
Sometimes she has a
little ceremony.
But her tiny god can't fix
her heart, it's brutal and lost.
It does like religiosity though.

Carried Away By My Dark Obsession

You're so sweet when
you're bleeding, and you're
needing that cock.

You're so lovely when
you study.

Let me give you
this rock.

Don't blame it on
emotion,
the ocean still rolls in.

Don't call it love,
when we both know
that it's sin.

I don't care about
the weather
when the shit
hits my veins.
I don't care about
the tether,
when I'm going insane.

If you were here,
I'd kiss you,
make my troubles
go away.
The problem lies
in the fact that I can't stay.

You can suck on me,
suck the poison from
my soul.

Keep me young.
Never grow old.

I'm always watching you,
through the Windows
of my mind.
My heart is true
even though my
soul is blind.

I dream of fucking you
in the darkness
Of your cage.
I want to slide it in
so you can feel all of my rage.

You're going to take it
Just like you took everything
From me.
I once was blind
But now I see.

I miss you,
but not as much
as I miss myself
I love you
but I hate my fucking self.

I See Monsters Eating Quiche

You do it a
little at a time.
You start a holocaust at
5:30 am, over your
sausage and instant
coffee.

You do it with
your small hatred
and your snide
comments--your prideful
looks at the dirty man
with no shoes.

You do it in
one moment, by not
calling your dying
brother
over childhood
trivialities.

You do it by gassing
the goldfish, flushing love
down the toilet;
clogging the sewers with
your hatred and
malevolence.

You watch the green
grass die and the ants
drown, while you
smile over your
newspaper, and plot
your next hostile

takeover.

You did it when
you punched the
dog, and pinched
the child.

You do it when
you smile.

You're a mean
one Mr. Finch,
Mrs. Jones,
Mr. Smith.
But guess what?
You are dying alone.
Every day, every second,
and the moon and the
sun and the stars
celebrate your demise
and so do I.
You've never lost
any thing.
To loose, you must be
found.
You have to have a
bit of gamble in you.
You don't.
You're as useless
as an eel in
a quiche.

Carpe Diem Motherfuckers

**The mediocre march into oblivion
while watching Tik Tok videos
and never reading a
book or writing a
poem.**

**They don't know
the difference between
an orchid or an iris.**

**The mediocre march into
madness sleeping until
noon, while neglecting
Bukowski and Mozart.**

**They don't know how
to play an instrument.
No idea what a C
major chord is.**

**But they know all
the emojis.**

**The sad sheep masses
don't**

**know the difference
between a Van Gogh or
Monet painting, and a
digital reproduction on
a coffee cup.**

**Their phones look
like grotesque growths
attached to their ears.**

**Everyone should
contribute to the
cosmic dance,
Carpe Diem**

motherfuckers!

Lonely Little Vagina

We've been apart
now for a while, and
the pain has begun to
subside. But today, something
triggered it all fresh
and sharp.

I ran across some
pictures of your
vagina that you let
me have.
It makes me sad
to look at them
for hours on end.
I may be reading
too much into the
three different views,
but in one of them,
your dormouse seems
to be whispering,
"I miss you Thomas,
we had so much fun,
you and I."

In another shot,
the light hits little Jezebel
just right (she loved it when I called her that.)
And I swear it seems as though
she is pouting, like she's sad too.
And the third picture is
the hardest to view of all.
It's in black and white
so it has that artsy film noir
look to it, like a sad french

mime. Quite artistic as far as
closeups of vajayjays go.
It has the fussy, pouty
look to it, with a twinge
of anger, as if to say,
"why did you break up
with that great poet who
idolized me, and took such glorious
pictures of me." It seems to be
beckoning, "Please take him
back, maybe if you do,
he won't drink so much and
disappear for days on end
with your car, and then come
back smelling of urine, and
old painted up whores."
It really breaks my heart
to look at that one.
I'm almost crying as I write
this because Jezzy looks so sad, and
lonely, and a bit angry at
you for selling my collection
of baseball cards.

And I Will Rise

**There is a gravity to
sadness; it pulls me
downward into a
deep dark well.
I can't climb out.
It's my own private hell.
I pray for levitation.
I jump, only to fall.
I feel forgotten.**

**I put one foot in
front of the other,
and I will rise.
I move on.
Hope returns like
a long-lost friend,
and I find my sanctuary.**

Nature Reminds Me

I don't
understand why
my mind
drifts to thoughts
of you, in the
spring when I'm
alone in the woods.

The dew is on the
grass, and the small
flowers begin to
bud, the petals
slippery and wet,
glistening in the
morning
sun.

The birds sing
their symphonies of
praise, and the trees,
erect and strong, reach
to the waiting sky.

The rain shoots
down, and I
rest.

Dapple and Down

Down I go into the gray and brown.

I hit the sides, like being in a cradle that is
rocked too fast. It's an abrupt catastrophe.

I didn't see this one coming; but I felt it, like
the slight rumble of an earthquake, or like the
false dawn, before the real light yawns and
opens the sickly day.

It's just another ending, dapple and down.

Blue

I've been to the crushing
place.
It smells of death, and
spider mums.
Daisy chains dropped,
when the music died.
The lake is murky now.
Clowns roam the street,
looking for carnivals
and meat.
Silly boys still believe
in love and dreams, and
girls that like opera and
giving head.
This world is strange, and
Picasso walks the lonely
avenues, feeding
seagulls' peanuts and paint.
No one blames him.
It's his blue period.
All the while,
an old bent man plays
the guitar.
He smells like camels,
and hope.

Don't

Don't call a women a cunt,
they don't like it.
And don't tell a batter to bunt,
they want to smack it.
And whatever you do,
don't try and give your
cat a bath in the tub with
that Mr. Bubble shit,
he'll scratch you.

When your boss gives you the
newly revised employee handbook,
don't say, that sucked, it went
on and on and on.
There was no plot, and I
couldn't figure out, who in the
hell the antagonist was.

And one more thing,
if you fall in love and you
think you found your
soul mate, and it doesn't work,
and you feel like your
heart is being ripped out
through your nose,
don't give up.
Because the right one is
out there, somewhere waiting,
and who knows, maybe they have
a cat that likes baths and
blow-dryers, and being dressed
up like an Oompa Loompa from
Willy Wonka and the

Chocolate Factory,

it could happen...

Don't give up.

A Feathered Stone

Your love is like a frozen bird, a
feathered stone falling from the sky.
I wish it didn't die.
It should be flying, and soaring, and
healing, against the warm blaze of
the afternoon sun--weaving and
diving through the coolness of the clouds.
But it's gone, and all it can do is
plummet and take a few more
birds out, on its way down.

Classical Felines

My landlord gave
me two black kittens.
Little balls of fluff.
I sent pictures to
my sister.
She said they have
eye infections, and not
to use hydrogen peroxide,
because it will blind them.
The thought never crossed
my mind. I thanked her.
They are semi-feral,
but they are warming right
up to domestication.
I was like that too.
I enjoy my simple life now.
Fishing and writing, I take
vitamins and clean cat shit
off my bed.
We are working on the
concept of the litter box.
I play classical music for them.
They like Vivaldi, but prefer
Mozart, D minor seems
their favorite key.
I don't know if they are
male or female, all I
see is a little pink dot, and
they aren't real fond of
me looking.
Bukowski for a male
and Emily for a female.
If they are both males

or both females, I don't
know what the hell I
will call them.

The bigger of the two is
sleeping next to me while
I write this.

I'll be a son of a bitch,
he's smiling, or she,
while sixteenth notes rip
through the burnt
umber autumn morning.

Poetry Is My Loving Wife

She rubs the ache from
my back, as the
morning sun
breaks through the
blinds.

She gently kisses
my lips in the
long hot summer,
and brings me
piles of leaves in
the fall.

She doesn't smash my
fragile-glass ego,
nor leave me wanting
in the night.

She births me
hundreds of
children that live
forever.

And she stays young,
while I grow old.

Limited

Once in a while,
my poetry will bring
women.

They read my stuff.

They find me.

The talking is great;
very literary.

We speak of all
the little gods:

Hemingway

Pound

EE

Shakespeare

Dickinson

Buk

Ginsberg

Some-times, we fuck.

That's always nice.

They soon find I'm
fallible and have
bad habits.

They prove human too.

They fart and drink my
booze, occasionally
burn dinner.

We try though, while
Joan of Arc burns at
the stake, Robin hangs
himself, and
Don Quixote fights
windmills.

I always love them.

And in the end,
we accept our
limitations and
humanity.

A Writer

I just have to write.
Fuck everything else.
I've suffered for my art,
and there's no doubt that
I will suffer more.
We all have our agony,
that's life and I accept
my plight.
I am what I am
(as Popeye would say.)
And I couldn't change
it if I wanted to.
I remember one night,
staying in an abandoned
house.
I wrote some poems on
the walls.
I saw the words in
the moonlight through
a broken window.
Even though I was famished,
I hadn't eaten in
three days,
at that moment, I became
full and complete.
I knew right then,
as long as I had the words;
my words, I would never
feel empty again.
My black satchel full of
writing and the clothes
on my back were all
I owned.

I had no idea where I
was going at dawn,
but I sure the fuck knew
who I was.

