

Passing

ORANGE

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# Autumn Carols

Every day  
Excitement  
Reminds me  
That our lives  
Aren't over!

That 36 and sleet  
Is a miracle, just  
Like orange, just like body  
Warmth, morning birds,  
Whatever sticks with you,  
Promise, unkempt promise  
Like singing all night  
And doing it again tomorrow;

Like knowing that you are  
Alive and inside me,  
Like pools of glass,  
Fallen reeds, sand pipers,  
Dreams of Antarctica,  
Like knowing you've touched  
All of the continents, swam there;  
Unnecessary punctuation!,  
Whoever believed an  
Exclamation point anyway?  
And isn't it really the first  
Emoticon?.

What if everyone spent an hour  
Making something, anything  
That they didn't have to,  
Every day, forever?;-

Narrow straits, ever crooked,  
No. . one's. . . counting. .. ....

# Myth

It's like looking at your sister  
And saying  
"You don't exist"  
Because somebody thought  
It didn't make sense,  
Like throwing out perfectly  
Good food because it seems  
Funny to you,  
The hope that everything  
Might really be a dream, wait,  
It is a dream, but not for hope,  
For ignorance, floating, fair  
Self-loathing ignorance because  
You just. can't. face.

Yourself.

Turn it over.  
The back side of a canvas  
Means more than the front,  
"How does it work?"  
The first question, but so often  
Far later than last, and the  
Myth damages more than the vast  
Lie, a dying corpse  
Greeted like a lover  
No other to blame but  
The one whose name bears  
The forfeited promise,  
Given away for comfort,  
Ease of spirit, and then, there,  
The poison has a place.

When we face the curse?  
Happenstance reinforces that which  
Might be considered truth.

We see

Stories to make life  
Liveable.

Motivation

Belief, faith,  
A spade at last.

With such knowledge, can not  
Art, the great story teller,  
Leech dogma, and in so doing  
Heal festering imagination?

Those who propagate "truth"  
Like a blacksmith iron will  
Yet find their face on the anvil,  
Softly asking why the hammer has  
Yet to fall.

Epiphany  
Blue-eyed goggles  
Smoldering discontent  
Eat a pig in a dream  
And save the world  
The veil you watched for  
Years and walked around,

~Mythology~

Satan-candy lying  
In your very own bed,  
Grip the railing tightly that  
Has no bridge, nor ravine. . .  
Minds, once freed, see  
Through themselves



Like a pilot flying with a  
Mud-rainy windshield [   
Sunlight can feel like  
The Devil beating his wife  
Again, but for the droplets  
In their array, scattered mildly  
About, varied in their brown-gray  
Envelopes ] the plane will fly itself  
After all, more or less, at least,  
Like an intuitive, silent guest.

Whoever signed up for the job  
Of buying groceries and sharing  
Life insurance with Beezelbub  
Had to know that people would talk.  
On the short end, she was in for  
A life of misunderstanding,  
Existence caught in translation and always (   
the immutable center of greed),  
Transition, slowly turning leaf  
Color, laryngeal muscles adjusting  
Dance-like to desire, that which  
Will carry into forever like a  
Popsicle (but without the sugary  
Haste) and wait for the day to come  
When light, shining through water,  
Reminds us that we can fathom  
Covenant to the point of tying  
Rainbow immutably to Devil and Deity,  
If you're southern, that is; a  
Luxury reserved for the sentient,  
And cherished just below the clouds.

Today simply  
Feels like change.

The air with its  
Fingers tickling  
Every atom, the wind  
A German folk band,  
Oompa, oompa, oompa  
Waving like wheat.

Today, even bald people  
Have hair, for the breeze  
Makes them whole,  
Pushing out whatever  
Stunted growth, calling  
Forth new cells to do the work.

The sun played hide and seek  
Like the sleek-cheeked child,  
Mirroring vanity in the trees while  
Standing by for further instruction.

Today is rare enough; oh, yes,  
Change is eternal, and, sure,  
Summer sun hangs its biceps  
Over tanned beaches while the  
Razor thin blades of cold creak  
Their way across a 12-month tundra, but

Nowhere has Fall all year long,  
Her shameless, welcoming  
Doorstep, her storied promise,  
Opening the back stoop to  
Whatever we had forgotten to hear  
Right there before our eyes.

Your breath is the  
Light of the clear blue morning  
Sprung in silence, but never alone.  
The touch of your hand, the  
Gentle excitement of rain.

You renew gracefully, cleansing  
As you go, washing freely,  
Your eyes invite pleasure, rescue calm.

Time with you revolves through  
Eternity as it has come and gone,  
Your voice delights in life, dancing  
On air, waving with the soft lull  
Of tall grasses, your nearness revives,  
Creates what stays, and releases  
All else into ghost hands for keeping.

I see you rise before me, polished  
And perfect, a mythology unto yourself,  
The lithe weave of happiness,  
The beauty that mends.

The world calls inside my head,  
As I lie here with my lover,  
Skin touches carving me  
Into myself, wars fought in  
Elongated moments, dreams  
Unto themselves, unreal in their  
Bizarre, flailing, otherness.

Love, if nothing else,  
Is a compass; the sturdy  
Reminder of direction  
Sacrificing itself regularly  
In purposeful reflection,  
Always revealing in smiles  
What would otherwise appear  
Gruesome, unmoved by the  
Dangers of truth, and eager.

