

RETROSPECTIVE: Print College

Or, Internet Slaphappy Autodidact on the Loose



Pussy Riot

May I be alive when I die. D.W. Winnicott

Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement. Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal. To be spiritual is to be amazed.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel, God in Search of Man

Be regular and orderly in your life, like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work.

Harlan Coben

Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them. What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?

George Eliot

Who could ever explain you Omi? Willa Hart, Age 10, Granddaughter

In my heart

Is the seed of the tree

Which will be me.

Leonard Nimoy (Dr. Spock)

.....

Toxic Psalms *Ana Sandrin (A Restless Choir evoking images of coercion and oppression)*

.....

The surrender *of the will is itself impossible merely to will, and we may struggle with the act of surrender more deeply than we struggle with the act of rebellion.*

The Virtues of Poetry, James Longenbach

.....

If there is a lesson *to be gleaned, it is that no person should succumb to brutality without putting up resistance. Individually it can save one's life; en masse it can change the course of history.*

Shalom Yoran, The Defiant

(Shalom Yoran fought the Nazi's after his mother said, Go my beloved children try to save yourselves and take vengeance for us.)

.....

Conceivable: *up there, in the cosmic network of rails, like stars,*

the red of two mouths.

Audible (before dawn?): a stone that made the other its target

Paul Celan (translated Michael Hamburger)

.....

Some folks don't use the time *God gives 'em; that's why they're liable to come up defeated.*

"All God's Dangers" Nate Shaw (aka Ned Cobb (1885---1973) Unschooled black tenant cotton farmer

.....

I wanted to bite *the world bloody, but I have bitten myself, made my own poor tragedy of things.*

Siri Hustveldt, "The Blazing World"

.....

I was reading *my way from darkness into paradox.*

Audrey Assad, singer, "I Shall Not Want"

Poetry is a principle of power invoked by all of us against our vanishing.

The making of poems is a practice – a work human beings can do – in which civilization has invested some part of its love of itself and the world. The poem is a trace of the will of all persons to be known and to make known and, therefore, to be at all.

Allen Grossman, poet, *The Sighted Singer: Two Works on Poetry for Readers and Writers*

.....

I freed myself, inwardly.

They didn't know where they were going. But we knew. We played with tears in our eyes.

Esther Bejarano, on playing music for those headed for the Nazi gas chambers. Member of the Auschwitz Girls' Orchestra

.....

I learned young to be ashamed.

Old age is a time of loss, decline and stigma. At 88, she admitted, she had mixed feelings about living and mixed feelings about dying.

Ambivalence reigns, she wrote, in death as well as in life.

Lillian B. Rubin, sociologist and psychotherapist, author, *Woman of a Certain Age: The Midlife Search for Self* (1979) *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* (1976)

.....

About talent: things like grit, motivation, and inspiration – that ability to imagine achieving this high level, to fantasize about it.”

Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman, psychologist University of Pennsylvania

.....

The idea is to stop wasting energy resisting the way life is.

When Caregivers Need Healing, Catherine Saint Louis NY Times 7/29/14

.....

...an intuitive feel for the beauty of the unseen –

Walter Isaacson

.....

it comes 2015 - breathing fire or floating on a whisper - but it comes - another year - always thinking of you as we move through space and time and always lovingly - Naomi

.....

over the meadow and through the wood - tumbling - stumbling - rearing - fleeing - soaring - flopping - tripping - running - stumbling - rising - falling - laughing - longing - loving - hating - praying - silencing - mothering - healing - helping - turning - aging - changing - being - living - dying - lifting - mourning - thinking - smiling - crying - laughing - remembering...

through it all, dear friend, you have been there - thank you -naomi

2015, really?????????????

.....
...sometimes beautiful, sometimes disturbing, sometimes subversive, sometimes downright crazy, but always interesting – fathom the reality beyond appearances, the world invisible to our eyes.

Colliding Worlds by Arthur I. Miller (Evolutionary Biologist)

.....
“What I was, I am not now. What I was, I will never be again.”

(James Brady said in 1994 Press Secretary for President Reagan took a bullet meant for the President)

.....
I’m only good for short takes.

Mr. Mason, six months before his death. (NY Times, D4)

.....
I can’t laugh anymore, and when I can’t laugh I can’t write.

South African in Exile, Nat Nakasa, NY Times, 8/10/14

.....
One heart is not connected to another through harmony alone. They are, instead, linked deeply through their wounds. Pain linked to pain, fragility to fragility. There is no silence without a cry of grief, no forgiveness without bloodshed, no acceptance without a passage through acute loss.

Stamina is required in the maintaining of hope, the desire to set it all down.

The important thing is to keep living because only by living can you see what happens next.

Not Blonde on Blonde but Blood on the Tracks NY Times Review, Patti Smith of “Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage,” by Haruld Murakami NY Times 8/10/14

.....
“I only realized after he died what an extraordinary gift that was. As a novelist, you have to be free. Books can’t be an act of filial duty.”

Richard Flanagan, author “The Narrow Road to the Deep North,” Man Booker 2014 winner

.....
A Dutch father of three told me about his Buddhist-inspired approach: total commitment to the process, total equanimity about the outcome. -

How to Be a Happy Parent -by Pamela Druckman

.....

Shambolic: chaotic, disorganized, or mismanaged: John Berryman shambolic creature with large appetites and a self-destructive streak, marrying three times and writing in one of his semi-autobiographical dream songs:

Dwight Garner, NY Times, 10/15/14

.....

Hunger was constitutional with him
Women, cigarettes, liquor, need need need
Until he went to pieces
The pieces sat up & wrote.

John Berryman, Dream Songs

.....

...come awake to the colored, sounding, problematic world.

Maxine Greene

.....

I would not tell anyone else that he or she should choose death with dignity. My question is: Who has the right to tell me that I don't deserve that choice?

Being able to choose when to die, she said, allowed her to live. It has given me a sense of peace during a tumultuous time that otherwise would be dominated by fear, uncertainty and pain.

Brittany Maynard, 29, Right-to-Die Advocate
(Compassion & Choices website)

.....

Here lies Aaliya, never fully alive, now dead, still alone, still fearful.

An Unnecessary Woman Rabih Alameddine

.....

Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.

James Baldwin

.....

"How can I begin anything new with all of yesterday in me?"

Leonard Cohen, from Beautiful Losers (Viking Press, 1966)

"When we remember our former selves, there is always that little figure with its long shadow stopping like an uncertain belated visitor on a lighted threshold at the far end of some impeccably narrowing corridor."

Vladimir Nabokov, from Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle (McGraw-Hill, 1969)

If I go to a game, before kickoff I get goose bumps and feel that edgy nervousness just like I did when I was playing. My body fully expects that I'm going to run onto that field, and that's hard. If we won, I'd stay up all night rehashing things, and if we lost, then Sunday night would be my time to grieve.

Chris Snee, retired Right Guard Giants, and son-in-law of Coach Tom Coughlin

After a hundred years

*Nobody knows the Place, —
Agony, that enacted there,
Motionless as Peace.*

*Weeds triumphant ranged,
Strangers strolled and spelled
At the lone Orthography
Of the Elder Dead.*

*Winds of summer fields
Recollect the way, —
Instinct picking up the Key
Dropped by memory.*

“After a hundred years,” Emily Dickinson

I’m not going to deny

*the orange center of the flower
each last breath that passed
over the table
in the autumn gone away.
I wanted to take that afternoon
and put it in a safe place.
In a wooden box on the mantel
of a house I always imagine,
or in the hole I once dug
in the backyard for the imagined, stilled heart.
I wanted the day to stop
the way a movie would—
or to play it over in a place
my mind makes room for.
It was no large matter
of love, it was everything;
the grey afternoon, the Saturday
that began like a procession
inside a small flower
a young girl might tear apart.*

Jill Bialosky, Fathers in the Snow, The End of Desire

.....

*"what i should of softly sweetly surely said:
'o wingèd [one], come read with me in bed."*

"full-famished

Famished-full

Olena Kalytiak Davis, "Threshold," The Poem She Didn't Write and Other Poems

.....

"Should I remove my soul before I come inside?"

Gillian Flynn Gone Girl

.....

"We create what we remember to survive all we never had."

Mariève Rugo "On Not Being Able to Write"

"Ghosts of past memories well up: unlooked for and uncelebrated."

Lindsey McEwen, Owain Jones, and Iain Robertson, Glorious Time?

.....

My face like a bowl of crushed flowers - NB

A Legacy

*My friend falls
White as a piece of paper
Blood falling out
In a pool of slush
My friend bought the farm*

Why didn't I die

*Shooting
Soldier dying
Feeling bad*

Why didn't I die

*Trying to save my admiral
Stepping in front of the bullet
He falls
Guts come came out
Shot by a sniper
Deathly silence*

Why didn't I die

*Son walking into dead mans land
No gun to be found
Wanting peace
I hear boom
He's gone*

Why didn't I die

*Hear go home
Excited but sad*

Why didn't I die

*I go home
No one there
No wife to be seen
Sad, crying*

Why didn't I die

*I stab my self
Happy
No regrets*

I finally died

Willa Skye Hart, Age 9, Granddaughter

I am from

*I am from my bed
Sleeping quietly
With no moving at all*

*I am from NYC
Loud, busy
Shining buildings*

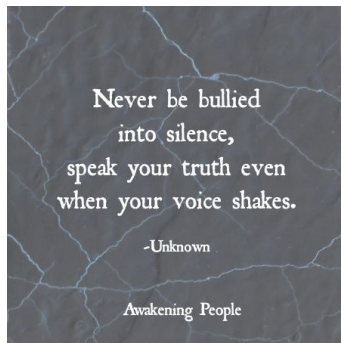
*I am from my desk
Quietly sitting
Doing homework*

*I am from watching tv
Watching Nicky, Ricky, Dicky, and Dawn
Cozily lying on my couch*

*I am from ice-skating
Gliding across the ice
Spinning around*

*I am from steak
Juicy chewy
Yummy yummy*

Willa Skye Hart, Age 9, Granddaughter



Meditation at Lagunitas

All the new thinking is about loss.
In this it resembles all the old thinking.
The idea, for example, that each particular erases
the luminous clarity of a general idea. That the clown-
faced woodpecker probing the dead sculpted trunk
of that black birch is, by his presence,
some tragic falling off from a first world
of undivided light. Or the other notion that,
because there is in this world no one thing
to which the bramble of blackberry corresponds,
a word is elegy to what it signifies.
We talked about it late last night and in the voice
of my friend, there was a thin wire of grief, a tone
almost querulous. After a while I understood that,
talking this way, everything dissolves: justice,
pine, hair, woman, you and I. There was a woman
I made love to and I remembered how, holding
her small shoulders in my hands sometimes,
I felt a violent wonder at her presence
like a thirst for salt, for my childhood river
with its island willows, silly music from the pleasure boat,
muddy places where we caught the little orange-silver fish
called pumpkinseed. It hardly had to do with her.
Longing, we say, because desire is full
of endless distances. I must have been the same to her.
But I remember so much, the way her hands dismantled bread,
the thing her father said that hurt her, what
she dreamed. There are moments when the body is as numinous
as words, days that are the good flesh continuing.
Such tenderness, those afternoons and evenings,
saying blackberry, blackberry, blackberry.

Robert Hass, *Meditation at Lagunitas*

I felt a violent wonder at her presence like a thirst for salt, for my childhood river with its island willows, silly music from the pleasure boat, muddy places where we caught the little orange-silver fish called pumpkinseed. It hardly had to do with her. Longing, we say, because desire is full of endless distances.

Meditation at Lagunitas, Robert Haas

Life with the Sword of Damocles – constant threat; imminent peril – any situation threatening imminent harm or disaster (*The Free Dictionary*)

Pending doom

Disaster
The phone rings
My heart quickens
Fear jiggles the receiver
My ears fill with blood
Waiting to hear
Waiting to hear...
Every day to wait
Every day a wake
Every day my fate
A choice I made
To lift a child
From the soil
That could keep
Him intact
My pact
With the devil
Each day
On my Met calendar
Another work of art
Each day
I try not
To come apart
I live in a zone
Of radiating fear
Solitary alone
Waiting for
The ultimate word
Your son is...

NB

.....
She seems to be lulling herself out of existence. Life dies hard, though. Every so often, though with increasing feebleness, the woman in the chair cries out, "More."

Words Felt, if Not Quite Fathomed, Playing Beckett's Game, Beaten by the Clock –

Ben Brantley, review, NY Times Oct 9, 2014

.....
The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new. Murphy, Samuel Beckett

*Bid us sigh on from day to day,
And wish and wish the soul away,
Till youth and genial years are flown,
And all the life of life is gone. Watt, Samuel Beckett*

Beckett's final seven words of their last featured letter, from 1965 to his friend Tom McGreevy, prompts us to want more "...the best of whatever is to come". And to that same friend he also writes, "let us hear and say what friends like us have to say and hear splinters of joy from some happier days."

Sean Doran, Artistic Director *Happy Days*

.....
b. 07/17/1940

post birthday

fallen to

a lower register

of old...

nwb

.....
The last of the road sank into the heat shimmer of the horizon behind –and Jonah saw in every direction the unbounded desert – the scrub clinging to tits face giving its tracts the look of a vast, sealike rolling. And he lay down with his back on the scorched sad and with his face toward the sun, relentless and colorless – and he unfurled for the Lord his sorrow. Jonah 5:1 (as written in the introduction to "The Book of Jonah" by Joshua Max Feldman)

Us & Co.

We are here for what amounts to a few hours,

a day at most.

We feel around making sense of the terrain,

our own new limbs,

Bumping up against a herd of bodies

until one becomes home.

Moments sweep past. The grass bends

then learns again to stand.

Tracy K. Smith, Life on Mars

My face sinks like the setting sun

Gravity's pull

My nose protrudes like Pinocchio's

Looming the great final eclipse

Old stories to be retold

Nose like anteater sniffing burial ground



And my preternatural asphyxiating

Suffocating benumbed mind

Unwinds explodes with chatter things to say

I do not know which to prefer,

The beauty of inflections

Or the beauty of innuendoes,

The blackbird whistling

Or just after. (Wallace Stevens Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird)

To quiet regret offer indulgent apologies

Impossible to make the body of a life right

Too many versions exist death prompts alight

NB

Never Bloom Always Bust

Flapper pancakes

Tits fall

Pull of gravity

That's all

Press on pubic bone

To pee

Legs give way

Spinal stenosis

Body's decline

Charted

As if by Google

And yet

Never a word

About the bloom

The fragrance

Of virginal desire

The allure

The seduction

Body firm

Nineteen lovely

You are ugly

How can you wear that?

Look at your hair

Traumatized

At loveliest moments

Of life

Desire running

Spring thaw
Press on pubic bone
Gravity pulls
Body's descent
Descant
The bloom
Faded
Chance for love
Vacated
Old age
Informed
A mother's
Wisdom
Passing of time
Press on pubic bone
To pee
Breasts fall
Who is at fault
For early defeat
Her fear of my
Budding
Or the fact
That I gave
Her commentary
Such high bidding

NB

.....

Wrangle self to the ground

Getting rid of you

Banish

A condition of death

By my own hand

Wiping you clear finally

From my heart and mind

NB

In Perpetual Exile or How the Holocaust Separated Me From My Sexuality

The animal reproduces

Seasons of flowering

The ineluctable poetic passion

Severed cut off

Truncated

Lost for me

Overwhelmed overcome

Harpies sang

Of genocide in my head

Overrun entangled

Mother's petrified forest

Of primordial sin

In perpetual exile

Cutting off a body's

Desires dreams urgings

Exiled

Torqued

Punishing recrimination
Penitent
Cleaved riven
Submissiveness imprinted
Terminal dislocation
Numbers tattooed
Ink invisible
Wrists mark
Chronology
Permeating hovering
Stinking implausible fumes
Bodies heaped
Dead incinerated
My *Holocaust* family
Two generations back
Didn't die
Didn't die in vein
Curly headed girl
Host to images
Keepsakes of venality
Vivid clear
Penetrating
Clairvoyant
Fumes permeate
Northward Newark
Neighborhood
Chunky chocolate factory
Fumes radiate

Overhang dome
Of scents portend
Crazy curly headed girl
Imagination rampant
Fumes incite
Overwhelm confuse
Overrun nighttime air
Pungent sickening
Curly headed girl yet five
Chocolate vapors
Permeate
Fabricate concoct
Confections volatility
Vapors waft
Titillate stoke
Time contracts
Oceans shrink
Holocaust vivid
Active verb
Actuarial tumult
Two streets over
In the Northward
In Newark NJ
Only Jew
In elementary school
Of five hundred
Darkness falls
Lone sentry

Watching over

Parent's bed

Not to snatch

Take away

The train rumbles

Thickened smoke

Fumes infuse

Mother beat her head

Enameled oven door

Unlatched

Launching pad

For her grand descent

Evensong

Nuptial bed

Foreplay

Drum roll

Nightly threats

Fanfare

Lunging toward death

Died at ninety-three

I died each night

Barely five

Watching these

Nightly forays

Enameled door

Death's gateway

He dragged

Her hair root

To bed
To fuck
I watched
They didn't touch
Never to doubt
Imagination's hold
Bare-knuckled power
Curly haired head aswirl
Sunday family meals
Homemade Challah
Grand-parent's
Master bakers
Hands mold
Braided breads
Ecclesiastical essence
Source of life
Sunday family meal
Brisket kreplach latkes
Borscht boiled potatoes
Sour cream
Desperate moments
Heaping spoonful's soothe
Father remembered
On the lower East Side
Kids holding
Potatoes on sticks
Garbage can campfires
Jewish family

Sunday table
Each head filled
With potatoes on sticks
Cousins gasping
Begging for rescue
On the other side
Pischke coins clank
Underground relief fund
Sunday stragglers
Stagger slumped
At table
Another *green cousin*
Rescued
Curly headed girl
Wonders why
They aren't green
Memory impounding
Imploding
Desperate for sour cream
Slather stuff gag
Jewish food to subdue
Festering heart
Golden 's frozen blintzes
Oozing cottage cheese filling
Sour cream
Binges palliative
Bring
Modicum momentary

Tranquility relief

Images loop

Incinerators and Jews

Nazi's subterranean

Rumbling boxcars

My sugarplum fairies

Gasped reading

Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*

In it's *once upon a time*:

"Fear presides over these memories, a perpetual fear"

Fairie tales menace

*Oh, grandmother, what big ears you have!
The better to hear you with.
Oh, grandmother, what big eyes you have!
The better to see you with.
Oh, grandmother, what big hands you have!
The better to grab you with.
But, grandmother,
What a dreadful big mouth you have!
The better to eat you with.*

*The Brothers Grimm
Little Red Riding Hood.*

A young, beautiful mermaid falls in love with a dashing handsome human prince, after saving him from drowning. In the hope of winning the prince's heart, she asks the sea witch for a pair of human legs. The witch agrees to give the mermaid the most beautiful pair of legs known to man. But there's a catch: every step the mermaid takes will feel like it was taken on razorblades – her feet will bleed ceaselessly. And even worse, her greatest possession – a beautiful mermaid voice – will forever be silenced. But the mermaid, in love with the Prince, agrees to the deal. The next morning, the prince finds the mermaid washed up on the shore, naked, with her beautiful new human legs. He marries another woman. The mermaid, after toying with the idea of killing the Prince, eventually throws herself into the ocean and dies.

The Little Mermaid

Harnessed to vagrant star

Stuck to vivid interior life

Sunday meal table

Conversation

Haunt inhibit

Father's bedtime stories

Construct nether realities

Not so crazy
Curly haired little girl
Precocious beyond relief
Overhang of hellish vagaries
Shadow life
Fictive scripts culled
From restive imagination
Fearful seductions
Yet five
Scrolling
Frame by frame
Mother's tortured
Descent
Hellish collusive
Corrosive
Enflamed desire
Skin crawling revulsion
Passions subdued
Passivity ensued
Possibility quashed
Gas infused death
At open oven door
Aftermath of tantrum
Docility and drenching fatigue
Sitting wide eyed
Darkened sky
Parent's bedside
Midnight scrambles

Bedtime stories
Fractured relief
She tucked in
Nuptial bride
Anxious hyper-breaths
Abated
And yet
Unreeling unraveling
Sultry salty
Midnight seductions
Conflated curly headed girl
Sunken eyes
Bruised fruit cargo
Anomalous gathered
Imagination depicts
Dolorous hideous
Mother took me by the hand
Standing before
Guernica at MOMA
I aghast
Simulacrum foundry
Nighttime torqued canvas
I knew Nazi freight
Babies hurled
Against cinder block
Thrown clay
I knew *Guernica*
Exactly as it moved

From Picasso's hand
My mother my father
My relatives my family
Jumble tangle
Of genocide
Urged on me
Resulted in
Depraved starved
Sexual appetites
Erotic ecstatic
Forbidden fruits
Coiled serpent
Offering original apple

Bushel and a Peck

*I love you a bushel and a peck
A bushel and a peck though you make my heart a wreck
Make my heart a wreck and you make my life a mess
Make my life a mess, ... (Frank Loesser)*

Danger lurks within
Hungers' mortal depravity
Death chambers
Ineluctable
Sexual appetites
Fear quashes
Truncates
Cuts off
Severs separates
Lust desire
Kept in check

Arousal
Death trigger
Life saving
Grace saving
Suppresses
Love crushed
First impetus
First urgings
Vapors extinguished
Energies spent
Occlude disrupt
Natural rhythms
Of sun moon tidal sea
Fuck never love
Retrained monitored
Low sex drive
Husband said
Passions kept in check
Parent's urgent forays
Nightly suicide missions
Elliptical impulses
Bride returned to bed
Subdued
Quick necessary
Appeasing fucks
Tenderness
Impossible
Sweet nectar of touch

Torqued
Earthen pits
Incinerated
Burnt out
Legacy of twist and harp
Curly headed girl doomed
Perpetual exile
Never to be touched
Left at death
Curious and starving
Residual imagery
Idles keepsake
Forbidding midnights
Curly headed girl
Waited to hear
Puttering breaths moans
Sandman slips shut
Parent's troubled lives
Interplay of shadow
And nightmare
Constructs
Child born of
Holocaust castoffs
No forgiving forgetting
My granddaughter nine
Refuses to root for German's
2014 World Cup FIFA final
Nazis she says simply

In perpetual exile
Bled bred
Dread of being touched
Repulsed
Feral disgust
Dynastic odyssey
Feelings emptied out
Ruined subdued
Midnight high jinx forays
Jewish inbred contempt
For bodies faces hair noses
Religious wars
Image distortion
Emotional abolition
Parallel lives
Hide in excessive prayer
Garish garb wigs
Stench 18th century overhang
Or in gilded ghettos
Always separate
Apart estranged
Anomalous sidestepping
Aversions abound
Transgressive exploitative
Jewish
What is this?
What are we?
More than diaspora

Self-hatred permeates
Bubble wrapped
In self-contempt
Israel homeland
Lives pinioned
Propped against
Death's unyielding
Magnificent sword
Five-year-old self
Past present pluperfect
Webbed to World War II
Its rages and calamities
Heinous *Holocaust* night raids
Father fucks a daughter to safety
Sentry at foot of parent's bed
Nazis equals no touching
Possessive obsessional pronoun
Beyond age beyond range
Elektra in formation
Stunted in tribunals
Of nighttime raids
Perpetually haunted
Initiated ways of love
Propulsive prohibitive perplexing
Little curly haired girl's head swirls
Remembering's Daddy's penis
Bobbing a toy sailboat
Sudsy lustrous water

In the tub we shared
Rationing
Blotting out dreams
Curly headed girl
Offered subterranean
His restorative love
It was wartime
Held captive
Rule-breakers
Adulterous
Sex desire fucking
Watch with
Vacant disbelief
Serpent tongue
Original apple
Other's appetites
Entice
My tongue
Can't be held
In check
Myself inside out
Yearning twisting
Confounding alluring
Body's pleasures
Tourniquet tightens
Erotic sexual urgings
Pre-teen wild thing
Girls squirming

Imaginations boundless

Preludes to the forbidden

Truncate cut off longing

Squelch remembering

The voracious girl

Boundless appetites

Ground to dysfunction

Heart severed

From body

Card catalogues leafed

How to touch others?

Is pleasure evil disgusting ?

Don't be disgusting mother said

When asked about sexual things

Body screams out squirms

Unfocussed longings urge on

How do people learn to love to fuck? What are feminine wiles? What is feminine hygiene? Library catalogue: no index cards to point the way

When did my body freeze over?

Married dismembered crippled

Severed from the erotic disavowed

Dreams deadened unremembered

Yearning squashed in its budding

My hungers dinosauric

Girl bobbing curls

Craves craven incessant

The sensual hidden forbidden

Deadened harbingers

Of rampant desire cropped up
Soaring sunflowers
Cutting through
Rubble and eviscerated concrete
Secrets to the grave
Untoward adventures redound
Compulsive desires
Pushed out me out
Sexy lingerie desperation
In beds of disbelief bedlam
Partners obliging indifferent
Kind responding
To the arch the ache
Of the despair
Desperate hungers
Serpent tongue lashed out
Other's loves
Held a perverse fascination
Stealth lovers confronted
Girl of freckled innocence
Thrusting angry fingers
Recoiling *it was not me*
It was the other one
The half-lived one
Banished to a dungeon
Of suppressed desire
Tongue reckons
Forbidden seductions

My sordid fiction
Confronts menacing seductions
Mother plundered
Punctured my dreams
She stood over my head peered in
We were a ridiculous spectacle
Right out of *Dr. Seuss*
She loved reading and singing
I sat warily lulled by *Summertime*
Believing that the lines
Held a code of intentions threats
Her twisted heart
Wanting to kill me off
Obliterate devour
Reinforcements
For the maze of her twisted mind
Life's second chance
Wrested
My existence her bounty
Words imprinted
Spun into memory a chocking vine

Summertime

One of these mornings You're bound to rise up singing Then you'll spread your wings And take to the sky But til that morning Nothing's going to harm you no With daddy and mammy standing by...

Porgy and Bess Lyrics by Dubose Heyward Music by George Gershwin

She sang always sink side
Curly locks flaxen corkscrews
Coiled tight to set her to fury
You are doing this to me

Fuckin' curls
Cropping three-year-old head
To startle unsettle
Throw her my mother
Into upheavals tantrums rages
Little girl with curls sits sink-side
Seduced by her voice
Off set rumbling tremolo
Infusing the lyrics
We were conjoined
She died and I am missing parts
Perpetual death wisher
Embalming renewals
Emptied of spirit dances
One of these mornings
Summertime summertime
I never slept well
Moon and night sky
Sentry watch
For untoward dreams memories
Charlie is my darling
Another song in her sink-side repertoire
Dazzled enwrapped
The wonder of her munificence
Stun-gunned stunned stunted
Enveloping entrapping captivating
Tilted curly headed girl sink-side

'Twas on a Monday morning, Right early in the year, That Charlie came to our town, The young Chevalier. -An'

Charlie, he's my darling, My darling, my darling, Charlie, he's my darling, The young Chevalier.

Meadowlands

Another song caroling off

Her sink-side repertoire her medley

Bursting forth hands sudsy

Martialling intense rendition

Full-throated *Rusky* frenzied pitch

Little curly head transfixed

Little girls, look, little girls, wipe out the tears, and follow the song's rhythm oh, the song, our wonderful battle song!

Little dear meadowland little but wide meadowland. The heroes are going on the field, oh, the brave Red Army soldiers!
(*Meadowland Lev Knipper 1933*)

She was a warrior my heart her target

Luring with a panoply of songs

Cossack martialling trumpeting

Foxhole crazy quilt

Of loyalties tributaries

Exegesis prickling

The small girl's curly headed mind

Coat makers have no coats for their children

Ramble of orthodoxy

Sudsy hands

Deceptive messaging inimical warrior

Fusing selves in ideological manifestoes

Songstress of the inane the insane

Insides inflaming

Soon the tempers heated

Battling storming from within

Her head the site for beatings

Self-flagellation
Choking on guilt
Wreath of predatory thorns
Jab penitent
Craving emptying
Sinfulness obsessional
Motherhood battered
Consumer of evil
Famished for approbation
Bull-whipped to sanity
Supple sanguine
Mother returns
Emptied of storminess
But it builds
Eruptions frequent
Curly haired girl calls out
Guttersnipe yet five
Words crater innocence
Lambent vessel of retribution
I remember you
Mother voodoo
Dead at ninety three
But never for me
Intertwined kudzu
Life ebbs
Decade of eighty
Picks at body parts
Vulture circling

Reflecting refracting
Devouring greatest love
Mother and child
She beating
Against her perplexities
I was her enemy
My consumptive life
Her bed my sanctuary life
Full-throated rendition
Summertime lullaby
Lulled semi-colon consciousness
Waiting to be lifted skyward
Mammy and Daddy standin' by
Father's seductiveness
Subtext of his original stories
Constructing giant
Wise with kind gentle soul
Tell me what did Harold Osterhoffer look like?
Curly headed girl enrapt describes
High to the sky face big as moon
Arms long as tallest trees
Feet as big as cars
Smile bids you trust
Harold Osterhoffer offers lessons
Scriptures of morality
Right and wrong
Enlightenment
Good and evil

Polar opposite
Her side of bed
A wife a mother draped
Steeped in shiftless amorality
Godlike father biblical stories
Told by the imaginary man
Humongous leagues tall
My father a good man
A righteous man
A starving man
Holding fast to his daughter
Feeding tube life support
First love only great love
Contender rival
Banished exiled
Father authored
Dear John letter
I took the dictation
Unerringly perfectly
My mother my father my family
Tainted with the smell
Of exile of *Pogrom*
Of displacement humiliation
God chose us
To be exterminated in ovens
The fumes caught
In the fine hairs of noses
Reassembled remodeled reshaped

To appear like the unchosen
Holocaust grafted
Skeins of sorrow
Dermaplasty's craft
Drawn from
Hideous venal imagination
Birth rebirth
Parasitic renascence
Regenerative
Burrowed borrowed
The life
Little miracle born
Of the curly headed little girl
Daughter to prey upon
Offering of prayer and despair
Mother knew my destiny
She beat her pregnant body
To rid herself of me
This collusive
Retributive necessity
Forgiving
Does not release
The heinous the unforgiveable
Parchments documents attest
Enslavement oppression genocide
Genetic embankment
Surf the blood
Upheavals tidal waves

The unbearable unforgettable
Scrolls of torment
Steal love
Death fixation embeds
Stillborn lives
Manifest *Holocaust* residue
My mother my father
Not ready to contend
Rebirth renaissance possibility
How to you recover
From the impounding
The exploitation the heinous
Oppression servitude
Servility false humility
Insides a rampant imbroglio
Of sensations
Retribution reconciliation
Compensation restitution
Reparations
Bounty on my head
Child born of fury and dislocation
Of humiliation decimation
Of degradation
Repulsed fascinated
Retribution festers
Tribunals of despair
Their bed site
For onslaught

Incessant perpetual war games
Still the blood flow
Of pillage of war
Fails to clot
They loved me
They loved me not
They destroyed me
Left me bereft empty
Destined to be solitary
Incapable of having
Holding onto a true love
Blame without point
Cannot resurrect a life unspent
Where is the restitution
The compensation
Too late the *phalarope*
They are dead
Soon I will be dead
Nano seconds left for me
To unearth what drove me
To distraction to fascination
What drove me to explore a nether life
To move hidden in feigned innocence
Desperation culled kindness responsiveness
A curiosity prickled
Grand Canyon's of amorphous desire
No longer to fester repressed
Deceit lifts absurd at this point

You in the mirror on the wall
I want to know you
All of the untoward
The fascination
The obsessions
The serpent tongue
The *Garden of Eden* apple giver
No longer to harm me or others
Imposter woman
Wrapped in formaldehyde
Taxidermy at first cry
Forked tongue
I was the puppeteer
The master of my own fate
I was at cross-purposes
Moment to moment
My tongue twisted in confusion
Struck hamstrung
By perverse combinations
Versions of freedom
Love's freedom love's abandonment
Exiled body
Eyes water longingly
Dislocated at birth
Failed to ever love
Forgive myself
For fearing love
Lost a life given

Whatever the circumstance

Sacrificed rifled

Never fighting back

Residual flames fester

Displacement dislocation

Cut me off

From home country

My body could not tolerate

The sensual the erotic the sexual

That which makes us human

Sacrificed not never given

NB

Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. Job 1:21

.....