Starving in the Whiteness

I've been going through a long dry spell, an arid
wasteland of the mind. Writer's block is hell.
It's an empty nest, a dead baby bird in
the wet grass- ant eaten eyes.
It smells like plastic flowers on a tombstone.
I'm lost and starving in the whiteness.
Why can't I write? Have I drank my mind
into mush? The poems don't come like
they used to- the click is gone.
Sometimes, there were four or five a night.
They swam from the river of my soul.
They were my food, my light, and my wings.
A good poem is like smacking the ball
out of the park.
Writers block is a
limp cock, a miscarriage, an empty gun.
It's like having a stomach ache,
and not being able to vomit.
Everywhere I go, I am
surrounded by convicts and a maze of walls.
My mind and spirit are not in prison though.
They fly over the razor wire like
the falcon I saw through the
bars on the window.
He pierced the clouds like a bullet.
I will make the next poem a feast;
blood and feathers will fall from my chin,
ambrosia will pulse through my veins, and I will
sing and soar from the depths of my cage.

Sometimes, She Consummates the Deal

There she is:
naked and fickle on
the floor, sucking
marrow out of
soup bones; her
breasts
busy with
living things.

The muse plays
hide
and seek
like a spoiled
little child, as I s
sit with
sterile white
paper.
I think I see
her from the
corner
of my
eye, but when
I look,
she is gone, like
the last Dodo bird.
I yell, "Are you dead? "
NOTHING.
And then she
appears
dimly through
the glass and
gives
me a hard one,

fierce, right behind
the eyes,
in that still small
place where sullen
shadows
dance to Wagner, while
sparrows burn and
smell of
Spider Mums, and
funerals.

Then, she's gone like
the Cheshire cat.
(the grin remains.)
I get another
drink, hoping to
swallow and consume
her- to become one.
It doesn't work.
I get
frustrated, pace the
worn out
carpet, like a
caged tiger

Writer's block is
hell.
It's worse than
celibacy and
bologna.
Far worse than
constipation, or not
being able to cum.
It's like missing
the vein, or
dying of thirst in the desert.

It's like being
dead, but alive.

And
finally at
last
it's over (she consummates the deal)
and the words and
lines flow like
rain in Seattle in
the springtime.

I can
see the vulva in
the rose.

Taste
the sweet potato sky,
plant flowers in concrete, and
beat Mr. Death in
a game of go fish.

And
strangely,
it all smells like
home,
eternity,
and two-week old
puppies dreaming of
Mother's milk.

County Jail, A Writer's Retreat

I sit here in
county jail sporting the
orange jumpsuit and I
write more poems and
memoirs in a week than
I've written in a year.
It feels orgasmic when
I'm pounding out the
word and the line.

When you're homeless and
the temperature is minus ten,
jail isn't a punishment,
it's a reward.
I got busted for public intox two days in
a row, and again three
weeks ago.
The state remembered?they
recommended 30 days,
the judge gave me two weeks.

Every time I go to jail
I'm very drunk,
and by morning I'm
coming down hard.
I remind the guards of
my predicament?the danger of
withdrawal seizures.
They say, "We are aware of
your condition, Mr. Case."
And within a couple of
hours
I'm on Librium,

making detox bearable.

Within a couple of days the
drunken haze dissipated
and the need to create returned.

I got their tiny safe
pen (impossible to stab someone with),
and I went to work.

I looked out my little
window in my cell and I
saw a male bald eagle gliding
lazily over downtown.

I felt as free as he was.

Mary's Mouth

I hold my
twisted angel while
she sleeps,
her ass snug against
my groin.
I envisage her
sanguine
grin while she dreams of
domesticating me.
I can't believe
that I never
noticed how
cute her mouth is.
It's amazing? I'm spellbound.
I want to nibble on
those lips.
The way she
uses her tongue to
enunciate certain
words is sensual and
seductive.
I'm apathetic about
the topic she is reading,
but while I watch her
mouth move, my ears
hear Shakespeare's sonnets.

Death is Stalking Me

Death is stalking me.
It watches me play cards,
smoke cigarettes, and
drink beer.
It took my parents, two
brothers, and all my friends.
It got Chris last week.
20 bottles of whiskey in
seven days, I suppose that
would kill anyone.
They found him on the
railroad tracks.
Death is stalking me.
I won't cheat it.
I won't escape it;
but before it gets me,
I bet I finish
this poem.

Fuck all the King's Horses And All The King's Men

Yeah, so what I was sitting
on the wall.

It was mine, and a great
wall it was.

Peasants walked by
and envied my crevasse,
they mistook it for a
belt, I had to constantly
correct them.

I got in such a squabble
with one of the villagers,
I leaned forward to give
him the what for, and
I'll be damned if I didn't
tumble off and smash into
thousands of pieces.

Because I'm so important,
the Kings men and beasts were
quickly dispatched, and
the incompetent fools could
not fix me.

So I lie here, yolk and shell
everywhere, yet I continue to
think and reason, no heaven,
no hell. This wretched life
continues, I watch the scum
walk through me, I hear their
uneducated banter and it
infuriates me...

I've read all the great philosophers,
yet; nothing has prepared me for this.
And what the hell does, "pride goeth
before the fall." mean anyway.

Like a Butterfly Melting

My body aches in the waiting and
the night is torn apart;
fractured and shattered by
the memory of you.
Stars shake and die,
and I'm filled with diesel loneliness,
soul sick, like a butterfly melting.
Everywhere I go,
I smell pumpkin pie, lilacs,
and sexual energy.
The day will come when
I'll not think of you;
not write a single line about
you--not feel you in the
attic of my mind;
but until then,
the crows peck at my
heart, spring never comes;
ice forms on my brain,
and life inches along like a filthy worm.

No More Eden

It's the continual
opening of the
eyes that disappoints,
not that sleep brings peace,
but it's the momentary
reprieve from life's
clenched fist, and
it's ruthless apathy.

Life is a toss of
the coin,
a roll of the dice.
Often, it's snake eyes.
As a kid, I always
thought that everything
would be alright.
Now I see the
randomness of
it all.

I'm always trying to
get back to Eden.
Sometimes, the
dreamer in me
forgets the futility.
The banishment is
forever.

For a Friend in an Asylum in California

Give me lazy lithium
days; soft asylum and Cheshire madness.
This sadness only
lasts
awhile, with sun burnt
smiles and ocean mist
kisses...

Give me sweet Mai Tai
nights, gentle lunacy.
The Mad Hatter moon
laughs at me,
and the fog
only lasts a
little while.

Just one more time,
please stay a while.

Life Anew

Bukowski and Mojo zip through
the new apartment.
Chirping like birds.
I had no idea kittens could
be so easily thrilled.
They aren't even
high on catnip.
Fluffy black
blessings.

2 Dollars on the 6 Horse to Show

I sleep with my glasses,
so, I can see in my dreams
the moment you left me,
it's all part of the scene.
So, the jockeys, they need me.
I know they will bleed me.
And it's 2 dollars on the
6 horse to show.

The buzzards and seagulls,
they know what you've done.
You said, come on boy,
let's go have some fun.
But that look in your eyes
was full of goodbyes
and now, I'm all but done.
I'm full of regrets
but, it's just one more bet.
And it's 2 dollars on the
6 horse to show.

The clowns and the hookers
got nothing for me.
They took all my money,
oh boy can't you see?
There's just one more bet,
and I'm full of regrets.
and it's 2 dollars on the
6 horse to show.

Bukowski and Hopper
look down on me smiling.
They've been out to sea.

They've been past the islands.
I'm tired of running
and I'm tired of standing still.
Another pill won't do it
and it's time for me to go.
And it's 2 dollars on the
6 horse to show.

You took all my money
on a day that was sunny
and you know them old clowns,
they really aren't funny.
So, I head to the track
to win it all back,
and it's 2 dollars on the
6 horse to show.

One For Hunter

This one goes out to
the rambling, gambling mad man
from Aspen- the late great
Hunter S. Thompson.
My drinking has landed me
in prison for a short stint.
To occupy my time,
I read and write,
it keeps my mind sharp
and the nursing homes at bay.
Also, a pen or a book in my
hand has the added benefit
of a signal to the other
inmates that I'm in my own
world, and I don't care to converse.

H.S.T's guerrilla approach to
writing, and his sharp gonzo wit
keep me laughing and thinking
on this carnival ride from hell.
And if I can laugh in prison,
I'm halfway home.
My mind will go where my
body can't.

Like Hunter, I'm a betting man too,
and I always bet the long shots.
So I'm putting a bundle on
me to pull out of this shit hole,
and do something with my life.
Ho ho ho, God Bless you Doctor.
And as my old man used to say,
"They can Kill us, but they

can't eat us."

I Need To Visit France

I dreamed I was at some sort
of carnival/expo with my
sister and my ex.

Somehow, I got separated
from them

I met a young French woman.
She was beautiful, and she
Liked me a lot.

There was a lot
of passion and an instant
connection.

I had cuts all over my
face for some reason.

She liked me anyway.

In fact, she didn't even
mention the cuts.

The attraction was strong.

There was a heat I
could smell.

We started making out,
and we were just
getting ready to do it,
when we noticed a
large crowd behind us.

We laughed, and she wrote
her information on my
hand.

Later, I was playing
with a bear, and some other
strange animal.

I fell in a river, and her
phone number and address
were washed off my hand.

I never did find my
sister and the ex.
I woke up, and felt
Sick to my stomach.
Why are all the
good ones in dreams?
I need to visit France.