Lost,  
Used to mean  
So many negations,  
Opposites, not-found,  
Used to inspire such  
Affectionate outpourings  
As to fill the pages of indescribable  
Electronic notepads, used to make  
Me feel like Something, rubbed  
Against, overseeing coffins of  
Doubtful resurgence, lined,  
Buried in good time, all  
Time measured with  
Judgement, but now,  
Lost, with you, I  
Remember, comes  
In the form of  
What may be,  
And for you,  
I have learned  
To be me.

Slipping into 42  
Not like a house shoe  
More like a boot,  
Watching the world,  
Respond to my roots  
I couldn't begin to describe  
Who I was then,  
Now I simply know  
It doesn't matter,  
And even if it did  
Who would be the wiser?

Tougher, an attitude,  
Not a callous, like  
The vocalis, easily stretching  
To the weight of one more day,  
Taking what may be, and  
Releasing the rest with glee.

I thought about this place,  
Softly, as the slow ripples of  
Your life worked presence loose  
In mine, the walls accepting  
You in their reflection, the turn  
Of the past smiling at such a  
Good and obvious choice, and  
I wondered then what Now would  
Feel like, with you so close, around  
The corner, you and new, feels  
Like old times, the ones I would  
Have had, if they had asked my  
Opinion first. That's a feeling  
That I hope I never get used to.

It's not brain surgery,  
But it is the brain,  
Of course, not alone,  
Of course, when is the  
Brain ever alone but  
Within itself?

The brain, hanging stalactites  
Gray with the decay of sensory  
Ignorance (how many times  
Have you seen the ground  
This time around?) abutted  
By the soft swish of fluids,  
Shifting round and round on  
A slow spin cycle, and what  
Does it take to let them  
Settle, the little bits of sense  
(bee buzz, unused light fixture fossil  
lost to another age, cartographic  
dirt patterns, the muscle you just won't  
release, the acidic taste of coffee?) and  
What more to let them settle the score?

Loss is this: having seen, remembering  
That you forgot to look, when it mattered.



# Passing Orange

I love this time of year,  
With the day's getting longer,  
"Like being born again into  
Life's harsh reality," you said,  
Like the world waking slowly,  
Deliberately, full-rushing power,  
The constant promise of renewal.  
Cold, clear promise, the light  
Reflecting off of your eyes,  
Moments ringing with praise,  
"How did it happen, where did  
You come from?" you asked, in  
Your way, not rhetorical, more  
Syntactical, like a misplaced comma  
Or an extra ending punctuation...  
If there were ever reason to question  
Birth, it is not here, as days grow  
Longer, smiling through hidden leaf  
Buds, waiting to remake what we well  
Know to be, the soft definition of now,  
The piqued excitement of always,  
The love in all we can see.

Leaving,  
Sure, that's one thing,  
But separation?  
Sitting in a deep freeze  
With no shirt on,  
Sky diving without a  
Parachute, combing a  
Bald head: these are your  
People, the kind you would  
Choose if you could, but  
You didn't have to, the choice  
Came without effort, free  
As a gift, you passed it on  
As a receiver, and now you're  
Passing by, straining the space  
That made you possible, eating  
From an empty bowl of oats.

Everyone is pleased for you, as  
You are for them, because pleasure  
Comes with closeness, the simple  
Answer to "what next" lies resting  
In a field somewhere over yonder,  
Plans are more of a wish, as is  
What may become of the newness  
That time together has helped you  
All discover, discover, the essence,  
Pausing to notice the subtle changes  
In how you sleep, eat, watch the  
Horizon that didn't exist before:  
The reason for closeness, the  
Blessing in friendship, and the  
Silver lining around the cloud of  
Separation...a body of water too  
Diffuse to hold in a glass, but vast  
And powerful in meaning.

Leaving Day

Emotional objects

Layered

(Red, orange, yellow, green)

Read like a confused

Conglomerate

(400HZ, 800HZ, 1200HZ, 1600HZ)

The body knows,

But what does knowledge mean  
The first time?

(Blue, indigo, violet)

Howard Hill's sir name was chosen  
With care, renewal a constant climb,  
But "think"

(2000HZ, 2400HZ, 2800HZ)

And memory opens like sunlight  
Glaring off of a sea of trombones.  
The chance of illusion satisfies the  
Haunts of passage, that which  
Will no longer speak daily truth  
Will not be forgot, only displaced,  
Realigned as bandwidths expand,  
The soft, windy cold of springtime  
A pleasant reminder of the past.

Love, in her floral beauty contented  
Wreaths her arms in forget me nots  
Smiles, though others would be tormented, and  
Remembers all that labor sought.  
Laughter, forgetting herself in elation,  
Sings anthems to tunes written long ago,  
Reveals in your eyes the birth of creation,  
And answers in you all that love could know.  
The wind whispered "listen, the world will awaken",  
The fireside echoed, "be still, you will hear."  
And giving to you what could never be taken,  
The world came to life with the pleasure of share.

Of all that I might in this life do,  
It is better, and more fitting, for loving you.

You can feel it,  
When the earth starts  
To take it back, to reclaim  
What was never really relinquished,  
But for in your mind, the  
Moments built with pushes,  
That distinct effort we call  
Caring, a most personal trait.

You can sense the release,  
Nature's gift, "I got this, you can  
Let it go again, like you did before,"  
Cycles upon cycles, definition  
In its poetic form, remembers you  
Only to say "thank you for your part,"  
And then you move on.