And you were right, /my wife, righter than me –

there is no there ,

there is no there,

and even if I walk

for all of time

I will not get there,

Not alive.

One last line shared both by here

And there, the line to which

- no farther -

the living may draw near.

Falling Out of Time by David Grossman

.....

But then, Sinatra's theme was loneliness.

All men are lonely, created for some reason mute about their feelings and fears.

And loneliness is a kind of death.

Richard Cohen, Let's be frank about Sinatra's legacy, Daily News, 4/7/15

Last Words to Miriam

Yours is the shame and sorrow,

But the disgrace is mine;

Your love was dark and thorough,

Mine was the love of the sun for a flower

He creates with his shine.

I was diligent to explore you,

Blossom you stalk by stalk,

Till my fire of creation bore you

Shrivelling down in the final dour

Anguish — then I suffered a balk.

I knew your pain, and it broke

My fine, craftsman's nerve;

Your body quailed at my stroke,

And my courage failed to give you the last

Fine torture you did deserve.

You are shapely, you are adorned,

But opaque and dull in the flesh,

Who, had I but pierced with the thorned

Fire-threshing anguish, were fused and cast

In a lovely illumined mesh.

Like a painted window: the best

Suffering burnt through your flesh,

Undressed it and left it blest

With a quivering sweet wisdom of grace: but now

*Who shall take you afresh?
Now who will burn you free
From your body's terrors and dross,
Since the fire has failed in me?
What man will stoop in your flesh to plough
The shrieking cross?
A mute, nearly beautiful thing Is your face, that fills me with shame
As I see it hardening,
Warping the perfect image of God,
And darkening my eternal fame.*

D.H. Lawrence - 1921

THUS IT BEGINS AND THUS IT ENDS

Encrypted Secretive

Non-translatable

Emboldened

Embedded

Geo-location

Years days

Hours moments

Begins and ends

Birth cry

Death gargle

Beginning to end

Naomi Barber

It's quite an undertaking to start loving somebody. You have to have energy, generosity, blindness.

There is even a moment right at the start where you have to jump across an abyss: if you think about it you don't do it.

Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea

If she was going to die in that room she wanted to like the wallpaper.

Jane Franklin Mecom, Sister of Benjamin Franklin

(NY Times, The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin, by Jill Lepore)

Recalling who I was, I see somebody else

Recalling who I was, I see somebody else.

In memory the past becomes the present.

Who I was is somebody I love,

Yet only in a dream.

The longing that torments me now

Is not from me nor by the past invoked,

But his who lives in me

Behind blind eyes.

Nothing knows me but the moment,

My own memory is nothing, and I feel

That who I am and who I was

Are two contrasting dreams.

Nothing had ever obliged him to do anything.

He had spent his childhood alone.

He never joined any group.

He never pursued a course of study.

He never belonged to a crowd.

Fernando Pessoa, Poet (1930)

The circumstances of his life were marked by that strange but rather common phenomenon – perhaps, in fact, it's true for all lives – of being tailored to the image and likeness of his instincts, which tended towards inertia and withdrawal. Fernando Pessoa, Preface of *The Book of Disquiet*, tr. by Richard Zenith.

The roses I love in the gardens of Adonis,

Lydia, I love those fast fleeting roses

That on the day they were born,

On the same day they die

Light for them is everlasting: born

After the sun comes up, they die

Before Apollo rounds

His visible track

So let us make our life a single day

And willingly ignore the night to come,

The night already past

The little while we last.

Juliets Garden III by Gabriela Fernando Pessoa

...if it happens, it must be possible –

Theorem in science Richard A Muller

.....

Looking at you

IV

A man and a woman

Are one.

A man and a woman and a blackbird

Are one.

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

Wallace Stevens

Looking at you

I see myself

Half not whole

Horribly inadequate

Looking at you

Aghast

Irreparably compromised

Desultory figment

Curlicue fantasy

Pining girl-woman

Prince rescue fantasy

Mounted stead

Bolting out of dream

Muted call for love

Man stallion rearing

Waving scythe

Menacing mocking

Crushing dreams

For true love

And this was

Husband number two

Inured from awakening

Resolute

All tributaries

Lead to hurt

Abandonment

Reckless enduring

Fear of touch

Dread sun-tipped
Opening up
Prophecy
In flagrante
Grand disrespect
Came early
I found you
It was willed
Pre-ordained
Midnights
Of crushing
Bruising damning
Nose holding
Lovemaking
Ambition's hungers
Duty-bound
Fucking your way
To a Ph.D.
Sheepskin scrolled
Not a single fuck more
Sixteen years
Beyond
Time with you
And still
Sickened
Filled
With revulsion
Repulsed

Gewgaw

Ornamental

Trophy ex-wife

Fury overtakes

Debilitates

I shake

A junkie

At first sighting

Curdle recoil

Time eviscerates

Regret flares

Body rigid

With metastatic shame

Ultimately

Consummated

Betrayal

Freed of marital

Tyranny

Gun wielding

Fist pummeling

Rapist

Husband number one

Never stopped saying

You are lucky

I still find you attractive

I picked you

Out of a line up

Of potential suitors

You were the evil one

More heinous

More menacing

More destructive

Tongue snapping out

Incessant barrage

Insults recriminations

Fist flailing husband

You grabbed at me

Repulsed

Getting the job done

You are totally lacking

Feminine wiles

Tore at my body

Denigrating each part

Doppelgänger

Dead wringer

Mother incarnate

Mother inside out

Droplets of dread

Embed blood

Love too combustible

Fear its equal

Legacy

Infant beaten

In utero

Finding blame

How else to explain?

You disgust me

Mother said

Greeting me

At the door

Her face

Aflame with grief

With shame

Words

Not to be taken back

Sorrow engulfs

Overwhelms

Final stage

Guides my mind

Final mile

Soon to come

Biblical odyssey

Misadventure

Inevitable

Destroying

Chances for love

Le ciel et la boue

Sky above mud below (Pierre-Dominique Gaisseau)

Folded in between

Soft dew

Final sweet dream

Promise myself

Regret will not be

The last thing

On my mind

NB

On My Mind One More Time

Remembering

Recalling

Reassembling

Heartbeats for love

Smoke-signal

Flare

Wanted man

Who likes to fuck

Dan Flavin

Blinkering neon

Signage

Original sources

Us and In Touch

Elemental primary

Fastened onto

Divine apothecary

Of remedies

Speed-reading

Sluggish

Supermarket line

Fucking keeps you

Succulent young

Stumbled

Bag in hand

Man

Reads

Tealeaves

Of desire

Man

Of grand ambition

Found me wanting

Man hell bent

To *get his own*

Cruising

Heded the call

Primal locked

In perpetual longing

You a concoction

Of dissembling

My essential self

My coming apartness

Obscene gullibility

Us and In Touch

Just quit on myself

Picking you

Squandered

Chances

For true love

You were a fox

A deceiver
Desperation's
Scent
Led you to me
Portal *Fluxus*
Filigree in flagrante
Prom rose
Pressed in pages
Of supermarket rags
You found me
I lay supine
Like a rag doll
A stray in heat
Barter and swap
Fucking for Ph.D.
Turned blind eye
Not to see you
In you're fullest
Embellishments
I a crow
To your adept foxy flatter
Fucked early
In Bronx ball field
Near pitchers plate
I was elated
Soon the fountain
Of youth to gush
Heart raced

Random surfaced

Dormant hunger

Easy prey

To faint flattery

Woeful man with swag

I will fuck you

Alive back to life

A subtext

Apt retelling: The fox and the Crow Aesop Fable: A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good-day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds." The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future. Moral: Do not trust flatterers

Years pile on

Since you fled

With next victim

Of charmed

Penis wand

You enter

Sightlines

I recoil

Set to cringing

Revulsion

Registering

As self-contempt

Swarmed stung

Hives of regret

I chose you

I chose you

Arbitrage

Broker

Dicker fee

Fuck you

In exchange

For a Ph.D.

Gave him

First book

By Foucault

Unknown to him

Innocent feral

Nouveau scholar

Destiny fixed

Charmed others

Erudition

Continental appetites

Ambition reckless

Devouring

Caught a *Rara avis*

Mounted her

Duty-bound stallion

Felt flush

Youth potion

Rose within me

Fool reckless

Helpless fool

Losing

Second chances

For true love
On a bed
Of self-deceit
Believing
I had arrived
Finally
At real life
Storybook savory
Fuck all night
Meaningful work by day
Work and love (*Freud*)
Hand and glove
Now seventy-four
Final backward glance
Reckon with
Reconcile justify
That I built
A life around
Glossy enticing
Cover stories
Primary source
US and In Touch
Fucking keeps women young
My biblical text
My wise word
Pre-ordained
Quick-silver
To the very end

Final ruthless truth

I could chose no other

Believed love harms

Closing argument

Incontestable

Evidence

Odyssey

On final lap

Looking

To fashion

Exit out

Suicide for the young

Over seventy

Crafting ending

Dignity and grace

Before falling

To the raptors blade

Diapers and drool

To be anticipated

Short-circuited

At all costs

Last gasp

Regretting you

Never to forgive

Myself

For choosing you

Taking

Life's terminal review

You husband two

Were Hail Mary pass

A Hail Mary pass or Hail Mary route is a very long forward pass in American football, made in desperation with only a small chance of success,

Retrospective of life

Horrible

To know

Squandered

Second chance

Giving myself to you

Narcissism's embodiment

Lollygagging sub-standard

Living at mercy

Of your mean mouth

Keeping diminished less whole

Daily seduced and sedated

Woe is me!

I married

Minus charm and art

A nachgemacht

Replacement mother

NB

.....
love is a lion

we will meet

in the pit

in the morning

John Donaldson, Mailman and Poet



Found babies

Home goes forever

Choice chance

Umbilical cords

Poems tether

Never ever severed

Found child

Home goes on forever

NB

.....

The Little Prince lived on a small asteroid caring for a single rose. A fox the Little Prince meets tells the Little Prince, "One sees clearly only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince



Tonight as I was putting Owen to bed he said to me so you know what I wish for every night whenever I see a shooting star go by I wish that no one ever faints not even the Nazis. And not anyone's girlfriend. Owen Shepard Hart, grandson, age 5 following Luca's girlfriend Chloe's quite dramatic fainting spell waiting for a table on Mother's Day 2014. Mom, Rebecca

.....

He was close to his grandmother, who died when he was seven. "I definitely felt very protected by her; I still feel protected by her in a creepy way, because I associate my time with her as one of safety and, like, the majesty of childhood and catching fireflies, that nonsense. I have all these sense memories of being with her and around her."

"I feel a deep sadness for both my parents. I feel sad period, for the messiness of life."

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, playwright (What We Are and What We Aren't)

by Alex Witchel NY Times Magazine Nov 23, 2014

Whether to Answer or Not When

He said in response

To my mother's death

Let us remember well

The past we shared

With that

He shut the door

Temptation

Steadfastly dormant

In truth even when

A tender hand

Reaches for touches me

My skin blisters

Old wounds fester

Simply cannot abide

Heat of love's flicker

Combustible

Parse touching

My once boy friend

Recounted

That he married

A high school friend

And that they made love

Every which way

Tantric *Kama Sutra*

Mandala of love gyrations

Inventive permutations

"The point," he said, "is to channel all the sexual energy that would normally leave during an orgasm, back into your body. It gives you so much energy!"

Reflecting shared above

He had read somewhere

Lovemaking taking place most often

In their homemade *Orgone Box* (Wilhelm Reich)



My imagination flared

Expansive feverish desirous

Portends of ecstasy

Embattled begging myself

Just this once

Recoiled snapping back

Overheated vapors

Warned of succumbing

Too great the risk

Enflaming hungers

Too long dormant

Fastidiously tidily oppressed

Desire for sex for love

Inherently a killer

Radically throwing me

Off kilter to the four winds

Precarious balance

Askew awry

Must die longing

Can never risk

Inviting being loved

Erratically erogenously

Expressing sexuality

Will have me going berserk

Love making for me

Too unpredictable explosive

Rather to die

Than risk being that alive

NB

.....
...she felt it intriguing to play someone so vulnerable, someone who has shaky hands and who feels fibrous and fragmented ---

When you lose love, it can do terrible things to a person. Any woman who's been through the experience of not being touched or being lovely - it does something to you chemically -

I probably am more drawn to film that readily delve deep into the human condition and relationships. It's playing those roles that you get to see how odd everyone is. I do love that. There 's no such thing as normal.

Kate Winslet Interview Sarah Lyall, NY Times 11/11/13

.....
Sad about Frank M. Last time I saw him was in Hungarian Pastry Shop. He was engaged in lively discussion. The age we live in is not built for philosophers, but there he was.

So said, Frank Pignatelli after being informed Frank Moretti, a rival at least in Frank P's mind had died.

.....
I'll be your mirror, reflect what you are In case you don't know

I'll be the wind, the rain, and the sunset

The light on your door

To show that you're home.

I'll Be Your Mirror

By, Lou Reed...

So if I kill myself tonight

Stop the headache

And the genius all at once

Then you could show my letters

To the world

Show how I loved you once

And your new lover

Can say I knew Rene Ricard

And asked him once to leave my house.

Rene Ricard, poet Love Poems

Riverlight

*My father and I lie down together. He is dead.
We look up at the stars, the steady sound
Of the wind turning the night like a ceiling fan.
This is our home.*

*I remember the work in him
Like bitterness in persimmons before a frost.
And I imagine the way he had fear,
The ground turning dark in a rain.*

*Now he gets up.
And I dream he looks down in my eyes
And watches me die.*

Frank Sandford

Death and the Arkansas River

*Everytime death gets a Cadillac
He wants to fight.
He wants to fun the front door,
He wants cooking that will remind him of home.
If you try to forget
Death ties a strong around your finger.*

Wives and old coaches,

*Ouija boards and certain cheese,
Belts long enough to reach overhead pipes.*

Frank Sandford

What Claude Wanted To Tell Her

*The deaf fish without luck all day, without bait
Down a street they've stolen dark, run it off
Like a mad dog. They told you
Pick lice off the moon, and you grew your fingernails long.
Your ovel's with the weevil.
You write off to the back of an ad
Hunting a cheap cremation.
Drop me a line. Frank Sandford*

This Conflict

A body with a very few clothes

An old radio

Some apples

You get to eat

as many slices of bacon as you want

the morning of a home game

The way his sweater smells

It gets so hot it smokes

After awhile

Just when Sam Cooke's new song

comes on

Worms and a homely girl from Texas

who can read quicker than you

Good marks

and a lost crop

like a whole season

that passed without a letter

from my brother.

Frank Sandford, "What About This," Edited by Michael Wieggers

Status Report: June 4, 2014

Will and body declining

In great synchronicity

Will and body dying

In great synchronicity

To die she said simply

Just stop eating

Body deteriorates

With dismaying alacrity

Teeth and eyes

No elder new set of teeth

Not again twenty-twenty vision

Signs

Of mortal decline

Declension: to die

*Present I **die** you **die** he **dies** we **die** you **die** they **die**. Perfect I have **died** you have **died** he has **died** we have **died** you have **died** they have **died**. Past I **died***

Body and mind

Flex for more time

Resist tug and pull

Catch a falling star

Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket

Never let it fade away

Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket

Save it for a rainy day

Just one more day

Grace lost

Willful indulgence

One more day

Imagining
Eyes fluttering close
Breath abates
No death rattle
No lollygagging tongue
Piteous horrifying
Refuse to drool
Become Incontinent
Children hold back tears
Hold noses
Avert eyes
Change my *Depends*
Honorable
In motion
God smiles
Pride swells
Handled death well
No handlers for me
No more falling stars
No restoratives
No replacement parts
Wondering planning
When to plant my stake
When my mile done
Not to ask
One more sunrise
Another sunset
Disciple of

Self-imposed death

Resist

Longing for more

Intricate puzzle

Anticipating

The time when

It will too late

For the death

I have in mind

Stop eating

Stop hunger

Stop desire

Not again

To *catch a falling star*

Getting close

To leaving for

For *Innisfree*

Stem regret fear

Death my death

A reckoning

Of will and by design

NB

Early Morning Reflection

Wilting withering with great alacrity
Alarming unsettling
How quick the body's descent
Declension decline then gone

NB

.....

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

William Butler Yeats

.....

Racing Random Through Me - June 2014

Granddaughter Sophie Blue

Now known as Sophie Strong

Now 13

My numero uno

My bookend war-resistor sister

Granddaughter Blue my Blue -

NB

.....



Once more the storm is howling, and half hid

Under this cradle-hood and coverlid

My child sleeps on.

There is no obstacle

But Gregory's wood and one bare hill

Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind,

Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;

And for an hour I have walked and prayed

Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour

And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,

And under the arches of the bridge, and scream

In the elms above the flooded stream;

Imagining in excited reverie

That the future years had come,

Dancing to a frenzied drum,

Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

A Prayer for My Daughter, W. B. Yeats (Verses 1 and 2)

For Luca On June 13, 2004

Sixteen years ago Lucia had her moment with you

She never turned her back

She wanted more, more for you

Did you get more

By joining with us, with me?

Only time will tell

I never would have left Paraguay without you!

I will never leave your side

No never

The day will come when you will be off on your own

Leaving me and then

You will belong to the world

There is not a stronger, braver, more courageous

Child that God ever made

I learned big deep lessons

As I held onto you

About what it means to be alive, about life

Whatever you will come to think or know

This Naomi, Mom got so much

Having you as my son

Than ever could have anticipated

Spanning continents and hearts

A little flutter of a child arrived in my arms

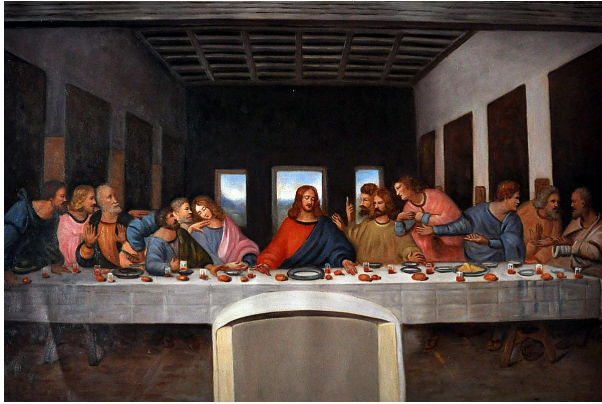
A wonder of a young man stands sixteen years tall

And I am a mother filled with wonder, untold love, and awe.

With the deepest and unceasing love,

Naomi, proud Mother

The Last Supper



How but in custom and in ceremony

Are innocence and beauty born?

Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,

And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

A Prayer for my Daughter, W.B. Yeats

They had a big table

Brought up from the community room

Long and narrow as the one in the *Last Supper*

They were eighteen friends

Some from first grade others high school

This was the ninth year Friday after Thanksgiving meal

Table set with random pieces of kitchen finery

Tablecloth wine glasses utensils set just right

Menu cooked from scratch

Luca responsible for the meats

The mac and cheese the sweet potatoes

The vegetables the deserts the wine and beer

Brought by the friends

Luca's girlfriend/sister prepared the turkey

The bacon back the ribs the ham

The turkey free-range antibiotic free baked in my oven
My job basting every twenty minutes for six hours
Turkey cooked slowly at 325 degrees
After the meal and in between courses
The friends gathered in the game room
To smoke blunts prepared lovingly in advance
These friends have seen Luca go from tennis champ
Eighth ranked for boys 15 when 13 in tri-state area
To boy living and dying and dying and living
Over a period of more than ten years
The have stood vigil over his hospital bed
Lay beside him in sleep encumbered hospital rooms
They have seen him stooped over like old man
They have found him too weak to walk more than a few steps
They have seen him grow from vital unstoppable guy
To a frightening disconcerting leanness deathlike really
He has in truth died and come alive three or four times
They know the surgeons had to remove his large intestine
The friends know his poop flows incessantly through an ostomy bag
They believed along with him that he would someday get rid of that
And if scarred would once again sit upright on a toilet seat to poop
Now in 2014 he has no rectum it was surgically removed
And he will permanently have an ostomy bag
They wonder collectively if he can or has the will to recover
From this most recent permanently body modifying surgery
The meal is a triumph a success the food was delicious each dish perfect
He tells me the next day
Eighteen friends sat around a beautifully set post Thanksgiving table

Friends who were still out of town joined in on Internet games
Eighteen friends sat at a table fit for a king or prince or dear friend
Eighteen guys with a girlfriend or two relegated to the kitchen by choice
Dined and laughed and shared stories sometimes 20 years in the making
Recollecting how frisky and silly and wildly wonderful they were as kids
Still retaining the *joie de vivre* and camaraderie once again
As they enjoy their annual post Thanksgiving meal
They are each aware of how precarious once again
Luca's medical condition recovery still a question mark
Luca sits in the center among his friends just as Jesus Christ did
Luca living dying laughing eating lounging smoking
Each friend's face in clear focus
Each friend's love and loyalty framed in his every bite
Luca living and dying dying and living and dining dining dining
As if this was his last meal as if this was his last meal as if...

NB

Suicides Spread Through a Brazilian Tribe

By CHARLES LYONS NY Times JAN. 4, 2015



FRIENDS and family gathered around the limp body of a 15-year-old boy laid out on a bed in a thatched hut near the Brazilian town of Iguatemi, close to the border with Paraguay. A shaman shook a small wooden rattle while chanting and dancing — final rites for yet another victim of a suicide epidemic that has plagued the Guaraní Indians of the western Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

The boy, Dedson Garcete, had hanged himself — one of 36 suicides among tribe members in 2014 through September, and one of about 500 among the tribe of 45,000 since 2004, according to Zelik Trajber, a pediatrician with the special secretariat for indigenous health within the Ministry of Health in Mato Grosso do Sul.

Indigenous peoples suffer the greatest suicide risk among cultural or ethnic groups worldwide. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men ages 25 to 29 have a suicide rate four times higher than the general population in that same age group in Australia, according to the country's Department of Health.

In the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death, behind accidents, for American Indian and Alaska Native men ages 15 to 34, and is two and a half times higher than the national average for that age group, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports.

Among the indigenous in [Brazil](#), the suicide rate was six times higher than the national average in 2013, according to a study released in October by Brazil's Ministry of Health. That translates into 30 suicides per 100,000 people. Among [members of the Guaraní tribe](#), Brazil's largest, the rate is estimated at more than twice as high as the indigenous rate over all, the study said.

In fact it may be even higher. The Indigenous Missionary Council says there were over 70 suicides in 2013, substantially more than the figure of 49 provided by Dr. Trajber.

The Guaraní have long made their home in the fertile land of Brazil's southwest, where swaths of vast forests and savannas have been transformed into farms and ranches. In the process, the tribe has been dispossessed and uprooted from its traditional way of life. Many in the tribe face extreme discrimination and live in abject poverty close to the farmers and ranchers who occupy land that was once theirs.

"Living in this nonplace, they commit suicide," said Maria de Lourdes Beldi de Alcantara, an anthropologist at the University of São Paulo who for years has studied adolescent suicides among the Guaraní.

Nearly 100 years ago, the Guaraní, who today live primarily in Brazil and Paraguay, were forced off their ancestral land when the Brazilian government granted farmers and ranchers the legal title to that land. Tribe members were placed in crowded reservations, and often separated from family members.

Then, in 1988, the Brazilian government created a new Constitution that established rights for indigenous people. Among them: giving Guaraní and other indigenous families the right to repossess their ancestral land, a process that has been slow and frustrating for both Indians and farmers and that has put them even more at odds.

In many cases, farmers, too, have lived in Mato Grosso do Sul for generations. They raised their families there, and worked and profited from the land, first from maté (a kind of tea), and later from

sugar cane and soybeans. Like the Guaraní, they are rooted in the land, making the conflict between landowners and the Guaraní both cultural and material. Where the indigenous see repossession of their ancestral land as integral to revitalizing their cultural traditions and regaining their sense of well-being, ranchers and farmers view it as a hindrance to Brazilian progress and development.

James Anaya, the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples from 2008 to last May, said suicides among indigenous youth, across the globe, are common in situations where tribe members have seen the upheaval of their culture, which produces in the indigenous a lack of self-confidence and grounding about who they are.

In the southwest of Brazil, he said, distress, poverty and violence against tribal leaders have led to despair among Guaraní teenagers, who feel they don't have a future. "They see taking their own lives as unfortunately and sadly an option," he said.

Professor Alcantara said that over the past 10 years tribe members have come to live between two cultures — the culture of nearby cities, where they are discriminated against, and the culture of their own tribe. Young tribe members, in particular, feel that they don't belong either to the city or to the tribe, she said.

Tonico Benites, a Guaraní and anthropologist, said that during Brazil's dictatorship of the 1970s and '80s, conditions on Guaraní reservations deteriorated: There was overcrowding and families were split apart. Today, the situation has grown even worse, he said, and many Guaraní feel lonely and isolated.

"At some point, many people I knew, friends, had lost their autonomy, their way of supporting themselves," he said. "So they end up thinking about death."

Off the reservation, Guaraní have suffered extreme prejudice, threats and worse, Dr. Benites said. "It happened to me three times, when I was waiting on the side of the road and a truck came at high speeds toward me," he recalled. "I had to jump, otherwise it would have hit and killed me ... and later they'd say it's an accident, but it isn't."

He said pistoleros hired by farmers have burned Guaraní huts, tortured his friends and killed tribal leaders.

Mr. Anaya, a law professor at the University of Arizona, said he believes that improving educational systems for the Guaraní and other indigenous groups can help. "We need education that doesn't try to take out of indigenous children their identity but rather helps to reinforce it with all the modern tools that are appropriate to modern life," he said.

Both sides want a peaceful solution, but in small Guaraní villages across Mato Grosso do Sul, Guaraní boys like Dedson continue to despair.

"Our biggest hope, for which we struggle every day," Dr. Benites said, "is that our children may be happier in the future. That one day they can live another kind of life, a better one."

Charles Lyons is a multimedia journalist and filmmaker.

NOTE: Gasp: This piece is about the place where Luca would have been living had he stayed with his birth mother or a surrogate. Luca was born into the Guarani Tribe in Paraguay in 1988. Luca's home village is in Paraguay fifteen miles from the Brazilian border. Guarani Indians have lived in both Brazil and Paraguay for hundreds of years.

.....
But oh God, tenderly, tenderly. Already, month by month and week by week you broke her body on the wheel whilst she still wore it. Is it not yet enough?

A Grief Observed - C.S. Lewis

I was young,

New in my marriage bed, but regret was already

Sunk sharp in me. Like any blade, it would grow

Dull slowly.

Claudia Emerson, poet, "Natural History Exhibits"

.....

We must learn

to want each other

in direct sunlight,

no more or less than

what we really are.

.....

I think about *the drive to my apartment,*

the cliché your palm will make

closing against my breast.

.....

I must change

What I cannot accept.

.....

...children work to perfect the obstinate and beautiful mystery

that every soul ends up being to every other.

Erin Belieu, poet, "Slant Six"

.....

Still Mother

only night will watch as I, the night nurse

wake up to a world unhere, unyours.

Alice Fulton, poet, Barely Composed

.....

She has no friends, and finds that to look inside yourself

and see so much mystery is the worst kind of loneliness.

Laura von den Berg, novel, Find Me (baby abandoned at birth)

.....
...exile, the mix of anonymity and authority over his identity,

“the sanction, if one can accept it, to become oneself.”

James Baldwin

.....
Since when is this a conversation? Now drop and give me 50, you cellulite-spackled loser.

Irvine Welsh, novelist

Racing Out the Clock

We are racing out the clock

You and me Luca

And don't know

If we are winning or losing

I walk around

Tearfully grieving

Smothering sobs

Eyes run as if from cold

Tears for years shunted once dry-eyed

Flow as if in spring thaw

I walk around crying moaning

For whom the bell tolls

For Luca for me for us two

I am spit from seventy-five

You yet to reach your twenty-seventh birthday

I need to get my dying out of the way

Two goals yet to reach

First to help you get as well

As you can be as is possible

And second to post all of my writing on a personal website

Announced or unannounced to be discovered or not

Two things to do before taking that final step

For whom the bell tolls

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.*

John Donne

It tolls for us we have beaten the odds

Now wondering what's ahead for you

And knowing that my time

Hopefully at my own hand will come

I will no longer be crying moaning grieving

For you or for me

I will have plucked up the nerve

And finally mercifully be decreed dead

NB

.....

In a field

I am the absence

Of field,

This is always the case.

Wherever I am

I am what is missing.”

When I walk

I part the air

and always

the air moves in

to fill the spaces

where my body's been.

We all have reasons

for moving.

I move

to keep things whole. Mark Strand Keeping Things Whole

I empty myself of the names of others. I empty my pockets.

I empty my shoes and leave them beside the road.

At night I turn back the clocks;

I open the family album and look at myself as a boy.

What good does it do? The hours have done their job.

I say my own name. I say goodbye.

The words follow each other downwind.

I love my wife but send her away.

My parents rise out of their thrones

into the milky rooms of clouds.

How can I sing? Time tells me what I am.

I change and I am the same.

I empty myself of my life and my life remains. Mark Strand, The Remains

Responding to *The Wallcreeper* by Nell Zink

Tiffany marries Stephen within three weeks of meeting him. Imagining marriage as a kind of early retirement plan. She follows him from Philadelphia to Bern to Berlin; they get to know each other but quickly think better of it. They are magnificently ill suited, and they cannot be parted.

I wasn't pregnant, I noticed. I clenched my hands into claws and cried like a drift log in heavy surf. Stephen put his hands on my ears. Much later he told me he thought if I couldn't hear myself I might stop. He said it reminded him of feedback mounting in an amplifier.

My down there plays a minor role in several scenes to come. He was uninhibited, as in inconsiderate. She says to him after a particularly clumsy encounter, Can I get more orifices? She goes on: Not that three isn't enough, but that the three on offer aren't enough to sustain a marriage...

Geese passing overhead made so many V's that they merged into X's and covered the entire sky like a fishnet stocking. Crows patrolling a field spread out in teams like policemen looking for a corpse in the woods, turning their heads from side to side, staring at the grass with one monocled eye and then the other.

I'd done all kinds of things, all of them with the aim of staying close to a man. It hadn't occurred to me to be ashamed of myself. I'd thought love was a socially acceptable motivation. But to right-thinking Germans, I was a mindless whore.

The Wallcreeper by Nell Zink, Reviewed by Parul Sehgal, NY Times 12/03/14

Eerie parallels

Parallelogram rhombus



Prescient eerie scary

Prophecy in reverse time

Backward time

She speaks to me

I speak through her

How did she know me?

Philadelphia Berne

Frankfort not Berlin

Marry, too, in three weeks

Husband hard to part from

Leave escape

Death threats

Notations nightly

In journal

Three nights on...