Kings and Queens Die, While I Train Kittens

I'm not surprised anymore by
the extraordinary.

When life bombards
me with trivialities, and
ordinary events,
something always happens to
jolt me from my lethargy.

"Bukowski shit on
the training pads!"

My brother yells, from
the dining room.

I'm living with my
brother, and
we have two
black kittens, Mojo and
Bukowski.

They bring me
hours of smiles.

I've never seen
eyes so full of
trust and adoration.

Bukowski has an
aversion to the litterbox.
We have tried everything.
When I put him in,
he jumps out like it's
a muddy pond.

His brother Mojo adores
the litter box.
Not only does he do

his business, he also
plays and sleeps there on
occasion.

We've started with
the training pads and
newspapers.

It's working.

Amidst all the destruction,
hate, and chaos in the
world, I'm eaten up by
the magic of the ordinary.

I talk to them as
they doze in the
afternoon sun.

"Thank you boys,
you got me going again,
Mojo, you broke the
dry spell."

They blink, and
Bukowski licks his
brother's head.

A Cat Named Poe

My autocrat of a
cat
sat on the pedestal
and watched me type.
His eyes, slits, like
slivers of emeralds.

He took a paw,
licked it, and
washed his despot face.
He owned me.
I did whatever he
wanted.
He sauntered off,
then turned and
watched , as I
took liberty with
truth, for the
sake of
imagination and creation.

I dreamed last
night that he could
talk.
He just said two words.
"Beautiful lies."

A Hell for Words and Lines that Wander

There must be
a hell where
forgotten
words and lines
dwell.
Smilies scamper,
lost like beetles.
Bat winged metaphors
fly to that dark
hell of forgotten
poems.
If those wandering
words escape, they are
gone forever.

When I swim in
the ink, and the
writing streak starts,
the prose comes to
me while I nap.
Now, I sleep with
pen and paper,
to put the words in
that white paper
prison where they
belong.

The Best Medicine

Some say,
laughter is the
best medicine.
While I have
found that to
be true, it's
become so
cliche.
An axiom I now
live by is that
mushrooms are
the best medicine.
Perception's door opens
wide, and my jaw aches
with laughter.
I can taste blue and
green, and hear
tulips sing lovely
ballads for the
squirrels that have
forgotten where they
buried their nuts.
I train my poems like
circus bears.
They rarely maul me.
And, just between
you and me,
The Birth of
Venus painting that
hangs above my
writing desk vibrates and
pulsates like the
Gulf of Mexico.

That red headed
temptress dances
seductively, long into
the night.

And now,
my kittens think
it's funny to
meow backwards.

To Do...

There is a
force at work that
doesn't want me
to write.
There's always
something vying for
my attention.
The phone rings,
the kittens want
played with,
I get horny.
All I have to
do is think about
writing, and the
next thought is
I should take
a nap.

To read about
writing
isn't enough.
To promote my
writing won't cut
it either.
To finish one more
poem, to communicate
something worthwhile
is what will help
me sleep tonight, and
keep the undertaker
lonely and afraid.

Guess the Fruit

I used to play this
game
with my second
wife.
It was called,
guess the fruit.
We did it in
the morning,
that way, we had
breakfast and sex.
Succulent and sensual.

She would lie naked on
the bed-blindfolded.
I put a Miles Davis CD
on, then went to the
kitchen, and roughly chopped
various types of fruit:
Peaches, Pears, and Pomegranate.
Avocados were too messy.
I would grab a handful of
various types of berries, and
assemble them all on
a plate.

By the time I got back to
the bedroom, she was
squirming around, and squealing
like a squeaky toy.
I'd take a piece of fruit and
lightly rub it on her neck,
she would yell,
"Banana"

"Nope," Id' say.
I would dart it across
her lips, and work it
down her neck...
ease it across her pink
left nipple.

She coos, "Peaches."
"No baby, but you are close."
I would make light stabs
down her belly to the top
of her golden mound.
By this time she
would softly moan.
"Fuckkkk...Blackberry."
"Yes! You got it."
Then I would pop it
in my mouth, savoring the
juice and the sweetness.

The game would continue
back and forth until
we finished the fruit.
By that time, we were more
than ready to make love.
We went at it like
dogs in heat.
the sweat and fruit juice
mingling on our bodies,
illuminated by the
morning sun, breaking
sad through the
window.

I am single now, and poor.
I can't afford fruit.

And even if I had a woman,
it would be hard
to play, guess the Mickey D's
dollar menu item.

You Don't Rub the Back of My Head Anymore

You used to say it was sexy.
You'd get this gleam in your
eyes as you kissed
me hard on the lips and
rubbed the back of
my head; but not
anymore.

We had our laughter and
drunken songs,
but as always,
the end seeps in.

The poet in me hopes
one motherfucking thing will
last forever.

It started with
complaints, then
resentments and almost
hatred. It's sad.

There was a time when
the love was gooey?like
chocolate in the sun.

We had an amazing
sexual chemistry.

we were like
dogs in heat.

We fucked everywhere:
swimming pools,
the grass,
the beach,
the hospital,
our tent, other people's tents.

Something was
always missing though, and

sex couldn't fix it..

The end felt like swans dying,
like butterflies burning.

I always imagined us more
like Bonnie and Clyde than
Romeo and Juliet.

It doesn't really matter, same ill fate.

Fuck, who were we kidding?

Lovers inevitably get
their turn in hell.

My Cat Is High, and So Am I

They've been
monkeying
around with
my town, when
I wasn't looking.
The space and
landmarks have
been shifted.
Something is
cooking in the air.
It smells ultra
bright, with a
hint of juniper
berries.

Even, the kittens
are sitting up on
their haunches and
taking notice.

Locker Room Logic

I work at a
gym that is
popular all over
the country, because
of its family values, and
sliding fee scale.
I am a custodial artist.
It's mindless and gives
me time to write.
I get a free membership.

Men walk around the
locker room nude, and
try to have full conversations
with me.
I want to say,
put your cock away,
it doesn't talk.
This is a gym,
not a nudist colony.
I take no delight in
seeing your shriveled balls.

Where is your modesty,
your decency?
Wrap yourself in a
towel before you try
chatting me up about
the weather.
I'm trying to work out,
and then get the fuck away
from you screwballs.

The Ball Woman

I once knew a woman that
could roll herself into a perfect ball.
She rolled all over town.
It didn't seem that unusual; sad,
but not strange.
Lots of people are all balled up.
I caught glimpses of her face.
It was often expressionless.
She had a flat affect.
Sometimes, she'd come out of her ball,
and smile.
She was gorgeous, educated, and
had a great sense of humor.
But when I'd get too close,
she'd get back into her ball
and roll away.

Bow Wow (One for Anna)

I used to have a friend from
New York that was a lawyer, she once
dated a famous NBA star.
We drank vodka together.
She was a bit smug, but smart and
funny? a dangerous combination.

One evening, we decided to
go to a neighborhood grocer that
sold spirits and wine.
She had a black schipperke named
Bruno.
One drunken night I dubbed
him the Senator, after Ted Kennedy,
another smart and funny drunk.

We called a cab to get
more booze. I put Anna's
Dolce and Gabbana sunglasses
on; I grabbed a broom handle and
hooked the Senator
up to his leash.
I said, "Look, look, I'm blind and Teddy is
my seeing eye dog."
Anna laughed and said,
"Oh we must bring him along."
She used the word, "must" a lot.
The cab pulled up and the
act began.

I worked the cane, and the dog out the
door, with those big white
sunglasses covering my eyes.

We piled in the cab,
and
tore off into
the sweltering July night.
We pulled into the
grocery store parking lot
Anna told the cabbie to wait.
She was beat red and big tears of
joy flowed freely down her face.
I grabbed her arm and said,
"Quit laughing, or they'll think it's a joke;
I'm fucking blind; it isn't supposed to be funny."
She laughed harder.

We walk through the sliding doors,
I'm waving the broom handle back and forth on
the floor.
The Senator immediately proceeds to
piss on a display case of crackers.
Anna cackles,
we walk on like we didn't just see Ted's
indiscretions. We headed for
the booze.
Anna yells, "Did you see what the
Senator did back there?"
I say, "Of course I didn't see it honey,
I'm blind, what did he do."
She screamed, "He pissed all over that display case."
"I know, I know?let's get the
booze and get the hell out of
here before they kick us out."
Just then, the Senator slipped out
of his collar and began to
run up and down the aisles.
I chased him, he dodged me.
Anna tripped and fell, she laughed until

she wet herself.

That fucking dog had
more moves than an NFL running back.

I finally cornered him by the
milk and butter section; I reached down to
grab him, and the little
son of a bitch bit me.

I smacked his nose and said,
"Bad Dog?Bad, Bad Dog."

He bit me again.

I finally had him in my arms;
by then, those ridiculous looking
sunglasses were on top of
my head.

I lost the broomstick, and dragged the leash and
collar behind me.

We made it to Anna's and drank into the
night. Most poets wouldn't know how to end
a poem like this
but I do,
bow wow.

Make the Static Go Away

Make the static go
away,
the dead-dog depression;
the fleas tip-toeing across
my brain.
Hate locks the
door to the heart,
and puts the
soul in a cage.
The rage consumes,
like a west coast fire.