Detachment, like caring, resolves  
Internally, though deeply, toward the  
Gut (caring nestles closer to the skull),  
When all that we'd hoped we'd be,  
Caught in wrapped illusions of control,  
Floats on bug song and dew,  
Waiting anew tomorrow's pleasures.

"Look for me beneath your feet,"  
He said, and that's where we are  
Happiest. That's where we shine.  
The great democracy in now,  
Holding loss in time.

The box, my torso,  
Feels shut up like a  
Window coated in  
Layers of paint, the  
Grooves between your  
Fingers, carved newness.

There are quid pro quos,  
There are ships to be burned,  
Walked away from fearing  
Nothing but tree frog poison  
And destiny whose image  
Slowly weaves into a Ferris Wheel.

There are places to be imagined,  
Spaces to be kept, languages to  
Create as fools await their summons,  
Knowing not what will become of  
Tenses and cases, and whether  
Subjunctive should enter with its  
Irrealis waste and promise.

There is the horizon to be crossed,  
The cliffs edges to be walked off,  
The sunrise to see as circular,  
The earth our spaceship lifting  
Always upward, and gravity's inverse myth.

There are flowers to be petaled,  
Noses to smell them, and physical  
Traits to observe. Angles to consider,  
Love made in raw public fits,  
Feeds to tell seeds of stories that  
Others can reveal in their bedrooms,

It sticks. The box, the torso, fixed  
As with paint, it clings in vain to what  
Might have been, struggling  
Politely to settle everything, weld  
The finer parts down with pie-shaped  
Rivots until only the house remains, all  
Else painfully asking why they must go.

Windows only know the stories that  
Pass before them, yet the body  
Intuits lifetimes, awaiting the  
Chance to be freed, to mark  
It's Eid with a meal fit for kings,  
And shared recklessly with all  
Who chance to believe.

## Flower Basket

You won't know what's in it  
Until you LOOK!  
But what could it be?  
Drowning in surprise,  
Drowning in surPRIse  
Like a sunrise, like a  
May Day basket, all  
Flowers full and bursting,  
I hung it lightly on your door,  
And then ran, ran around the  
Neighborhood until you caught  
Me and kissed me and kissed me  
And rolled about in the flora, a  
Bouquet of smiles, laughter, memory,  
Beauty, possibility and promise, and  
A few candies at the bottom, the good  
Kind, with chocolate.



Forever?

Someone else's trap  
Lightly bated with peanut butter,  
Mostly for the rats, that is  
Mostly for the rats write  
We this love tale to sell  
Causing billions to fail in search of  
That one, small, huge, un-known, -seen,  
-Been, -won, -done, -ever after spun into  
Unshakable rhyme for the only time it  
May have shown a hint of promise and  
Now sputters in a rear view mirror unclear,  
Unknown, unseen, unbeen,  
Forever.

Yeah, I've been there, dragging that  
Sandwich board in the rain, draining  
What's left of post-apocalyptic fever  
Out of the sweet brains of zombie hosts,  
Ghosts that I puffed up with whooos and  
Whaaaats and what haaave yooooouuus, but  
What You have, maybe, I stopped to consider. . .

Forever, not, "forever", not like that girl in the  
Tower with the super long, completely impractical  
Hair, or the terror of chasing slippers around, the  
Fright of drawing down night slowly over a  
Capitulated field whose memory, faded, hazy  
Memory of a perfect night, one, alone, night  
Whose perfection stands in question if only  
For its isolation, is that perfection? To happen  
Once and so cramp the memory of everything  
Else that no one, nothing, ever, can be as good?  
What the hell even is the "Great White Buffalo?"

No, I stopped to consider, or, consideration stopped  
Me, as in "to be" there was never a "not" to me,  
And there was you too, always there, perpetual  
Renewal like a garden claiming the sunshine for  
Its needs, watering itself from the pollen that bees  
Shower like rain storms in sunshine, you are always,  
Not "forever", and the difference lies sweetly on  
My cheek like a kiss that I waited for, once, maybe,  
And then again, softly spun from spider silk stronger  
Than mythology, you linger alone, and draw  
Down one into all other.

Mist whispers "I love you",  
"Write me a poem," she says,  
But it's already done,  
Begun in light racing backward  
And forth across lines tied to  
Rainbow-found clouds,  
None but the boldest stars aware of  
Your nymph skin enchanting the  
Whole night, each subtle curve  
Delighted as nature chants the  
Names you have yet to reveal.

Perfection is each drop of water  
That laid across your body before  
Brushing your suppleness in slow  
Return, desire, the wind whose  
Steam caught the twilight in subtle  
Jealousy of your delicate charm.

Slow, like a cafe sandwich,  
"They walk around, past me,  
I'm a ghost, or they are, but they  
See, I see them seeing, those  
Couches they return to, this one  
Hard with wood frames, that one  
Plush and gross, scattered with  
Baby things, he's got a Playstation,  
Those places they sit to see their  
Eyes bulging with fantasy."  
"But they never catch your eye?"  
"Dr., please, not until the check  
Comes, at least, not until they care,  
Or, feeling self conscious, smile  
Crookedly, vacant, dull but curious."  
"Everyone looks at a baby, though,  
Don't they? And sits still while those  
Ligament-free squeals pierce our  
Ears, knives through burned meat!"  
"If you ever finish hot coffee, you've  
Drunk it fast," I said to him,  
But there was only silence,  
The kind that settles over streets  
Whose snow, black with winter's  
Filth, is nearly gone, yet the air  
Is alight with pregnant promise.