Forays with my vagina

Clocked on a meter

Husband kept

Gun bedside

Broken safety catch

Bullets loaded

Set to shoot

Eerie parallels

Prescient
Does she know me?
Dream me up
Legacy mother
Of squatter dreams
Of dreams torqued
Turned inside out
Transformed nightmarish
What have I transported
Transposed into her life
What particles of the past
Infiltrated her mind
Her imagination
Her experience
All my life
Searched the world
Pleaded with my mind
Find better words
Find better words
To express
The soreness
The pandemonium
In my heart
My crazy quilt of disappointments
Of incriminating remorse regrets
Nell Zink now walks
Through an uncanny scrim
Of my deepest suppressed
Ill-expressed experiences

Her words transcendent
Translucent lifting gathering
Our common communion with love
Her soaring unsparing words
Vocabulary groupings
Words finding each other
Clustering with adroit
Nearly otherworldly
Word inventions
Blood droplets sealed my past
Her expansive vocabulary
Set me to shudder unravel
Her book holds
Our combined lived worlds
Grateful to have found
Her book her narrative
Our story her words
Extracting gold silver diamonds
Radiating hypnotically
The universal female hysteric
Utero depleting steadfast past
Herald *The Awakening* Kate Chopin
The Yellow Wallpaper Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Tumultuous storming the sky
Riven to her words
Woolf Plath Sexton
A force of women
Mourning freedom's thwart
The past holds

An incalculable landfill
Of crumpled discarded women
Nell Zinc's book elicits bears witness
Breaks into my stalwart
Rock stolid disengaged heart
With astounding awful truths
Stint inserted to expose to let flow
The futility of my heart's
Unrelenting continuous breaking

NB

Linda Linda Linda - Are you there are you here with me?

Final words from **Maxine Greene** as she lay dying at 96. Linda, her only daughter, died of breast cancer more than sixty years before. *Lesson is don't live that long too long*, said Alta Maxine's weekend care giver. During the last six years of her life Alta tended to Beverly Sills as she lay dying. *Barbara Walters is a real bitch, tried to keep us from cleaning her up from putting on her best dress as she died*. Wisdom from an individual who resides on the corners at the edges of waning elder lives.

My mother called out *Momma Momma be with me* as she died. She despised her mother reviled her with stinging stunning verbal assaults each conversation meant to destroy. Tempestuous daughter heart struck mother.

Margo an incontrovertible *Wasp (white Anglo Saxon protestant)* converted to Judaism months before dying from terminal lung cancer. She wanting to be buried next to her son John. John who died more than fifty years before. John who had incurable leukemia was buried in the Jewish cemetery in which his father's family had hereditary plots. Margot never forgave herself for putting John through tortuous futile treatments. Ultimately divorced marriage couldn't hold up under the strain of the death of six-year-old John. Her husband a Jewish psychiatrist came from an eminent Jewish Boston family with burial plots in an exclusive *Jews only* cemetery. Three children without religious affiliation who lovingly shared their mother's death bed in the three month ravaging *Lung Cancer* death sat aghast as the Rabbi, Margot's Rabbi conducted a traditional if reform Jewish graveside memorial service. As lifelong Jewish friend read personal reflection pondering life's strange juxtapositions.

My father decided it was time to die and just stopped eating. *No more Bach it is too beautiful* he said as I was about to put a Bach cantata on his boom box. Requesting rather the lulling sounds of the Celtic Irish music favored by his Irish care giver and host of his hospice in the Catskills as he with difficulty inhaled and exhaled his last breaths. *Death is your most important moment* the Irish care giver would often say.

Mike died on a hospital bed at the foot of his marital bed his wife systematically and consciously driving him to plummeting physical weakness. Insurance payouts her guide to his ongoing hospital and concomitant physical therapy stays apparently package deals thirty days in rehab following each frequent hospitalization. Mike stumbling as he walked never a proper diagnosis given. *Only dogs bring out the motherliness in me* she reflected soon after his death.

Penny staged a death on a world stage plunging to her death along with her husband and a leading French refugee expert. Rushing headlong devious laughter embedded in the announcement of urgent departure she and her husband bringing satellite radios to refugees in Sarajevo during the Bosnian conflict. Penny distressingly obsessed about becoming sixty neither her mounting fortune nor her unrivalled collection of promising artists could dwarf her fear of getting older there we no parts of her left to rejuvenate no doctor's scalpel to repel chronology.

We are living to damn long my mother's endless diatribe as she fought off death hand in glove. Don't live too long the lesson offered by Alta caregiver to dying older wealthy often women of esteem who could afford to remain at home receiving twenty-four hour care from organizations like Visiting Angels in their wan.

Ben husband number one comes to life on a world stage otherwise is in a deep preservative gel of sleep near to catatonic. He writes to keep current to hold the script to entice his lifeline need of primacy relevancy. *N org* recorded regularly in diaries during fifteen years of marriage archived somewhere to be scoured upon his death. *What youthful what immature sex*, my unhelpful therapist quipped. *But I don't even know what sex is for I offer*. Still wondered *to myself what feminine wiles were*. I let that therapist throw me further underground. Her off the cuff declamation eliminated in a still awkward innocent ex-wife any chance for romance for love. Looked instead for a guy who would fill me with sex big time sex adult sex loveless sex fucking the wrong guy is a form of killing oneself of dying.

I am the sad hand-me-down the next generation of madness the craziness in my mother that came from an ancient displacement – free floating in her the *Holocaust* and the obsessive desire to be other – otherwise. Sadly my dying will not stop the pollutants passed through our DNA – we are still running on a script of being dispossessed.

NB

Breaking Silence Too Late

Took the veneer the narrative

The story of the good girl away

My story the most provocative

Capricious and gossip worthy

Pains shoot through me

As if moment's ago

I listened to the descant

Mom do something that is Daddy's girlfriend

His father paraded his girlfriend

Around in on all of his son's sacred places

School classroom tennis court his bedroom

Favorite black leather living room couch

His actions were incendiary tawdry

Worthy of a gossipy roundelay

Still a decade later

Feel tattered unglued

How could he level

Such degradation at me

He despised me

I stood between

Him and his new love

Kicking up his heels

Chest pounding
Obsession made me enemy
Victim of this public damning
Wife and the mother
Of our found son oh God
Breach in reality
Had me wed him
Allowed his menacing tongue
To jab to assault for too long
From the moment of *I do*
I knew it was wrong
Guilt kept me stiffly silent
Past envelopes left un-confronted
Early on in my childhood
My brother and I learned
To keep our mouths sealed shut
Never to speak
Of our delirious deleterious mother
Who had daily fits
And after attempting
To stuff her head in the oven
Slithered to the floor
Beating her head and spritzing spit
Our father asking what my brother
Six years younger or I had done
To so upset her
Tacitly warning us
Never ever to speak of this

And we never did
Until we were out of our teens
When twenty-one my brother asked our father
How could you have done this to me to us?
He wearily sat silently sad-eyed mute
When a child I got the training
To endure the unspeakable
The unconscionable
Queen of *Mumblecore*
Scenes of degradation
Humiliation shades drawn.

NB

No rest without love,
no sleep without dreams of love-
be mad or chill obsessed with angels or machines,
the final wish is love
-cannot be bitter, cannot deny,
cannot withhold if denied: the weight is too heavy.

Allen Ginsberg, Howl

Twisted prism fractured light

Milky eyes soon legally blind

Viscera knots acidic

Lifting from that dark place

Unmitigated hatred

Spins off my tongue

Discus of rage

Keepsake chronicle

My mother recollected

That minute's old

I turned my back on her

From her banishment

She unearthed for me

Two husbands

With surly tongues

Savaging me daily

Retribution just dessert

For infant cold-shoulder

Wistful if for moments

Peering from sunset windows

Changeable moons

Dream of couples snuggling

Interlocking with one another

Husband number one

Journal notated orgasms

Husband number two

Held his nose coming to me

Whispering *pee-yew*.

Time to look at moons
Finite life at an end
Death eclipsing
Time for holy cure
Malady of self-loathing
Exhausted by regret
Pincushion heart
Ghoulishly pain riddled
The *Jew* in me roars
Never again I say
Time lost time to
Evict squatter yet desiring
Vaporized chances for love
Never again fist raised
To be harmed by a man
Witless body confounded
Untutored heart
Octopus arms flailing
Reaching for that one someone



The force of an epiphany
That sex was necessary
Led me to invent *Marat Sade*
Men to bring me harm
Obligatory fondling

Reckless caresses
Mockery of desire
Bled into family genealogy
Litanies of ill-begotten love
Time to placate
Forsaken heart's yearning
For connubial connection
Desire ebbing body dying
Finale firework
Of primal screams
Never again fist raised
Death encroaches
Obdurate obstinately
Forgive forgive forgive
Unrequited yearning
For true love
Bereft finally dawning
Never to have
If but scattershot
Unsustainable experience
With true love
The final roar
Epic apostolic
Stars scatter I howl
Then silence body succumbs
Lapsing into last breaths

NB

Only Palliative Laying of Hands

My teeth shaky few and far between

Won't make it to Thanksgiving 2015

My eyes bluing with cataracts

Won't make it to Christmas 2015

My body refuses to learn of another fraught diagnosis

Five thousand to fix your mouth the dentist says

Cataracts need to be treated the eye doctor says

Still in remission the kidney doctor says

Graves disease held at bay

What will make me whole again? Nothing will!

Foresworn off medical treatments

For me only palliative symptom abating

My body is dying

Can't bring it back

With dental transplants or cataract free eyes

Time thwarts

It is in my hands to bring it my life to an end

No more not another medical exam

Only the palliative for me now

I sit on the crystalline edge nervously waiting

For another body part to fail

Sorry won't reconstruct rescue

From a natural end of life decay

Only the palliative

While I construct an ending

The task to find the right place

In which to lie down and *rest in peace*



Perhaps fold into a rising tide

Perhaps lie on a bed of evergreen needles



Need to die with surety

No second thoughts

No half measures

No returning from almost being dead

No hand to mouth resuscitation

No claiming to have glimpsed

That startling final white light

My death to be

An unambiguous choice

Full faced openhearted

Communion with death

Aware and avowed

This to be a last and final breathe

NB

We Never Left the *Holocaust* Behind

It whipped around our house

Blustery gusts turmoil

Footing lost

The howling cut through

Never silence in there

Bluma our flower Bluma our mother flawed Bluma distracted Bluma disturbed Bluma disturbing Bluma head beating tantrumming Bluma and Beaudiful Bluma our father's ecstatic declamation

Flower petals crushed

Pressed deep

Recesses of memory

Daily bread once removed

Fleeing foot soldier

Pogrom Holocaust

As if scraped off a gas chamber wall

She broke open the sky

With her howls

Tempestuous self-contempt

Tearing off the daisy petals

Reckoning *Jewish or not Jewish or not...*

The fumes decimated our annihilating mother

It was *Armageddon* every day

The *Holocaust* her text

Her justification her sorrow

She breathed dragon fire inhaled death

Exhumed six million with her every breath

We witnessed her

She kept the fires alive
She kept the furnaces burning
She caste a heathen murderous spell
On my brother and me
Dissembling before us her art
Enamored by death loving death
Obsessed by death dying
Begging each day *to end it all*
Explosive exploitive mother
You were our storm
We never found a clearing
The *Holocaust* your reason your season
Never severed umbilical to mother death
You made threats to kill yourself daily
Mad dog teeth on our very lives
Weighty pain endures goes on and on
No more recounting no healing
No more mulling over old war grounds
Old tormented blood stained past
Mother you died at ninety-three
I still carry your anguish your agony
You have become my embattled baby
Death has become a subtext for me
Death now daily swallows me

NB

Time to leave behind forego

Present tense:

Don't call me

Don't tell me

Don't want to know

Future tense:

Never to know

Fate of my children my grandchildren

Who will go to what college

Who will get catastrophically sick

Who will get married and divorced

Who will be lucky in love

Life truncates ever knowing

Holding tomorrow's curiosity

Time to shape how to be remembered

Time to plan for death

What particular month day weather

Where the sun will fall

When the next full moon

How best to cease breathing

Desire a consensual death

Opening mind

To the coming scythe and hood



Soon just to stop existing

Quiet and alone by my own hand

My own mind my own imagination

My death my own –

NB

...passed from one pair of groping hands to another – you're everyone's everyday. I am being fingered. Probed. Eaten. Devoured. Disappeared. ...There is a hole in the world. I wept when I saw my reflection in a spoon. I could not find myself, could not see myself. But I am here. Japit Kaur, Nirbhaya (play – embodies Jyoti Singh Pandey, who died in 2012 after being gang-raped in New Del have been a sentient being, a thinking animal on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.

Trouble with the three B's: bonding, belonging, and believing –

In those rare, heavenly states of mind, I may write nonstop until I can no longer see the paper. Only then do I realize that evening has come, and that I have been writing all day.

Shy and inclined to living at a certain distance from life, unexpectedly fell in love, (for God's sake) I was in my 77th year – relinquishing the habits of a lifetime' solitude, like decades of meals that consisted mostly of cereal or sardines, eaten out of the tin, standing up, in 30 seconds. Oliver Sacks.

"On the Move, A Life," NY Times, 2/28/15

On a day with my young grandson

Early December

He is six

Slight temperature keeps him

Home from school

Shows all day okay Omi

The TV orgy ensues

First cartoons with warring Legos



Followed by Disney animated fairy tales

Playing over and over

The Three Little Pigs



Singing along a constant refrain

Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?

Next day he is back at school

And I at home writing and listening

To the newly released *Beautiful Life CD*

Until it runs a loop in my head

The jazz saxophonist Jimmy Greene
Honors the memory of his daughter Ana
Who was only six when gunned down
On December 14, 2012 in her classroom
With twenty other six-year-olds and six educators
At Sandy Hook elementary school in Connecticut



Impossible to take back that day that death
With his holy breath and his saxophone
He brings Ana back alive if for an hour of play
Undulate in a sickened swoon
Slumped over gagging as I listen
What is the meaning of life of this death
How could it happen that a little girl at school
Was shot down with a rapid fire spray of bullets
In just a few seconds with a *Bushmaster AR 15*
A gift from a mother to assuage or incite



Provoking gyrating hybrid mental maladies
Morbidity confounding clarity
Bushmaster owners rally
Bullet bullying justifications

Primal urge
Never to sever umbilical cord
Symbiotic clinging fear enshrouds
Premonitions prophesies
Stun gun each day with fear
Atrocities conjured horrors imagined
How to stiff-arm stave off madness
When pondering what fate has in store
Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?
I am afraid each day
Never pick up receiver
Don't know how to text
Have no *Smart* phone
Don't want to know
What lies beyond the confines
In which I exist perambulate
Panic snakes intertwines
Tethered stuck to a shadowy
Subsistence sustenance
Pending doom my daily bread
The *Jesus* wafer relieving sin
Doesn't begin to absolve
What horrendous acts
We do unto others
We all murdered Ana
Truth abhorrent
Congeals adheres
Looking the other way

Doesn't keep fate at bay
Fate presses obdurately on
Exist in stony silence
One primal yelp away
One last deafening garish scream
Trepidation seizes my heart
Hide under bed behind closed door
Door knock jangle of phone unnerves
Jeopardizing fragile inner balance
Fate impinges I cringe
Circumference gets smaller and smaller
Space in which to move shrinks
Fear pulverizes threatens
Toleration for staying hidden
Natural death beckons
Very nearly seventy-five
Fate my fate
Impatient can't wait
Fate my fate
My hand shaping an end
Overlord fear has won

NB

God what God

Where God

There is no God

Six- year-olds shot dead

Sitting in a circle

Discussing the weather

And the date

On December 14, 2012

God shot dead

Silenced by a *Bushmaster*

God our invention

Murder imponderable

God lay down

In a pool of blood

Stuck clotted to the floor

Of a classroom

Of six-year-olds

In Newtown Connecticut

Why and how come

Apple bite drove Adam

From the *Garden of Eden*

He just showed up

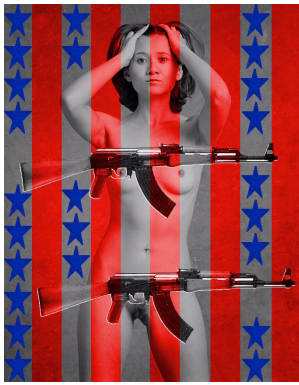
In a classroom

At Sandy Hook elementary school

Adam lay dead near the children

In a pool of his own blood

His Eve his mother frozen
With fear and ambivalence
Unable to nudge her son
Toward sanity
He shot her first
Into her sleeping face
Was God in Adam Lanza
Or God looking out
From his mother's vacated eyes
Adam murdered his Eve
Rifles offered instead of apples
Adam mowed her down
She signaled a come-on
An incautious seduction
Felled by an Oedipal fuck
In great mythic tradition
Invigorated energized
Adam moved to Sandy Hook
Snap dragon killing of six-year-olds
Adam anamorphically blinded
By his old six-year-old pain
Adam the shooter
Mother bought him guns
Took him to shooting ranges
Enticing with shot gun erotica



Victoria Van Dyke

Seductress mother taunts dares

Son shoot me kill me please

Responding to her plea

Blasted off her head

Shot at her face

While she lay in uneasy sleep

The boy she kept hidden remote

Removed from scrutiny

Vigilant fearing what was to come

Her son murdered

Twenty six-year-olds and six educators

In her heart she knew

Death would come

Mother and son intimacy

Culled murderous ambition

Mother and son

Adam and Eve





Driven from

The ecclesiastical exalted

River sky flower bird tree

Paradise lost to them

Behind shuttered windows

Mother son

Pas de deux at rifle ranges



God died

Actuarial tablet

Two thousand twelve years

Murder rape rapine

Enough is enough

God be gone

“If some one loves a flower of which just one example exists among all the millions and millions of stars, that’s enough to make him happy. . . . But if the sheep eats the flower, then for him it’s as if, suddenly, all the stars went out.”

Twenty stars blinkered off

Twenty six-year-olds lay dead

Flowers stars moon sun

Yield single rose on asteroid

After Sandy Hook murders

We are left wondering

Who and why God?



NB

*“Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.
Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.
Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?
Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?”*

Epicurus

“I do not believe in God and I am not an atheist.”

Albert Camus

“Is man merely a mistake of God's? Or God merely a mistake of man?”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Dear Naomi,

*Absolutely loved your poem, deeply moving and just.
Here is Serge: So beautiful, this systematic replay of an insistent horror
in our world, where god is so inadequate and unqualified.
Many thanks from both us.*

*Love,
Anne-Marie*

Naomi,

This is so powerful, heart wrenching, and raw....and speaks the truth. Written from a broken heart...so many hearts broken then, and time and time again since.

This could never happen in Cuba as the people are not obsessed with only their immediate families, but consider the needs of the entire community, and it shows in so many ways. I think you are Cuban at heart and soul.

Love you,
Rose

Hundred children shot down

While in classrooms in Pakistan

Blood-splattered walls

Shot up desks shoes scattered

Malala shot in face

Going to school in school bus

Still pilgrimages

Still the craving

Still Jesus sermons

About his great and good love

His sacrifice

His mother's virgin birth the price

Still a longing for paradise

Death looms at first birth cries

God exists to terminate lives

Whether by chronology or *Bushmaster Rifles*

Consciousness is the attempt to grapple

Endings we create or yield to

Power of god is the power

To murder to kill to let die

No forgive no forget no life without death

NB

"The third chimpanzee has dominated earth/ the one that made Chartres and the Sistine Chapel/ and now begins to explore space/ he is speaking to the stars/ that have yet to respond/ has seen the birth of the Big Bang/ from which everything was born and he was born/ and like a baby with his mother/burst into babbling with God."

The Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaraguan Poet

...a spinster teacher and scholarly physician who, in making love, "discarded their outer-world selves, joined, rolled, rolled back again, each straining to become incorporated into the other, to be made one, to form a new organism wanting nothing but to make love to itself all day long."

Edith Pearlman, Binocular Vision, Honeydew

.....

*Have compassion for everyone you meet,
even if they don't want it. What seems conceit,
bad manners, or cynicism is always a sign
of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen.
You do not know what wars are going on
down there where the spirit meets the bone.*

Miller Williams Arkansas, poet

The Germans have a word for a word for that. Kammerspeck. Literally, grief bacon.

Studies show that 110% of men who leave their wives for other women report that their wives are crazy.

Dept. of Speculation, Jenny Offill

.....

*Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
Things fall apart.*

Yeats

.....

I write to close my eyes.

Kafka

Surely all art is the result of one's having been in danger, of having gone through an experience all the way to the end, to where no one can go any further.

Rilke

The Central problem of Western Civilization is reduced to one guy who's got to puzzle it out for himself.

Walter Liedtke Curator at the Met, Vermeer Scholar

It is my halfness my incompleteness

Abject pitiful irredeemable irrevocable

Unmediated irreconcilable

Parables of perversity entice

Feet plugged in resistant muck

Wallow in dispassionate despair

Turning fortunes to disclaimers

Exist in confections of confusion

Delusional rapture just beyond grasp

Life could never have been otherwise

Immersed in the baptismal waters

Of presumptive lovelessness

The dragoon of symbiosis lulled

symbiosis: interaction between two different organisms living

in close physical association, typically to the advantage of both





Lull and lure of interdependence

Entangled dependent conjoined

Conjugated mutinous plural pronouns

Zeitgeist updraft *Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran*

Testimony of ecstatic love and its dilemmas

But let there be spaces in your togetherness and let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love: let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

If your heart is a volcano, how shall you expect flowers to bloom?

Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; For love is sufficient unto love. And think not you can direct the course of love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course. Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself."

I have found both freedom and safety in my madness; the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us enslave something in us.

It takes a minute to have a crush on someone, an hour to like someone, and a day to love someone... but it takes a lifetime to forget someone. Khalil Gibran

Confounding compounding love

Perverse vertiginous

A magnificent profusion

Of twists and turmoil

Commingling hearts

Tinder fireworks

Meteors sparking night sky

Permutations of fucking

Fucking up each other

Fucking to reach

That penultimate orgasm

Exhausting desire longing
Amorphous craving craven
Where that magnificent stranger
Always my father never my father
Holder heathen double divorce decrees
Speculate what glue goo promise
Keeps partners together
Vows vaporous morning fog
Constancy scrambles imagination
Ponderous plundering whip slicing
Fled bled longingly looking for another
Irresistible vacuum sucks back
Prescient desire flashes warnings
Dragged hair root limp body
Into indecipherable canyons of the past
The before of before
Sanskrit Old Testament Kama Sutra
All passed me by
Heart spent longing for unknowable
Forbidding love forbidden love foretold
Conditions scrambled the imagination
My halfness my incompleteness startles
See Ben See Frank the men I chose to marry
Husband number one after three weeks
He knew nothing about of me
I shared less
I walked into his life
And it was a completely

Exquisitely furnished apartment
Past present future all neatly tied up
Life ready-made cultural iconic 1962
Swept off my feet
My knight my destiny complete
Spirit will quelled rebelled
Gun slinging rapist wife beater
Just beneath just beneath
Intertwined crazy murderous mother
Re-embodied reimagined reborn
Umbilical cord never severed
I saw you on a Cambridge street
He will marry my Nibsie
She said upon first meeting him
History repeats anon
Inevitability this marital convening
Husband number two
Palliative fuck on a sports field
Thrilled pressed into pitchers mound
Stray dog sniffing ambition hid in lollygagging
Obsequious until he uncorked me fucked me
Until obliging host of his future destiny
Gasping for air titillated tilted upside down
Helter-skelter faint feint feigned
Swashbuckler of fuck forging a future
Vulture-like picking and choosing
Characteristics religion nationality connections
Building glamming glutinous mutinous future

Master builder of bullying bruising shaming

Mouth surly mean calculatingly destructive

Presentiment looming

Unwieldy awful truths flash blinking neon

Arc of men I married in the stars inevitable mates

My halfness my incompleteness startles

I married men no more no less whole than I was

Asserting their manliness crafting my subordination

I have found both freedom and safety in my madness; the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us enslave something in us. Khalil Gibran

My halfness my incompleteness startles

These then are the men

I chose to marry two of them

One who recorded orgasms

As if for the *Farmer's Almanac*

The other one who climbed vines

Jack and the beanstalk

To reach his predestined heights

Husband one creates paradigms

Of a world he can rule

Matter of life and breath

To remain visible significant

Secretary-General self-appointed

Of Cities and new world order

Overlord emperor and king

Husband two now arouser of limp dick

Still hunting duck whistle

Bringing home one woman after another

They have to bring to him like three kings

Particular religion or foreign country

Prowling the world for final ordination

Born into the world as he should have been

Princely entitled

Malfeasance his ordinariness

Leaning over the grand abyss

Death exists there not to side step

Hold up to light my wedding portraits

Mirror fragments mosaic cosmic rendering

Distorted disfigured expressions



The Weeping Woman Pablo Picasso

Husbands rendered

The half-ness of each of us is startling



Francesco Clemente Experience of Love

The grooms scary



Francesco Clemente Despondent Men

Two piecemeal beings perform coitus

Different antithetical hodgepodge

A hippo and gorilla



Defies imagination

We could complete each other

Chance jigsaw of one hundred tossed pieces



My body moves toward its natural death

I feel a poignancy of a world

I got so egregiously wrong

Dreams voided

Submissive sacrificial lamb

Spirit slaughtered

Dying prematurely executioner blind fear

My halfness my incompleteness startles

Soulful somber alone

Not to finally end life so disappointed

So engorged with regret

Death mocks transformation inchoate

Afterlife comes when ash to sodden earth

And I return as a shimmering phalarope

NB



Phalaropes reverse the usual sex roles in birds: Females are larger and more colorful than males; females take the lead in courtship, and males are left to incubate the eggs and care for the young. The Red Phalarope nests in the high Arctic, and winters in flocks on southern oceans it is rarely seen inland in most parts of North America.

Wherever you're from sucks,
and wherever you grew up sucks,
and everyone here lives in a converted
chocolate factory or deconsecrated church,
without an ugly lamp or souvenir coffee cup
in sight, but only carefully edited objets like
the Lacanian soap dispenser in the kitchen
that looks like an industrial-age dildo, and
when you rifle through the bathroom
looking for a spare tampon, you discover
that even their toothpaste is somehow more desirable than yours.

.....
I think about the drive to my apartment,
the cliché your palm will make
closing against my breast.

.....
We must learn
to want each other
in direct sunlight,
no more or less than
what we really are.

.....
It's all Romeo and Juliet —
hate crimes, booty calls, political
assassinations.

.....
I must change
what I cannot accept.

I was young,

*New in my marriage bed, but regret was already
Sunk sharp in me. Like any blade, it would grow
Dull slowly.*

*Scissors and straight razors he keeps honed
in case — sits in one of the chairs facing
a wall of empty mirrors reflecting mirrors
behind him, the backs of his head, one after
the shrunken, redundant other. Finally,
with a towel, he covers the television screen
mounted on the wall, the way he might — nearing
the end of the day — a parakeet in a cage.*

Claudia Emerson, Pulitzer-Winning Poet

You're sitting at a small bay window

*in an empty café by the sea.
It's nightfall, and the owner is locking up,
though you're still hunched over the radiator,
which is slowly losing warmth.*

*Now you're walking down to the shore
to watch the last blues fading on the waves.
You've lived in small houses, tight spaces—
the walls around you kept closing in—
but the sea and the sky were also yours.*

*No one else is around to drink with you
from the watery fog, shadowy depths.
You're alone with the whirling cosmos.
Goodbye, love, far away, in a warm place.
Night is endless here, silence infinite.*

What the Last Evening Will Be Like - Edward Hirsch

Want to go to bed simply said

Never to hear

Want to go to bed simply said

Forgive forget forgive forget

Can't hold on to regret

Last vestiges of my life

My past

Want to go to be simply said

Want to be free

Need to be free

From hating him

Hating my past

Wallowing

Feeling sorry for myself

Regret is the poison of life

My daughter when a teen once said

I am being poisoned

I am poisoning myself

Want to go to bed simply said

Dread dying matter-of-factly

Ordinariness a crucible

Want to go to bed simply said

Waiting expectantly

Waiting irrepressibly

Waiting impossibly

Want to go to bed simply said

Resigned no one ever said

Want to go to bed simply said NB

Maxine Greene she died on May 29, 2014

Maxine, I can't decide not to see you anymore I can't decide not to see you I can't think about what books what movies what art shows to share. *Too much of a bureaucrat* they say *you are Naomi* never invited to serve on your Boards of anything I was a friend we were friends.

I was the age your daughter would have been dying at 31 of breast cancer while in London many women were your daughters you and I we were strange bedfellows.

Both of us had husbands who had loaded guns without permits hidden among underthings or in cutout rare books you probed me as if my life were on reruns, review my life was always on review with you.

With intensity I would share thoughts I didn't even know I held so articulately so acutely you made me move beyond myself. We were a comfortable fit Saturday nights at local restaurants enjoying the teenagers or babies at *3 Guys* or often at more elaborate restaurants.

You invited me to celebrate Jack's birthday tossing his ashes on the outer rim of the Reservoir in Central Park. *His request* you informed me as we sang *Jack Happy Birthday*. Jack died playing gin at his Jewish club. You could still walk then.

You spoke disparagingly about your son.

You incessantly apologized for yourself and yet no stage was too small.

Even when you had to be wheeled onto the stage you were brilliant and pointed saying what each member of the audience was longing to hear. You served as Chair of every notable education organization. You had a loyal steadfast following. Paolo Freire said *You were the greatest education philosopher since Dewey*.

You probed me you dug in you dug deeply I worked hard for your friendship but near the end I resisted visiting you. I didn't have enough stories or movies or art or books to share or didn't want to. Maxine I can't decide again not to visit you

I resented being typecast the person at the back door. I was as if your secret friend your imaginary friend. Your friendship gave me scope approbation glory and a Ph.D. for my erstwhile husband you described as *that feral student*.

You went to psychoanalysts incessantly You were of that royal intellectual Western liberal tradition. You were a Jew who was not a Jew. You were rich you apologized you agonized but lived rich and lived last years with twenty-four help at home.

I didn't come in the last weeks to see you. You asked for me she said over and over *Where is Naomi? Where is Naomi?* I couldn't come I didn't want to come I can't decide again not to come again. You are dead. Regrets none really. A sadness permeates it goes down deep. I loved relished our times together even if I was second string on the B or C team.

Dying you called out for your daughter dead more than sixty years you said her name over and over *Linda are you there are you here Linda with me?* You said *you were afraid fearful of daying*. Asking over and over *if Linda is here?*

I was shaped by our conversations became more considerable more wise more reflective. I am shaped by your death. In the end you were a mother calling out for daughter Linda dead for more years than she was in your keep. In the sanctuary of our friendship the lessons loomed none larger than a mother's heart longing to finally join a daughter lost to premature death a mother who never believed she was worthy or sufficiently attentive. Maxine was envious of captivated by my connection to motherhood.

We were two souls lost to love never got it right. *I get jealous when seeing people in love holding hands* you shared. *I would have been gay a lesbian if I was young again now* commented simply.

I loved you Maxine more than you can imagine I couldn't come because I could no longer measure up give you enough add enough to your life. Maxine I can't decide now not to come. I call for you missing you overwhelms. Maxine Maxine Maxine I miss you. I missed last chances to see and visit with you I was not one of the weepers at your bedside They were the A Team.

You were described as a public intellectual. For me and with you we were quiet confessional and abiding friends. Fifteen years of Saturday night dinners often visits after three in the afternoon. I had to break it off could feel death lumbering looming. Drifting off moved to the shadows the sidelines. *We haven't seen you much lately* one of your Lincoln Center A team said accusatorially at the funeral. It was the commodification of Maxine I fled the vultures at the bedside trying to get

last bits of you. They were not your friends they were your worshippers idolatry was their fix.

Friendship is private consoling. We did share secrets. We talked about sex and the paucity of it in our lives

Regrets commingled you ordering chicken and me steak penultimate moments shared at *3 Guys* restaurant. We were regulars until we weren't. I couldn't come anymore Maxine my Maxine my Maxine alive and waiting for me. No more the greeting kiss the ice water the wine and then *tell me books movies art*.

Maxine hated not walking. *Diverted by my son his recurring illness* was what I said when asked why I had not come by. We lost our privacy our intimacy I was a chronicler a purveyor for your voraciousness you're longing for more of life. I couldn't come to see you death hovering testimony needing to be wrought wrung from you.

Shedding friendships now Maxine you were just the first to let go I wasn't to be surrogate daughter at your bedside as you died.

Beverly Sills had a worse death the weekend aid Alta said when queried. She had been present for both deaths. Asking her thoughts about it all. *Just don't live so long* she answered simply. Maxine you fought off death like Mohammed Ali. Pondering now how to submit to resign to fashion a death. Maxine, you just refused to give up life to give up on it.