Make the static go
away,
the electric anxiety;
the butterflies swimming in
my blood.
Love is a fantasy,
a fairy tale for children.
Devotion
imprisons
the mind and
subdues the heart.

Give me sweet
apathy, beautiful
sedation, let me
float in bliss;
untethered by emotion.
Let me get lost, deep
in the core of the orchid,
and sail aimless,
in the

vast chasm
of the sea.
Give me radical
lethargy.

It Matters

I met a man once who said, It's all
nothing. Everything goes away in the end.
It doesn't mean anything.

I asked him, What about love?
He said, It's an illusion;
it disappears when you
think you have it.
It means nothing;
we are all going to die.

I saw him walking one day,
and I asked him
where he was going.

He said, It doesn't matter, all roads lead to death;
it all ends the same- nothing matters.

I said, What about family, children, and God-
what about life?
Family abandons you, children grow up and
move away; God is deaf and dumb, if he's
even there, and life ends in decay-
everything goes away.

I said, What about art and literature,
the power and the hope?
What's the point of beauty if the
beauty ends? he said.

I said, What about the moment? You're
alive right now, it's real and it's happening.
Look at the simple beauty of that robin-

Its breast looks like a sunset.
Do you smell the sweetness of the cherry blossoms?
Do you remember the slippery loveliness of
a woman's vagina, the taste of a fine Chardonnay?
Look at the dappled fur on that dog; he's almost
grinning, that has to matter; it has to
mean something.

No, he said, That dog could get hit by a
car in an hour, then he'd just be a pile of
bones rotting in the street.

But look, I said. He's alive; his fur is warm and
course; look at his tail wag, he knows things.

He shook his head. You don't get it.
The race is fixed; the horse breaks
his leg in the home stretch.
The champ goes down from a
glancing blow, the dice are loaded.
It's a setup.
Everything goes awry,
it's not good for mice
or men.

I smiled and threw a perfectly
timed left jab to
the bridge of his nose, the blood was the most
brilliant shade of red I'd ever seen.
It flowed from his nostrils and
settled on the green grass
below his feet.
Some of it stained his white shoes.

Hey what the hell did you do that for?
That fucking hurt.

I said, Pain is nothing- it will end- it's almost
like it didn't happen;
maybe it's a dream.

You're fucking crazy!
It is real; you punched me,
and now my shirt and shoes are
ruined, he said.

He walked away, and the sun broke
through the clouds, flowers bloomed,
and a small black
beetle crawled through a
patch of blood onto
a lilac bush.
And somehow, I knew
that it all mattered.

It's Just a Hop, Skip, and a Jump to the Madhouse

It's the little things that
drives one mad,
a snapped shoelace,
on your way to the
liquor store in the
driving snow.

A cockroach in
the cereal,
dead batteries, when all you
want to do is listen
to music.

Shifty eyed people in
my house, quietly plotting
my demise.

It's the tree of
life, cut down to clear
space for a parking lot.

No love from my brother.

Another frosty day in April.

Cigarette prices constantly
rising astronomically.

Footsteps in an empty
hallway.

It's Just a hop, skip, and
a jump to the madhouse.

Two Bunnies Beneath a Cold Gray Sky

I don't want to go on a
gentle journey,
from convoluted to
convalescence.
I quit drinking again;
found love in
the psych ward.
She's my broken-winged
angel.
So much pain behind that
sweet smile.
She's drinking again,
and I can't fix her.
It hurts, like an arrow
through the stomach.

I have a rabbit that comes
to my yard.
She lies in the same
spot every day.
So much so, that
she has worn down a
place for herself--the surrounding
grass grows around her.
She feels safe.
I feed her spinach, and my
brother sings her
show tunes.
That's what we get
for having a drama
teacher for a father.
Thanks, Dad.

It's been an unseasonably
cold April.
I feel sorry for Harvey;
That's her name, thanks
again Dad.
I talk to her softly.
"Hi, baby--what are you doing?
Do you want to come in?"
She doesn't answer. I'm sober.
I want to take care of her...
Both of them...
My two little bunnies.
It's cold, and the wind is
blowing hard,
beneath a mean grey sky.

The Journey is Done

The feet are the
soul of the shoes.
And without the
feet, the shoes are
an empty body,
vacant vessels that
sit in the corner,
quiet as a tombstone,
forgotten, and curled at
the toes, flowers and
grass smashed into
the tread.

The tan leather is
baked brown from the
sun, tired and cracked from
the long lonely
miles of wandering.
Finally, the journey
is done.

Deliciously Loving You

Deliciously loving you,
yet, I'm the
one that got ate up
and spit out.
So I lie on
an empty beach
like a broken sea shell,
while the lonely rain
pounds the sand.

It's the Hunger that Drives You

I'm on a Bukowskiesque roll;
pounding them out,
seven or eight a night.
I know it won't last.
It's like a fast.
It's the hunger that
drives you.
And when you're starving,
you eat--then rest,
not today though, I've hit
my stride.
And the night is mine for
the taking.
And the words are mine for
the raping.
And my heart I am staking
on the fact
that
I will stay hungry.

Rise Up

The civilization of
poets has thinned out.
There's a drought of
metaphors and symbolism.
We are all prisoners in
a musty attic.
Where is Emily when
you need her?
I'm afraid they've gone
the way of the graveyard.
Too much booze and
too many broken hearts.

Where have all the
painters gone?
Sunk deep in
cobalt blue.
Artists resurrect!
Come out and play.
These are days full
of sumptuous sunrises,
and nights laden with neon.
I long for those
Jagged edges and brush strokes
that bleed pain and love.

Art changes our world.
It makes the brutality
bearable.
The smell of paint and old
books, transport us to
a gentle place laced with
ambrosia that we all

should drink.

Dreams of the Fish

Evening sky reflects
on the glass lake.
The soldier of a
tree carries on
through the lonesome
night.
If we could only
see the dreams of
the fish,
far from the
frying pan.

One Good Hit

To get back
in the game,
I need one
good hit.
A horse with
early lick;
that has more
heart than
Joe Louis
and Jake
LaMotta
combined.
I need decent odds,
at least 8-1.
The racing
gods have to
smile on me
one more time.
At least for
6 furlongs,
and then baby,
I'm back in the
game.

Taos

I was young, and living
in Southern California.
I owned life, I had two pet
doves and I was reading
a lot of Dylan Thomas.

I was getting ready to
go to college for Nursing.
20 years old, learning about
assonance and alliteration.
Poetry, and love for the
craft found me...all green
and naive.

On my way out the door,
the phone rang, it was my
brother Ted, he was head of the
biology department at
San Diego State. He told me
in his scientific way that
our oldest brother Todd was
dying of pancreatic cancer,
and asked if I would come and take
care of him.....I said of course.
Ted said as soon as the semester finished
he would be back out.
I drove down the coast sobbing like the fog.
I was to fly out the next morning.
I would stay overnight with my sisters in
Ventura. Ted called at 1 am... Todd had just
died.... Ted told me his last words were,
"Is Tommy coming out? "

Happiness Comes Quietly

It doesn't come with
pageantry and pomp.
Happiness comes with the
soft whirl of the
ceiling fan, while I
sit and watch the
snow fall through
the venetian blinds.

It's the end of
debauched
momentary celebrations of
scoring enough
change to get a pint of
vodka, to avoid withdrawals.
Dead friends on a
street to nowhere.

Happiness comes softly in
the jingle, jangle bells on
the cat toy, as the
kittens play.
All around me, living things.
African violets and aloe vera plants.

I live for the Zen on
the banks of the pond
amidst the cattails and willows.
Bluegill and small bass
swim the shallows.

It's the end of chasing
the chaos of attaining

things that
rot and rust.
Happiness comes
quietly with a clear
conscience and some
good coffee, as I sit
on furniture that I own
and pray for my
fellow man.

It comes in the
bliss of a hot bath.
The spirit is cleansed in
love and gratitude.

I Was Painting You

I know they look like sunrises and sunsets,
but I was painting you.
When I painted all the rivers that lead to the oceans,
and the glorious starry nights, and the flowers;
the sublime orchids and the tender roses.
In the end
and from the beginning,
I was painting you.

Done

It's heartbreaking and
raining in my soul.
Love isn't enough.
It's a swamp in
her heart,
mold, mildew, decay.
She wants my balls in
a jar.
A gelded pony to pet.
I'll always be
a stallion.
The fields are
my home,
not her fenced in façade.
I'm galloping for
good
into the wild.

Belladonna

Everyday that dawns,
you slip away a little more.
The distant stare,
the apathetic eyes.
Your love is as dead
as the roses in
the trash.
Your heart is an
abyss that I'm
lost in forever.
Belladonna drew me in.
The poison kept me there.

I Want

I want to kiss
her mouth in the
spring rain,
to feel her tight
wet body against mine,
while the water
pounds down around us.
I want to
carry her to
my underground
lair, and taste
her orchid
until she wilts in
sweat drenched ecstasy.

But Now I See

I will not trade
my serenity for
madness.

This sadness only
lasts a little while.

I don't want to be
in Wonderland anymore.

Everyone is crazy.

whichever way I
turn, left or right,
it's lunacy.

I deal in reality now.

I won't play croquet with
the queen, no matter
how much she smiles.

The game is fixed, and I
know it.

The deck is stacked.

The cards are laid,

and I see the

spade behind

her eyes.