## Sonnet

Some day from now  
I'll remember lying in  
Bed, wrapping a present  
For you, considering  
Enjambment, not as a  
Poetic agent, more in the  
Context of noticing life from  
Just outside, realizing that  
Pleasures you've known had  
A name long before you knew  
To call them anything at all,  
Listening to Elvis hum his sweet  
Lyrics in my head, vulnerable  
Except for the wink in his voice,  
Yet still tender, that word, "always",  
Always, it echoes, rings across time,  
And will settle in me, some,  
Unpredictable, day when the gray  
Light of February is cuddling left-  
Over snow lying hopefully on  
Gables, or perhaps when the slow  
Turn of seasons confuses itself  
Again, and effort seems to recoil  
In acquiesce, allowing what will be.

That being, allowance, the stepchild  
Of love poetry and lyrics, all driven  
By must, haves, and tragedy, chasing  
The toddler emotions around like  
Golden retrievers on a rabbit chase,  
But oh so deep to consider loss like

A polished mirror, or not, that's what  
I was thinking, or not Neruda holding  
A scarf and crying dry tears to a  
Young sex object, and not Adele's  
Incessant calling, calling, lonely  
Calling, and not Whitaker's sleep (for god's sake),  
Puccini's consumption, Monteverdi's  
Sorrowful parting, not the notes, as it were,  
Haven't they had it long enough?

If popularity nestles into separation  
Like chocolate into peanut butter,  
Then I've always been a fruit guy,  
And even if that thought from the  
Future finds itself accompanied by  
Unpredictable change, as it always  
Will, even if Elvis's wink has left with  
A nod, even if the bitter sweet taste  
Of used-to-be bites a little on the  
Back end, I can't imagine any  
Moment more special than a chance  
To remember loving you so deeply,  
Wholly, and unrefined, like spirits  
Passing in unspeakable glory through  
To another life, like the world you  
Have shown me in your beauty, your  
Trusting desire to give it a shot,  
Your ever eager infatuation with life.

Loss may be a defining feature of Life,  
But it pales in comparison to  
Found, which is how change has  
Reawakened in me ever since I first  
Saw it in your eyes.

# Eulogy Democracy

Thomas the Phoenician, two hours dead,  
Forgot even the sound of the robins on lampposts  
Whose light, just extinguished from the pre-programed  
Switchboard, was forgotten ages ago by city planners.  
As mile markers picked life from his bones  
In faint whispers, he recalled only profit and  
Loss in the slow loosening of his limbs,  
An Armageddon in small doses, as it always  
Was, yay, it always will be, no flash of light  
Or white horses, but only the show of  
Unseen losses, and celebrations of foreseeable  
Feats whose treats pass for Saturday feasts and  
Sunday melancholy, alone in the same chair  
As the last, this, the grand apocalypse:  
Devils picking at carcasses, spears and blood,  
Angels forgoing moments of saving grace for  
The unwashed, rather, no one can clean the  
Road's black ash from their feet, they sit,  
Staring, never noticing those who pass along  
The other side reversing their woes,  
Separateness is drivers alone,  
Loneliness is the BBC, knowing that all the news  
America has to sell has been at your  
Service, twice, and still it goes on,  
And still the job waits for you,  
Once this work is done.

But why wear your shoes with no clothes?

"It's one less thing to carry."

Logic, mythoLogic, the Greek god

Of moonlight said, while walking

Among mortals, that all is as one

Chooses to believe, that, choice, even,

(As she gouged out the eyes of a passing

Sailor who stared at her skirts too long),

"Is the product of your belief." Her lover

Would later turn the sailor into  
Sea foam so that he could forever  
Look up the skirts of anyone he chose to.

"And why play a guitar with five strings?"  
The A has other uses, as an article, or  
Popularity. The one thing, after all,  
That the rise and fall of billions upon  
Trillions of lives has proven is that  
Everything will right itself, and the right  
Will never look the same as before, and  
Few will find meaning, or cause, but  
Something must be written down for  
Children to read and pundits to argue  
Over to show that they are worthy  
Of campaign donations, earlier and  
Earlier every year.

Remember the words of the Lord,  
They will keep you in all things,  
As a light that gives you away  
To all who would kill you savagely,  
And drink your blood, or to those  
Who would ask you into their fold.



## Part II.

And so what of it, Death?  
Progenitor of art,  
The fertile soil from which  
Leaves, extended from ash,  
Seek the narrow light of moments,  
Time's newlywed ever escaping  
Love's finger, diamonds lingering  
In long-willed shadow, Death, crushed  
By fire and rock, bereft of water,  
Sunlight's tickling hand reaching  
Across lands golden with life,  
Memory's Tiresias, argument's strife,  
All but the lost stand before  
You and wave their fist,  
Listing side to side to avoid  
Centered, you, Death, fondling the  
Alien scythe, bringing pestilence for  
Posterity, wandering across TV  
Screens between cars and furniture,  
Sitting atop cathedrals of progress  
And yearning for a call, not to arms,  
But to legs, movement, the studied  
Course of barriers that, once lain down,  
Are centuries in the forgetting, but  
Oh so easily discarded.