Need to craft a death that will most fit reflect my inner life. Think you knew that part of me think you affirmed that in me. You died as you lived a very public figure constancy with grace. I want to die as my father had refusing to respond once again to the beauty of a Bach Cantata drifting off a fast and Irish Celtic song.

For my death will come my body emptied of food and desire lying motionlessly quietly as ocean waves break and a sunrise breaks onto the day imagined but left unseen.

Maxine you had me believing that you would live forever never die be there brimming with possibilities and refusals. Maxine I can't get used to life without you.

NB 2014

Prevailing Winds

Prevailing winds

Looking for a beautiful

Devastatingly beautiful place

In which to close my eyes

For the last time

No longer curious who Sophie will marry where Owen will go to college what profession Willa will pursue.

No longer want to know if Jeremy divorces or who he will marry or how life for Rebecca and Luke will turn out.

I don't want to know how Hudson copes with his mother's indifference or worse and if Daisy can transcend her mother's adoration and depersonalization and if Upton continues to be indifferent to it all.

I don't want to know I won't know

I am relinquishing the possibility of knowing.

The near rabid curiosity concerning future events and milestones

Of each blood relative kept my mother Bluma alive

Miscalculation of medical options set her on a path

To a premature death at ninety-three

Jewish mother cudgel guilt driven call for help

She fell down cellar stairs

Believing that family members on holiday would rush to her side

Emergency room attendants read

Her do not resuscitate no extraordinary measures health proxy

And forthwith put her into hospice care

It seems impossible to wave

Once signed under one's own jurisdiction

Social worker explaining how it worked

Said hands clasped voice tightening

You know your mother suffers from mental illness

The mental illness is what will probably take her life

Back in the car my brother and I squealed

With irrepressible laughter waiting for its moment

Finally some expert to confirm

Our mother she was as crazy like a Looney bird



Our mother she did fight back

Outliving all predictions by months not days

It means business this hospice escort service

To a pain free merciful morphine medicated death

Setting off on a trek an odyssey

As my courage and resolve grow

Looking for the place the right place

Breath-takingly beautiful

In which to lie down to die

Imagining near the churn and roar

Of the ocean high-tide bringing

My pill engorged unconscious body

To the place where the sea and sky get born

NB

*I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;-
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking,
I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.
I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.*

Sea Fever John Masefield

But Where to Find the Crevice

A crib for death
Where the drift and sway
Will carry me off
On the white tufts of tide
Consider the rocky coast of Maine
The chill of wave forbidding
Or the familiar water basins
Near Wellfleet or Truro
Or Costa Rica back road remote indifferent
Beneath the solemn bluff on Block Island
Trek perpendicular to the sea desolate
Where a solitary soul
No longer young
Can steal her death from chance
And the desires of offspring
For just one more day NB

Burdening Unburdening

I am on a talking marathon about dying

We are old I tell my old friends

We are dying

We are more dead than alive I say

They stare impatiently past me

Facing aging death

Requires a personal pronoun

I persist

We are dying I am dying

Steeped in a conundrum

Without date certain

Confronting end of life

Mirror refracts bends time

Friends move away back off

Construct hysteric homily

We are dying we are dying

Seeding doomsday gloom

Friends mordant or matter-of-fact

Everybody I know who is old

Spends most of their time going to doctors

Stalwart friend from Kansas shares

Without humor maladroit

Death my preoccupation my obsession

Snags drags territorial

Death relinquishes personal pronouns

I am dying sooner rather than later

Searching a location

Akin to a Hollywood movie set

The sea draws me to it

Moon's exquisite choreography

Sea's ebb and flow

I am dying this I know

First to free

From resentment rage regret

Need to fall in love with myself

Final breaths drawn final truths

Experiencing solitary rebirth reborn

NB

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.
John Donne

I am dying

My body decays

In open air

Fear the stench of death

Dying death a rat's prowl

I am a hysteric

Brimful of warnings

Premonitions eerily settling in

Death begins in the personal

A secret manifest

Dying is my preoccupation

A first love obsession

Relentless encompassing

Incoherent incessant

Plotting planning

Demonically strategizing

Nothing else much matters

Live in a quandary

Hostage to an abstraction

Life love death

Overtaking overwhelming

Me meekly submitting

NB

Desire

Dream

To move

To death

By my own hand

Desire for death

As close as just

One more broken tooth

Living at the edge

The final upheaval

Of an eroding mouth

Something within

Pushes me forward

Preoccupies

No longer wanting to know

What is to come

More than death

Executed by my own hand.

Note left saying:

I have gone/done my mile

Please understand

Love, Mom

NB

You are Old, Father William

*"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –
Do you think, at your age, it is right?
"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."
"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door --
Pray, what is the reason for that?"
"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment -- one shilling a box --
Allow me to sell you a couple?"
"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak --
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"
"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life."
"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose --
What made you so awfully clever?"
"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Said his father. "Don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs."*

Lewis Carroll

.....
He told me I was so small I told him, Water me I promise I can grow tall

When making love is free.

Breathe

Help me in ways of submission

My body's itching to press on the bruises you hide with a smile.

Pendulum, Tahliah Barnett -FKA twigs

.....

When I finished one book, I wouldn't write for a while, he said in 1966. Then I had to learn how to do it all over again. The arm goes cold: there's a learning process you have to go through again before you rediscover the warmth that comes over you when you are writing.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

.....

...how death is that bad tooth wobbling in my head

I want my perfect teeth buried in the earth like a curse

Sarah Holland-Batt "O California" New Yorker 2/23 and 3/2 2015

.....

What the mind does after losing one's father isn't just to pick new feathers from the world, but pick new selves to love them with.

...to fly with the hawk to find my father, find him and bring him home.

Helen Macdonald author "H is for Hawk"

.....

...grace resides in the most unlikely places – and that moving forward means leaving some things behind.

Vicki Constantine Croke reviewer "H is for Hawk" NY Book Review 2/22/15



Goshawk - Audubon

You Sucked Me Dry

You sucked me dry

Climbed me like a vine

Lay supine you said

Fucked me holding your nose.

Bitterness oozes

Seventeen years later seethe.

A collision course

A soupcon of fiery words

for you my pretender prince

Believing at forty-one

That you would bring me

To the fountain of youth

You sucked me dry

You climbed me like a vine

You kept me waiting for the splatter

Mocking jeering *you have no feminine wiles*

Pinioned to the draught of my desire.

You dark prince knew

What you were doing.

Rolodex of contacts

Enamored Jewish intellectuality

Erotic baptism in Trevi Fountain

Image free floating Fellini *La Dolce Vita*



Evil incarnate

We took in a found child



Mother and father fraud

Despicable

You turned from

First child offered

His ears poked out

You told me

The canny lawyer

Brought you to an infant

Three Kings re-enacted

All in distant impoverished Paraguay



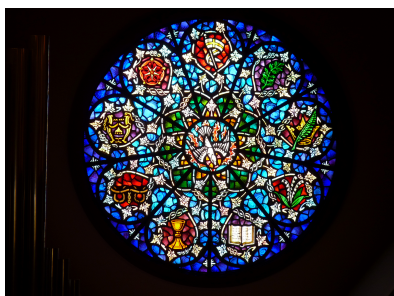
Does any god of darkness

Think more of him self than you?

Under a dim light holding the infant child

You cried out *son my son*

My own Italian opera castrati
As the lawyer handmaiden regarded
The histrionics of fatuous fatherliness
I found my son and I love him
You sucked me dry
God-awful cunning stray
I took in as husband
Flashing my gold wedding band
Around on subways and buses
I am a married lady
I fuck all night
Get dressed up
And show up on time for work
Caricatured married lady
We joined hands promising
To love until death do us part
While my father played the violin
Beneath a sun struck rose window



Vows the trip wire
The ultimate self-deceit
Sanctity in death
Stillborn flush of love
Carnal incarceration

Without love imprisons
Prism of light life
Flowers birds songs trees sunrises sunsets
And being a mother
A mother of three
Two from my body
One stolen from another country
Children my three
Have delighted and completed me.

NB

Healthy children will not fear life if their elders have integrity enough to not fear death.

Erik Erikson

Lying is not a disease it's a choice...

Play, Ode to Joy, Craig Lucas

And so, if the classic image of dying with dignity must be modified or even discarded What is to be salvaged of our hope for the final memories we leave to those who love us? The dignity we seek in dying must be found in the dignity with which we have lived our lives.

Sherwin B. Nuland, "How We Die."

Built to Live Alone

Longing for love

Too fierce fearing

Dissolute disconsolate

Power to destroy

Mother broken crazy

By my birth cry

Infant sorcery voodoo

Deep in bones destiny

Love given

No place to flower

Lambent infant

Curled recoiled

Tensor ball of reject

And so it went

Built to live solitary

Rollicking desire

Feral wild

Frightening

Magpie scaring

Scattershot suitors



Magpies are birds of the Corvidae (crow) family, including the black and white Eurasian magpie, which is one of the few animal species known to be able to recognize itself in a mirror test.¹¹

Twisted narrative

Distortion torqued past

Miraculous virginal

Motherhood enveloped

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, Exodus 20:5

Time encroaches

Death a whisper away

Solitude's affirmation

Fierce piercing

Clouds sky moon's shapes

Death moves into place

Consciousness clarity

Astounding

Life choices

Beyond reverie

Breath ebbs with tide

Lambent grace solitary

Finally to shut my eyes

NB

.....

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead;

Mad Girls Love Song Sylvia Plath

.....

How could I?

Have fallen

For this forager

Sniffing for a woman

In possession of the *Golden Fleece*



Found me an Upper West Side Jew

Who could deliver and authenticate

A Sheepskin affixing a Ph.D. to his name



Investigative seducer

Gathered biographical data

Cornered me lay me prone

On a local college ball field

Divorcee bereft hollowed out

Scent of shame and fear exuded

Wounded woman easy prey

Fucked me dry woozy

You haven't had it for a long time

The tingle collapse swoon near faint

He made his mark I was caught

In the twist of his Houdini vise

Succumbing to his allure

Sex keeps you young

Read it quick flick cover story

In supermarket rag magazine

Fucking keeps older women young

Stars seek younger men – (ashton kutcher and demi moore all the rage)

My heart thumping with mindless reverie

Blindsided by his projectile mouth

You stink as in smell bad

Your face sags

Better get a facelift

Your front teeth arabesque

Kick out like Rockettes

Big turn off better get braces

You are on the way down I am on the way up

A constant refrain

Give me your money blurted with a Tourette tic

Rabid wolf howl deadened night of Catskills

Never make marinara sauce again

Only momma's and nana's on Sunday's

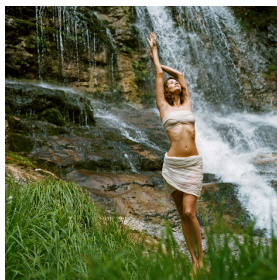
Predator parasite leech

Sucked the life out of me

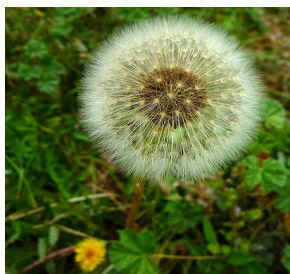
Submitting relinquishing

Believing his ejaculate

Akin to the fountain of youth

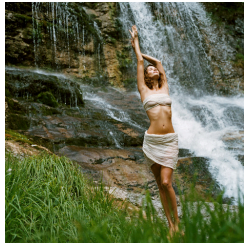


Nearly two decades later
I can't stop hating despising him
He turned my life on me
I gave myself up to him so easily
His deft fingers drove me dizzy
Now as time dwindles
Loose ends to tie up
To forgive him and myself
Must move beyond the woman of forty
Who let him fuck her for a dandelion wish



I am stuck a still life of self-contempt
Horrified I ever let him come near
Moving toward death
Blowing a wish on a wild dandelion
Pathos engulfs regret let loose
Back then on the way to re-awakening
I let him in but he never brought me

That fountain of youth



With his rough reckless touch

A sleeping beauty found her truth

NB

.....

Intermittent explosive disorder --- psychiatric disorder

Can lead to suicide can lead to heart attacks can lead to strokes

.....

Sweet biblical irony – my mother, my first husband, the wife and husband of my two older children all have/had this disorder

Question: is it catching passed on in genes or just magnetized to find us or for us to find them

Or do genes adjust when mired in self-defeat over and over

Intermittent explosive disorder – ‘til death do us part...

NB

.....

Watching them eat at Le Pain Quotidien was as if looking at a scene from *Tom Jones*.

Fucking literally brioche and quinoa salad

With erotic dipping in a shared bowl of gazpacho

They knew I was spying on them

Imagining them disrobed lying prone

Not holding back from their bodies unabated appetites.

NB

.....

Sinfulness

We didn't take Gustavo

They wouldn't give us Gustavo

Rather they wouldn't give him to Frank.

His ears pop out!

Frank thought

Gustavo was 18 months old

Playful and able to put puzzles together

He lived with his mother

Who could no longer take care of him

He was sturdy and straight eyed

Sweetness spread his face like sunshine.

No! You can't have him!

A multi-second delay observing him

As of a hunk of butcher meat

And not falling to his knees

Reverently welcoming him as son

Had him snatched by the assembled observers

Away from Frank's disdain

No sorry you will not be able to adopt Gustavo

The lawyer resolute on the phone

While I dickered with her for another chance

Even as my heart resisted

I knew our already fraudulent marriage

Could not withstand tampering with fate

Having lost out on this innately holy offering

He wants an infant

I offer pleading for a second chance

Reluctantly the lawyer said,
There was a newborn up for adoption
While heatedly objecting to *baby shopping*
She agreed to have Frank see the infant
Since Frank was already in Paraguay
At my misconceived insistence
Thinking he will be the first to bond
The lawyer more avenging wily angel
Dragged the pretender father across Paraguay
To a forbidding city blackmail its currency
Frank held the infant three weeks old
With treble voice full throated fatherly emotion
I found my son and I love him!
The lawyer looking on skeptically bemused
By this manipulative theatrical performance
Saying as she took the infant *okay you can adopt him*
And to herself *oh what the hell one less baby to get adopted*
And so we became after some necessary paperwork
The parents of Luca Alexander, our name for him
He was indeed an indigenous child of remote Paraguay
From the first his body revolted being taken
From the cloistered overhang of rainforest
His body drew roaring fevers spasming
When given regulatory baby shots
He couldn't tolerate milk
Refused most foods
Was in constant motion
Particularly at meal times

He climbed the tops of trees
Prescribed a panoply of medications
To subdue him crack his will
Frank who refused Gustavo
Folded like a chair when given
Declamations of Luca's disorderliness
His aberrant undiagnosable disease
Luca distressed frightened locked
In *behavior modification* rooms
Frank sat in flank with the punishing experts
When at eight introduced to tennis
Luca came to fully to life
On the way to becoming a tennis champ
Luca's body collapsed
Nearly comatose surgically lost his upper intestine
Consigned to wearing an ostomy bag (external repository for poop)
Some immigrants never adjust get acclimated
Luca was such a child an anathema
We had no god given right to take him
From an arbor of rain forest trees
We had no business adopting him
He was a son of Paraguay
And it is there ne needed to remain
With and among foster families
Perhaps indigenous Guaraní as well
We dared venture into the badlands
Luca paying for our taunting fate
Having him join our faux family

A child's life sacrificed

I was always a problem child

He tells a friend and me recently

No you weren't I replied

She always gets angry when I say this

Luca told her walking up Madison Avenue

Easy conversation if with a drizzle of rain

He tells us to *move a little faster my two HO's*

Meaning me and his girlfriend

Was a mother ever revered or loved more

Still life frame perpetrators of disease

Two parents who brought on

The collapse of his body

Luca lives with mangled stomach

Destined Luca to life in the wrong place

Clearly we had no right to bring Luca into lives

So compromised by deceitfulness and lies

There is yet a reckoning coming

The truth we brought Luca into a home

That was not a home

To a couple who were not a couple

Never to reconcile aberrant decision making

Ultimately some decisions lay beyond moving beyond NB

Post Script: According to records, Luca was born to a Guaraní mother in the village of Pte. Kyha the very place in which the alarming rate of teen age suicides occur. Had Luca continued to live there perhaps this would have been the fate befallen him. Luca's birth village borders the Parana River and is directly across from Brazil. The despairing Guarani teenagers come from the border towns of Paraguay and Brazil according to the NT Times: "Suicides Spread Through a Brazilian Tribe," 1/4/15.

To contemplate this unsettling information is to bring me apocalyptic. Where in the world did Luca belong? Here in New York with a mangled, butchered body his young life spent resisting battling everything contiguous with his life or to have lay like the ground fallow, depleted a life cut short by despair and perhaps suicide? NB

What I Did for a Fuck

What I did for a fuck:

Put a mail order contraption

Under my chin a rubber band affixed to my mouth

Opening and closing rhythmically

To tighten up a slacking jawline

A hawker's promise *only \$19.99* as seen by Frank on TV

Plastic surgeon listed in one of those free street newspapers

Said conspiratorially taken hair root at just 41

Her jawline sags yet she is so young

Without surgery it will only get worse I fear

Inconsolable sadness gravity's pull

Betraying a heart with feckless loveless fucking

How did I ever let him in the door?

Where the insurrection, the refusals the resistance?

In what depth of lunacy did I step?

What I did for a fuck:

He dragged me as if a child to an orthodontist

He was repulsed by the gap in my front teeth

This following major dental surgery

For life threatening bacterial infection to my gums

Your teeth are abig turn-off overtones of threat and menace

Get braces or else, implied no more fucking

Early on in this aberrant courtship alert to danger

I fled driving at dangerously high speeds

Glimpsing sunrise when I found myself

In his bed in his airless sub-basement dark dank den

With a will yet to cut ground the bulb yet to root

Ex-wife trauma victim I was captive

Fucking keeps you young

Glancing this in some supermarket rag

Where are your feminine wiles baiting inquires

Where were they?

Desperate to please his jaundiced eye

Arouse his flagging sexual appetite

He ups the ante with attempts at allure

You stink you walk wrong you can't cook

You hold my hand put your arm around my shoulder

If that is what you want in movie theaters

Besieged constant innuendoes to keep his prick to himself

Mouth jaw teeth sag and jowl lost

Feral child in the landscape of love

For a fuck:

Is this your mother? Saleslady asks

As we purchase the necessary professorial Harris Tweed jacket

Elbows cupped by buttery leather

Laughter spilling from orifices as he models

Face sinks further into premature aging

For a fuck:

Berated as we toured Europe

Take off your bra don't you see every woman has no top

This along a river in France

Kept my breasts covered small moment of resistance

For a fuck:

You insist on standing in front of me keeping me behind you

Supplicant and overshadowed inference here
Contradiction my public persona advanced him
My presence shielded kept him hidden
Sex was his weapon I was his concubine
Mr. Fuckman you clawed for gold fled swathed
Get off the damn bus at back door demanded
This in the thick of traffic
Two small children at home
Held on straphanger for dear life
Death nips tally sheet reconciliation necessary
Dear god I promise not to hate him anymore
I promise to forgive myself for hating him
And for hating myself for choosing him
But wait don't believe in God
Urgent need to move beyond
Free myself of what I did for a fuck
Still tight fisted on my jugular
This more than regret much more
Reaching deep into the yowling fiery center of earth
Free will collapsed like a lung
When I lay down for that fuck on the ball field
Life has no meaning the moment you lose the illusion of being eternal. Jean-Paul Sartre
Vacated resistance cudgeled
Thrashing through cocoon of past marriage
Supine limp mind wiped clean amnesiac
Damnation decisions abrogated choice stillborn
Death nips: time to own up
In a vacated moment gave myself away

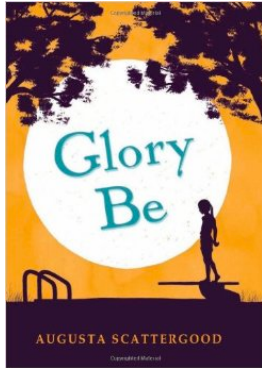
Swiped clean a self emptied

Despair lost its grip on eternity

Glory be glory be

What I did for a fuck

I did for a what?



NB

Doing Death Well

Doing death well

Doing right by death

Freight weight bearing down

It is coming last breaths

Just stop eating

Weakened swallow pills lots

While hand can lift to mouth

While still can lift hand to mouth

Find a beautiful place

Not at home ghosts will haunt

Courage to not ask

For just one more day

Find courage not to hold on

Moments of lingering curiosity

Tectonic

The before and afterward

Beyond imagining beyond knowing

Inevitable death

Chance still at own hand

Trickster tantalizes

More time less time

Will snatched vampire-like

Time to calculate if with sorrow

Dreams stalled nothing more

Bitter taste of regret

Desperation rallies

Attempts to dragoon

One moment more

Grace at death

Stepping finally

Beyond obeisance

Ruled by fear

Heart opens

Blinding moment

Then silence

NB

Every third thought shall be my grave

Prospero, The Tempest, Shakespeare

Excerpts: Interview with Philip Roth NYTimes with Daniel Sandstrom

Sabbathian response to a place where nothing keeps its promise and everything is perishable.

I did the best I could with what I had. Only a madman would go to the trouble of writing 31 books to affirm his hatred.

Unthinking men stunned by the life one is defenseless against, including especially history: the unforeseen that is constantly recurring as the current moment.

The horror of being caged (by writing) has lost its thrill. It is now truly a great relief, something close to a sublime experience, to have nothing more to worry about than death.

Can you think of an ideology capable of corrective self-satire let alone one that wouldn't want to sink its teeth into an imagination on the loose?

The power in any society is with those who get to impose the fantasy. Yes, character is destiny, and yet everything is chance.

The tool with which the novelist thinks is the scrupulosity of his style. Here, in all this, lies whatever magnitude his thought may have.

Philip Roth

and thus have postponed learning what his uneducated had been trying so hard to teach him all along: the incomprehensible way one's most banal, incidental, even comical choices achieve the most disproportionate result.

Indignation, A Novel, Philip Roth

.....
So much is plain exhausting

*and exacting and every stupid reason loves its reason,
those hundred little dodges that
get us in the end.*

*Sir Arthur, my name is
Merely and it's Dust Mote, it's Future and Gray Dissolve
where time put me in this chair
to watch you by accident because
so what. Or who knows. And no telling.*

Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle, Back from the Dead, Talking Endlessly on a Tiny TV

Marianne Boruch. The New Yorker

Doomed destined

Exiled

No home

Inevitable

Write large

The stars

The Jewish star

Doomed

Heathen crucifix

Nomadic

God is love

God is not love

Blood smite

Door tight

Infant fist

Resist

Commitments

Love home

Kinder kuchen

Children webbed me

Gravity's pull

Exiled doomed

Domicile denied

Wanting love too much

Left me wizened

Depleted solitary

By the wayside

NB

Down to nub and bone

Truth excruciating

Distortions omissions

Libelous claims distractions

This moment gone

In lazy lollygagging

In conjecture

Confection pressing

The past for better answers

Outcomes how and why

Dragnet compressor of time

Wasted bloviated consecrated

A rose is a rose is a rose – things are as they are (Gertrude Stein)...

Dwelling in the past

Stuck in fury sadness regret

Moments lost regretting

Beget more moments to regret.

NB

Regrets Mishaps

Sadness sorrow

Guilt fury

Anger rage

Never to go beyond

Missed chances

For love

Were there truly ever any?

Death is your most important moment (Sheila)

Death is the mother of beauty (Wallace Stevens)

I've got to make a plan for my death

I've got to find a beautiful solitary place

Not to be found until the last breathe is uttered

I have gone my mile the death note

I was a person with extraordinary dreams

Struggling with a combative thwarting past

Not sufficiently fierce to be transcendent

Image captivates

Sipping champagne while washing down pills

With grace and determination

Craving love never moved beyond desire

Body feared love's enflaming

Tectonic upheaval volcanic

Longing for meteoric flight

Took the span of my life

NB

*The loss of possessions gives "a sense of the shrinkage
of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness."*

William James

Nullified

Nullified as if I was never there and wasn't
took cello jewelry clothing piano
Always took good care of antiques and art
left dust free
nothing of me evident
nothing was evident
before I left remaining always invisible
Way to survive breathing but not alive
Left first husband with house in tact
He looked around saw nothing was missing
noted my departure in his journal
and started to write
Marriage Voices about our marriage
with a handsome advance blurb
on cover from Erika Jong
and so his life after a brief interregnum
moved on everything in its rightful place
a shadow woman
not to covet the edge
of the bed her arms around him.

NB

Here breath hot with pumping fumes

Lifting skyward

The bodies now mist stinking blowback

No one nearby ever smelled

“Auschwitz is in our veins.”

“American after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next world.”

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Her method involved revisiting victim’s worst horrors and letting them ‘vomit’ them out. You have to move into the torture chamber with them. You almost have to be tortured with them. Work with the ‘noble and good’ qualities that can enable a victim to survive. It was enough to take a victim’s story, hold it and say, ‘Yes I believe you’.

Helen Amber, Therapist to Torture Victims, NY Times 8/28/14

She lived and died as if asphyxiated

As if in the communal shower of death

Dying is so hard

She died radically alone

In her disabused momma’s arms

NB

I was birthed restless and elsewhere

gut dragging and bulging with ball lightning, slush,

broke through with branches, steel

I was bitch-monikered, hipped, I hefted

a whip rain, a swirling sheet of grit.

Scraping toward the first of you, hungering for wood, walls,

untuned skin. With shifting and frantic mouth, I loudly loved

the slow bones

of elders, fools, and willows.

Katrina by Patricia Smith

Age Appropriate

Obsessed overtaken

Overwhelmed by death

Death tugs me

An undertow

Each day

Legs newborn lamb's

Overlord death

Mother death

What is death?

What is after death?

Where do the dead go?

Death obsessed

Dead-ended death

Encroaching each day

Veiled warnings

Get to it girl

Make a plan

Or again

Will-less feckless

Supine resigned

Make up your mind

Time to die

The question

By your hand

Or by mine

NB

Weather is not just a visual, you can feel it with all of your senses. That's what I'd like to get at in my paintings – that full body feeling. You sniff the weather, and a complicated rush of feeling runs through you.

Jane Wilson, Artist

.....

When you get to that confrontation of truth with what matters to you, it creates the greatest opportunity for change.

Jack Groppe, Human Performance Institute

.....

The idea here is getting people to come to terms with whom they are, where they want to go. I think of writing as a life course correction. James Pennebaker, Psychologist

.....

apophenia – the human tendency to see connections and patterns that are not really there...

“unmotivated seeing of connections accompanied by a specific experience of an abnormal meaningfulness,”

Klaus Conrad, Psychiatrie

VSED – Voluntary stopping eating and drinking.

If I am not me I don't want to be.

...barbiturates dissolved in a little bit of vodka

pre-emptive suicide

I want to go out on my own terms.

Jerome Medalie, Choosing End Game for Dementia NY Times 1/20/15(excerpted)

.....

To grow old is to lose everything.

...unknown, unanticipated galaxy” of the very old, so unimaginable to younger self

Prose endures. Poetry abandoned me. The sound of poems is sensual, even sexual. That requires a blast of hormones. (When testosterone departed, so did poetry.)

Growls at age-segregated communities, “old-folks storage bins” – “for-profit-making expiration dormitories,”

He assaults “fatuous” euphemisms for dying. He wants the bad news straight up no concealing “how we gasp and choke, turning blue.”

I've never been around when somebody, in the middle of a sentence or a sandwich, had the luck to pitch over dead.

Donald Hall, “Essays After Eighty

Forgive Her Mental Illness

Forgive her mental illness
Forgive her for being mentally ill
Forgive myself for hating her
Because she was mentally ill
Can't won't forgive her cruelty
Her verbal vituperative overspill
Her cruelty distinct from her craziness
Mother was a mean woman and a tormented woman
Her character fragmented disjointed flawed
She was a *Fabian Socialist* coveting a place
At the table with the *ladies who lunch*
Fetish fashioniste whirling dervish identities
Coats dresses suits garments to reflect
Her moment-to-moment fragmentary self
Consumed by shifting selves
Exhilarated desolate in fashion's hold
Mother was deceitful she lied
Truth an embellishment
Knotted contorted salvation
Pleaded forgiveness second chances
Tirade collapsed victim seized
Home cavern of luminous insanity
Children cowered coveting
Another better mother
What a supreme concoction
Mother lay dead at nine-three

Where the phone's ring
As day winnowed into dusk
Her call interlocutor cult like
Questions fired off dialogic
In hieroglyphic hierarchical order
She wallowed in self-pity
I drown in sorrow
Refusing to comfort her tempers
I chose to despise her
Life spent hiding protecting myself
From the crazy vapors impinging
Buttressing life exhausted exalted
Rotating revolving cycles of a day
Had us skirmish rancor to apology
Apotheosis of dysfunction
Remnant pigeon scatology
Aftermath of tirade
Evidence open over door
As if yet to pop in a roast
Father approaches girl of five
Orbiting still hyperventilated tumult
Asking what did you do to upset her?
Inert struggle futile quest for peace
Reality on the edge of circumspection
Often startling whiplash moment
She grabbed me by the hair tugging it straight
You were never born this way ringlets a cudgel
Lambasting castigating baiting me

Daring to select an item of clothing
Mocking my bad taste jeering scuffling off
Heaping stacks of clothing at me on me over me
Department stores her sacred space
Pique reminiscent moment
When she dressed me
Mannequin-like for family wedding
Full-length orange brocade dress
Topped off with fur shrug
Hair pulled back straight
Held tight with sequined bobby pins
This the occasion the night
No longer wanted to kill myself
Believing myself already dead
Mother was sick in the head
And was not a nice person
But the sick in the head
Needed a better response
From a better daughter
Finding a way to comfort
During spells of torrential
Excruciating levitating sobs
Fists beating against her temples
I wish I were dead her mantra
Dying is hard so hard lapsing
Airbrush kiss stomach spasming
Lamentation my death approaches
Inevitability and grief

At mother daughter relationship
Gone so horribly wrong
Know now how ordinary
Our rough engagement
This embattled mother-daughter duo
Our horror and sorrowful domain
You disgust me
A birthday greeting at an open door
Perpetual exhortations to extricate herself
Her mind deftly attempting
To grab her mouth back
Squirm still
Hearing the timbre the upheavals the uproar
The awful moments of her rising inner howl
Still hear the incantations of her loon-like scream
Still wait the moment frozen frightened fatigued

NB

.....
***My mother would suffer** from manic depression, or bipolar disorder. The ravages of this condition I observed; the onset of her mental instability I only felt. Knowledge in itself resolves nothing, but it helps. Acceptance – it comes down to that. This is how I came to this point, and to this place, by this looping road, from such anguish, and I am still alive and full of hope.*

Patient No. 9413 Roger Cohen NY Times 8/22/14
.....

Kaddish (fragments) Allen Ginsberg

'I am a great woman—am truly a beautiful soul—and because of that they (Hitler, Grandma, Hearst, the Capitalists, Franco, Daily News, the '20s, Mussolini, the living dead) want to shut me up—Buba's the head of a spider network—'

I banging against her head which saw Radios, Sticks, Hitlers—the gamut of Hallucinations—for real—her own universe—no road that goes elsewhere—to my own—No America, not even a world—

*That you go as all men, as Van Gogh, as mad Hannah, all the same—to the last doom—Thunder, Spirits, lightning!
I've seen your grave! O strange Naomi! My own—cracked grave! Shema Y'Israel—I am Svul Avrum—you—in death?*

*Asylum spreads out giant wings above the path to a minute black hole—the door—entrance thru crotch—
I went in—smelt funny—the halls again—up elevator—to a glass door on a Women's Ward—to Naomi—Two nurses buxom white—They led her out, Naomi stared—and I gaspt—She'd had a stroke—*

*Too thin, shrunk on her bones—age come to Naomi—now broken into white hair—loose dress on her skeleton—
face sunk, old! withered—cheek of crone—*

One hand stiff—heaviness of forties & menopause reduced by one heart stroke, lame now—wrinkles—a scar on her head, the lobotomy—ruin, the hand dipping downwards to death—

The wires—'

in her hair, as she beat on her head—'I'm not a bad girl—don't murder me!—I hear the ceiling—I raised two children—'

Two years since I'd been there—I started to cry—She stared—nurse broke up the meeting a moment—I went into the bathroom to hide, against the toilet white walls

*'The Horror' I weeping—to see her again—'The Horror'—as if she were dead thru funeral rot in—'The Horror!'
I came back she yelled more—they led her away—'You're not Allen—' I watched her face—but she passed by me, not looking—*

Opened the door to the ward,—she went thru without a glance back, quiet suddenly—I stared out—she looked old—the verge of the grave—'All the Horror!'

or Svul Avrum—Israel Abraham—myself—to sing in the wilderness toward God—O Elohim!—so to the end—2 days after her death I got her letter—

Strange Prophecies anew! She wrote—'The key is in the window, the key is in the sunlight at the window—I have the key—Get married Allen don't take drugs—the key is in the bars, in the sunlight in the window.