Love, Dad

When I think of my kids now,
I so much want to say things
that I know I won't,
like, please for your protection,
try not to feel too much.
If you can't help it,
you may find that
life comes at you like
a left hook...a broken doll,
a rotten tooth.
I'm sorry I failed you,
I would trade it all,
everything I own or ever
could possess, for your smiles,
and deep true laughter.
May you never know brutality
or ferocious things.
I'd rather you get
dog bit than hope and
feel heart sickness.
Find someone who holds
you tight and
doesn't let go.
The woods do in a pinch,
but they can't touch
you with flesh wrapped
bones that cherish your hearts.

My poor kids,
your crazy father loved you the
best he could.
Don't ever let anyone
kill your light;

always hold on;
there is beauty in the ride,
often too much.
You might feel like
a stranger or an alien,
it's supposed to be like that.
Often it feels like
a lump in your
throat that won't go down.

Wear sunglasses, they
help with the glare...the sharpness,
and remember,
some flowers are edible.

I Love the Country Life

I love the country life,
the tranquility,
in between the feral cats
and hawks.
Morning coffee March
I sip it with Irish creme and smile.
Last night I fell
asleep inside her.
Safe and sound
and domesticated in her
tight wet walls.
We came together in
determined silence.
Family in the next
room.

I love the country life;
the ponds and streams and
sun soaked meadows.
The wild asparagus and
gooseberries.
In her arms my spirit rests.
My tired wings
find a nest better
than the barn swallows,
stronger than the eagles.
I'm a brook trout
swimming through
her veins.

I love the country life.
Coonhounds and cornflowers,
coyotes yipping and

bobcats tiptoeing up on
shocked field mice.
Last night, after we died
a little in each other's arms,
I gently rubbed her
cheek and kissed her
eyelids, nose, and lips.
I breathed in deep the
smell of lavender, sex, and
home, the safest
fragrance I know.

Phantom

Drinking has been an exercise in
lunacy and sorrow,
like jumping off of a cliff,
for tomorrow's dead dreams.
The fruit of the vine should
be sweet and sentimental,
like Mamas and milky moonlight.
With a fistful of memories and
a soul full of pain,
I try it all again.

A Calculated Mess

She had that
doggy style lust,
bent and broke;
taking life hard
and fast from behind.
She had the eyes of
a serial killer,
with a splash of
rainy afternoon sadness.
I met her at the
homeless shelter, and her
soul was a
vagabond with a vengeance.
Her heart was an abyss.
Life had fucked her up
beyond repair.
No way was love gonna'
fix that train wreck,
that calculated mess.
In the end,
the best I
could do
was not
slip away with her.

If We Could Dream

If in death
there were
dreams of divine
joy, and sublime
happiness,
it wouldn't be
so bad.

Like the dreams
I had as a
little boy.
The ones, that upon
waking, I felt like
I'd been punched in
the stomach.
Heart sick, lonely as
an old hound,
howling in the
moonlight.

The dreams that felt
so real, I could taste
the sweetness of
my favorite candy on
my tongue.
I could feel the
handlebars of my
shiny new bike.
Feel the wind on
my face, as I
raced against time.

The dreams where I

could smell the
honeysuckle in that
beautiful girl's hair.
The one that loved
me, as we walked the
dew soaked Meadows,
and talked about
our lives together,
bobwhite's singing our
favorite songs.

No, death would not
be bad at all,
if we could dream.

The Demon of Creative Energy

I am dumb

with wonder, that I'm

not torn asunder, that my brain and body don't burst, under the
torment of the demon that lives in me.

He longs to be free, struggling clawing, scratching to be released, shrieking at me to write the words
that reside inside.

I tried hard to drown him with vodka and Guinness Stout, but he learned to swim.

So once again, we toast the night alone by candlelight, as I read Sylvia Plath while he takes a bath
in dark Irish beer. He knows that writing's fantastic, orgasmic, electric, and we cum together as he
whispers sweet prose while doing the back float in a sea of Absolut.

I'm destitute, but he doesn't care, just as long as I share his seed that spills from my quill.

And so, I hear his shrill voice in the middle of the night, screaming, screeching, write motherfucker,
write.

We All Slip

Winter will soon slip into
spring, all dressed in
green; bouquet nights and
the rebirth of love.

Snakes gliding through
the grass.

But for now, we deal
with ice and snow,
slick roads and cold
hearts.

I was on the bus the
other day.

The driver had a
slippery scowl pasted
on her chubby face.

My mask had inched
down on my nose, and she
yelled, "put your mask
on or you will be off the bus."

I was having a terrible day already.
My asthma was acting up,
I could hardly breathe, and I had
just had to put my beloved
dog to sleep.

I miss her, but she slipped
away peacefully.

I rang the bell to get off at
my stop, as I chewed my

gum in passive anger.
I stood up and walked toward
the front of the bus.
The aisle was slick from
the snow and ice.
As I neared the exit door,
I took the gum out of my
mouth, so that I could throw
it away, but things went
horribly awry.

I slipped on a wet
spot, and to catch
myself, I firmly planted
my gum hand on the back
of the driver's head.
She had short hair, but still,
the wad of gum was now
embedded in her golden
locks.
I'm sure a haircut is
in her near future.

Since then, I intend
to tread softly and cautiously,
and just maybe,
she does too.

The Last?

This could be
the last poem I
ever write.
I hope not,
but it's possible.

If it were my
last poem,
what would I want
it to say?
Wow, not so easy.

Poetry has been a
loving wife, and I
will miss her on
all those sleepless
nights, when dreams
don't come.
Writing poems have
kept me in touch
with all the harsh
pain, and all the
sublime beauty.
Both are supreme
teachers.

Poetry has opened
my ears to the
sounds of the
earth, the whispered
rush of the creek
running over stones
and sticks.

The cries of my
children in the
night wanting
their mothers'
milk.

If this were
my
last poem, I would
want it to bring
some joy and be
a bit less sentimental.
Oh well,
guess I have to
write more.

Little Birds

Beneath these
satin sheets,
my memory
flutters like
little birds on
indigo nights.

Folded wings
rest in my
mind's eye.
Fingers itch with
visions,
Delta of Venus,
orchids in bloom,
wet with the
sticky dew.

I grip my
virility
and begin
a slow
waltz...
It feels so
good.

For O

A black splash
washes over my mind.
A dark flow that
bursts into bloom, like
Oleander or Night Shade.
The four leaf clover in
my pocket broke into a
thousand green tears.
Lovers know how to kill.
And when she keeps me from
my daughter, she's the
executioner, and smiles.
But the sublime thing about
life and love is: I will
never give up.
If I fall 100 times,
I will rise 101.
And I'll see you
soon, my little Iris.

The Sleep of an Artist

To sleep the sleep of
an artist is
the best sleep ever.
All the foes lie vanquished,
and I paint words with
their blood.
All the letters spent on
the paper in
ejaculatory fashion,
like sperm to the egg.
There is no fodder from
dreams to be marshaled,
just the birth of my
creation,
when I
awake.

I Wish My Fears Would Migrate

Fear is like
the shadow of a bat,
larger than life.
I taste the
rabid nightmares;
they poison my soul.
Anger masks the fear.
I hear the harpies scream
in my febrile brain
and my faith is
small as a
grain of sand
growing slowly
over time.

Vincent

There goes Vincent with
his jagged sky, and
ragged beard.

His cobalt blue are
stained with the glue that should
hold us all together,
but it doesn't.

His sunflowers are lost
on humanity.

When we can't hold
on to what we pretend to love,
we kill it...

Usually in small
treacherous ways,
like apathy or
arrogance.

I Wish I Were in Puerto Rico

I woke up too early.
It was still dark out.
I tried to read some
Hunter S. Thompson, but
it made me thirsty,
not a drop in the
place.
I wish I were in
Puerto Rico.

A few nights ago my
girlfriend and
I got into it.
She bit me and
scratched my face.
We were drunk on
wine from Argentina.
The coffee I'm
drinking doesn't taste
right.
I wish I were in
Puerto Rico.

In the wee hours of
the morning
I decided
to shave my head.
It took four razors, but
I finally got the
job done.
I looked in the
mirror,
and a stranger peered

back at me;
a head like Gandhi
and a face like Marciano.
I wish I were in
Puerto Rico.

Yesterday
my girlfriend and I went
on a shoplifting spree.
I stole coffee,
a couple of books,
a hat, denture glue, and
a cock ring.
She's a much better thief than
me.
She took
razors, two tapestries, laundry soap and
trash bags, makeup, shampoo
and coffee that doesn't taste funny.
As the sun gently
kisses the horizon
and begins to bathe
Iowa City in golden light,
I wish I were in
Puerto Rico.

Tomorrow morning
I have to be in
court.
A month ago I stole
some wine and got caught.
My day of reckoning has
almost arrived.
I should just get a
fine that I will
never pay, but

with these things,
one never knows.
The judge could be
hung over or constipated
or worse yet, he could have
read my poetry.
I really wish I were in
Puerto Rico.

Thinking Beyond

Smut to
some
is
erotica to
others.

A feast to
me
maybe
a snack
to you.

We see things
differently
through filtered
eyes,
with varying
experiences.

Open
minds
think beyond
good and
evil.