What do we call Wealth if not the smooth  
Ferry boat to nowhere, that is, nowhere  
But the end that marks the beginning  
With, never the other way around, standing  
Aside and leaving others to wonder,  
Vanity the denial of riches, mothers, and art,  
Strung upon tin-can phone lines, scratching  
Messages to yesterday lost in translation,

The mailman, the priest, the child, and the rest,  
It is but the soldier who, worm in hand, sinks  
Her way past the dark lines of morbidity and into  
The padded-wall ward, singing to all her  
Hero's welcome for the one who gave them up;  
The teacher, the bank teller, the out-of-work,  
"brother-can-you-spare-a-dime" footman  
Punching the clock like a tower, hour after  
God damned hour to the tune of "go do it  
Yourself, and leave me alone", grasping  
After "Mine!" they wreath and spindle  
The world into dwindling pants suits  
For the fattening age; politician, and  
Porter, slave and would-be-master, each  
Grasping their fate in paper bags soaked  
With the grease of profit choked in desire,  
The blood dried on Death's frayed cuffs;  
Boatman, farmer, astronaut and technician,  
Ah the technicians, their inheritance, a night  
Out with bad story telling and craft beer  
Because no one ever cared else but to sell  
The life's work of snails given over to rabbits  
Intent upon procreation; the brokers, the value-  
Makers, the ignorant clerks licking cocks for  
A weekend in the Islands once a decade, for  
Photographs of holidays, blenders bought,  
And children graduated, such promise, such  
Promise, such primrose promise, they all pray to the  
Same god whose name rots their eyes and fills  
Their brains with leftovers heated daily  
With microwaves soaked in change, marinated  
In daily remembrance to forget that their skin,  
What they curse in each mirror they pass,  
Fell off that day, that minute, never to return  
But awakened that it might become dust.

## Icarus

"Write one about the  
Arrogance of cyclists",  
Was overheard at a business  
Meeting, more gray suits than  
A dove migration, "did you ever  
Stop to consider that everyone  
Is wrong?" Or, at least, that was  
The subtext. Everyone but me,  
"Everyone but me"; it could have  
Been the convention banner,  
Hung above every door, the  
Passover mark renewed daily  
For fear of another Pharaoh,  
Another plague, another Moses.

This is the wilderness, but they  
Forgot to think that, just kept  
Scheduling the next one, "yes,  
I can do 2:00," "what about 2:30?" "Uh,  
Nope, that's my dental appointment  
Time...get it...?" Shrugs. No one  
Wants to hear humor, not when  
There's manna futures to be  
Counted and short sold, and there,  
Up above, lines of caves with Icarui,  
Icaruses, depending on the Latinists,  
All looking over their potential doom,  
Looking neither left or right, and  
Therefore alone. They made wings  
From a convention banner, glued  
Together with what they could find,  
And now they will test their boldness,  
Test it or die in the incoming onslaught!

"Shouldn't have used wax", they  
Said the next day just before the 2:00.  
"Can't ever tell when wax is getting  
Weak. I prefer tape, even, but if  
You want to do it right, got to have  
Guerrilla Glue." "You know I've been  
With them from the beginning?"  
"Wish I had been able to get in on  
Microsoft from the beginning."

The flyer lying face down in their failure  
Refuses to stand, worrying that  
Others will know that they didn't  
Fail completely, consumed by a  
Corporate need that sits ever  
Inside themselves, when all along  
They were neither alone nor failed,  
But simply living, and unable to see  
The common cause.

## A Night In The Windy City

One light of three blinks  
Atop a suspension bridge,  
Blinks a drifting amber  
As the sun slowly rises  
Over Lake Michigan.

The dower stench of seabirds  
Lofts around its spires  
While beauty and corruption  
Carpool to their workday  
Past gardens whose access  
Will ever be patiently withdrawn  
From those who first valued them.

Loveliness breeds desire, a  
Commodity that raises rents  
And yields ever to greed and  
Polish, numbers increase risk  
Of loss, something must be done.

The song's in My head  
"Rush!"  
"Don't rush". . .

Our national cuisine,  
Following cornfield upon  
Cornfield of sugar and  
Beef meal, looks more like  
Preservatives holding hands,  
Sapped of nutrients and waiting.  
But you can't hear it,  
Of course, who can, hear it?  
And who would want to?

There the garden lies behind its  
Walls for all to see,  
Blink, blink, blink, blink, blink.

## Our America

Amidst this backdrop of neon  
Chromaticism I whispered "I love you",  
Your hand resting lightly on my thigh,  
I stroked your hair as the air, filled  
With sounds of sounds crowded  
Desperation in refuge, the voices of  
Those speaking without voices asking  
"What was your America then?"

I wasn't alone, rather,  
We walked, hand in hand,  
Walt and Allen, as you did with  
Them all, didn't you? Vixens.

Hiding out in a bomb shelter  
With plastic blue seats, arpeggios,  
And balding beatniks in thin ties and  
Sport coats lounging on sweaters,  
Will we ever learn what it was that  
You asked, or is the future ours  
To leave, slowly whining on the edge  
Of a violin bow made to sustain notes  
No one ever asked to hear?

Where is our America, then, or when  
Was it ever to be more than promise?  
The great democracy unearthed not  
In experiment, but in agitated discontent,  
Now lost in pet insurance, organic produce,  
And belief that twenty-five  
Was ever a decent crowd.

Light was never the answer to darkness,  
But the argument of the damned,  
Hoping, grasping for discernment,  
Wanting to be known in the caverns  
Of comparison, when all they ever  
Needed was to see the other side,  
To know that they weren't alone  
After all.