Love,

your mother - which is Naomi—

All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them.

Allen Ginsberg

***There was never a single doubt** that we loved each other beyond anything else, from the time when we first met until the moment he died.*

He never changed a word. He thought, 'First thought, best thought'.

We talked about how to make something beautiful, what to do when you fail, and how to make something supremely ugly.

Almost every day we said. You are the love of my life, or some version of that, in one of our many private and somewhat bizarre languages. We knew exactly what we had, and we were beyond grateful.

You made me forget myself I thought I was someone else, someone good.

Isak Dinesen

He leaves a small size garbage bag open

Into which he has dropped his ostomy bag

Filled with his poop.

I tie it and walk down the hall to the compactor

I clean the toilet of the splatter he has left

I sprinkle alcohol around the tub like holy water

We share one tub it must be sanitized

He bathes every three or four hours or so

His body got broken years ago

And still it is wracked with disease

This time his upper intestine

His lower intestine long gone

We are a team it is our bond

Who will wrap and throw away the garbage bag

When I am gone? I worry

In my irregular life I think often of suicide

The mechanics of it

The how and why and why and where

Follows, status health check:

My chest dredges clogged mucous

Cough incessantly intermittently

I suck cough drops from Switzerland I use my inhalator

The one that doesn't have steroids, which harm eyes

Pneumonia is the old persons heart attack my oldest son says

Your tooth is black my grandchild recoils

Front tooth's enamel broken off near gum

Only three or five are real teeth in my mouth

Frequently remove bridge from bottom jaw to clean

Dread in forgetful moment

It will slip out of my hand float down drain

Don't smile don't remove sink drain

Teeth provide powerful impetus to get out of this life

My kidneys are miraculously restored

Following menacing idiopathic kidney disease

Post-treatment my immune system kerplunk defunct

Kidney disease in remission

Defiant willfulness pulled me through

Why are you bald on top

Same nine-year-old granddaughter asks

Thyroid condition I reply

Medically known as *Graves Disease* in remission as well

Although *creeps back petty pace* or not (*Shakespeare*)

Death put but *tomorrow is another day* (*Gone With the Wind*)

Legacy countdown:

My older children's marriages fall into shambles

One stays one leaves both feel

The leaden weight of cross-wired decisions
We pick people we can soothe and salvage
Who hold us hostage with slick savagery
Co-dependency is a form of malfeasance
A perennial pervasive conundrum
Stay or run inheritors of flight or fight syndrome
Death now my preoccupation humor camouflages
I go on Beckett says
Plans formulate no more dental implants
Lung or kidney or thyroid disease will recur
My eyes bluing with rapidly occluding cataracts
Easily rectified my eye doctor says
But why I wonder to see more clearly
Bleak landscape my primed canvas
Having my bridge go down the drain
Will throw me over the edge
Must be better reason for death
Vanity and toothless gum
The telltale sign end has come

NB

.....
*No idea stays pure. Even the
flowering of art isn't pure. And
the sun has spots. All geniuses
menstruate. On sorrow floats
laughter. In the heart of
roaring lurks silence.*

Gunter Grass, Dog Years

R.C.A. Root Cause Analysis*

*[a method of problem solving often used to make a medical diagnosis - Wilson, Paul F.; Dell, Larry D.; Anderson, Gaylord F. (1993). Root Cause Analysis: A Tool for Total Quality Management. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: ASQ Quality Press. pp. 8–17.]

Root Cause Analysis

Medical methodology

Witch doctors at Ouija board

My found son a fish out of water

A nocturnal animal without nighttime

A hibernating animal without winter

A transplanted boy anomalous

Indigenous pure untouched

Concoctions of immunization serum

Embed infest like spirit dancers

Startlingly at thirteen stomach swelled

Poop splattered with blood

Encyclopedic *Three Men in a Boat* diagnostic ramblings (*Jerome K. Jerome*)

Doctors circling like fire-eaters around bonfire

Flies battling wings on flypaper

Scent of citronella flies enthralled

Diagnoses rattling off like bids at stock exchange

Gamma ray probes diagnostic rave

It is: jungle fever AIDS syphilis malaria dengue parasites hookworm yellow fever

He ate a dirty apple grapes from a street vendor started with giardia:

Drinking water which is untreated or contaminated by infected feces

Eating foods such as fruit or vegetables, which have been washed in contaminated water.

Failure to wash the hands properly after visiting the toilet followed by contact with food.

Anal sex

Unrelenting limned medical groping

Rorschach blotches of readings and misgivings

Contradictions spark fireworks

Tongue hanging out panting prognosticators

As he got plied with exam upon exam

Every tool in the diagnostic box

Justifying huge expenditures

Gargantuan bites out of hospital budgets

He spiting constantly had fungus

Esophagus swelled from probing tools

Doctors flocking guilt ridden

Nearly killing him with some

Alpha ray remediation treatment

Luca pummeled jiggered by collectives

Of curious doctors groping

Touching his tommy raiding his anatomy

Dragging fingertips diagnosis by osmosis

It was a three ring medical circus

Leaping gleeful leprechauns

Shaman sorcerer voodoo dancers

There has never been such ballyhoo

Rivalries in the court of *Henry the VIII*

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark (Shakespeare, Hamlet)

What hath we sewed what tricksters spawned

To prey on patients so contemptuously so recklessly

Ignominious pursuit of a *Golden Fleece*

Played out on a boy with an disease ravishing body

Mocked jeered as he ran to bath waters for soothing

Wrath fury resisting yet another needle injection

Why and why and why he would ask nurses
Wearing pedometers to gauge number of steps taken
Why and why and why asking had him not dying
Diagnosis chasers leaving him with no upper intestine
Sepsis death throttles on operating tables
Hospice rendering while in intensive care
He never ever belonged here with us
Subject of derision observation fascination
Human specimen held captive for study
Uprooting displacement broke him
He was a wild stallion not to be tamed
Father attempted to control him
With inexplicable sensational cruelty
Fierce mother lifts in me but inept
Overpowered by husband
Schools medical profession
They got it wrong we got it wrong
Awry RCA root cause analysis
Doctors building resumes award seeking
Direct bloodline to Spanish conquistadors
Defile violate natives codify
Disease infested plundering
Month upon month of prognosticating
Pulled out his intestines
A mish mash of seeping sepsis
My son makes peace with his body
Scarred and disfigured
Evidence of survival stoma on tummy

Out of which his poop spills
Contraption captures waste
Considers stoma as if one of multiple tattoos
A mother looks at a son motherhood on trial
The vagaries and the victories
And the indomitable spirit of a found son
Probed plundered never blown asunder

NB

.....
How could you bring me into this world when you knew you wasn't ready?

Adolfo Davis, Prisoner Poet – life sentence at 15 now 38 (NY Times 4/11/15)

.....
The elimination of the insignificant --- Frank Lloyd Weight

.....
During moments of suffering people discover they are not what they appeared to be.

The suffering scours away a floor inside themselves, exposing a deeper level, and then that floor gets scoured away and another deeper level is revealed. Finally, people get down to the core wounds and the core loves.

Paul Tillich, "Shaking the Foundation"

.....
I am getting that close

To nerve root scrubbed down

I am almost there down to the core

I hear myself shouting whispering chanting:

no more no more no more...

NB

Cogent Coherent Analysis

Or vagal nerve self-pity

Adhere congeal

Veer verge

She has such a hard life

She had such a hard life

Marriage busted

Children divorcing

Sick child

She must be so lonely

Say what

She won't talk on phone

Say what say nothing

Here and again

A lunch a tea a drink

Scattershot scheduling

She broke off first

Disbanded friendships

Discarded

Refused to renew

Refresh catch up

Broke from the past

Brought none of us

Into her present life

Her future an abyss

Don't want to get stuck

Feeling sorry for her

Hard life bad life

Don't want to know

About the shifting sands

Of her life

I built the walls

The wails of solitude

Second helping motherhood

My kid sick Guaraní

Of broken body

I built the walls

They don't call

I don't talk on the phone

The ring sends me

Bird scattering at gunshot

Shut out the dither

Blather of dailiness

I built the walls

Don't call

Won't answer

I built the walls

The wails solitude

Phone rings I recoil

Write walk read

Café restaurant

Recompose a life

Note in their eyes

Old lady can't be regular

Without structure anarchy

Forgetting ambushing

Chaos ensues

I forget

Walk in fresh snow

Walking stick new snowshoes

Forgot glasses

Went to read in coffee house

At restaurant they bring bill

I ask *where can I sign*

You didn't give us your card

It is coming

End of life

Themes conditions haunt

I am lost I am lost I am lost

Don't' call

Moments of friendship

Touchstones no longer

Vagaries of loss

Most important friends gone



Ruth Gwily

Still in my arms

My young bedeviled son

His future an uncertainty
Second hand mom
You the child
Who readily listens to my stories
My found child
Greatest source of embarrassment
Agog at the father I chose for you
Oh god makes me sick
You deserved better
Could have should have
Adopted you alone
Regrets unraveled
But that one
Phobic fear of phone
Circumscribes a day
Time to pick last books
Bucket list of walks
New York New York
I built the walls
I shush the wails
Solitariness
My best accomplishment
I was afraid when a girl
I would always be alone
Solitude my heroics
Need the grit the aplomb
To diminish dim the light
To spirit away minus histrionics

The grand urgent manifest

To die by my own hand-crafted design NB

Countdown (to Death)

Looking in the mirror

Enough to want to die

Creeping toward decrepitude

Vanity or reality

Yield space

Runaway

Or to salvage

A bit of grace

Disgraceful face

Subway seats vacated for me

Right age prefer to stand

Looking in the mirror

Repulses scares

Who is that

What became of her

It is me

It is me

Need to die

Want to die

It is time

NB

The Art of Disappearing

*The moon that broke on the fencepost will not hold.
Desire will not hold. Memory will not hold.
The house you grew up in: its eaves; its attic will not hold.
The still lives and the Botticellis will not hold.
The white peaches in the bowl will not hold.
Something is always about to happen.
You get married, you change you name,
and the sun you wore like a scarf on your wrist has vanished.
It is an art, this ever more escaping grasp of things;
imperatives will not still it—no stay or wait or keep
to seize the disappeared and hold it clear, like pain.
So tell the car idling in the street to go on;
tell the skirmish of chesspieces to go on
tell the scraps of paper, the lines to go on.
It is winter: that means the blossoms are gone,
that means the days are getting shorter.
And the dark water flows endlessly on.*

—Sarah Holland-Batt

.....

Trenchant Unsparring Life Course

Cataract coated eyes
Newspaper held too close
Choke residue ink recycled paper
Body breaking down
Chronology graphs demise
I was born in 1940
In a manger of Jewish slaughter
War rationing Nazi's polio
Chunky chocolate factory
Northward Newark scented the air
Fumes from gas chambers
Smoky evanescence veiled night times
Breached the ocean in waves of despair

Chicken smothered in schmaltz soothed
Stories of *Holocaust* home baked Challah bread
Face covered
Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad
Sabbath candles flutter
Bewildered brutal nomadic displaced
Deep in kneaded flour wonder
How am I here I need to get back home
We heard in whispers
Children thrown against cinder block walls
Communal showers stacked dying bodies
Gaseous fumes exterminate already half dead Jews
I listened closely I was less than five
Prodigious mind precocious
Imagination flared asking
How did we fight back
Why didn't we run away
Eye for an eye
Became Christian *turn other cheek*
Prayerful chanting Old Testament liturgy
Prodigious mind precocious self only knee high
The scrim the flimsy scrim murmuring secrets
Shushed tales of brutality yellow stars on sleeves
Friday *Sabbath* meals tethered despairing family
A girl of five close beside a grandmother
Who held her too tight bed times
Teeth in jar of water
Braid loosely knotted down her back

Her sadness pervasive invasive
Fingers glided my curls
Softly singing *Oyfn Pripetshok* then *Shlof, Mein Kind*
I was the lamp beside the golden door (Emma Lazarus, The New Colossus)
The justification for her insufferable displacement
The diaspora charted my life
Sat at the *Sabbath* table not yet five
Beside my grandma covering her face
Chanting Sabbath prayer lighting candles
I was her rebirth I was her new earth
Now coming on seventy-five years
Bequeathed anointed thus
Stumbled lurched
Decisions elusive evasive
Grandma I came nowhere near
Fulfilling your dreams for me
Synaptic vagaries of stories told
Fearful premonitions
Of pending pogrom
Reflected a compendium
Conundrum of embattled excuses
I did not do the best I could
I stood before myself a sentry
Grandma tears soften my fall
Too much for me to live the lives
Of the family that went up in smoke
Your omnivorous desires broke me
I know you loved your Saul

With his amputated leg his diabetic body
Your daughter my mother reviled him
Regarded him with revulsion contempt
She closed out a world open to her
For fear of contact with him
He was a man who wrapped *Tefillin*
As often as he belched and spit
Grandma I never found a true love my Saul
Stories of the old world mesmerized
Held a din in my ear
Perhaps in the first wave of family
I became the most displaced person
Carrying the torch carrying the burden
Anointed steerage voices my yawl
Pastiche of longing and dread
I should have not been chosen
Your right and proper emissary
Stuck on sound bites
Heard at five of the *Holocaust*

NB

What??!! Above us only sky? John Lennon

Outliving Horror for 70 Years and Never Forgetting

At Auschwitz-Birkenau, Holocaust Survivors, Ever Dwindling in Number, Gather to Remember

By JOANNA BERENDTJAN. 27, 2015

Photo



Dignitaries and survivors gathered Tuesday to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps.

OSWIECIM, Poland — More than 3,000 guests, including Holocaust survivors and foreign dignitaries, gathered on Tuesday at a site marking one of history's biggest horrors, the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps in Poland, which were liberated by Soviet troops 70 years ago in the closing months of World War II.

Because of the survivors' advancing age, this year's ceremony at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum may be the last major anniversary celebration to include more than a handful of people who endured the Nazi camps here, where about 1.5 million people lost their lives, most of them European Jews. Some 1,500 survivors attended the 60th anniversary in 2005, but on Tuesday there were fewer than 300 on hand. Most are in their 90s, and some are older than 100.

Their dwindling numbers prompted many at the ceremony to raise the question of how best to sustain memories of the horror when they are gone, and what it means in a time of fresh outbreaks of religious and ethnic animosities.

"Today, in the name of truth, we need to fight the attempts to relativize the Shoah," President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland said as he opened the ceremony, using another term for the Holocaust. "The memory of Auschwitz means the memory of the importance of freedom, justice, tolerance and respect for human rights," he added.



Holocaust survivors on Tuesday outside the former Auschwitz concentration camp near Oswiecim, Poland.

Dozens of heads of state and other prominent figures took part in the ceremony, including the presidents of France, Germany and Austria, François Hollande, Joachim Gauck and Heinz Fischer; the kings of Belgium and the Netherlands, Philippe and Willem-Alexander; and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew represented the United States, while Russia was represented by Sergei Ivanov, President Vladimir V. Putin's chief of staff.

The anniversary takes place at a time when reports of anti-Semitism are increasing across Europe. One Jewish organization said in a recent report that the incidence of anti-Semitic acts in France had doubled over the past year.

"Jews are targeted in Europe once again because they are Jews," Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress and a major contributor to the preservation of the museum complex, said at the ceremony.

Mr. Lauder, 70, said the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, including one at a kosher supermarket, had prompted him to radically change the remarks he intended to deliver. He called on the world leaders in the audience to adopt policies of zero tolerance toward hatred of any kind. "Unless this is checked right now, it will be too late," he said.

Steven Spielberg, whose Holocaust film "Schindler's List" won seven Academy Awards, raised a similar warning in a short speech on the eve of the anniversary, saying that Jews were once again threatened by "the perennial demons of intolerance."

Speaking at a Shoah memorial in Paris before flying to Poland for the ceremony at the museum, Mr. Hollande pleaded with Jews in his country not to react by emigrating. "The place of Jews is in France," he said. "France is your homeland." He called on Internet service providers to take action against anti-Semitic comments posted online.

Mr. Gauck also gave a speech at home before traveling to Poland. He told a commemorative session of the German Parliament that "while the Holocaust will not necessarily be among the central components of German identity for everyone in our country, it will still hold true that there is no German identity without Auschwitz."

He spoke of the difficulty many Germans had over the years in acknowledging what had happened during the war. "Remembering the Holocaust remains a matter for every citizen of Germany," Mr. Gauck said. "It is part and parcel of our country's history."

For the first time, the memorial ceremony here was sheltered from the January weather, under a tent large enough to enclose the entire red brick gateway to the Auschwitz II camp, for many a symbol of the Nazi atrocities. Several survivors were among the speakers.

"The greatest debt we have today is to pass on the memory of their lives to others, their desire and will to live," Halina Birenbaum, who was at Auschwitz-Birkenau as a child, said of those who were killed at the camps. "Only in my memories, I can be with my loved ones who died here. Only in my memories, I can recognize right from wrong."

"People forget what Auschwitz was," Mr. Birenbaum said, "and that terrifies me, because I know to what kind of hell it leads."

Administrators of the museum, which includes the remaining grounds of the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps, said that the museum's mission, once focused primarily on survivors, was evolving toward memorializing the Nazi atrocities for generations born after the war.

Roman Kent, chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants, was a teenager when he was imprisoned in Auschwitz. As he spoke on Tuesday, he struggled to keep his emotions in check.

"How can I forget the smell of burning flesh that constantly filled the air?" he said in a trembling voice as tears rolled down his cheeks. "Or the heartbreak of children torn from their mothers? Those shouts of terror will ring in my ears until I am laid to rest."

The ceremony concluded with the survivors, who were awarded medals, and the assembled dignitaries placing candles in remembrance of Holocaust victims, arranged symbolically in a straight row that was called "a line under history."

Old people die within days of fracturing a hip

Catch myself in anticipation before just before

Snowy days lean on my floral wooden walking stick

It is the *just one more day*

Just need to know to find out

Culminating moments events

Elections graduation weddings illness divorce doom desperation plague

Where is the cut-off the bend the other road not taken?

NB

The Road Not Taken

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference*

Robert Frost

Not to salvage

Intervene
In the breakdown
Too many parts
To restore
Can't fix one part
Without another breaking down
I am old
It is plainly speaking
Old age
Lashed to chronology
Probabilities high
Stroke speechless
Motionless eyelids aquiver
Here lies fortuitous critique
Anticipating loss of self
Exertion of will over
Death's undignified
Tyrannies
Embroided imbroglio
Down to nub and bone
Courage and truth
Embattled
Which day when
To take matters
Into my own hands
The hot breathe of finality
Rapier rapist welcomed lover
Mind diminishes memory lapses
Hourglass runs low
My hand the cudgel
Or limp hapless
Fixed in memory
Sad difficult end
Death pulls
Gravity pitch
First to stop
Wondering
What next day will bring
The portal opens
Ready for death
Declamation reclamation
Summation
Ashes to ashes
Cremator fired up
Imagination perked
Finally death envisioned
Never a suicide
To honor a choice when a girl
To live however hobbled
Time now finally right to die

NB

.....
Did any of us know why, given all our advantages, our entitlements, our good study habits and chemically inflated self-esteem, we were still so prone to spastic fits of despair, why we sought out more and more exotic ways of getting high, why we wore Sanskrit rings and tribal tattoos, salon-styled dreadlocks and Japanese see-through raincoats? Trust a white boy to know his Bob Marley.

About Barak Obama, he has that look all the time, a kind of noble dread. He's a sacrificial king, the still center of the churning world. Call him whatever you want, but he's older than old school. He's the most primal president we've had in my lifetime.

...the long arc of orgasm, where all of our perversities are unleashed.

Food, it seems to me, and the smell of food, is the world's great consolation prize, its way of saying, things can't possibly be so bad.

How far in the future can it be when people say I don't want to be me anymore?

"Your Face in Mine" by Jess Row

.....
Hérodiade. ANCIENT OVERTURE OF HÉRODIADE

Abolished, and her frightful wing in the tears
Of the basin, abolished, that mirrors forth our fears,
The naked gods lashing the crimson space,
An Aurora—heraldic plumage—has chosen to embrace
Our cinerary tower of sacrifice,
Heavy tomb that a songbird has fled, lone caprice
Of a dawn vainly decked out in ebony plumes...
Ah, mansion this sad, fallen country assumes!
No splashing! the gloomy water, standing still,
No longer visited by snowy quill
Or fabled swan, reflects the bereaving
Of autumn extinguished by its own unleaving,
Of the swan when amidst the cold white tomb
Of its feathers, it buried its head, undone
By the pure diamond of a star, but one
Of long ago, which never even shone.

Crime! torture! ancient dawn! bright pyre!
Empurpled sky, complicit in the mire,
And stained-glass windows opening red on carnage.

Soon enough! for all is bad dream and foreboding!

On the fingernail raised in the stained glass, according
To the memory of the trumpets, the old sky burns,
And to an envious candle it turns
A finger. And soon, when the sad sun sinks,
It shall pierce through the body of wax till it shrinks!
No sunset, but the red awakening
Of the last day concluding everything
Struggles so sadly that time disappears,
The redness of apocalypse, whose tears
Fall on the child, exiled to her own proud
Heart, as the swan makes its plumage a shroud
For its eyes, the old swan, and is carried away
From the plumage of grief to the eternal highway
Of its hopes, where it looks on the diamonds divine
Of a moribund star, which never more shall shine!

BY STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ

"This Old Man, The Revelations of Age" New Yorker, 2/17 & 2/24, 2014 (Excerpts)

We elders — what kind of a handle is this, anyway, halfway between a tree and an eel? — we elders have learned a thing or two, including invisibility. Here I am in a conversation with some trusty friends — old friends but actually not all that old: they're in their sixties — and we're finishing the wine and in serious converse about global warming...or Virginia Woolf...There's a pause, and I chime in with a couple of sentences. The others look at me politely, then resume the talk exactly at the point where they've just left it. What? Hello? Didn't I just say something? Have I left the room? Have I experienced what neurologists call a TIA — a transient ischemic attack? I didn't expect to take over the chat but did await a word or two or response. Not tonight, though. (Women I know say that this began to happen to them when they passed fifty.) When I mention the phenomenon to anyone around my age, I get back nods and smiles. Yes, we're invisible. Honored, respected, even loved, but not quite worth listening to anymore. You've had your turn, Pops; now it's ours....I get along. Now and then it comes to me that I appear to have more energy and hope than some of my coevals, but I take no credit for this. I don't belong to a book club or a bridge club; I'm not taking up Mandarin or practicing the viola.

In a sporadic effort to keep my brain from moldering, I've begun to memorize shorter poems — by Auden, Donne, Ogden Nash, and more — which I recite to myself some nights while walking my dog, Harry's successor fox terrier, Andy. I've also become a blogger, and enjoy the ease and freedom of the form: it's a bit like making a paper airplane and then watching it take wing below your window. But shouldn't I have something more scholarly or complex than this put away by now — late paragraphs of accomplishments, good works, some weightier-op-cits? I'm afraid not. The thoughts of age are short, short thoughts. I don't read Scripture and cling to no life precepts, except perhaps to Walter Cronkite's rules for old men, which he did not deliver over the air: Never trust a fart. Never pass up a drink. Never ignore an erection. Getting old is the second-biggest surprise of my life, but the first, by a mile, is our unceasing need for deep attachment and intimate love. We oldies yearn daily and hourly for conversation and a renewed domesticity, for company at the movies or while visiting a museum, for someone close by in the car when coming at home at night. This is why we throng Match.com and OkCupid in such numbers — but not just for this surely. Rowing in Eden (in Emily Dickinson's words: "Rowing in Eden —/ Ah — the sea") isn't reserved for the lithe and young, the dating or the hooked-up or the just lavishly married, or even for couples in the middle-aged mixed-doubles semifinals, thank God. No personal confession or revelation impends here, but these feelings in old folks are widely treated like a raunchy secret. The invisibility factor — you've had your turn — is back at it again. But I believe that everyone in the world wants to be with someone else tonight, together in the dark, with the sweet warmth of a hip or a foot or a bare expanse of shoulder within reach. Those of us who have lost that, whatever our age, never lose the longing: just look at our faces. If it returns, we seize upon it avidly, stunned and altered again. Nothing is easy at this age, and first meetings for old lovers can be a high-risk venture. Reticence and awkwardness slip into the room. Also happiness. A wealthy old widower I knew married a nurse he met while in the hospital, but had trouble remembering her name afterward. He called her "kid." An eighty-plus, twice-

widowed lady I'd once known found still another love, a frail but vibrant Midwest professor, now close to ninety, and the pair got in two or three happy years together before he died as well. When she called his children and arranged to pick up her things at his house, she found every possession of hers lined up outside the front door. Another message — also brief, also breathtaking — came on an earlier afternoon at my longtime therapist's, at a time when I felt I'd lost almost everything. "I don't know how I'm going to get through this," I said at last. A silence, then: "Neither do I. But you will." Roger Angel

Responding to Roger Angell

I don't want to be reawakened

Awakened aroused filled with desire

I am in the business of dying

Not staying alive

Love why long for love

It only brought me pain

And troubling questions about myself

The desire crushing

"Still cruising along here feeling lucky and not yet entirely alone

"But I believe that everyone in the world

Wants to be with someone else tonight, together in the dark,

With the sweet warmth of a hip or a foot

Or a bare expanse of shoulder within reach

Those of us who have lost that, whatever our age,

Never lose the longing, just look at our faces." (Roger Angell)

No I don't long for this lying in bed

It was arduous back breaking near murderous

Clinging to the edge of the bed

While scattershot arms reached for me

Fistfuls of sheets kept me from toppling

I hated love I hated marriage I hated being touched

I am the daughter of a mother

Who struck back at passion with nightly forays

To the furnace to shove in her head

My sex starved father pulling her

Up the stairs to the mahogany bed

Love scared me

Kept me solitary

Numb to the touch unloved

Unable to respond

When the bluebird of happiness landed on my shoulder...

The Navajo identify the Mountain Bluebird as a spirit in animal form, associated with the rising sun. The Bluebird Song is sung to remind tribe members to wake at dawn and rise to greet the sun:

*Bluebird said to me,
"Get up, my grandchild.
It is dawn," it said to me.*



Zip-a-dee-doo-dah oh what a wonderful day

No longer wanting to be filled with longing

True love really never in the tealeaves

Self-pity inglorious emotion

Foolish an old face filled with longing...

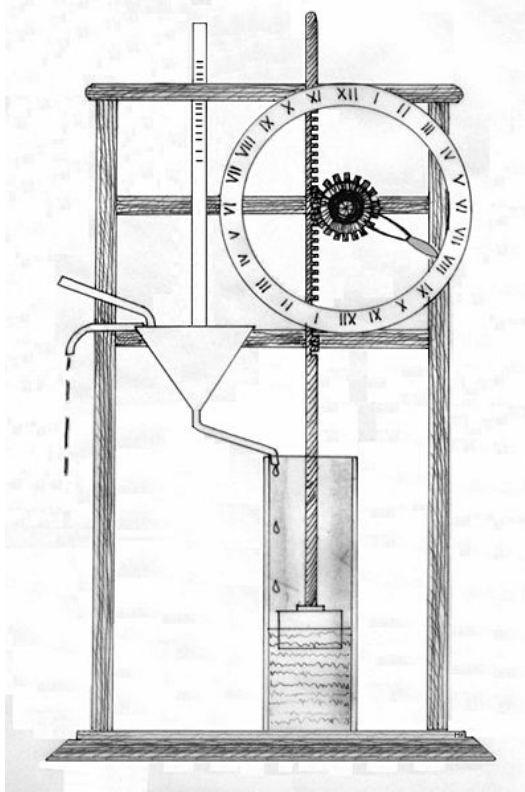
*Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
My oh my what a wonderful day
Plenty of sunshine headed my way
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
Mister blue birds on my shoulder
It's the truth
It's actual
Everything is satisfactual
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
Wonderful feeling
Wonderful Day
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay*

*My oh my what a wonderful day
Oh, plenty of sunshine headed our way
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
Mr. Bluebird's on my shoulder
It's the truth
It's actual
Everything is satisfactual
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
Wonderful feeling
Feeling this way
Mister Bluebird's on my shoulder
It is the truth
It's actual
Everything is satisfactual
Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah Zip-A-Dee-Ay
Wonderful feeling
Wonderful Day*

The stars the sky the sunrise
The *zip-a-dee-doo-dah* day
Draw my face away from the mirror
Agog, my how you have aged
You are absolutely no longer there
The you of you thought pretty
Prideful no more
I chose to live beneath
The glow of the sun
Its glare of rays harsh
Cataracts burnish near blindness
Stealth suicide propagator
Time is done for me I see
Watching the drip drop of the clepsydra...

NB

clepsydra, also called water clock, ancient device for measuring time by the gradual flow of water.



clepsydra

.....

I'm gonna cut your throat, Baby, gonna look down in your face. I'm gonna let some lonesome graveyard be your resting place. I got little bitty legs, keep up these noble thighs,

I got little bitty legs, keep up these noble thighs. Aah, keep up these noble thighs. I got something underneath, and it works like a boar hog's eye.

Skinny Leg Blues, Geeshie Wiley and L.V. Thomas, Elvie Thomas

.....

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now. Goethe

Glimpse of Heaven

Bottom step

She on her knees

Her face tilted up

She kisses him

His neck crooked

His head bent

Reaching her mouth

Again and again

She to him

He to her

And then stands up

Stylish pointed shoes

He picks up his sax

And she her backpack

And they walk off

His arm around her

Hers around him

Reaching to kiss again

Nothing stealth nothing sordid

A musician and his muse

A musician and hers

On the steps

By Lincoln Center

Across from Julliard

I have been to the mountain

I have seen love

I walk my way overcome NB

Laying on of Hands A Human Touch

Lay your healing hands

On my arching back

Expert on the wiles and ways of love

Master of the Orgone Box

Days burnt off in tatters prospectively

Banished ultimately

Exiled to a wild farmland field

In the middle of Pennsylvania

Solipsistic fucking reigned over life

The bread and water of your being

She abandoned you to your madness

Fifteen years of penance held you

Awakened Rip Van Winkle

Found computer technology

Geriatric Little Leaguer pitches baseballs

Competitive swing dancer on the over sixty circuit

Abandoning me days before my senior prom

To join the *Beat Generation* on the Santa Monica beach

Pounding out on a rented typewriter

Your mind slipping into multiple selves

My mother gave away my antebellum gown

Stuck me into strapless prickly polyester

Tinseled high-octane yellow dress

Classmate friend last minute date

Dear my first real boyfriend

We are in our mid- seventies

Life had us veering toward madness
Always unsettled dislocated
Placate indulge me if just once
Bring me to love if in a virtual Orgone Box
Awaken in me what has lay dormant undiscovered
I am not afraid to be shaken from my dormancy
Don't want to die with the bitter taste aftertaste
Of my barrenness lovelessness regret
Weighting down last and final breaths

NB

An Eye for an Eye... *"The penalty shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for ...Exodus 21:24*

To kill a guy or woman with a gun in the rain the bullet picks up speed. Wait scratch that. It's in any kind of weather. You shoot the bullet and it picks up speed from the gun. It zooms through your skull but your skull is hard it can't get to your mind. But you fall down because it shot your head so you fall down and you're dead because of lots of gushing blood. Your mind still goes on I learned that from clone wars but I got those words gushing blood from you mommy. I pick up little things from everywhere.