Searching for Nod

That first-morning swig washes
away the stain on the inside;
the parade of hearses and the
lovers lost to the carnival of life.
A few more swallows and
memory becomes nebulous.
Cumulus clouds form in
the brain, and the thoughts
float by, all fluffy, like cotton candy,
and fun-house safe.
In this twisted mirror
I see the tired eyes of
a clown who's not funny anymore;
just a ragged costume and a
jagged soul that is hungry for
sleep and dreams, a moment's reprieve.

Four for the Show

The cats gather
en masse every
time I sit
down to write.
One by one, they
jump up on the
big maple desk,
and walk across the
keyboard.

Mojo swats at
Shadow's tail.
Bukowski nips at
my fingers as they
peck at the keys.
It's going to be
a long night.
The cats don't
understand poetry
or marketing.
Shadow hisses, and
jumps down.
Bukowski gets
bored, and bites at
the cords.
He gets overly
excited, and slips off
the back of the desk.
The wild look in
his eyes flash
centuries of power
and sadness.

I think of my feral
days on the streets,
stealing booze, and
sleeping under
bridges in
December.

I wrote my words on
the walls of the
abandoned
houses.

And now,
such beautiful
providence.

I quit drinking and
I live in a town with
a clear lake. I catch
fish and eat them.

I've published three
books and I write my
poetry on a
computer that my
three cats view as
a playground.

Sometimes,
it all seems like a
furry dream.

I've Been a Slave

I've been a slave so many
times.

I've been a slave to
booze and vaginas,
to poverty and the streets.
I've been a slave to opiates
and poetry
brutality and love.

I've been a slave to
the flesh and my addictions,
good intentions galore.

I've been a slave to
beauty and hatred,
passion and desire
the flame
and the
fiery dance with death.

I've been a slave to the
crowd and the pedestal
the morning glory women, and
their spells.

I've been a slave on
the slow ride to hell.

So for the last time,
I'm done with slavery.
Go find a new cock to control.
This rooster is going back to
the barnyard,
chase the horses and hens.
I promise
I will crow at the

freedom-soaked dawn.

Dry Land

No commitment
no devotion.
I'm like a boat on the
ocean with you;
tossed and broken by
the waves of your emotions.
Your hurricane is dangerous.
I'm heading for dry land.

Love Button

A long time
ago
when I was
a teenager,
I had a
wonderful,
tender-hearted
girlfriend.
She was patient.
I was wide
awake, and green
as a frog.

She said,
don't rub it so
hard, you will
hurt it.
Think of it as
a new toy you
discovered.
It's small, and
you need to be
careful.
It isn't a
pimple that
you are
trying to pop.

I can still smell
her hair, lilacs and
pond water.
And on gentle summer
nights, I hope someone

is being kind to
her love button.

Watch Out

It's always the bat-shit, rabid dog-crazy
ones that will put up a really
good front when you first meet them.
You're always amazed at how normal they appear.
They are intelligent, hold down jobs, drive Volvo's;
maybe they even have children that they
seem to take care of. They pay bills,
celebrate holidays, and have houseplants.
They might even have a
dog a cat, or a sickly-looking bird in a cage.
But, just underneath the false facade of
lucid smiles, lurks a whack-job from hell.
They make Sybil and Lizzie Borden look
like Mother Theresa.

If you find yourself with one of these
women, don't confront them, it only
makes matters worse and could prove deadly.
Just smile and nod, and slowly back out
the door. Don't stop until you see the
Pacific Ocean. Get in and wash yourself off.
You're safer with the sharks and the riptide.

Old #56

In one of
my many
lifetimes, when
I was a child,
my dad had a
sprawling stretch
of land in
Missouri.
He had 200
head of cattle.
We used to run
the cows we
bought at auction
through this
shoot with wooden
beams that closed
on their necks.
My stepmom took
this gun-like object
and put an orange
tag in their ear.

My brother and I used
to play with this black and
white steer.
We called him old #56
because of the number on
his tag.
We chased him, and then he
chased us.
I felt bad for
him, the tag in
his ear.

I talked to my
dad about it.
He said if the steer
ever got lost,
we could find him.
I felt good about that.
I didn't want to lose him.

One night
the following summer,
we were sitting down for
dinner.
I hadn't seen
old #56 for a while.
I asked Dad where
he was.
He didn't say anything.
We were having
t-bone steaks.

As I write this,
my black and white
kitten, Bukowski,
bites at the pen and
tries to wrestle my
wrist as it moves across
the paper.
I'm glad that he
isn't a steer.

God is an Artist

Above all,
God is an artist,
and His greatest
creation is us.
We are made in
His image, and so
we create.
Our creations pale
in comparison to
the sunset, the mountains,
and the oceans;
but we try.
And sometimes, we succeed.
And it is good,
and He is well pleased.

Horny, Broke, and Needing a Drink (A Philosophy)

Booze and pussy are
tragedies of Greek
proportion.

Take a man with
potential and then
give him a steady
dose of either (or both)
withdraw it,
and watch him
degenerate.

It's not the sex act
or
the alcohol its self,
it's the effect they
produce on
one's psyche.
We will always
equate that which we
feel emotionally
with absolute
truth.

If one has given
himself completely
(with abandon)
to either pursuit,
when removed,
there will be
a vacuum
a gaping
hole that without an
act from the

gods,
will never be
filled

Hook Him Up to the Machine

Hook him up to the machine.
Shock his brain into
mediocrity.
Death stalks him;
he is aware.
There is too much
flash in his eyes.
His brain needs a reboot;
he needs to forget,
like a goldfish, like
a monkey in the zoo.
Hook him up to the machine.

He is too sentimental.
Salmon swim in his blood;
he has a paisley heart,
and a tie-dye soul.
He can smell colors.
Hook him up to the machine.
He has Van Gogh eyes, and
a Bukowski gut; he walks
like he's lost in a maze;
hunchback sadness,
butcher knife nerves,
Hook him up to the machine.

He believes in love,
and has too much trust.
His vivid green memory
is a curse, we need to
crash it, kill the eternal spring.
Hook him up to
the machine.

A Cat Named Poe

My autocrat of a
cat
sat on the pedestal
and watched me type.
His eyes, slits, like
slivers of emeralds.

He took a paw,
licked it, and
washed his despot face.
He owned me.
I did whatever he
wanted.
He sauntered off,
then turned and
watched, as I
took liberty with
truth, for the
sake of
imagination and creation.

I dreamed last
night that he could
talk.
He just said two words.
"Beautiful lies."

Lost at Sea

Her heart was
my port, as I
sailed lost in
those
vagrant waters.
Her eyes were my
lighthouse
through the
fog and the storms
of life.

Oh, how I loved
her
once upon a time,
when I was lost
at sea;
she was my shore,
my harbor of joy.

The nights are darker
without her,
and the Stars
hide their sadness
behind the clouds.

I am
older now...
colder
now
without her touch.

Hope Took a Vacation

I saw the dawn
rape lonely
orphans,
while bats ate
butterflies,
cats killed sparrows
and hope flew
south for
the winter.

On my way
downtown,
I've seen the
dead through
windows at the
drycleaners, eating
hamburgers with
starched faces

The librarians,
dry and dusty,
pray for rain,
as hippos weep,
hyenas sigh,
and hope
flies south for
the winter.

I've seen the strange
hand of
circumstance
wear the jester's
hat.

I've seen destiny
angry turn her
back, while potential
is wasted on
the railroad tracks.
Yeah, hope flew
south for the
winter.

The Search Continues

The way she faked
love on those gentle
autumn nights
in the country
was one of those little
miracles that made the
trees cry, and the
flowers weep.

Sleep brought dreams
of an actor on an
empty stage...
A big crowd that wanted
entertainment.
They followed the actor
everywhere.
He felt like he always
had to be on.
He didn't like that,
so he moved to
Idaho, where he fished
for trout, and real
love.

Starting Over

She threw me a
rock in a
sea of madness.
A twisted lifeline,
when I longed
for love.
Now it's just
empty space,
a knife wound to
the face,
and a new
house
that I can see
the library from.

Into the Dark

With furrowed brow
and a soul full of
sorrow,
I trudge the
lonely road of
perdition.
Providence guides me
as I stumble and fall.
Not even sex or
chocolate
can save me now.

Six

On a day that was
fraught
with anxiety and anger,
I sailed on
to the
other side.

The two pens that
blew up in my hand
foreshadowed the
prolific writing
streak to come.

Six poems today,
a personal best.
Bukowski would be
proud.

He might even
wonder
How I did it without
whores
booze and
cigarettes.

It was easy.
I had bluebirds for
lunch, and listened
to Vivaldi.
I Just let the telephone
ring
ring
ring.

The Proper Task

Sometimes,
I catch
myself Swaying,
like there is
an eternal metronome
that my spirit
hears.

Or,
A song that my
soul must keep
time with.
It beats to the art
that surrounds me.

Such a delicate balance,
between the cactus and
the sun.
Between the dog and
the bone.

When they autopsied the
Tin Man, there were
irises and orchids and
Neruda poems where
his heart should have
been.

Love is an overused
word,
but an underused
gift.

Fishing

Ice melts on the Lake.
Fish will move into shore soon.
Please bring back the dock.

Anxiously waiting.
I just bought some more tackle.
March, please be a lamb.

Walleyes taste the best.
Get the hot Cajun batter.
I feel a slight tug.

Exstasy

Love finds me in
the nuthouse
wandering in
Delerium, sweat-drenched
dreams.