Did Charon feel the cold cut platter  
Of loneliness, the white toast points  
And wilting celery spears waiting  
For small talk on worn shag carpet  
In a warm living room cloaked with  
Heavy curtains and boredom?  
Did he ever care?

Would to be the ferryman to Hades  
Where at least purpose meets daily  
With function. All the rest, rusty  
Negotiation, leaves too much to say,  
And too few (optimism the butter of  
Tears) see the sun in its glow beneath  
Pleasure while we hold hands and smile.

I found forgiveness in an  
LA thrift store. Standing there  
Looking for more than I knew,  
The box found me,  
A Celtic Cross burned in the face,  
The inside bore the word "Matthew"  
Chapter eighteen, verses eighteen to  
Twenty two, as the words came to me  
I knew the calm hand of my past  
Resting carelessly in the room.

The passage dissected two parts,  
The latter, a riddle in math,  
Most clear to the Hebrew,  
Though the message reveals one of  
Humanity's great truths:  
Forgive, over and again,  
Higher than you can count  
And then some.

But the first words recoiled back  
Begging me to leave them be  
For another, and others still to see,  
The little wooden vessel, light as balsa,  
A likely product of church camp  
Now holding space like an  
Arc of the Covenant surrounded  
By leftovers, rejected stuff, what  
Had to move on so that more could  
Be bought, more acquired, piled up,  
Stacked and forgotten, hoarded for  
The sale of the dream of the Invisible Hand  
("Whose bounty proves our  
Superiority, the rightness of our  
Living, Amen"). The words spoke to those who  
New the code, "whatever you bind", it told,  
Value in life equals value in others,  
"will remain", and "what is loose" he  
Simply said "will do likewise."



It took an Einstein to remind us that  
Life, though linear to our faces,  
Floats around, all in all at once,  
And there I was, standing with my  
Past, all the stories that nurtured  
My soul reminding me that the goal,  
Clear and plain before the nose of  
The world, was never greed, or more,  
Or having or taking, or all of the surface  
Beliefs in America's dream, but instead,  
Love, community, what time you  
Can for others, knowing yourself  
Through them, as a window into  
Always that straddles time,  
A heaven, forever as we know it, of wealth.

# December

## Catharsis

It was December third,  
She thought, looking down  
At the Advent calendar  
Unopened, the sounds of laughter unheard.  
Life would have been long,  
If only things had been different,  
Like the lyrics of the song  
They used to listen to every day,  
"Just keep holding on",  
But she wouldn't, not after this,  
Not knowing it was all wrong.

Somewhere years hence,  
She thought as the empty bottle  
Rolled away from her eyes, slowly  
Closing, someone  
Will be opening the third  
Little door, eating the candy,  
Smiling, maybe, as they read  
"Prepare ye the way..."

## Beverly Hills Present

Lost in a sea of string lights,  
Palm trees, and insanity,  
The measure of measurement  
Seeps through a sieve and  
Decorates the table, mustache  
First, followed by cheek bones,  
Scattered hair and 5-o'clock shadow  
Of powdered sugar that could have  
Been Dick Nixon's if only someone  
Had told us what the theme would be!?

There's no substituting wealth for  
Sanity. The cards are fixed, the  
Table turned in on itself, eating  
Away at opportunity like the fourth  
Glass of whiskey in an hour.  
Sure, all people (most of them at least)  
Are genuine, in that sweet, trying  
Kind of way, but we are all plagued  
By our want for more, the disease of  
Greed ever gnawing at the roots  
Of stability, ever chewing our feet  
From desire, the one to be  
Simple, to be free from want  
Or expectation. No freedom  
Was ever won by trying to protect  
What was never yours to begin with.  
No life ever lived from inside a snow  
Globe afixed by other's labor for the  
Sake of your gain.

## Oval Office Santa Clause

He rolled the pen slowly in his hand,  
The slightly cool edge, unnoticeable  
Before, glided easily over his palm,  
Bumping along the pink and wrinkling  
Knuckle knees before turning over  
Again, a finger tidal wave depositing  
It back at the broad base of his  
Life line which reminds him that  
It didn't have to be like this, the  
Thought on repeat, speed dialed  
Each second before its smokey wake dissipated.

The moments to wait have all wandered away,  
Negated by inaction, hope, and  
Misunderstanding that they could  
Truly be this way, stoop to lows  
Only chosen by the meanest of  
Societies, the ones whose end was  
Signaled in glowing color by ruthless  
Rulers, oligarchs, and all-too-patient  
Citizens caught in their own petty  
Greed and entitlement force fed  
By the tyrants and lapped up like  
Poison-fed beef in chemical gravy.  
His decision wasn't easy, but felt  
Clear: sign it, make it happen, then  
Hunker down for the onslaught.  
It may not even help, he knows,  
Like the slow rolls of the pen caught  
In its patient arc, and it may hurt,  
As all things seem to do in their hands,  
But courage demands that it be done.  
Like the warrior's sword of old,  
Swiftly falling upon acts of valor,  
So glided the pen, freed from its  
Cycle, and lost to history but for  
Milliliters of its dark milk.

This drifting sunset  
Will be my last,  
The pressure of it  
Weighs on my chest  
Like ten thousand elephants,  
And yet, each cloud wisp,  
Every pink flash, orange wink,  
And marbled beam  
Retells a moment of my life,  
Such that it is to tell.