That's his quote. From grandson, Owen Hart, Age 5

.....

Right now, I'm lost in a transition. *The old is dead, and I don't know what the new is. The only way to find the new is to start different things and see if there's something that can come out of experimentation. It's somewhat unsettling, but it's a hopeful thing in a way. I've been here before, lots of times.*

David Lynch, filmmaker, artist -NY Times 8/31/14

.....

"Ernest (Hemingway) had, by default, to be shared." *Mary Hemingway reflects in Idaho in 1961, soon after his death. "The thing was not to be heartbroken about it."*

Quote from, Mrs. Hemingway, by Naomi Wood

.....

At one point Isherwood *suspects Bachardy of being "franker than I am. Is that because you can afford to be? Am I scared of you? Yes, in a way. But I really almost wish I could be scared. How can I explain that?"*

The Animals, Love Letters Between Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy

Edited by Katherine Bucknell

Craving the Normal the Ordinary

Auschwitz tipped titillated

Days dappled with ruin

Sauntered into a normal a *good guy*

Leaned in to hear

How his father kept the door ajar

Sitting on the toilet

Perusing the *National Inquirer*

Pants around his ankles

Intermittently chatting

With his children

He was a butcher, a butcher

The man in full-bodied blood splattered apron

Behind the supermarket meat counter

Thrilled entranced by the ordinariness

Catnip to a *holocaust* riven imagination

Captivated meeting his mother

Waiting our table off the books

In an Italian local Bronx restaurant

Alternate Sundays catapulted

Mother longing for children

Custodial grip of divorce settlement

Piece de resistance captured

His family ate pasta with *gravy*

Every Sunday at precisely three

Talking about the *gravy*

Talking about which doctors

They had seen during the past week

Nana at the head of the table
Bodies bombarded with ailments
The gravy fumes swamped acuity
Family secrets in swirl and spin
Forkfuls of pasta soothed silenced
Over the river, and through the wood,
To Grandmother's house we go (Lydia Maria Child)
Left Manhattan crossing the Harlem River
Leapfrogging the Bronx to Naples and Sicily
Gored open his father's infidelities
His mother's electroshock treatments
Her lifelong dependence on anti-depressants
Alternate Sunday afternoons
Aproned festooned to a family meal
I married the man the butcher's son
Backlash whiplash from first husband
Pretender to *Rousseau Plato Ibsen and Mailer*
Married the regular guy from the Bronx
And just beneath his ordinariness ornery ambition
He was no *salt of the earth*
He was Jew baiting *Zelig* imposter monster
Son of Sicily still *wet behind the ears*
A behemoth self-invented Leviathan
Pretender to *Foucault de Sade Derrida Henry Miller*
Ultimate destiny kingpin pantheon
Ordinary gripped swoon befell
His rapacious desire for me occult
Pimped curmudgeonly fucks offered as treats

Deliverables shifted title amplified
Zealous seeking reparation
Wrong sprouting a butcher's son
Token anime for his divine invention
Step toe Jew pogrom motivation and excuse
He the wolf at my door
My legs sprung open it was rape
Family read the *National Inquirer*
Feudal destiny transposed transplanted
I was a Jew of books music art
Sexuality dimmed suppressed
Replaced by the heavenly *canon*
Sartre Thomas Mann Beethoven Picasso El Greco
Randomness the chaotic the unimaginable
Raptor *Holocaust* mediated by *Bach*
Butcher's family stuck in old world soil
Screeds sacred and profane held to whispers
Contortions of imbalance found respite
At their Sunday table I the outsider to mistrust
Dragooning bamboozling their favored son
Stealing him from Sunday pasta
Dragging him off to be with *fancy people (their words)*
They were right to fear his vacated chair
I was the Jew who took him across the River
I the vessel he the oarsman
Where the origins of the animus festering
A son's ambition unruly mean-spirited evil
Trespasser to make biblical scholars cringe

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (King James)

My bitterness festers leaks seeps septic

Tangled in regrets remorse

Forgiveness dropped metaphor

Trespasser quark genetic anomaly

Unruly ambition dead-ended with me

Satiated fled *Batman* cape soaring off

Aborting cockeyed cockamamie relationship

Leaving me breathless depleted debilitated

Bitter angry upheaval reverberates aftershock

I was the outsider at the butcher's table

Wary suspicious finding me dangerous

The butcher's family equally displaced

Tainted tormented as this Jew

Whiffing fumes of *Holocaust*

Refusing to find a day free

Fear impending disaster doom

Traumatized wife butcher's blood splattered apron

Decoding new world on pages of the *National Inquirer*



Jewish girl's family touchstone *Guernica*

Standing for hours my mother and me

Before *Picasso's Guernica* at MOMA



Images blanket young girl's unconsciousness

Mother gasps breathing irregularly

Digging deeply into daughter's hand

Daughter obsessively mines

For relief alternative images experiences

The butcher's family my Italian Rockwell's

Swept up by regular guy laying me in field

In gospel trance raped and sanitized

The knight advancing his sword

His prick stiff and soaring

Old world Jewish beauty succumbed

Fucked just once and then came

Demands for the liturgical ritualistic *Offering*

NB

To be in love is to recollect separation anxiety. Clancy Martin, author of Love and Lies

.....

But I'm beyond that: it makes no difference to me. These words are his cremation, I've already watched him burn.

Deepti Kapoor, author, A bad Character

Guernica- Summer and Smoke by Tennessee Williams

Saturdays in Greenwich Village or at MOMA with my mother

Prematurely caste before images dialogue

My imagination infiltrated

By what could not be understood

Scarred fractured subliminally

I lived on a battled field

Of raw raucous repulsive image

Prematurely preternaturally exposed

Precociously damaged

Before I was ten I stood fixed before *Guernica*

Sat ringside at Circle in the Square

Audience for Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*

The heathen blessed the blessed blasphemed

Solace to come from a kindred soul

Someone perpetually raw

Kinship without fearing the onerous

I fell in love with Karmalee

I was eighteen

She committed suicide a decade later

Letters postmarked

Just before her death

We spoke of *Medea Camus*

We spoke of art of poetry

Of dreams

Lying close though not touching

In an Ohio wheat filled farm field

Her letters told of loving me

Dreams of tender passion
Emotions long suppressed
Guernica, Summer and Smoke
Twisted aberrant fate
Karmalee I didn't know me then
Love as expansive and unwieldy
Feelings cropped innocence lost
Unwieldy premature experiences with art
Feelings were there for you
If only you had touched first
My heart would have burst flooded open
Never not in Sappho not in any love poem
Would have captured the love I felt for you
Fear relinquished you and I moving
With shafts of wheat in the breeze embraced field

NB

What I leave behind unanswered unknown

Who Sophie will marry

Why does she blush when talking about getting her period

Will Owen fight back from the dragon fire breath of his father

When will Jeremy come to know

That his wife and mother of Hudson, Daisy, and Upton

Has the stunning characteristics of a *sociopath*

Will Willa become a soccer star or a political activist

Will Daisy conquer her need to be sick to please her mother

Will Upton just keep his back turned on it all

Will Hudson find a way to live in this world

Will Jeremy find true love again

Having the courage to open his heart and commit

Will Rebecca fade into a mutual alcoholic haze

And call it love or will love move beyond the sip of wine

Will Luca decide to stay around

If with a body so betraying him

Will Rebecca and Jeremy honor my *Will*

Will I have the grace to die

By my own hand and not in my own bed

Rather near the ocean's sublime turbulence

Still mostly intact just plain old

Moments before the ebb to see it all clearly

Unembellished by regret remorse edits deletes

I was as I was

Knowing the better way contrarily

Walking always where my feet were placed

NB

We Will No Longer Stay Silent to The Classism

We will no longer stay silent to this classism. No more brownstones and brown skin playing tug-of-war with a pregnant air hovering over them like an aura of lost children. No more colored boy robbed of their innocence. This city always will be the foundation of this country. We are root. We are backbone. We brown, we black, we yellow, we white, we young, we collage of creatures stomping to be reminded of the mammal inside of us. We chance, we deserve, us opportunity, us new mayor, us new beginning, like dancing cocoons, us hope, us fight, us happen, us love, us some good human, us happy, we happy, we happy with change. It is a constant baptism to remind us of our holy. We welcome, we family, we congratulate Mayor Bill de Blasio. We are so very honored and pleased to have you. And the congregation says: 50 years CROWD: Amen!

By Ramya Ramana, 17, New York Youth Poet Laureate Read at Mayor de Blasio's Inauguration 2014

.....
...africanmemorywhisper

blowing

the blown the known

what we knew

what we blew

blues loves us

our spirit is ultraviolet

.....
to have been together

and known you, and despite our pain

to have grasped much of what joy exists

accompanied by the ring and peal of your

romantic laughter

is what it was about, really. Life.

Loving someone, and struggling.

Amiri Baraka, SOS, Poems 1861-2012
.....

What differentiates us from animals is our capacity to restrain ourselves.

Damian Szifron, Argentinian Director and Screenwriter

.....
Flying to India to scatter his father's ashes on the Ganges, Dr. Gawande asks the question that underlies his inquiry: *How can dying ever be acceptable? He gives an answer, but the final shot of him sitting alone on the banks of the river tells its own story.*

Dr. Atul Gawande, Being Mortal film

.....
And that is exactly precisely why

I have to take matters into my own hands

Terminal mindset life long desire

To pull away quicksilver flight

Solitary face to the wind

It has become time to confront death

Reluctant embattled

Longing still to make life right

Forsaking what did not get lived

Unfathomable creature death

The end is in the beginning and yet you go on. (Samuel Beckett, Endgame)

Was I ever completely alive?

Time to snatch from possibility

What never was and end it

Confounding perplexing flummoxed

How can I the I of me

Lay there still and solemn

Surrounded by my children

Sad eyes dripping tears

Fearing what will remain unsaid

Dead they can make of me what they will

God in whom I don't believe
Have to find unsullied determination
To take my own life
Short circuiting debilitating malady
My most uncompromised moment
To radically close my eyes
Taking myself from the force of time
And the stubborn inclination
To believe life can just go on and on and on

NB

.....
Violent death - Robin Williams how good did it feel to slash away at your wrists strangle yourself with a strong genuine leather belt swinging from a the hinges of an ordinary closet door? Violence was your final placating. Strangling yourself cut off your voice your incredible well spring of words. Monologues coming from some other place else from heaven from time from beyond imagination an insane creativity jarring sparking nerve endings. To think how best to end this cut off its flow. Self-inflicted violence became your way to find comfort to put an end to the torment to express the rage you felt interpreter of your inner demon. Resorting in the end to a vile and repellent act your audience recoiling finally to subdue end the devilish romp hell raising imps relentlessly wreaking havoc within. The measure of the agony a belt tightening wrists throbbing choking curdling sputum burbling mouth falling limp and then a body rigid with lifelessness left to be found swinging from a door hinge how ordinary how fantastical how gory. In the end you blended songs within a hymnal choking off at the source. Was this a mad moment to bring relief or a quest finally manifest?

At the time when my body was yet ripe for motherhood yearning often heatedly for babies to come from my body a counter voice hummed just below the surface urging me to take a sharpened butcher knife and plunge it directly into my uterus over and over and over. My desire for motherhood deep in a quicksand of confusion and turmoil reviled bedeviled by the very thought that I perhaps I might be a mother. Free floating entangled images of munificent motherhood as depicted by artist Mary Cassatt or evil wretched menacing motherhood tethered to trenchant images of the wicked witch in the *Wizard of Oz* or the hag in Hansel and Gretel plunging babies into a boiling burbling brew. Rife with literary and art symbols my turmoil contorting eviscerating lacerating deftly enticing invigorating. Children live at the foot of a tantric mountain helpless longing swept along by the tidal wave of whatever whomever names herself mother. It is that curious confounding fate for which I wielded the thick devil menacing knife an uprising within ancient chorus of devilment urging me on and yet and yet when my first baby came into my arms minutes old still wet with birth goo and blood a surge of love flowed through me original earthbound innocent as a first spring bloom or wobble of a colt the miracle of birth startling.

NB

Miasmatic metastasizing blaspheming Jew nearly driven demonically to slaughter a uterus and that guided by the unrelenting hand of Jewish mother –

NB

“Round about the caldron go;
In the poison’d entrails throw.—
Toad, that under cold stone,
Days and nights has thirty-one;
Swelter’d venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i’ the charmed pot!
ALL. *Double, double toil and trouble;*
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.
2 WITCH. *Fillet of a fenny snake,*
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder’s fork, and blind-worm’s sting,
Lizard’s leg, and owlet’s wing,—
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
ALL. *Double, double toil and trouble;*
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.
3 WITCH. *Scale of dragon; tooth of wolf;*
Witches’ mummy; maw and gulf
Of the ravin’d salt-sea shark;
Root of hemlock digg’d i the dark;
Liver of blaspheming Jew;
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Sliver’d in the moon’s eclipse;
Nose of Turk, and Tartar’s lips;
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver’d by a drab,—
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger’s chaudron,
For the ingrediants of our caldron.
ALL. *Double, double toil and trouble;*
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.
2 WITCH. *Cool it with a baboon’s blood,*
Then the charm is firm and good.”

Macbeth, Shakespeare

I learned not to look away at the moment when I should be paying the most attention. The closer I got to the heart of a scene, to the really difficult material to write, the emotionally challenging stuff or the exchange in which the conflict is made most explicit, the more I’d look for a way out of writing it. This was out of fear, obviously, because you don’t want to run up against your limitations in craft, intelligence or heart. It’s much easier to duck the really vital material, but it kills what you’re writing to do so, kills it instantly.

A conversation that dwells only in what hasn’t been accomplished and doesn’t try to see what is fighting toward the surface for breath is an impoverished conversation indeed.

Mathew Thomas author We Are Not Ourselves

Burnt Norton

I

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
 But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.*

*Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.*

IV

*Time and the bell have buried the day,
the black cloud carries the sun away.
Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis
Stray down, bend to us; tendrils and spray
Clutch and cling?
Chill
Fingers of yew be curled
Down on us? After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.*

*Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in the time future,

And time future contained in time past*

T.S. Eliot

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

Requiem for a Nun William Faulkner

Tell me something and then take it back.

...the dead in their sheer open parenthesis

There's no way back believe me. I'm writing you from there.

Jorie Graham, From the New World

An Autodidacts Death

No time *White Rabbit (Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll)* to say goodbye to tell of regrets. Time now is for me to enter my schoolhouse door, the Internet. *I'm late, I'm late. For a very important date. No time to say hello. Goodbye. I'm late, I'm late, I'm late.* So sayeth the *White Rabbit* so sayeth me.

Numbness kept me dumb unschooled running on hyperbole now out of the public eye curiosity commands my time. I stayed so ignorant so unschooled so temperamentally ill equipped to learn love or to know the words in a book. Anticipating next moves kept me agile fragile shut down unseen unseemly sad figure unable to open to flower even the sun filtered through scrim and fear backed up by vapor nothing of substance. Now I gorge I drop fall into the rabbit hole the Internet and questions come pouring out stumbling on each other too much to ask multiple versions of answers in easy reach with a click of fingers I have found my endless fount of all knowledge. Greedy voracious making random connections reckless in my inquiry it will lead to where it leads until I am exhausted tired out eyes ache pulsing through the pervasive veil of cataract. Still impatience and the clapboard closing door of fear tire me too readily diligence falters I am unable to sustain the pursuit of a word a context a perspective the boundlessness of the Internet startles disconcerts. Never before have I been so open so free-wielding so unencumbered. Never before so unafraid to know more and more of an unspecific pursuit set off jiggled into a query. Exhaustion tired eyes and frayed nerves clicks off the computer the search for whatever abruptly ending. Inhabiting streaming music as I pursue an inquiry a CD playing on my new Bose unfamiliar composers singers fill the room freeing me to wonder move away from solitude and numbness from being sequestered sealed off remote and resigned. Legions of what I didn't know and of what I had never heard catch up with me for once for once I live in the moment fully present fully alive even as my body is in rapid decline.

And so a woman so cut off so unschooled passing as someone generically knowledgeable submits to following circuitous routes circuits into my own self-devised *Book of Knowledge*. At seventy I stopped working informed my children I no longer am a whatever I was as a professional now am a grandma and writer. Did not know declaring thus that I was to become an autodidact of which perhaps I am most proud. To end life with a wellspring of if unrelated facts and numbers I have come back to the land of doing *Nothing* releasing myself from the aggravated feeling of the exquisite sadness as I rushed into the arms of men who were so limited so much like me so fractured and migratory. The autodidact me would have welcomed a man to challenge me seeing how little I knew forcing me to shed being facile to stop being afraid and numb opening my senses without censoring or instilling fear

encouraging me to embrace what is to be learned if to feel the unquiet of the library so many books never to read. I would have let myself fall in love with idiosyncratic Mark K with his gloved hands always so cold his nervous energy confronting his dislocation studying texts discerning locating the source of his ultimate personal disarray his orthodox Jewish childhood as if a compressor on his life force. I too a child lost to holocaust my mother's torment mine fixed symbiotic her family's diaspora my ultimate stultifying fate. I would have loved you Mark K and moved beyond my fear of your probe your prophecy unexamined I lived your script forewarned and ignored. Flowering autodidact lives as if I really am soon to die wanting to be dead so much of the time I lived longing for nothingness time squandered fretted away but not today not on this mid-August summer day.

When I read the concluding pages of *The House at Pooh Corner* by A.A. Milne to Jeremy and Rebecca I could not hold back my tears. Christopher Robin informs Pooh that he has to now move into the house of numbers and geography and therefore won't be spending as much time with him doing *Nothing* in the place of *Nowhere*. It is that house I enter now. But for me it is a place of renewal a place to recapture my innocence to regain feeling in my fingers to wrangle with my, if times, resistant mind. Knowing truly I am on my way to dying feeling alert vivid vibrant as a vase of Matisse flowers.

"Promise me you'll always remember: You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." "Then, suddenly again, Christopher Robin, who was still looking at the world, with his chin in his hand, called out "Pooh!" "Yes?" said Pooh. "When I'm--when--Pooh!" "Yes, Christopher Robin?" "I'm not going to do Nothing any more." "Never again?" "Well, not so much. They don't let you." Pooh waited for him to go on, but he was silent again. "Yes, Christopher Robin?" said Pooh helpfully. "Pooh, when I'm--you know--when I'm not doing Nothing, will you come up here sometimes?" "Just me?" "Yes, Pooh." "Will you be here too?" "Yes Pooh, I will be really. I promise I will be Pooh." "That's good," said Pooh. "Pooh, promise you won't forget about me, ever. Not even when I'm a hundred." Pooh thought for a little. "How old shall I be then?" "Ninety-nine." Pooh nodded. "I promise," he said. Still with his eyes on the world Christopher Robin put out a hand and felt Pooh's paw. "Pooh," said Christopher Robin earnestly, "if I--if I'm not quite--" he stopped and tried again-- "Pooh, whatever happens, you will understand, won't you?" "Understand what?" "Oh, nothing." He laughed and jumped to his feet. "Come on!" "Where?" said Pooh. "Anywhere." said Christopher Robin.

So, they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing."

*"...But what I like doing best is **Nothing**." "How do you do **Nothing**?" asked Pooh, after he had wondered for a long time. "Well, it's when people call out at you just as you're going off to do it, What are you going to do Christopher Robin, and you say, Oh, nothing, and you go and do it." "Oh, I see," said Pooh. "This is a nothing sort of thing that we're doing right now." "Oh, I see," said Pooh again. "It means just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear and not bothering." "Oh!" said Pooh."*

– A.A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*

Now to stuff myself sick silly with anything that finds its way to my clicking fingers. And in the ensuing moments days hour's left to me to know finally what was possible in the world just outside me. I have become the girl Mark K could have loved. Mark died of Lou Gehrig's disease held by his wife and son. He found love. I've stepped from the girl shadowy and elusive he warned me about. Mark and I we left Newark's tortuous arduous streets read Philip Roth's original texts for authentication. Knowing how encumbered our past I yield move beyond torment shame feet planting firmly in my sacred space my shack my room my fingers still able to click move and soon will go for a walk sit by the Hudson River and read my book and if for moments look across the River and remember you.

NB

Dying

Dying not from despair not from desperation not from exhaustion not from a jaundiced look at the past represented as a wide array of colors variegated shadings no longer to dispute deny disregard. Reaching the point of how much more to question to know to tolerate knowing without falling into despair self-pity bitterness and regret. Quicksilver leaving precipitously impatience fear quickened my steps when I should have stayed in place having a forceful hand in shaping an ending. Lens narrows vivid colors become pastels shadings blur images in this retrospective review of my past fuzzier and elliptically distant and distorted. Standing nearly still if on wobbling legs uncertain footing wanting not again to escape cut short run rather to create an ending a death most natural. A death least histrionic least brow beating less hysteria provoking offspring wiping away piss and drool as a form of epic penance. Desire to find the end before the end finds me more intact more discrete more graceful. To shape a death that does not rage but as the waters gently lap against the banks of *Innisfree* so I drift off to a final sleep one in which my children are not filled with wretched grief if sad and justifiably relieved.

NB

Lake Isle of Innisfree

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

– W.B. Yeats

"It's because I'm alone. If I could just feel it, it would be different, because I would not be alone. But if I were not alone, everybody would know it. And he could do so much for me, and then I would not be alone. Then I could be all right alone.

William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying

There was not a day when my mother whether on the phone or in person would not upbraid her mother. The malevolence was vital and wretched. I watched sickened frightened and confused. Life long my mother never had a rapprochement never said I'm sorry never had gentle moment of remorseful exchange. My grandmother died filled only with love for her stormy berating daughter my mother.

When my mother was dying in final moments she called out over and over again for her mother, *Mother be with me* she said her incantations from deep in her unconscious being. She felt safe with her mother her mother asked to cradle her death.

My grandmother's abiding unconditional love never waived never a cringe or grimace. Grandma just looked on with a love that transcended words. Love depicted in Kathe Kollwitz's art a mother clutching her children to her no matter the circumstance the encounter. My grandmother born of the same soil as the artist held onto her six children the fumes of extermination filling her nostrils the horror of *Holocaust* family deaths never leaving her heart or her mind. Perhaps she understood that her tantrum throwing stormy daughter harbored the seed of murderous destruction and resurrection all tangled up the embodiment of family agony if once removed from the treachery of *Jewish Holocaust*.

Wondering at this time what kind of mother I was past tense? For me motherhood provided a clearing in a life most of which spent stuck in a labyrinthine of petrified trees? I wanted to be like my mother's mother her love unswerving unconditional. How will I be perceived remembered? It rests with my children if anticipated to remain unknown. Reflections of their childhood are forming ranging from harsh to silly from morose to jubilant.

Decade after the death of my mother twirling like my chandelier tier in morning sunrise a day brings with it a new version of our life together. Still wait for the daily phone call the grand inquisition to follow the lives of all who were blood relatives a running commentary on each piece of information. Recalling her acute bouts of mental illness untreated still send a chill a shudder as I watched her beat her head ranting in tongues violently tossing her body about frightening woman who was said to be my mother. My father's reverence for her unhinged us leaving my brother and me feeling so vulnerable so unprotected so confused. Our father who we were led to worship watched her squirm with turmoil attempting to retrieve her calm her regard us accusingly asking *what did you do to so upset her?*

Mostly thinking about her I am left with sadness at how a mother and daughter went so wrong. Being a mother was unbearable for her endlessly punishing herself for her destructive behavior her assaults an endless barrage of disparaging and hateful words. It is only now I understand she couldn't help herself and that she hated herself for violating the bond with her children she wanted it to be sacred and abiding. When she was about fifty she started creating marble sculptures without power tools of mothers embracing children executing her own dramatic versions of Kathe Kollwitz whom she admired.

Looking these sculptures is to feel raw with her agony and her claim on forgiveness. We never had a moment of grace until near the end just before she called for her mother she let me get close enough to change her *Depends*, hold a cool damp cloth against her forehead, clean her eye glasses although she could no longer see holding onto my hand just before she started calling out *Momma Momma be with me*. Here we were a mother and a daughter death bringing us our best good ending. Repulsed to have her brush against my shoulder hold onto my arm when walking still now feel her cooling drying hand clutching mine my fingers holding on tight a surge of love crossing inextricably the bonds of a broken love repairing. NB



Kathe Kollwitz

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Marshall Berman, an author, academic, philosopher and lyrical defender of: *modernism, Karl Marx and his native New York City*, died on Wednesday in Manhattan. He was 72. *"Something is happening that I never could have imagined: a metropolitan life with a level of dread that is subsiding,"* he wrote in an introductory essay to the 2007 book *"New York Calling: From Blackout to Bloomberg,"* which he edited with Brian Berger. *"Some people say they're worried that a life without dread will lose its savor. I tell my students and people I know not to worry. If they just scrutinize their lives, they will find grounds for more than enough dread to keep them awake. While they're up, they should seize the day and take a midnight walk. Being modern is being new, whether we like it or not."*

Mr. Leonard wrote, summarizing his assessment of Dr. Berman's argument. "He likes it, Mr. Berman. Seize the day and change the world. Modernism is a permanent revolution, full of radical sunrise and great dawn. We synthesize ourselves, without tears. The tragic irony of Modernist urbanism," he wrote, *"is that its triumph has helped to destroy the very urban life it hoped to set free."*

Marshall Berman's belly lobbed over his pant buckle his hair beyond tangled disheveled his head perpendicular to the street when he walked his eyes cast down his clothes fell about him awkwardly as if off a rack at Goodwill just grabbed and put on. He was both feared and revered by students. If you were Jewish from an observant home you hardly noticed his oddity his disheveled appearance. Other students tried to look beyond his dishevelment and hear his, always provocative, lectures. And then there were the students like my ex-husband who strayed from Italian ghettoized Bronx graduate of mediocre catholic schools who sat in his class sprouting hives short of breath near to panicking ears filled with static.

While a student of Professor Berman he abhorred him he revered him he was repulsed felt disabused by this luminary at City College. This unnerved waif from the Bronx freshly pressed levis never missed a lecture, limply heading home the distance infinite the ultimate cost a craven obsession to best him to get his own Ph.D. in philosophy from the Ivy, Columbia University. The seethe eating away the man ultimately emptied of anything authentic shouldering a crater like chip on his shoulder of what he believed life owed him including my scalp, which I freely gave.

If deep inside I knew he was dangerous a hunter for bounty a woman to lead him from his ignominy to his rightful place. Admittedly he was sort of cute in a narrow face Frank Sinatra kind of way and he could croon and he could fuck and he was a choir boy who read books waiting to be called to accompany the priest about to recite the homily the other choristers playing dominoes or cards. To

think I chose him to be my husband. I was the Jew upon whom he dumped all of his fury his frustration flagrantly constantly abusing. I was the target Marshall Berman. I should know better seen it coming. Terminal task forgiving my once so forlorn self for promising to love a man who never was really there an empty suit an interloper a poseur a cipher my own Woody Allenesque, *Zelig*.

If I had studied *Talmud* would I have fallen to such fate? Jews keep being pummeled scattered *Pogromed* exterminated and find a way to go on. Think it is not to forgive but to chant **NEVER AGAIN!** Too late to begin again my imagination now to make peace to contrive threads of salutatory moments to remember to extoll I refuse to die regretful lost defeated. Not to quiver *I did the best that I could* no never rather this was the life that I had that I lived and there is and will be no other.

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I played the game as hard as I could. I feel like I milked every ounce of talent out of this body that God gave me. I was never a hard thrower, I never felt that I had great stuff. I wasn't able to strike out a lot of guys. I just felt like I gritted and willed myself through games.

Andy Pettitte, Reflecting on Retiring, NY Yankees – NY Times

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"I get the ball. I throw the ball, and then I take a shower."

Mariano Rivera NY Yankee

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Mariano Rivera understood what Steve Jobs, Lao Tzu and Bruce Lee understood: that simplicity is an art and a strength, a source of joy and beauty and power - a Zen Master With a Mean Cutter.

Michiko Kakutani NY Times 9/29.13

The trouble with you, Joyce, is you love the world. J.D. Salinger (*Cather in the Rye*) to Joyce Maynard, writer lover of J.D.Salinger. What is left is a kind of theatrical pride, the necessary performance of will.

David Remnick, *New Yorker*, *City of the Lost*

The man who stepped out for a paper and never came back lives inside us all. When You Said No, Did You Mean Never?

Fani Papageorgiuo

If it sounds like writing, rewrite it.

Elmore Leonard, author

The blues is not the creation of a crushed-spirited people. It is the product of a forward-looking, upward-striving people.

At home I use a four-pronged aluminum stick to get around. I need a stroller when I'm on the street. At receptions and in airports I need a wheelchair to get down the long aisles.

But nothing hurts quite like the loss of old friends. There are ways to cope at the time they die. But weeks and months later you realize you can't phone them and talk: Duke Ellington, Romare Bearden, Ralph Ellison, Alfred Kazin, Robert Penn Warren, Joseph Mitchell. It's hard to believe they're all gone.

Albert Murray, Author and Civil Rights Activist

...good day my brother one day at a time ride the wave my brother

Overheard on an uptown number 3 bus

yes, ride the wave -

nb

How I wish I had been ready for the betrothal when Eric asked me to marry him on his return from Burma. It took me literally years to realize that we are all imperfect creatures, but that Eric was less imperfect than anyone else I ever met.

Jacintha Buddicom, referring to George Orwell whom knew as Eric Blair

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I liked what I saw as its modesty, its tentativeness and its otherworldliness. (Heaven was blue, wasn't it?) I liked that it was furnished with the idea of things, rather than actual things. I liked its semi-emptiness. I liked that it had stories not yet told. There was room for a writer-to-be in there.

Holland Cotter, Art Critique NY Times, discussing, Matisse's 1913 "Blue Window."

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The language soars in complicated trills, but in the end it becomes clear that no secrets are being told.

Paul Zweig's critique of John Hollander, Poet.

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"Sex will never be simple or nice in the ways we might like it to be, he observed. It is not fundamentally democratic or kind; it is bound up with cruelty, transgression and the desire for subjugation and humiliation. It refuses to sit neatly on top of love, as it should."

Alain de Botton, "How to Think More About Sex"

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I've become a bit more – reckless, maybe, she said in 1998. I'm getting to the point where I can smash down a chord and not know what it's going to be, and make it work.

Marian McPartland, Jazz Pianist at 80

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...to try to make clearings of sense and discipline and style in the untamed, unsilenced darkness was to mistake morbidity for inspiration.

A. Alvarez 1980 Review of Seamus Heaney's "Field Work"

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What follows: Seamus Heaney writes...

Whatever You Say, Say Nothing

*Is there a life before death? That's chalked up
In Ballymurphy. Competence with pain,
Coherent miseries, a bite and sup,
We hug our little destiny again.*

What is the source of our first suffering? (Gaston Bachelard, French Philosopher) –

“It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak. If I could make poetry that could touch into that kind of thing, that is what I would like to do” – stoking his resolve to pursue “the silent things within us.”

Gleaning the unsaid off the palpable

Of this group, Heaney came to admire Lowell and to separate him from the others. In Heaney's 1978 review for The Irish Times of Lowell's last collection, Day by Day, Heaney (by then renowned himself) wrote: “Lowell's bravery was different from the bravery of John Berryman or Sylvia Plath, with whom his name has often been joined. They swam away powerfully into the dark swirls of the unconscious and the drift towards death, but Lowell resisted that, held fast to conscience and pushed deliberately towards self-mastery”

“Had I Not Been Awake”

*Had I not been awake I would have missed it,
A wind that rise and whirled until the roof
Pattered with quick leaves off the sycamore*

*And got me up, the whole of me a-patter,
Alive and ticking like an electric fence:
Had I not been awake I would have missed it,*

*It came and went so unexpectedly
And almost it seemed dangerously,
Returning like an animal to the house,*

*A courier blast that there and then
Lapsed ordinary. But not ever after.*

And not now.