She's my fucking angel,
and she sucks the
vagabond poison from
my veins.
Arms are bruised to
a Dijon yellow.

I forgot the
ecstasy of
connection and sexual
chemistry.
The heat...the
smiles that set the
bones on fire.
This is birth.

One for Hunter

This one goes out to
the rambling, gambling madman
from Aspen- the late great
Hunter S. Thompson.
My drinking has landed me
in prison for a short stint.
To occupy my time,
I read and write,
it keeps my mind sharp
and the nursing homes at bay.
Also, a pen or a book in my
hand has the added benefit
of a signal to the other
inmates that I'm in my own
world, and I don't care to converse.

H.S.T's guerrilla approach to
writing, and his sharp gonzo wit
keep me laughing and thinking
on this carnival ride from hell.
And if I can laugh in prison,
I'm halfway home.
My mind will go where my
body can't.

Like Hunter, I'm a betting man,
and I always bet on the long shots.
So I'm putting a bundle on
me to pull out of this shit hole,
and do something with my life.
Ho ho ho, God Bless you, Doctor.
And as my old man used to say,
"They can Kill us, but they

can't eat us."

That Sorceriffic Ass

Vicious eyes,
ferocious smile, and an
ass that begged to be
rubbed all night, like
Buddha promises good luck.
But, what that
ass brought was
jail, soup lines, and
homeless shelters.

The heart pounds the
head, then the feet pound
the street;
walking mile after mile,
aimless roaming,
doe-eyed thinking

What went wrong?
Where the hell did
I go wrong?

Then it dawns on
me like the dew
soaked morning.

It was the ass.
Always that
sorceriffic ass.

Dark Corners of the Soul

There's a little
boy that hides in
the dark corners of
my soul.
He doesn't want to
be hurt anymore.
I spent eight years
with Beth.
For the most part,
it was hell and
constant pain.
She made nightmares
look good.
I heard the
little boy cry
late into the
silky night,
while snails got
smashed on the streets
of Ventura.

When I drank, which was often,
the little boy seemed
at peace for awhile,
while swans were
murdered in Venice,
and I tasted the ashes
of Neruda.
Years flew by
like seagulls;
up
down
and darting.

The little boy
continued to
hide in the
dark corners of my soul.

He wanted to
come out and be loved.
He was thirsty for it,
but there wasn't
any around.
It was dry, like the
deserts in hell.
It's too late for
sorries here comes
the plow.

He began to see
the pattern of life.
There are monsters
that walk in the light.
Vulnerability equals pain.
The little boy got mean.
And now he carries
a knife.

Green is my Bed

I explored the
depths of hell, and
found it wanting,
wandering the streets,
looking for a utopia.
Not all that shines is
the sun.

Pictures can be
doctored, and when the
layers are peeled away
the purple horizon isn't
royal.

It's a ghastly negative,
with black and white
images that lack
love and depth.

All the potions are placebos.
It's temporary and tiring.
When I grew up,
I stopped playing with
toys, they break and
disappoint, and worse yet,
they leave me empty and hungry.

The sky-pilot found me
and I am full,
belly and soul.
Besides still waters,
green is my bed.

Whose Seed Is This?

I nurture the creator in you;
the little god that throbs to be master of
words and colors, lines and notes.
I watch you give birth to it.
I see how it squeezes out of
your brain and crawls across
the floor- all bloody and wet.
It's alive and glorious and grotesque.
You're immortal- a giver of life.
I hold it to my face and breathe in
the smell of rain, pine trees, and desire.
I kiss its fur and taste the
fires of hell, cardamom, and oysters, raw and sweet.
I feed it a bowl of saffron threads, soaked in milk,
stare into its wild black eyes; I can hear
it hum a tune in B flat minor, and I wonder,
whose seed is this?

Jazz In Hell

Chess in the
afternoon sun.
Jazz floats over
the silky couch.
Backs ache, while
hearts break.
Bishop takes knight,
and France falls again.

The masks are all
broken under the
cerulean blue skies,
while she eats berries,
and smiles in her
pink polka dot dress.
The pawns are all smug,
and queenie's on the rag.
Italy surrenders, and from
the grave, Charlie Parker
still hammers home
those soft amber notes.
I can smell her heat, and
I think they play
Jazz in hell.

Until the Rain Stops

Our love is
bigger than paper.
It's made of flesh and
bone and blood.
Words can't tear it apart.
Distance won't taint it.
My spirit groans
without you.
My soul feels empty
and alone.
I feel like a ghost wandering,
lost, like a blowing leaf.
Grief has become me.
I hunger for you.
Feed me.
I think of you there,
lonely and afraid.
I want to take
you in my arms and
hold you, until the
rain stops.

The Womb's Lullaby

I first heard the
lullaby in the
womb.
It has a pulse
and rhythm.
It was embedded in
my tissue and cells.
And when I was shot out,
bloody and naked,
the cord was cut.
The journey began.

At five years old,
I remember closing
my eyes, and lying
down to go to sleep,
it felt like I was
being rocked.
I wonder if the
subconscious mind was
remembering the
rhythm of the womb.
My Mom--pregnant with me
walking upstairs--downstairs,
elevators
escalators
movement
pulse,
the eternal lullaby of
the womb.
When I closed my
eyes, it felt like I
was being rocked.

It felt like I was
in a swing;
back and forth.
Easy, like a fragrant
spring night.

I feel and hear the
pulse--the rhythm,
the heart in everything.
In footsteps--in the wind,
in the ancient river, and
in the mermaid's song.
I feel it in
the beating of the
hummingbird's wings.
I see it in
Van Gogh's jagged sky,
in the flight pattern
of the wasp.

There is a rhythm in
death and birth.
Oh my God, the rapture of
the rhythm of love and
joy--so sublime.
The primal beat of a
heartbreak--pain,
like painting with
blood.
So real
too lucid.
Icarus, let's fly into
the sun, drunk on
vodka or cheap wine.
We'll escape--liquid smooth,
until our wings melt,

and we fall back down,
crash
to the pulse
the rhythm
bum bum
bum bum
bum bum.

Sometimes,
I wish I were
a rock.

The Purple

For the first time in my
life, I saw colors, not like
normal people see colors; my recent
woman
sees colors all the time.
This morning, there was
purple splashed all over my room.
Once, in her sleep, she said
the word 'purple.'
I asked her what it meant,
she said, 'Knowledge of the future.'
I know she will try and screw this
sickness out of me; God Bless her.
What do I know about the future?
I know it looks bleak, and the
doves are crying.

Breath

I was thinking about your
breath before you brush your teeth,
I love it.
It reminds me of simple, beautiful things,
like, streams flowing gently over
moss-covered rocks, and puppies at
about three weeks old, right before
they open their eyes, the way they
wiggle around with their ears pasted
to their heads, blind to the world.
Soft plump bellies full of
Mother's milk. But I think most
of all, it reminds me of home,
a home with love and laughter,
and books and plants.
Classical music and sunlight-bending
through half-open windows.
It warms hearts and hands and
hours and days, that slip
away far too soon.
It reminds me of feathers and flight,
and babies--clocks ticking, pages turning,
and life--hard, fast, short, beautiful life.

My Alice

In her deadly
blue eyes, I fall down the
rabbit hole.
Down
down
down I go.
I hit the
earth like a
mock turtle on its
back;
with a smack;
like a shot to the vein.
She travels through my
bloodstream with the
force of a mad tea party.
Her hair is dormouse soft.
I touch it, and feed
her tarts, as she
rides me like
a guillotine;
sharp and final,
with a purpose;
like a porpoise with a
fish hook in
its mouth.
I hold on tight
and never let go.

A Cursed Poet's Heart

The other day,
I was walking down
the street.
I started thinking about
pork pie hats, and how I
would love to have one.
I went to the
Salvation Army store and
found a dark brown one.
I put it on, and walked out;
smooth as a puppy's belly,
slick as a butterfly's wings.
I loved that hat, I lost
it a couple of days later.
I lose everything I love:
My kids, my clothes, my jaded angel.
I've lost houses, wives, money, and cars.
What is it about love and loss that
stalk me like a hound dog?

I've lost hope and heart, and
even my mind at times.
I've lost friends galore.
My parents and two brothers are
gone. I know if I love
something or someone, I will
lose it.
And those losses leave scars on
my soul that never goes away.
So the answer seems simple:
Love less,
yet, that is impossible with
this cursed poet's heart.

The Bullfrog Dreams of Flying

He wants to shake the moss off his
back and leave the tadpoles behind.
They remind him of his misspent youth, and
wasted spring. The blackbird sings of
blue skies, far off lands,
and the bullfrog dreams of flying.

Her Horns

Hidden behind a wall of
stony thorns,
her horns
are unmistakable.
She smiles and tries
to hide them,
but they are
ridiculously obvious.
The damage is
terminal and savage.
And the pain
is undeniable.
Her forked tongue
pokes the tepid air
and searches for
silly,
trusting victims.

Reflection of the Soul

I've said her eyes had
the color of a madness shade
of blue.

That's not true.

They are the color of
love and angels, and
eternal spring.

Her eyes sing of
motherhood and light rain.

The sun shines through them-
a tepid pool that I
want to jump in and swim;
back float through the
daisies and spilled juice,
through the ravens-
all the way to heaven.