I was told once, in Mrs. Baker's  
Music class, that composers  
Like Mozart never wasted a note,  
Each pen stroke perfectly finding  
It's betrothed's target. Like the  
Festering promise of failure  
Looming over humanity, it taught  
Me to fear composers, and believe  
In my own perpetual remorse, until now,  
Slowly releasing its grip with soft  
Fingers whose thoughts dress me  
In photographic montage gilded  
In nature's robes.

Night needn't come for day to end,  
And every breath's clear-eyed  
Beauty touches my tongue with  
Notes of butter, cherry, and paradise.

Love's shadow would have been your ghost  
Lost among whispering trees whose  
Arms lingered in white, telling stories  
Dottily, like wandering old women too  
Easy to stop, too focused to wait,  
You sat and smiled once, and traced  
The outline of a bridge, her lamp posts  
Standing sentry to pastel engravings  
Chipped and repasted by friends of \_\_\_\_\_  
So that all might explore some grandeur  
Long ago remembered as old, the yellow  
Stones overgrown with road noise  
That your pen happily ignored,  
I see you, then, before a before,  
Waiting to know that subtlety can  
Waste a soul, that the answers only  
Come long after the opposition has won,  
Never in time to answer this, never  
As a breeze asking to pass anointed  
In its beauty, precious through your hair.

# The Coventry Hipster

"Lully, Lulla,"

He could feel the wrinkled  
Scrawl of denim resting  
Rough, cotton whose  
Journey had already been  
Long, tortured aggression,  
Against his fingertips, soft  
In their entitlement, keeping  
Time to impatience, the slow  
Slide, moist with pre-sweat, as  
If all moments were meant for his,  
"Thow littell, tyne Child."

The tips of the \$75 canvas shoes  
Bought with someone else's dues  
To society peaking limpidly across  
A visage otherwise reserved for  
Asphalt and worn paint. Already they  
Were marked with phantom black  
Lines, signs of minor wear, a story  
No one wants to tell in mixed company,  
They would wipe off with a little  
Spit and polish, if ever he knew  
The tune, or cared, the red hand  
Staring him down, insensitive cars  
Wining by, each driven by a douche  
None-entity like a Japanese pilot,  
In a WWII film from the 50s, or  
A Storm Trouper, born, each, to  
Die a cinematic death and eat the  
Free food again while waiting their  
Next call. These "men of might,"  
They needed the credit  
Or better yet, the story to tell  
Someone, one day while sitting

Around the trash bin fire, too cold  
To remember why the calls quit  
Coming, too old to know anything  
But free food, the world spun too  
Quickly into the bright Gilded Age II,  
"For Thy parting, neither say nor singe"  
Ripe, sugary ripe, like Tarzan,  
Like the swell of the working class  
Once the bees have buzzed their last,  
And still the light won't turn.

These corners were never meant for  
Street traffic, but he doesn't notice,  
Too swelled with the hell of another  
Soft beginning, too clouded by  
The ghosts that his past would  
Never hope to know,  
"By by lully, lullay."



Well, there is a lot of blood,  
But at least someone red  
The paper today. Now put  
Away that thing. Before you  
Saw your arm next to the TV  
We were trying weekly to  
Avoid class to see the bizarre.  
The thread of my life was  
Tied around my waste,  
I needed a dollar, but it was a  
Quarter past, so we bought  
You a present, though it's  
A little mean, well perhaps  
Averageish, but (and this is  
A biiiig butt), we hope you'll  
Enjoy a sweet burrito!

(She'll need hay twice a day,  
And lots of love and oranges)

Little \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with your chosen homeland)

Why is it always considered  
"Little"? The scattered memories,  
Lost connections manifest in  
Food, music, and architecture  
Always a little less than was, but  
Buzzing with the excitement of  
What has been, though what is  
Remembered never includes why,  
What transpired to fling the seed  
Across the globe in search of  
Whatever wasn't there at the time.  
So big an experience to be known  
As little. The stable will always get  
To define the whole, regardless of  
Intention, and those that carve  
Newness, if not renewal, may only  
Be seen by way of comparison.

Trust, the one crop twisted  
Too closely to action to  
Be understood as corporate,  
Yet, strangely personal.

Everything that you've learned  
Floats on trust, like the enamel  
View of that ceramic orange  
Cookie jar, the one we used to use  
To give out Halloween candy,  
And so much more.

Open it again,

Just, because.

Abandoned, left alone,  
Cleft by the sun midday  
Quickly burning, charred by  
Loss, half-baked desire less  
The effort to feel it, you  
Were once dead to me, and  
Now I stay, hopelessly empty  
Without your call.

What is today, for me?  
This empty hole to be filled,  
Categorized in fits or starts,  
Stilled-tightened muscles  
Whose composure threatens  
My heart, yet will in no way release  
Into day, to-day, The Bard of Democracy  
Used to say, as if the word had action.  
Always something to-do, when  
Just as equally, there are things to  
Be undone, threaded like cuffs of  
Old pants whose closet presence  
Signals too many days without renewal,  
Too many opportunities unavailed,  
Too many days unhyphenated,  
Cramped in their tiny spaces,  
Left to someone else's whims.

## Poet Laureate

Joe Rumrunner had always  
Believed himself to have been  
A mountain goat in his previous  
Life, which accounted for his  
General lack of balance.  
His father convinced  
Them all that their unusually  
Descriptive sir name had nothing  
To do with their Jamaican heritage,  
But was, instead, reference to a  
Flightless bird found in West Africa  
Whose relatively short existence  
Ended in extinction in the 1960s.  
No one had bothered to check.