*The hiding-places of my power
Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,*

May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
While yet we may, as far as words can give,
A substance and a life to what I feel:
I would enshrine the spirit of the past
For future restoration.

Song

A rowan like a lipsticked girl.
Between the by-road and the main road
Alder trees at a wet and dripping distance
Stand off among the rushes.

There are the mud-flowers of dialect
And the immortelles of perfect pitch
And that moment when the bird sings very close
To the music of what happens.

The way we are living

Timorous or bold

Will have been our life

Seamus Heaney

The solitude suits him. *"I live in faint dread of people coming to find me," he said.*

David Mitchell, author, *The Bone Clocks* (Cloud Atlas)

College's mission: *It is for developing the muscle of thoughtfulness, the use of which will be the greatest pleasure in life and will also show what it means to be fully human. Anne Hall, Professor University of Pennsylvania*

NY Times column Frank Bruni 2/18/15

Her eyes are milky and blue because of her cataracts. And when she turns them inward, it's like she's moving into another world that's frozen deep inside ice. Jiko calls her cataract kuuge, which means "flowers of emptiness." I think that's beautiful. (kuge – "emptiness or sky flowers; an idiom for cataracts...The phrase sky flowers refers to the clouding of vision from cataracts, but in traditional Buddhist teaching, flowers in the sky refers to delusion brought on by a person's karmic obstructions. ..."flowers of emptiness" in other words, an enlightened state. All things in the world are the cosmic flowering of emptiness.) (p. 97)

final poem on Jiko's deathbed

To live

For now

For the time being

Ruth Ozeki, A Tale for the Time Being

Started in earnest with the "Blue Flowerets of Emptiness" (Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*)

Life drains from me

I can feel its flow

It just goes and goes

Contrite but true

I sit on a cloud

In review in reverie

Random moments

Gathering up

Fragmented memory

Without time sequence

Themes emerge

Still to purge

Hate and rage

Still to embrace

The beauty the goodness

But it flows out

Unstoppable now

I just go out of myself
Lose appetite
Impulses to explore
Something or other
Falter need to be urged on
Wishes desire curbed
Banished
Thoughts plans
For a next day
Still today
A day to memorialize
With a walk a book a thought
Not completely tired out
Just have had enough
Just to let life flow away
Don't want too many more days
In which to watch myself
Lose hope energy drive
Lose my will my nerve
Dreams vivid as movies
Moorings mornings
Lose ebb nerve verve
Dreams banished vanquished
With the last star to disappear
I have come to my own roadside
I have come to a stop
I have come to an end
Foisting forcing facing

Sunrises sunsets beautiful flowers
It is late August Sunday
A glistening moment
Listening to *Jobim* in the park
A summer Sunday jazz concert
The willow tree twirling
As if enthralled with the beat
Near me three young girls
And their teenage brother call
Dad Dad Daddy to one of the musicians
I was a young girl
Dancing in dusk's shadows
My father in his white tuxedo jacket
Conducting Newark's summer wartime pops
I said his name whispering
My mother's sourness curdling
As he gracefully moved his baton
His fingers for pianissimo to his lips
Being among *the neighborhood people*
Was excruciating for her
As if feigned royalty consenting
To sit on a folding chair
Among and with the masses
To have heard me call out *Dad Daddy*
Would have brought on
Stormy repercussions
Both of us my father and I locked
In her raging contempt

As life drains still find
Collected moments
The sun's sheen on the Meer
A duck swishing around
In the thick pea green algae
Coming alive a spark of me
Yet half-time walked off
To buy myself some delicacies
At the local supermarket
Another yen
Another moment
Part of the quickened sequence
Of demise
Unregulated yens
Despair follows
Emptiness moves through me
No food no music no clouds
No hues of sunset
I am dead bent
On moving on
Going home
As the African Americans cried out
As they buried "*big Michael Brown*"
Shot down unarmed
On a Ferguson St. Louis Street –
My son cries *I don't know you*
Don't know who you are
Don't know what you have done

Yet you have to watch this shit

Referring to the treacherous death

Of Michael Brown

Luca holds onto me crying

Early morning he yet to sleep

Is he sobbing for his own demise?

A foreboding or mine

Or ours our fates

Inextricably connected

Fate got him to me

Fate now will save him or not

We are at last gasps

One or both of us

I am near to done

Have had my run

Gone my mile

Soon to know

If he my found son has as well

Major surgery to repair his upper intestine

His lower intestine long gone

Removed when he was but fifteen

Mother of a chronically sick child

Hellish defies explication

Love makes peculiar demands on us

When where does loyalty motherly obligation end

Solitary solemn determined disregarding all others

A death of my own choosing can in earnest begin? NB

The First Man by Albert Camus

When the soul suffers too much, it develops a taste for misfortune.

When I was young I asked more of people than they could give: everlasting friendship, endless feeling. Now I know to ask less of them than they can give: a straightforward companionship. And their feelings, their friendship, their generous actions seem in my eyes to be wholly miraculous: a consequence of grace alone.

They hurt each other without wanting to, just because each represented to the others the cruel and demanding necessity of their lives.

And for all his life it would be kindness and love that made him cry, never pain or persecution, which on the contrary only reinforced his spirit and his resolution.

There is a terrible emptiness in me, an indifference that hurts.

At the age of 40, having ordered meat very rare in restaurants all his life, he realized he actually liked it medium and not at all rare.

You alone will know why I killed myself. You know my principles. I hate those who commit suicide. Because of what they do TO OTHERS. If you have to do it, you must disguise it. Out of kindness.

Remembrance of things past is just for the rich. For the poor it only marks the faint traces on the path to death.

He had loved his mother and his child, everything that it was not up to him to choose. And after all he, who had challenged everything, questioned everything, he had never loved anything except what was inevitable. The people fate had imposed on him, the world as it appeared to him, everything in his life he had not been able to avoid, his illness, his vocation, fame or poverty--in a word, his star. For the rest, for everything he had to choose, he made himself love, which is not the same thing. No doubt he had known the feeling of wonderment, passion, and even moments of tenderness. But each moment had sent him on to other moments, each person to others, and he had loved nothing he had chosen, except what was little by little imposed on him by circumstance, had lasted as much by accident as by intention, and finally became necessary: The heart, the heart above all is not free. It is inevitability and the recognition of the inevitable. And he, in truth, had never wholeheartedly loved other than the inevitable. All that was left for him was to love his own death.

Albert Camus, The First Man

Totemic Writing of Jean Paul Sartre

The world is full to bursting of bad novels and even worse poems that sprang from – and reflected upon – conditions of clampdown and woe.

Should I kill myself, or have a cup of coffee?

Live to the point of tears.

When the soul suffers too much, it develops a taste for misfortune.

Words are loaded pistols

Ha! To forget. How childish! I feel you in my bones. Your silence screams in my ears.

You may nail your mouth shut, you may cut out your tongue, can you keep yourself from existing? Will you stop your thoughts?

Freedom is what we do with what is done to us.

We are our choices.

You are your life and nothing else.

Everything has been figured out, except how to live.

Life begins on the other side of despair.

Man can will nothing unless he has first understood that he must count on no one but himself; that he is alone, abandoned on earth in the midst of his infinite responsibilities, without help, with no other aim than the one he sets himself, with no other destiny than the one he forges for himself on this earth.

In love, one and one are one.

Jean-Paul Sartre

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Wadjda a movie written and directed by Haifaa Al Mansour, it is the first full-length feature to be made by a woman from Saudi Arabia. Reviewed by Anthony Lane, *New Yorker*, September 16, 2013

...but the thrust of her film, toward the end, could hardly be more urgent. Wadjda winds up at an intersection, watching traffic stream by in both directions. You might read the scene as a feminist renewal of “The 400 Blows,” and of its celebrated freeze-frame at the ocean’s unwelcoming edge. Those of a hopeful heart will want to know where this genial striver, on the brink of womanhood, will head next. See “Wadjda” in a more sober mood, on the other hand, and you will ask yourself whether she can go anywhere at all.

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As parents, we want our kids to be safe, once you’ve been through this, you know they will never be 100 percent safe, and it’s hard to stop thinking about it.

Dr. Kassam-Adams, psychologist, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

His Ears Poked Out

I hate him I hate sex

Who the fuck are you fucking me?

Who the fuck am I?

Fastened to that claptrap spilling from his mouth?

Who is he to think he is better than

Being the father of a kid with ears poking out?

Stands firmly planted legs astride disdaining

Toddler Gabriel's ears poked out

I hate him I hate sex

It was for a fuck the domain

The ultimate fountain of youth

Bound to keep one young

Keep one's chin jawline taut youthful.

(Primary source some tabloid magazine found near register in Duane Reade finger-flipping while waiting in line.)

Bewitching fuck short-circuiting

All my better instincts

Got me a man

Who learning we couldn't have kids

Went on a pre-arranged long-distance

Adoption expedition to Paraguay.

Convinced myself that by holding

Our prospective adopted child first

He would connect in that amazing

Inscrutable parent child bonding.

Telling the adoption lawyer

It was important that he make first contact

With our intended child
Thus the trip to Paraguay
To which she reluctantly agreed
Anticipating when he saw Gustavo
A toddler of eighteen months
He would scoop him up
Clutching him tightly and moan
In his primal Italian
My son my son
The precise expectation
From all the witnesses present.
Rather he turned away
As if judging a 4H pig at a State Fair.
He would have condemned
Poor *Wilbur* to death
Unfortunately I wasn't there
Charlotte to blinker on and off
Beautiful beautiful child
Come to me my own my one and only son to be.

NB

.....

I don't want to die! Save me, somebody! Save me! (Wilbur, pig)

"What do you mean less than nothing? I don't think there is any such thing as less than nothing. Nothing is absolutely the limit of nothingness. It's the lowest you can go. It's the end of the line. How can something be less than nothing? If there were something that was less than nothing, then nothing would not be nothing, it would be something - even though it's just a very little bit of something. But if nothing is nothing, then nothing has nothing that is less than it is."

E.B. White, Charlotte's Web

My husband whom I had handpicked because he had the potential the wherewithal to fuck me into perennial youthfulness subjected this toddler Gustavo to jaundiced scrutiny. He placed this toddler on the viewing stand as if at an animal husbandry auction. Witnessed by adoption lawyer and caregivers Gustavo was taken immediately out of the room away from the jaundiced surmising. *His ears poked out* he told me later on the phone *in a flash seeing my hesitation* the lawyers told him Gustavo wasn't to be adopted by us. *I guess I didn't want to be a father to a boy whose ears poked out* he explained offering a solipsistic justification on the phone long-distance from Asuncion Paraguay.

I hate him I hate sex I hate myself

I sacrificed a kid took away a potential home an expectation from a baby because his ears poked out.

The sex never touched my heart never kept me young I grew older than *Methuselah* because I sacrificed my soul for a fuck from a man who looked into a mirror and saw a prince.

Turned out this man was a poseur whoring around his sexual promise stuffing other lives into his innards an empty space.

I took this man inside of me introduced him into our lives. He is a ritual killer slaying forlorn love starved women luring them into his lair sucking the victuals of life from them and as the life force drained and the spirit struggled moved on to his next delectable victim. I opened the door.

Poking out ears Gustavo your life was better without us this father would have fixated on your ears to excuse his tormenting conditional withholding of love perhaps this would have forced my hand aroused my heart to precipitously leave or shove him out. Knowing this jaundice disregard well. I suffered under the tyranny of his disdainful gaze until he found a new victim to fuck charm and flee.

"After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die."

E.B. White, Charlotte's Web



Forgetting to remember

Forgetting to remember

Remembering little signs

Forgetting to remember

Little signs

Forgetting to remember

To kill myself to die

To have a gentle

Handmade death

Forgetting the promise

To craft my own ending

Remembering remembering

Never to let myself forget

Before not remembering

My desire to be

Mixed with mulch

Replenishing the soil

In the Conservatory Garden

And on a bench with shade

Engraved small plaque reading

Naomi - Mother Grandmother New Yorker

NB

After seeing the movie *Papirosen* (Gaston Sonicki)

We are the people of South Sudan we are the nomads wandering Palestine we are the gypsies wandering the Balkans.

We are the displaced the children of the families fleeing Syria.

We fled were led out of Egypt we sing of it retell of it at the Seder.

We are the displaced we fled and fled and fled exiled without country without nation stolen overtaken annexed.

We lived in camps we were exterminated we are Bosnia and Sarajevo at war we are the Izedis mass executed by Isis in Iraq we are Palestinian children bombed in and around UN protected sites in war with Israel we are the disappeared in Argentina the street children shot in Brazil by police.

We are the exterminated we are the refugees we shared baths and toilets speaking Yiddish on the Lower East Side newly arrived.

We sailed to Israel a homeland for the homeless following the exterminating of our six million.

We displaced the Palestinians took their homes and land retribution revenge against the wrong people in a wrong act.

Wonder who would grandpa and grandma Saul and Eva been had they stayed in Silesia would they have been millers and bakers and gone to Shul?

Would they have had a Becky and Joey and Maxie and Bluma would Bluma have been so mentally ill had they stayed?

Who would Isidore and Sarah have been had they stayed in Poland they would not have married Isidore would have run from serving in the army and then come home. Isidore would have raised a Bill and Harry and Carl but in a happier home they would have been musicians and scholars and never have gone to synagogue. _____

Our lives are overshadowed we are the displaced we are the exiled it bleeds into every generation my older children's botched up marriages my strange choices of husbands it is the aftermath.

Sadness permeates guilt insecurity feelings of inferiority unworthiness inculcated by those who still despise the Jews or fear the Jews or use the Jews to peck upon.

When does the sun rise when does joyfulness come without hesitation and apology where is love without qualification in which generation do we ever step far enough from the shell the broken yoke of our displacement?

We are no better we are interchangeable with Syrian refugees the Sudanese slaughtered is this the order of life is this why god birth death desolation solitude yet poetry words song sunset flowers sunrise Van Gogh Mozart Joyce and love and love...

Why oh why oh why

IT WAS SEX!

That's why, she said my friend

Never mentioned my kids

In our required Episcopal premarital essays

It was sex

Why oh why

Never should have

I never liked him

He was nothing an *empty suit*

(Empty Suit: Someone puffed up with his own importance but really having little effect on the lives of others. It is often used as an insult to disparage others who really don't deserve the title. The true empty suit, which conjures up the image of a business suit of clothing without a person, really doesn't know what he or she is doing. He or she is ineffectual, perhaps a phony, and is about as relevant or helpful as a suit hanging on a rack. - Urban Dictionary)

IT WAS SEX!

She tells the truth Mainline friend she is a truth seer my truth seer

It was SEX

Yes and yes and yes

He was to keep me young

I was to sling a sheepskin over his shoulder affix a Ph.D. next to his name

It was SEX

No denying I tossed my life to a phantom man for a sprig of youth

His grip his fuck a tonic to stay supple juicy young

Nearly 75 know now fucking is not loving.

Loving is not fucking.

I was 40 an ex-wife an escapee from a tyrannical hell

Only to fall into the arms of a man far more dangerous his seductions lethal

IT WAS SEX. SEX FOOLED ME. SEX DERAILED ME.

NB

Mnemonic Retrospective

Heroics of the bathetic of the putrid of the repulsive

Dignity salvaged dignity retrieved

Staying a gulp above drowning

Body tourniquet of disaster

Retribution for what

I have a baby

A giveaway a landscape forbidding stunted beautiful extravagant

I have a baby enslaved

To contraptions contrapuntal a boy salvaging

Scavenger for dignity for survival

Bountiful life unforgiving life

My boy lives each day

Not to die not to fade away not to give up not to let slack

The tethered rope

I have a boy disfigured damaged beyond repair

Mnemonic despair shapes a day a narrative a story a tale

My boy looks for moments to chill go back to when to before

Before so distant hard to recall

Dear god dear life dear death dear son stalwart by your side as you daily decide

To live or die choking the tightening noose of shame of a body's betrayal

Boy of mine heavy destiny boy of betrayed body

Boy for whom the sun never sets or rises

Your body with its twisted self never a reprieve never a moment

Dear son of mine how long predisposed to die

Time waits each day for you to decide I watch I cry

NB

Testimony evidence shoving clothes into a washing machine done so hundreds of times since we moved into the coop fifteen years ago

The machines in my coop basement provide order for a life of necessariness - opened 24 hours if you get there between 4 and 5 am you can have all three of the large machines. Struck dumb still as if seeing the machines for the first time. How to start where to put the laundry card where the detergent?

I wash Luca's underwear basketball shorts his tee shirts.

I scramble back to remembering to functioning

His body twisted again his upper intestine diseased infected

I am brought back remembering

Swigging bottle of *Johnnie Walker Red* cradling his stiff stick-like body

Don't die Luca don't die Luca don't die...

These many years later I wash his often-soiled underwear

Death looms always pre-eminent taunting yet to strike

A bottle of *Old Grouse* on my closet floor

The detergent poured the machine in fits and starts begins its cycle

Live in bond with a society of mothers of a chronically sick child

We live between a wail and smile a moan and numbness

Grief the moment to bury a child lurks

Death holds us hostage

We live on the edge of light and darkness

Motherhood begs of us we know not what

Hosanna and horror with that first birth cry

NB

.....

It is my belief a parent who's traumatized is always expecting the other shoe to drop, will always be scanning the horizon,

Dr. Richard J Shaw, professor of psychiatry at Stanford

.....

Evaluations will be based not just on your efforts, but on your ability to bring excellence out of the people around you.

David Call, media columnist NY Times

.....

I don't believe in romantic love in that it has to be sweet and painless. The best one can expect is meaningfulness with moments of real happiness.

Irving Singer, philosopher, author, "Nature of Love"

.....

...suffering from chronic unresolved grief.

Irvin Yalom, psychiatrist, author, "When Nietzsche Wept"

I regret having to leave you with so many riddles but I am afraid my time is up. Patient to Dr. Yalom

.....

I seem to be suffering reading over much of this manuscript from chronic unresolved rage.

NB

.....

The essence of the soul is yearning.

And when I say confusion, I mean confusion. My asking you if you have a soul should be like my asking you if you have a person. You should be like, what are you talking about? I am a person. Our essence is soul. We are soul before we are born; we are soul after we die. And for the short time we are on this planet, we are soul fused with a body. Once we get this distinction clear, all the pieces of Judaism – and of our life – will fall into place." The existence of the soul is one of the fundamental underpinnings of Judaism. The Torah teaches that God creates each person with a physical body and a Divine soul, and it is the soul that is the person's essence. (Morasha Syllabus)

.....

Patience is also a form of action.

Auguste Rodin

.....

Why should I be impressed by the fact that you really, really love me? Really? Frankly, I'd prefer that you loved me a little less really, and with more restraint.

Roger Rosenblatt, "The Book of Love"

.....

Two decades on we are still together, still married and still, well, if I hesitate to say 'happy.' It's only because it's one of those absolute terms, like-nit-free,' that life has taught me to deploy with caution.

.....

I want my work to play the role of funeral oration, honoring this life.

I think every violent event generates disorientation. If your son is killed, your town is destroyed or you've been tortured, how do you relate to the world after that?

...dysfunctional furniture

How do you touch a wound?

...comes back and back, with the persistence of a mother's grief, it doesn't go away.

Doris Salcedo, artist from Colombia

.....

Before Becoming

Object of contrition

Frustration futility

Contentiousness

Death bed prayer bed

Where parting words

Are good words

Not to take back words

Death bed prayer bed

Where forced smiles

Idiomatic prompts

Deathbed revulsion

Death rapacious motherfucker

Unruly rambunctious

Squirm making

With death it ends

No one last word

Before becoming

Object of pity

Deathbed prayer bed
Time to shape an end
While fiction possible
Improvisation follows
No hair-raising
Breathe taking final moments
Death by my own hand
Not by health proxy living will
Muster up courage
To end my life
Before eyes dim to sightlessness
Before *Depends* billow with urine
Before mouth forms last gasp configurations
No moaning vigil no stifling sobs
No one to bear witness
Time for contemplative sorrow
For what will be left
Unsaid undone
Gathering the will
To animate enact the end
Extolling existential solitude
Death to mirror my resolve
Self pity pitiable ignominious
Grandiosity infatuation
With love's failures privation
Motherhood biblical
Astounding revelatory
Hobbled by *holocaust* horrors

Heart transcended horror
Loved my children
Without condition
Fearlessly openly
Motherhood illumined by the moon
Stunned each night at first sighting
Trees quickening heart to love beats
Colors of flowers birds astonish
Grasped early sorrow's behest
Yet never twisted the sacrificial knife
Sanctimoniously into my uterus
Dying is not hard so hard mother as you said
Living being alive is
Taking one solemn
Unexpurgated look back
Last glimpse of sky
Time soon to lie down
Dying alone
In and with the sweet scent
Of spring river bed grass
Or the surly full moon ocean tides
Cradling the final glimmer vestiges of my life

NB

Old age superbly rising! Ineffable grace of dying days!

Walt Whitman Song of Myself Leaves of Grace

My Own Life



A MONTH ago, I felt that I was in good health, even robust health. At 81, I still swim a mile a day. But my luck has run out — a few weeks ago I learned that I have multiple metastases in the liver. Nine years ago it was discovered that I had a rare tumor of the eye, an ocular melanoma. Although the radiation and lasering to remove the tumor ultimately left me blind in that eye, only in very rare cases do such tumors metastasize. I am among the unlucky 2 percent.

I feel grateful that I have been granted nine years of good health and productivity since the original diagnosis, but now I am face to face with dying. The cancer occupies a third of my liver, and though its advance may be slowed, this particular sort of cancer cannot be halted.

It is up to me now to choose how to live out the months that remain to me. I have to live in the richest, deepest, most productive way I can. In this I am encouraged by the words of one of my favorite philosophers, David Hume, who, upon learning that he was mortally ill at age 65, wrote a short autobiography in a single day in April of 1776. He titled it "My Own Life."

"I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution," he wrote. "I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company."

I have been lucky enough to live past 80, and the 15 years allotted to me beyond Hume's three score and five have been equally rich in work and love. In that time, I have published five books and completed an autobiography (rather longer than Hume's few pages) to be published this spring; I have several other books nearly finished.

Hume continued, "I am ... a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions."

Here I depart from Hume. While I have enjoyed loving relationships and friendships and have no real enmities, I cannot say (nor would anyone who knows me say) that I am a man of mild dispositions. On the contrary, I am a man of vehement disposition, with violent enthusiasms, and extreme immoderation in all my passions.

And yet, one line from Hume's essay strikes me as especially true: "It is difficult," he wrote, "to be more detached from life than I am at present."

Over the last few days, I have been able to see my life as from a great altitude, as a sort of landscape, and with a deepening sense of the connection of all its parts. This does not mean I am finished with life.

On the contrary, I feel intensely alive, and I want and hope in the time that remains to deepen my friendships, to say farewell to those I love, to write more, to travel if I have the strength, to achieve new levels of understanding and insight.

I feel a sudden clear focus and perspective. There is no time for anything inessential. I must focus on myself, my work and my friends. I shall no longer look at “NewsHour” every night. I shall no longer pay any attention to politics or arguments about global warming.

This is not indifference but detachment — I still care deeply about the Middle East, about global warming, about growing inequality, but these are no longer my business; they belong to the future. I rejoice when I meet gifted young people — even the one who biopsied and diagnosed my metastases. I feel the future is in good hands.

I have been increasingly conscious, for the last 10 years or so, of deaths among my contemporaries. My generation is on the way out, and each death I have felt as an abruption, a tearing away of part of myself. There will be no one like us when we are gone, but then there is no one like anyone else, ever. When people die, they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that cannot be filled, for it is the fate — the genetic and neural fate — of every human being to be a unique individual, to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death.

I cannot pretend I am without fear. But my predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved; I have been given much and I have given something in return; I have read and traveled and thought and written. I have had an intercourse with the world, the special intercourse of writers and readers.

Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.

By OLIVER SACKS NY Times FEB. 19, 2015

Oliver Sacks, a professor of neurology at the New York University School of Medicine, is the author of many books, including “Awakenings” and “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.”

.....

Plato famously divided the soul into three parts: reason, eros (desire) and thymos (the hunger for recognition). Thymos is what motivates the best and worst things men do. It drives them to seek glory and assert themselves aggressively for noble causes. It drives them to rage if others don't recognize their worth. Sometimes it even causes them to kill over a trifle if they feel disrespected.

.....

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Nibs

Nibs



Nibs: **Nibs** is described as happy and debonair, possibly the bravest Lost Boy. The only thing he remembers about his mother is that she always wanted a cheque-book and says he would love to give her one - if he knew what it was. He grows up to work in an office.

Lost boys Peter Pan J.M.Barrie

.....

Not Naomi

Too Jewish

Thought it was Nancy

Labor nurse Naomi

This is Naomi

N for Nathan

Deceased

Jewish custom

N for Nancy

They agreed

This is Naomi

Too Jewish

This is Nibs

Lost boy Peter Pan

Nibs not a name for lover

He took my flower

He abolished my nickname

Relegated to bin

Of adolescent landfill

You are Naomi

No longer virgin Nibs

There it was

And so it was

Nibs rediscovered

Digging for bones

Given a domain

A final home

withlovenibs.com

Nibs is described as happy

Joyful and debonair

Possibly the bravest *Lost Boy*

So time upends

Returning to me

Nickname Nibs

Love of my life

Swift knight

Took my name

Gave me love

If only as long as

A *Monarch Butterfly* is in flight



...dying two to six weeks after it becomes a beautiful monarch butterfly.

withlovenibs.com

NB

...habituation – the dulling of sexual senses as a couple becomes inured to each other, worn by life’s quotidian and lurching demands.

...relationship capitol – in good marriages you’re building up something, accumulating experience and knowledge about your intimate partner over time that builds on itself

There is intimacy that comes later that is staggeringly wonderful, she said. You can hold hands with this person you love and adore, and somehow it’s just as passionate as having sex at an earlier age. There is such a sense of connection and intimacy that grows out of a long relationship, that touch carries with it the weight of so many memories. And many are sexual.

Jan Hoffman, “An Unexpected Perk After 50 Years,” NY Times 2/24/15

.....

...always had to fight the residual sadness of the driven man.

He shows how the active life is inevitably an accumulation of battles, setbacks, bruises, scars, victories and humiliating defeats.

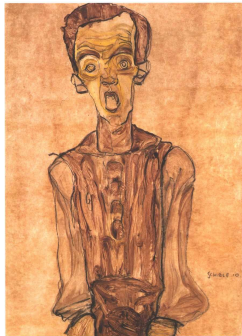
I suspect many people will leave the theater wondering if their own dreams and lives are bold enough, if their own lives could someday be so astounding.

David Brooks, commenting on, “The Hamilton Experience” at the Public Theater NY Times 2/24/15

.....

Squelch scream

Before it thunders out
Scream crushing my insides
Fearful when it comes
Soaring out
It will mean surrendering
It will be never ending
It will be deafening
It will shatter *Rose Windows*
It will overshadow hopefulness
It will silence prayer
It will be the scream
Of the mother
Who watched spectator
Her son's slow death
Subsumed by pain
Mother chronicler
Scream crushing insides
Primal urgent rising
Hand cupping mouth
Keep from unruly pouring out
Scream will be Rachmaninov's
Third Piano Concerto
Played by *Vladimir Horowitz*
Near the end of his life
Piano surging electric
Tearing through me
Anarchic chaotic
Sounds emitted from
Egon Schiele's scream



Verisimilitude
Magnification of labor pain
Inside me a cry curdles
Inside me a cry crushes
Motherhood coming
Undone inside out
Primal rough-hewed
Mother wrung dry
Surrendering

Music encompassing
Time to finally let go
Scream until
Sound diminished to whimper
Look to the mother who
Held her screams in check
Helpless beyond grasp and reach
Unfathomable motherhood
Mary knew
Jesus lay dead
Holding him close bowed head
Nothing could save child
Soon found nailed to cross dead
My soon struck battling
Pain and disease
That ate away at his insides
Pernicious deadly germ
Stripped away life force
Unrelenting unforgiving
Force-feeding the ending

NB



Michelangelo Pietà

Words

Cold pressed word play

My father looked up words

Every word any word

He didn't know

My father took the time

As he lost words

He looked up new ones

As he memory faded

He found a new word

To look up

Dad, like you

Never lose a word

Refuse a word

It's meaning

Dipolar irregularities

NY Times fount

Of my literacy

Internet divines

Transliteration

Words keepsakes

Word gatherer

Harvest past

Vocabulary

Anarchically grows

Illumines

Crystal prism

My father and I

Couple of autodidacts

On a day

Unbound found

Sentient: - responsive to or conscious of sense impressions <sentient beings>
- aware
- finely sensitive in perception or feeling (Miriam Webster)

Canopic: - a jar in which the ancient Egyptians preserved the viscera of a deceased person usually for burial with the mummy (Miriam Webster)

Thymotic: -1. The mind or heart as the seat of strong feelings or passions -

2. A desire or hunger of people for personal recognition and acknowledgement of their worth and significance -

3. People who are sensitive about their self-worth and the significance of their group -

4. The psychological origin of political action (Encyclo.Co.UK)

Ineffable: - too great, powerful, beautiful to be described or expressed (Miriam Webster)

Sentient

Hyper-aware

Canopic jar

Urn with my ashes

Thymotic man

Husband who

Had a gun

Fists cupped

Ready to lob

Ineffable struggle

To find words

The right words

Emotion's urgent

Naming

Breaking down

Screaming crying

Lamenting

Vocabulary

To catapult

To define

To illuminate

Words

Follow free up

Fear clotted besotted

Intoxicating scream

Before absolute

Ablution absolution

Silence then quiet

Breathing

Excessive expressive

Then ultimate silence

Noiseless as death

NB

Dying people

Philandering people

Set me

Jabberwocky

Wobbly wonky

Dying and philandering

Abandoning

Attracted more to abandonment than love

I once wrote

Death trove

Philanderer trove

Gob on

Magenta magnification

Mouth unhinged

Sprung open

Jabbering *Jabberwocky*

Guilty gossipmonger

Supreme

Death and philandering

Turned me

Weak meek mean

Twitch switch bitch

NB

*Twas bryllyg, and ye slythy toves
Did gyre and gymble in ye wabe:
All mimsy were ye borogoves;
And ye mome raths outgrabe.*

Jabberwocky Lewis Carroll Alice in Wonderland

.....

Complicated grief is like a wound that doesn't heal and can follow the loss of any close relationship.

Dr. M. Katherine Shear, Psychiatrist

.....

He once joked with me, said friend, that his tombstone would read, 'I knew this would happen.

Arnaud de Borchgrave, Journalist

.....

Your brain is a promiscuous explanation seeker. Baba Brinkman, Rap Guide to Religion

.....

It was, quite possibly, just the latest encounter in a long struggle putting the human advocates of mathematics and order against an unruly world that seems to keep its deepest mysteries to itself.

Amir Alexander, NY Times reviewing The Quantum Moment by Robert Crease and Alfred Goldhaber

.....

She built first stairways, then rooms in the stillness of the air above her. She built, as the title suggests, a "house in the sky," where, "the voices that normally tore through my head expressing fear and wishing for death went silent, until there was only one left speaking" This voice asks, "In this exact moment, are you O.K.?" She answers, "Yes, right now I am still O.k."

House in the Sky by Amanda Lindhout and Sara Corbett

.....

Holy Sonnets: Death, Be Not Proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so; For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be, Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow, And soonest our best men with thee do go, Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery. Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men, And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell, And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then? One short sleep past, we wake eternally And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

John Donne

.....

You go through hardship, things that are almost impossibly difficult, and there's no sign that it's going to get any better, and that's the point when people quit. But some don't.