Dreams of the Fishes

Evening sky reflects
on the glass lake.
The soldier of a
tree carries on
through the lonesome
night.
If we could only
see the dreams of
the fish,
far from the
frying pan.

Narcissist

See all those people
they're real, they
think, they
aren't mannequins.
I know this may come
as a surprise, but there
are other people in the world
with problems.
And by the way, the fact that
you can't find your tweezers
isn't a catastrophe.
Oh I know you need them to
perfect your eyebrows.
Just in case you forgot,
We are having a pandemic!
Oh, you want me to leave because
I make you uncomfortable.
Never mind, it is freezing out
and it's late at night, and I've nowhere to go.
Just a small reminder, we have a
two-year-old daughter, and I
have been helping you take care
of your son for eight years.
Oh, it's your house, and
it's not your job to put me up.
I wouldn't live with you if you paid me.
I had a place, but I gave it up when
you called me, crying and begging
for my help with the kids, because
you couldn't multi-task.
Ok, now I get why you got
rid of the mirrors in your house.
Even though you're a narcissist,

it's too painful for you to
see your vacant reptilian eyes
starring back at you.

Dead End Eyes

If her eyes were
a street,
they would be a
dead end.
There wouldn't be
a sign.
And if I drove
into them,
all the promising
landscape
and stunning scenery
would come to
an abrupt stop.
Such lies...
Those
dead-end eyes.

Palpable Pain

There is a road to
sorrow.
The pain is palpable;
it involves
drugs, booze, and
bad women.
It ends with
life under a bridge.
There are lots of
hospitalizations.
It's hell on earth.
Seizures and sickness.
Love was my
haven, but I lost it.
I left ME behind.

This Moment

If I could take this
moment and
own it,
hold it,
like a piece of paper,
I'd fold it
and
stow it away,
like
a pocket knife.

I you would be
my wife,
I'd be the
happiest guy in
the world.
You'd be my
girl,
and I'd be your man...
I would hold
your hand and kiss you,
and you'd never
miss me again.

Preoccupied

I make love to you;
exploring your body like
a garden.
I walk in the
lovely shade of your eyes;
that safe sky that I
long to fly in.
I dream of swimming in
the blue, and diving
hard into your wet pink soul.
I want to sink to the
bottom of your orchid, and
lick the nectar from
your swollen petals, like a
hummingbird--all beating heart and
pounding wings, as I let
the juice run down my bearded face.
I taste your sweetness in
the new morning sun.
I feel immortal,
and I wink at death.

The Pierced Dreamer

I met her at
the Corner Pocket.
She was bartending.
Her nose was
pierced, so was
her tongue, and
her heart.
She spoke of
a Utopian city:
A town of tree houses.
She was in her
third year of
architectural school at
Iowa State.
Some dreams are
best left
unsaid.

Frozen Love

Living on the Scandinavian streets have
humbled her.

No Christmas cards with
a 20 spot anymore.

No trust fund from
Mom and Dad.

All the money vanished like
the last spider of vodka,
like a dropped bottle of beer.

She could go to a
shelter by herself,

but she chooses

life on the

streets in the

brutal winter to be

with her Swedish boyfriend.

Love is lunacy--sometimes frozen.

Two dead friends last year on
a mad moonlit night.

Human icicles on
the Iowa City streets.

One time while drunk,

her and I stole

the neighbor's canoe.

We had her little

black dog with us.

I dubbed him,

Senator Ted Kennedy;

probably because we

were all drunks,

(not the dog) I don't think...

We wrestled the canoe into

the Iowa River, and
immediately proceeded to
tip it over.

The Canoe sank like
a bad bet by Hunter S. Thompson.
We could've easily drowned, but we
laughed our asses off,
choking and splashing,
except for Teddy, who swam
for Boston.

Sonnets and Villanelles and Cats on my Desk

I'm in a cool group.
To stay on top
of my writing, and to
promote and market
my poetry, I often
publish online.
If Lord Byron could
hear that.

In this place that
I belong,
I have deadlines.
I procrastinate until
the very last day, and then
scribble some shitty
lines and get angry with
myself for putting the
writing off.

I have a couple of
weeks before I need
to write a sonnet or villanelle.
I'm getting anxiety.
It's not producing the
desired effect of
hard work or discipline.
No
Not that.
It is getting me thinking.
That is sometimes productive,
and usually comical.

I'm thinking about

the 15 months I've
been sober.
For many years,
I was miserable.
Drinking and writing.
Writing and drinking.
Holding the bottle of
vodka to my shivering
lips to get the last
spider of liquid.
My clothes smelled of
decay and cowardice, and
everything tasted like
rotten meat.

Now, I have a beautiful
maple desk that my three
cats like to sleep
on while I write
poems about
procrastination and sobriety.
Such fuzzy black miracles.
They twitch as they
dream of fish and catnip,
and just maybe they
dream about writing a
sonnet for me.
We are all
addicted to something.

A Short Putt

After a tortuous hour of
math (algebra to be exact)
I start dinner; Middle Eastern stew:
Cardamom, Coriander, and turmeric.
Cooking is a little like math, but
much more like art. My mind begins
to ease as Bach pumps out
one of his symphonies from
the CD player. The stew boils, and
I want to go outside and play,
chase windmills. Where's Sancho?
Dulcinea's here, frustrated by my inept
ability in the equation game.
I fucking despise algebra.
Where's the Bluebird, the Sunflower,
Bukowski or Eugene O'Neil?
I want to smell a six-week-old puppy,
taste Van Gogh yellow, fuck until
I can't walk, and ease my
way into old age.
Vivaldi plays his victorious song.
And I know I'll conquer the
numbers game, but probably not
before it drives me crazy;
actually, it's a short putt.

Oh Yes, It Can Get Worse

Fear sucks at
my spine, like
a leech,
slimy and black.

The crowds
laugh and imitate
each other.
No creativity,
only brutality.
Little lemmings.
They get raises and
promotions,
accolades in bunches.

Killers of the
dodo and the redwood.

They smile over
tea and the
bones of dead men.

Perfect in
their machine like
minds; immune to death,
like the quest for power.

It's Now

There are miracles when I open my eyes.
The smile on the cat, the taste of strong coffee.
A Beethoven symphony while I taste dark chocolate.
I exist in the present, next week is nebulous.
The touch of my baby's cheek against mine
defeats the demons and destroys chaos.

Like a Cat out in the Rain

Sometimes, I feel like
a cat out in the rain.
A big black and white Tom just
trotted by.
Ears back, trying to avoid
the puddles.
Is he angry at the
world; maybe a little sad too?
Was he led away from
his domestication by
his drive and desires,
only to return to
a locked door and
no more love?
Or was he born on
the streets-never held?
Were the elements always all
he ever knew?
It's a dog-eat-dog world,
kill or be killed, and this
old boy is still alive.
I don't have the
answer to this feline's
follies,
but I do know this,
sometimes,
I feel like a
cat out in the rain.

Wanting (A Sonnet)

On wings of ravens, your sanity flew.
Taken to the shadows, your mind is lost.
Life's cruel fist, and melancholia, you knew.
You traded it all for such a high cost.
Too far gone in distant time, your eyes.
I can't go to where you have wandered late.
In pain, you can grow, but you bought the lies.
How does your vast and empty world now rate?

I read of sanity lost in old books
But never thought it would happen to us.
Thank God you are immune to all the looks.
In my weakness, I scream, you succubus!
I wish I could have saved you from yourself.
And now my love sits lonely on a shelf.

Fever

They came to me in
a febrile dream.
Whispered screams and
malformed limbs.
They wanted to drag
me to the hell they
came from, but I fought,
and got well.

Heroin

I put the spike
in and push it a
little; withdraw, and there
it is.

That beautiful
rose bloom flash.

Push the plunger
and I 'm back in Eden.

Naked and no shame.

And in that moment
it's better than
sex and God and Heaven,
and chocolate.

I'm lost in a
storybook blue
sky, and I don't want
to be found.

Nothing matters, but the
sublime substance pumping
through my
veins that make me
immortal.

Icarus flying into
the sun until my
wings melt and I
fall back to earth
and do it all again.

Back from the Dead

I will not be
subdued.
Cages don't suit me.
I have to be free.
Fly
run
sing
dance in the
open fields, swim
in the river with
the fish and water snakes.
My soul can't be
taken without my permission.
The access is denied.
My heart isn't yours to
mock and rape.
I will rise like
the phoenix from
the ashes and sail on against
the azure sky, free and
untethered.
Resurrected
I'm back from the dead.

My Night of a Thousand Storms

The inner critic
protects me from
reality and success;
It knows best.
It reminds me of
my hopeless plight,
my dark destiny,
my night of a
thousand storms.

Councillors say,
"Examine those thoughts.
Challenge them, are
they rational? "
I nod and smile,
and somewhere there
is a sparrow in me
that wants to sing,
that agrees with
the blue skies, and
the trees, and the wings
that have carried it
away from the pain.

But then the critic
and its minions
chatter away, and
remind me of failures,
they say,
"The play has already been written.
You're just doing your part-
your small walk-on part.
You don't get to rewrite it.

It's been written, it's finished.
You being a writer must appreciate
irony, isn't it ironic;
Thomas, no matter
how bad you want it,
you can't have it.
It's been decided, it's predestined,
long before you were born.
You lose, some win, but not you."

I faintly hear the dying song
of the sparrow, as I rise once again
and stumble towards the abyss.