He wanted to be renowned for his  
Words, our poet laureate,  
He wanted the gold wreath of  
Greek gods laid upon his head  
By supple youths whose study  
Of him in English class led them to  
Race after him in malls and airports  
Just for a chance to praise the phrase  
That change their life.

Would it be "sitting in that garden,  
Smelling yesterday's roses", or  
"Life gave me a veneer, like moss  
On an old wall, and soft shoulders",  
Or maybe it was simply his love of  
Dogs, they would say, cackling while  
Trying to remember one in particular?

But he whined inside, wheezing  
Outwardly with thinly veiled half jokes  
In colloquial speech, our poet laureate,  
The line between forced irony  
and meaningful reflection,  
Authenticity or Made in China,  
No, more a fog than a line, or  
Perhaps more like a dog, whose  
Mind you always believe yourself  
Present too, when they can  
Think of nothing but food.

Forgiveness,  
That surly supply store  
Stocked with unwanted items,  
Until they are marked down to  
Nothing. And no one knows  
Unless their head is on the block,  
Like those whose minds refuse  
To rewind far enough to remember that  
They need the most severe forgiveness,  
But will never cross that line but by  
A random accident. Instead, they  
Will hold like dread the belief over all  
Others heads that they alone know  
The forgiveness code, and would dole  
It out of only you deserved their kindness.

But, then, that store never had a key,  
Never locked the doors it never had,  
And surely never asked for reparation.  
Them that make a wager out of  
Forgiveness never were there,  
Perhaps they replaced freedom with  
Entitlement's sticky fingers,  
But, will they ever feel what they  
Can't possibly know?



## Winter's Night

It's the night before the night before  
The night before Christmas.  
That seems like it should be something, yes?  
The advent calendars reference  
Habakkuk or Malachi or some  
Other lesser prophet, which,  
What were the Hebrew people up  
To anyway to have so many prophets  
As to separate them out into  
Valuation categories? That's a  
Profound amount of foresight for a  
People who continue to struggle  
Against time for the sake of promise.  
Like an ancient history version of the  
24-hour news anchor, their talking  
Prophet-heads floated in the public sphere,  
Perhaps, stirring up enough trouble  
To disrupt the community and  
Settle into living memory so much as to  
Get wrapped around a child's chocolate  
Six thousand years later.

Kind of makes you wonder whether  
Larry King might speak for Now  
To a generation standing  
Around us but yet unseen, about  
Days like today, this night cubed before  
Christmas, the slow light meanders about,  
A dog circling its pillow before lying  
Down again having only opened its eyes  
Long enough to eat a small bit of  
Wet food, solidly content with the  
Morning enough to call it evening as it  
Begins, this night, unspecial, as it were,  
In contrast to the onslaught of holiday.

And why? Three days hence, why the  
Fenced off extension from This  
Special night? This one that calls  
Lovers to dream across time into  
Past lives whose future selves might  
Cross paths again if only touched  
By the magic of shortened light?  
The grace of as close an ending as  
Any might want for, nestled into  
Newness like a slipper, regarded  
With a brush of honest promise?  
The kind that stays on your nightstand,  
Hung by a piece of tape, unmovable,  
For generations? A gentle reminder  
That love flows deeper in your soul  
Than any other goal, and won't be  
Dislodged, even as colorblind myth  
Reaches for her mismatched socks  
And passes blame on to the cat?

Why indeed, since true power never  
Could be taken by money or calendar-  
Play, no, this night, this certain, lovely,  
Luscious night, sings all the carols  
Humanity forgot to write, standing  
At the doorstep and wondering.

## Elegy for October

I forgot October happened  
I forgot about it all  
You were looking so cute  
In your little half suit, and I  
Was so lost in the fall.

Never a minute to ponder,  
Never a moment alone  
Like dreaming to dive  
While still half alive, my  
Confidence eaten and gone.

Settled along at the bottom  
Settled a debt never owed,  
Tomorrow may prove  
It was all but a ruse, but today  
We will reap what we sow.

## The Shell Game

I don't know, you might say that  
You spit, and I swallowed.  
Did you know that the longest  
word in the English language  
Used to be antidisestablishmentarianism?  
Back in the 90s, that is,  
Back when you had a chance  
Of becoming something other  
Than you are today: a wasted,  
Lost, angry bird sitting on a  
Spoiled nest howling at the rest  
Of us, lobbing your putrid eggs  
For sport and leaving everyone  
Else to sort it out because you  
Heard one day that civics meant  
Hoarding everything, and poetry  
Ended when Frost celebrated  
New England's tiny walls, no  
Not the stone ones, they don't  
Even really keep the sheep from  
Wandering....but one can't expect  
To see bitterness when their soul  
Is bathing tits deep in it.

Wanna be right? Always choose B,  
The odds are in your favor, and  
You won't have to acknowledge  
The true depths of your hypocrisy,  
Because the answer always looks the same.

As if no one had even existed,  
No thought, no inkling  
Rare division of being through  
Consciousness, parsing of  
Elements to draw question  
Like conclusion, and no,  
I wasn't waiting here for my health,  
But for the wealth of knowing  
That you, distant, image, creation  
From too little information, but  
Known, important, essential...  
Until you weren't, until the wave  
Swept away yesterday and felt  
Us renewed to imagination,  
Seeking the needs that you left.