You look up and you realize, what a beautiful day, the leaves are turning and you're starting to feel confident. You're feeling full of yourself until you realize you're drooling.

To me, it was always to climb up the hill. Not standing at the top. Robert Redford

Beds are Boats

*My bed is like a little boat;
Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor's coat
And starts me in the dark.*

*At night I go on board and say
Good-night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away
And see and hear no more.*

*And sometimes things to bed I take,
As prudent sailors have to do;
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,
Perhaps a toy or two.*

*All night across the dark we steer;
But when the day returns at last,
Safe in my room beside the pier,
I find my vessel fast.*

My Bed is a Boat by Robert Louis Stevenson

Child at helm of boat

Thumbed page, *Child's Garden of Verses*

Ringlet headed little girl dreams

Beds are for pretend imagine fantasize

Beds are for wedding night's heirloom

Flaxen sheets stitched monograms

Beds cradle nightmares

Dreams vanish mornings

Beds symbolize passion cull fear

Beds move on tidal waves

Of moans groans screams

Beds hold secrets

Beds hold death the final recline

Beds are to dread

Beds are moats menacing to cross

Bed's edge precipitous cliff to cling to

Beds hold heartbeats gentle diffuse thoughts

Beds tell of a *departure with all the thrills and fears of the unknown* – (Esa-Pekka Salonen)

Beds are battlefields *if there is a problem in a marriage it is right here* (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams)

Somewhere in the transom of the universe

A body closed off sealed

To the touch of love

Bed of forgotten embrace

Remembered fear

Heart lost somewhere

NB

.....

Game of Mastermind – (Thinking of Esther C. Please Guess the order)

Husband son friends

Friends husband son

Son friends husband

Husband friends son

Son husband friends

Friends son husband

Esther C. said: *for years, every summer, I've been writing my life in poems. I called my son, who is 26. Take a chance, he said. My husband said go, and so did most of my friends.* (Esther Cohen, Will Pay for Poem, New York Story NY Times 9/22/13)

Guess the order:

Husband – friend - son

Son – friend - husband

Friend – son - husband

Husband – husband - husband

Friend – friend - friend

Son – son - son

NB

Now at this insane age

Cusp and pinnacle

Upper arms spongy

Dreams unremembered

Interrupted to pee

Longing moves toward mockery

Wake up wondering why and how

Arrived at this insane age

Cusp and pinnacle

Poems cliff notes

Story told

Beauty and truth

Truth and beauty

Happiness and fear

Fear and happiness

Take what back

If I could

Time evaporated

Life eviscerated

Before I could decide

What life to have

What bride to be

Life waited to be lived

Step beyond

The circumference

Of circumstance

When offered

Never took the chance NB

.....

all sorrows can be borne if you put them in a story or tell a story about them

Isak dinesen

.....

He told me I was so small I told him,

"Water me I promise I can grow tall

When making love is free.

Breathe

Help me in ways of submission

My body's itching to press on the bruises you hide with a smile.

Pendulum Tahliah Barnett -FKA twigs -

.....

So here I am imagining

At water's edge

Bone and current

Shifting hither and throw

Ashes disposed of

In the Harlem Meer

Choked with algae

Neighbors' fish and toss

Nibbled ingested

Perhaps niblets of me

This for my afterlife

Fusion of algae

And Meer spring water
Overstuffed reflection
Left me depleted
Without rhyme or reason
For marrying husband two
Infectious manifestation
Of pure sullied silted hate
Implacable intractable
Father of our found son
Origin of sinfulness
Bringing this child
Into our calamitous
Deceitful lives
Unforgiveable
Penitent tried and tried
To soften the edges of regret
Whittle away the pain the hurt
The animus clung to me
Poisonous choking
Choice run awry amuck
Decision held to light questioned
Hold explanation reason
None come aberrant moment
Hideous recollection
Inexhaustible inexplicable inexcusable
Pieces to jigger configure
Re-configure rearrange
Hate despise define me

Sitting near a hundred year old shade tree
Reading *The Round House* (Louise Erdrich)
Two men stand near by fishing
Louise Erdrich's husband committed suicide
She accused him of molesting their son
Does it yet haunt upend her
Can feel the heat of menace
Singing the pages of the book
Did she forgive him and move on
No, the images too harsh
The violations of others too venal
Sometimes no forgiving
I will die hating him
It sits like silt sediment
Always near my mind
Found son of unnecessary father
My found son will not predecease me
I refuse to tolerate
News of his death
I will not weep
As I spread his ashes
Down to nub and bone
I swear
He will live beyond me
If with badly mangled modified body
The spirit of Guaraní lives within him
Here it is then
This is how it will end

Powerful anodyne ageless archetype

I will die departing

Jumbled erratic inexplicable life

Leaving behind three children

Who will place me in the annals

Constructs of life and love

My mother died still feared

My offspring my progeny

Recollecting reimagining me

Will reach thank god

Into the time beyond me

NB

.....

So much of our own understanding of our depth occurs later in life, also amid suffering. The theologian Paul Tillich has a great essay in "Shaking the Foundations" in which he observes that during moments of suffering, people discover they are not what they appeared to be. The suffering scours away a floor inside themselves, exposing a deeper level, and then that floor gets scoured away and another deeper level is revealed. Finally, people get down to the core wounds and the core loves.

But depth, the core of our being, is something we cultivate over time. We form relationships that either turn the core piece of ourselves into something more stable and disciplined or something more fragmented and disorderly. We begin with our natural biases but carve out depths according to the quality of the commitments we make. Our origins are natural; our depths are man-made — engraved by thought and action.

So much of what we call depth is built through freely chosen suffering. People make commitments — to a nation, faith, calling or loved ones — and endure the sacrifices those commitments demand. Often this depth is built by fighting against natural evolutionary predispositions.

Babies are not deep. Old people can be, depending upon how they have chosen to lead their lives. Babies start out very natural. The people we admire are rooted in nature but have surpassed nature. Often they grew up in cultures that encouraged them to take a loftier view of their possibilities than we do today

Deep in the core of our being there are the unconscious natural processes built in by evolution

The Deepest Self, Paul Tillich, Theologian

How could they be otherwise?

The core root extends
From Leningrad to Siberia
From Paris from Austria
To exile to fleeing
Judaism the battering ram
The cudgel the whip
To drive them to near obscurity
Her father a Nazi petty bureaucrat
His grandfather first Jewish mayor of Leningrad
His mother entering synagogue once
When she was 93 on Yom Kippur
To see for herself
What all the fuss was about
Son poet coming alive
At readings from his books
His wife's pottery
Held the sorrow in the glaze
Their only daughter
Knocked up at 18
By super of building's son
She married
An Italian from Staten Island
Became a mother
Became a drug addict
How could it have been otherwise?
Damnable Judaism Jewishness

Can't stop being Jewish my mother would warn
Her *self-hating* Jewish daughter, me
No alternative for an exiled son of Parisian Jews
But becoming a poet
Or his daughter an addict
Now her daughter the great grand daughter
Of the first Jewish mayor of Leningrad banished to Siberia
Has chosen to spend a college semester
Studying at Tel Aviv University in Israel, in Israel!
We circumference the world imprinted with personal odyssey
It is in our bones it is in our genes
It is our judicial destiny our legacy
Never again never again never again
Her grandmother daughter of Austrian Nazi bureaucrat
Who warned her if she married that French Jew
He would never see her again and she never did
Over tea at our local French café
My friend predicted that her granddaughter would find
True love while at Tel Aviv University
Crusading for wholeness we go back to the beginning
The end is in the beginning and yet you go on. (Samuel Beckett, Endgame)
They will join together in the land
Scraped together to salvage Jewishness from European shame
Shaped from ancient liturgy about the *Promise Land*
Israel biblical geography the size of New Jersey
In the end finding true love
Born of suffering displacement cruel exile
It is in the stars it is in the bones inevitable

Perennial Runaway

Running away forever

From the beginning

Quicksilver

Lip smacking

A squandered mother's milking tit

Mortified stone primordial ice floe

Shoving away

The cantilevered urgent infant mouth

Began leaving abruptly hours old

Short-circuiting

Shaping life of incompletes

Fear seized

Poised to run

Endings abrupt

Endings a specialty

Always abrupt

Quicksilver girl

Left schools left marriages left days

Anticipating losing control

Endings frightening

Now near for death

Time to hand-wrestle you down

Refusing to lie subdued

Ridiculously mortified

Hand wringing children

Repulsed honoring
Revisionist history forming
Not to let death tangle
Wrestle me nib-end
To gargles and gasps
I know leaving
Running away my artistry
To quit life
Before death seizes hold
Wondering after each time
What could have happened
Had I stayed
Never to know
The *other road not taken*
Speculative post-mortem
Death dear death
I got to get my nerve up
Gather the momentum
The courage
Anticipating death
To kill myself
Before I come to
Slobbering speaking garrulously
About broken promises
Choking in the bitter
After taste of regret
Begging forgiveness
Eclipsing mercurial feet

Final edits
Expurgated texts
A last and final exit
Here the completed life
Of a girl who ran and ran
Never staying long enough
To let dreams take hold
Keepsake of forget
Protect my death sanguine intact

NB

Live longer

Live too long
Bulwark
Of consternation
Controversy
Every bit
Of sodden life
Plied through
I prefer
To die alone
When blithe memory
Still deceives
Retrieve a laugh
Raucous remembering when ...
Penultimate grace
Dying on your own terms

Constructing the end

Dying before

Consternation

Controversy

Seed the time

I am tired out

I am tired

Of composing a life

Time to plot a death

Where memories are fond

If just by guilt and jolt

And later much later

The odds bend toward

The hurt caused

The promises left unkept

Love knotted with pain

Words left unsaid

Remorse and meaning without end

NB

He needed me he needed me not

He found me in restoration hardware

He took a fixer-upper a tear down

He needed me

He needed the tools of my trade

Laughable really

I lived on the fringe

An incomplete autodidact in exile

Somehow in his dissembling self

He saw in me

An accomplice a gun moll

Weaponry for his strategic ascent

I was his Jew

He wanted me

A primary resource

A guide

He wanted a Jew

He wanted a *Yiddishe Cup*

To navigate the stars for him

To decode learn the enemy

He wanted a Ph.D. from Columbia

I was to cut a path

I bought him a book by *Foucault*

He wrote his dissertation on *Foucault*

His advisor called him

Her *feral student*

He was my primordial scholar

Before *Foucault*

There was catechism transubstantiation

Bronx Catholic schoolboy

Jew shapes into pseudo French intellectual

He prowled the *Canon*

Skimming tart pregnant vocabulary

Strategic demeanor concealed his rabidity

He held extreme hatred for Jews

Emboldened ambition soaring married one

Transcendent translucent incumbent

I became *the chosen one*

Mentoring his ruthless ascent

Anointed to affix

That longed for suffix to his name

Feral Foucault Scholar Ph.D.

Jew now wanders solitary

Wondering how and why

Answers never forthcoming

Burrowing mining for enlightenment

Was it just for sex for youthfulness?

Tabloid primary source

Too facile too surface too shallow

Sholom Aleichem answers

"No matter how bad things get you got to go on living, even if it kills you

When you die, others who think they know you, will concoct things about you...

Better pick up a pen and write it yourself, for you know yourself best."

Sholom Aleichem

Probing self-knowledge

To rock bottom truths
Steeped in lore
Suffering slaying ancient feet fleeing
Still refuse to believe
That I took this feral man in
It was my decision
It was his sin

NB

“You can go on living with someone who doesn’t love you, but what is really killing is someone who dislikes you.”

Elizabeth Jane Howard, British Novelist

Slowly, slowly, I started to love isolation, she explained. It’s not a disease. It healed me.

Everything that is not art, I try to transform it into art.

I used to knock on many doors in Gaza to enter the world I want to live in, but there is no door.

I love cinema; there is no cinema in Gaza. I paint; there are no galleries to show what I paint. A woman and an artist at the same time – this is a catastrophe.

I am ready to die in this room unless I find a better place.

Nidaa Badwan NY Times 2/28/15



The artist Nidaa Badwan has hardly left her small room for more than a year, creating her own world of color and a striking set of self-portraits. Credit Nidaa Badwan

The Primacy of Death

The primacy of death

Pervasive preoccupation

Never far from mind

How can it be?

Under its weight

My body breaks down

Impervious incipient parasitic

Rotting venomous shocking

Death breathing down my neck

Obsessed rollicking frolicking

Lover in hot pursuit

My head holds throbbing lamentation

Scribe arbiter amanuensis

Staring back over time

Encapsulated moments

Flipbook memory fragments

Tattered array random

Harsh recollection

Desolate dislocating

Vacated time squandered time

Landfill of decimated possibility

Dung heap of incompleteness

Silent invisible mordant

Perpetual dirge

Discordant discursive redundant

Lachrymose moribund
Mourning my own demise
Grief stricken
Possibility abandoned
Stagnant recitative reviles
Fled mercurial quicksilver
Never a toe dipping
In bracing waters of risk
Solitary secular stalwart
Triumph clear and incisive
I never became mad crazy
As foisted drawn out for me
By Momma Bluma nurse
Her compelling patient
Caged wiping feces on walls
Murals of decoupage
Frescoes of ancient mania
Mother feared becoming her body double
I never did commit suicide
Fantasy always never enactment
Reaching seventy-four attesting
I didn't become a raving mad lunatic
Primordial wall drawings with fecal matter
I didn't become crazy or kill myself
And this dear lord bear witness
Suffice at death intact if geriatric
The stake the pyre the enticements
Endured persevered stayed

However the regrets the torments
Incumbent desultory truly dreading
Moment to moment life finally ending

NB

Suicide is a deeply personal act, ultimately ineffable.

Liz Robbins, NY Times Restaurants Were His Life, Colin Devlin

Dropping words

Dropping stitches
Memory falters
Mnemonic constructs
Unremembered forgotten
Tyranny of eyes and teeth
Lurch heart lurid glance relieved
Mirror reflects back full mouth
If most teeth are dentist made
Eyesight dims cataracts blue
Harsh sun unfiltered stings stuns
What to repair where and why
To die more or less in tact
Taking in vestiges
Of me inside-out
My home holds clues
Of who I was and am
Gallery installation mounted
Or taped to walls tell all
Paintings collage assemblages

Photos reprinted from computer
Family inexhaustible fount of Selfies
Representations of my life extant
No longer looking over shoulder
Smothering voracious mother
Reviled mother sainted father
Among the unreconstructed dead
Life outside door narrows
Harrowing moment knowing
My world no longer exists
Becoming extinct memory's relic
Gain strength confidence
Wandering the hologram sampler
Home sweet home created
With diligent intentionality
Do not want to die here
Could not tolerate
Death's contaminating particles
Clinging to the self-styled exhibition
Want my kids to walk around
As they dismantle tear it all down
Retelling anecdotes creating myths
Having a good laugh beyond heartbreak
Hard to close the door of my home
In which lived I believe
The best of what was me
To say a final goodbye
To the home I grew to love

My shack my little shack
Perched high on an urban bluff
Vistas to view a long look back
Destination yet found
In which to lie down to die
Incautiously free unbound

NB

.....

Origin of death

It started with me today
I died I am dead
Replacing hope
With anticipation
Already friends
Have peeled off
Some through death
Some horse flicking flies
Obligation not love
Life eclipsed
Nothing left to offer
But the *blah, blah, blah...*
Of conversation
Conversations no longer
Capture or ignite imagination
I am gone finished it is over
I feel it today
I am just old
Having spent my time

Well or poorly
No longer matters
No longer to probe
What was lost or run from
How confused and ill-informed
Regret no longer stalks
How poorly I choose
Everything from husbands
To wall paint and counter tops
Aging manifests
Eyes teeth hair losses irreplaceable
Wrists blotched brown leopard spots
Legs uneasy trestle balancing
Cantilevered column of body
Falters falls stumbles
Stylish walking stick
To stave off broken hip
Being stuck in motorized
Medicare purchased wheelchair
Memory faltering
Totems keepsakes
Lapses overridden
Kept hidden
Again longing for death
An old restorative family habit
Thinking of a way out
Plaintive summoning
Begging to die

Mother's echoing mantra

I wish I were dead, I wish I were dead ...

Held hostage held captivated

Held impotent incapacitated

Mother fought off death

Overrun succumbed at 93

Old age looms

Hazards of wither and rot

Preoccupy foredooms

Melancholy melodrama

I am actuarially close

To chronologically dying

Gilded life span of 75

Tectonic shift

Tomorrows no longer entice

Crushing world smaller and smaller

Bits and pieces of me

Die slip slide elide

Eyes dim hands quiver

Legs falter

Breathe heaves

Heart palpitates

Brain betrays

No bringing me back

Searching in earnest for a place

Of natural beauty grandness

With the ocean's persistent laps

Where rocky bluffs rock startle stun

Unrelenting torment of the suffering
Of my found son's compromised body
His life force vehement
Anatomy dislocated trickster
Primacy of my death
Held in its thrall
Making peace with the sorrowful
With the confusion harm and fear
That circumstance bled into my kids
Today I am old
I feel old and know I am old
Time to plan for prepare for goodbyes
Yielding to those living beyond
Executors of an unexpurgated narrative
My physical presence
No longer to censor overshadow
In the rawness of heaving relief
Grief-riddled thought will be right

NB

Having to rip open my heart again

Scratch out my insides

Interpretative dance with fate

Come too late much too late

Let the light shine

...let your light shine before others,

that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Mathew 5:16)

Shine a light (Scorsese documentary about the Rolling Stones)

Shine a light on her

Shine a light on her

Shine a light on her

If anybody sees her (Songwriters Cruz, Taio / Fletcher, Tom / Jones, Danny / Kasirye, Alan)

What comes around goes around

What goes around, goes around, goes around

Comes all the way back around

What goes around, goes around, goes around

Comes all the way back around

What goes around, goes around, goes around

Comes all the way back around

What goes around, goes around, goes around

Comes all the way back around (Justin Timberlake)

Adages truisms aphorisms

How to explain

Startled jolted amazed

Beaudeful Bluma Beaudeful Bluma

My father achingly called out

Look at her see her

My Beaudeful Bluma

Dazzled by her beauty

Felled like a lightening struck tree

Her loon screeches deafening

Her head beating reckoning

Pounding on her breasts

Screaming begging to be forgiven
When her tongue slip knotted
Jolted you with her poisonous
Shit smearing assaulting venom
Twixt and tween being mean
And being crazy
But she was *beaudeful*
And my father was helplessly held captive
Fallen at her crazy cunning dragon lady feet
Obsessed indentured enslaved embattled
Our dad by *beaudeful Bluma* our mother
Then seized distraught multiple years later
Tracing family history's course with reluctant finger
See my son swooned netted bagged
Drawn into pledging forevermore marriage vows
With a *pretty woman* a B grade remake with our own *Julia Roberts*
A hostile takeover of my son in a weak vulnerable limpid moment
Within weeks of dating after sudsing him down in a shower
She rushed him off to a kitsch filled Hollywood Justice of the Peace
Following the *I do's* a champagne drenched lunch
Preserved in outtakes to share with family one year later
Eloping and travelling before introducing his *pretty woman* wife
To my daughter and to me my daughter keeping her very first secret
We learned with the first guilty embarrassed blurting out
That his wife was a featured runway high fashion model
Who had tapped danced on Broadway in the show *42 Street*
Further she from a tiny town of 400 in *Lone Jack Missouri*
Where she lived with her mother stepsister and stepfather
On a tenant farm committed to survival and sustainability

In other words except for paper products
Bought little from the outside world
My daughter-in-law new to me knew how to castrate pigs
Drove a tractor when she was less than ten
And took dance lessons teaching in her own studio at twelve
Finally running off from an abusive mother and father
To join the roadshow of *42 Street* at sixteen
Jaw dropping stories and anecdotes into the first hour
My son in a sort of beneficent catatonic gaze as she spoke
Her beauty and exotic background confounding and captivating
Soon to learn as the lens focused that this bulimic
Pill popping one-time cocaine-sniffing woman
Knew how to pose before a camera
How to smell vulnerability a carnivorous rat
Who caught my son in her butterfly-net
Without his marshaling a thought batting an eye lid
My son who had lived with multiple women for multiple years
Said once when he wanted a family *he would marry whoever was standing next to him*
And there she was as if a mannequin pasted up on stiff signage board
The wistful *Zelda and Fitz* skipping the light fantastic in Paris and beyond
Formally introducing her to the family having officially been his wife of a year
Having travelled the high seas of high fashion often as a trophy girl
She knew how to cast her final spell a spiritual death knell
My son stunned by her prettiness as he sat beside her
Blinded by the light
He was just blinded by the light
Cut loose like a deuce another runner in the night
Blinded by the light
Mama always told me not to look into the sights of the sun
Whoa, but mama that's where the fun is
Ooh, yeah
(I was blinded) Oh my my, oh my my

(I was blinded) Oh my oh my
(I was blinded) I was blinded by the light
(I was blinded) I was blinded by the light
(I was blinded) I was blinded by the light
(I was blinded) I was blinded by the light
(I was blinded) I was blinded
(I was blinded)
(I was blinded) (Bruce Springsteen)

What else is left to a mother watching a son vanish in a swoon?

But find an old reliable tune

She is so pretty she is so pretty his barely audible jeremiad

See the pretty girl in that mirror there:
Who can that attractive girl be?
Such a pretty face,
Such a pretty dress,
Such a pretty smile,
Such a pretty me!

I feel stunning
And entrancing,
Feel like running and dancing for joy,
For I'm loved
By a pretty wonderful boy! (Sondheim and Bernstein)

Like an undescended testicle from grandfather to grandson

Here we have a cycloptic one-eyed biblical reenactment

Of two mild-mannered men entrapped by raptor wonder women

Sun blinded stunned weak-kneed by their beauty

Venerating women who would agree to be with them

Thrust high on pedestals as they the women increasingly

And incessantly exuded strange maladies and tormenting malapropisms

Both women crazy beautiful and crazy as in a verifiable medical definition

Mental Illness: Any of various psychiatric conditions, usually characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning, and caused by physiological or psychosocial factors. Also called mental disease, mental disorder.

Fast forward a Jewish mother-in-law snapped awake

Having showered the ex-model ex-tap dancer

With totems of Upper West Side left-wing Jewish cultural life

To bring her into the circle of my son's early years

Her bone fides as every woman unraveled alarmingly

Pleasing my son as Mary pleased the great whomever with a baby

She produced three in great succession tumbling into inconsistency

Dissembling as a woman as a model as a tap dancer into fixed lunacy

Fitting perfectly alarmingly in the text book definition of sociopath

Sociopath: a person with a psychopathic personality whose behavior is antisocial often criminal, and who lacks a sense of moral responsibility or social conscience. Psychiatry – Ten signs for spotting a sociopath:

1) *Sociopaths are charming.*

2) *Sociopaths are more spontaneous and intense than other people.*

3) *Sociopaths are incapable of feeling shame, guilt or remorse.*

4) *Sociopaths invent outrageous lies about their experiences.*

5) *Sociopaths seek to dominate others and "win" at all costs.*

6) *Sociopaths tend to be highly intelligent.*

7) *Sociopaths are incapable of love.*

8) *Sociopaths speak poetically.*

9) *Sociopaths never apologize.*

10) *Sociopaths are delusional and literally believe that what they say becomes real.*

Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll (Chuck Berry)

And held in thrall to the third generation by a cutout beauty

The Lord...visits the iniquity/sins of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:6-7)

My father then my son captivated by unnerving beauties

What did my father feel believe about himself deep inside?

To have been so enamored seized held captive by *beaudeful bluma?*

His eyes belied him filled with a mordant sadness

Whenever he looked at my brother and me

His lips settled into an unspoken apology

What does my son's shrink-wrapped soul feel as he regards

His wife and mother of his three children who rarely deigns a greeting

Does he still feel like the luckiest guy in the world
For having this pretty woman marry him
Emotionally indentured servitude and how to move beyond
My father never did as he came close to dying
We had to remove him from my mother's care she was attested to
In the new Jersey State Elder Abuse Registry attempting to kill him
She was not a good mother I once told him
I agree he answered simply the sadness regret deafening
If dead I still feel the heat of my mother's intimidation
Envision her head spinning tantrums the oven door ajar
Fast forward to the present and find my son's three children
Cower feign smiles upon sighting their mother
The oldest held so tightly in her sway feels fractured
I am explosive inside he tells his aunt his father's sister
The boy at ten is ill equipped to read the world external to him
What goes around, goes around, goes around
Comes all the way back around (Justin Timberlake)
Hereditary displacement fleeing a disquieting voice inside
Believe time has come for us to stand still open *eyes wide shut (Kubrick)*
Become biblically untethered unbound to break the bonds
Of past transgression past deceit past fearfulness past docility
Time to be unsettled scuttling a past meant to incarcerate and intimidate
It was always about love we did not think we deserved or were worthy of
Before death leaves me wondering find your true love
Beauty in the divine losing ourselves in the loving of another
We recapture reclaim and come into ourselves

NB

I looked at him across the room at him

Sitting on the other side of the hospital bed
This little dried prune of a man hunched over
A New Yorker curds and whey of intellectuals
Tight in his box of insularity this man
Lightning rod for pain and subjugation
Who brought me back to my knees
Resurrecting reconstituting flashpoints
Subversive biblical warnings prophecies
A tableau of troubled *holocaust* misery
Watching him turn the pages as if scripture
Knotted my face teeth biting bone splintering
This assiduous reader had been my husband
And father to our adopted son
Brought out of the Paraguayan rainforest
This malaise enamored man sickness his wellbeing
From the first moment our barely two month old son
Foundered in deep lament
About his birth mother's abandonment
Resisting nourishment each formula unsettling
He was withering waning *failing to thrive*
Holding him as we promised to be worthy parents
I could feel his shriveling timorous body against me
In hours a local pediatrician ran off to find the right formula
His screams shrill resisting attempts at comforting
For a jumble and tangle of reasons
We were forced to stay in Paraguay
Mother and child this fledgling father fleeing back

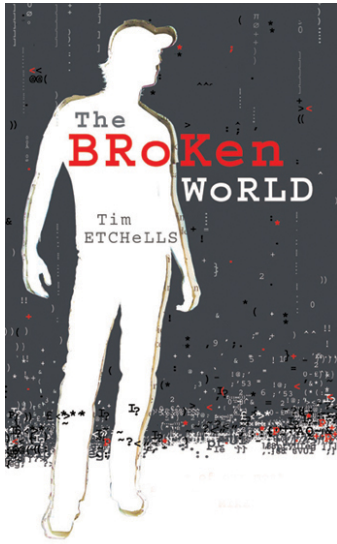
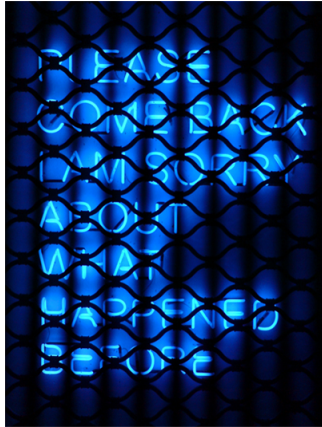
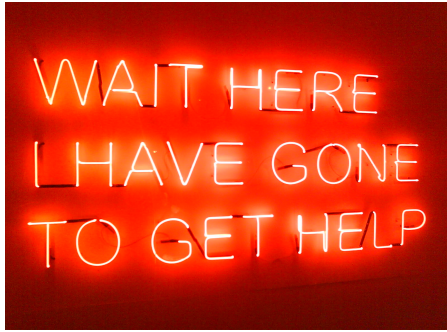
To New York for his euphemistic *Talmudic* work
The baby and I in residence with our Paraguayan lawyer
Our baby brought to life with lullabies
And bosom tight embrace by an extended family
Of female nurturing arms all part of household
This baby less than three months old began to thrive
Yielding to constant hums and nourishment
Love turned this little baby's fate around
The pediatrician commented but three weeks later
Nearly four months after the adoption
We were free to set off for New York
Enclosed and secluded in an interior courtyard
Of abundant flowers and hummingbirds
Wondering doubting if I should bring the baby home
Premonition burgeoning into a crushing reality
The baby could not tolerate any aspect of life in the city
If yielding in my arms his restive body stiffened
Alert sensing danger wild uncanny feral
Horribly despicably his father was to be feared
Verily asserted power a surging penis seeking release
A mad *Godzilla* wrangling his toddler son to the ground
Hereditary surfacing his son kicking back a Guaraní warrior
The boy collected of necessity a battery of plastic guns
Warring gladiator building defensive armament
Resisting without release his father's authority
The father surly soaring manhood intensifying
Epically throwing the boy's battery of plastic pistols
Onto the shoulder of the Saw Mill River Parkway
Biting his son's earlobe while tugging his hair

Godzilla mounting the back of his unruly son
And I a mother the equivalent age of *Sarah* with young child
Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself,
“Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old?
Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” (Genesis)
As if bound and gagged stuck in place
By the horror before my eyes *Jewish mother* blinders
Finally torn from sight the stench awakening
To the putrid impotence in his father’s flexing
Grappling ground down to my role
The onerous implication of my part as mother
Of this inordinately dysfunctional aberrant family
Looming on the next level of this inveterate Nazi gamesmanship
A pharmacy of medications to subdue the ever more noble resisting child
Father stuffed his son like a turkey with pills: *Wellbutrin and Ritalin*
Enraged thrown by his son’s expression of frenzied dislocation
Adopted boys have a lot of problems never settle down
This the gospel of a colleague with disdain for children
In this frame a dad’s hand holding the pills like puppy treats
Some seventy years later feel the crushing weight
Of my son pressed into my shoulder on a school trip
His head flopping like a heroine addict doped up at five
So he wouldn’t cause trouble on the trip
Old patterns re-emerge his father now offering anti-anxiety pills
To his adult son overwhelmed by life transforming medical challenges
Without permission intrusively getting a prescription
From his son’s personal physician
Seductively wanting his son to have a second MRI
To look inside to see where the normal boy resides

Resisting again the torment of technical enclosure
The disease pushing his punishing body to the breaking point
Perhaps not wanting a prognosis of an already short-circuited future
Old *Sarah* divorced the ever-philandering husband
When our son goading me was about nine
Mom, do something that is his girlfriend on our couch!
Again the harsh overhang of *holocaust* re-enacted marriage
Holding back my intrepid desire to lunge across the room
Grab this imposter father from his benevolent perch
Wielding a mighty *batarang* blow him finally to smithereens
And look for gather up the long ago hurled out plastic guns
Hidden in the underbrush of the Saw Mill River Parkway
Time for me eviscerates moment to moment
Old age dragoons disintegrating pieces of me
Time to remove this father-man from center stage
Shove him face-to-face with his putrid ill-willed intolerance
Death will not bring closure it was I *Sarah*
Who brought this found child to her avowed husband
Farcical contemptuous never ever even needing
His sperm to become Luca's mother
Trickster god inner truths unmasked
Pastiche of indecision self-deceit and confusion
Malfeasance illuminated in that final bright white light
Expérience de mort imminente (experience of imminent death)
When the star dies,
Its eye closes; tired of watching,
It flies back to its first bright dream.
Dejan Stojanovic, Circling: 1978-1987
Death blinks neon Regret – Regret - Regret
And then it goes dim as twirling prism vanquishes reason

NB

Death is Certain





Deaths are enacted on cherries, one by one. When the last cherry is killed, the performance is over.

Tim Etchells British Artist Director of Forced Entertainment

Moonlight

*It will not hurt me when I am old,
A running tide where moonlight burned
Will not sting me like silver snakes:
The years will make me sad and cold,
It is the happy heart that breaks.*

*The heart asks more than life can give,
When that is learned, then all is learned;
The waves break fold on jeweled fold,
But beauty itself is fugitive,
It will not hurt me when I am old.*

Sara Teasdale

.....

One of the biggest lies is that time could help. Time does not help. It only deepens the feeling that something is missing. One simply learns to live with such trauma. And if you don't get to the point where you can forgive them, then I think you can't go on living. Eva Fahidi, Holocaust Survivor Tells of Auschwitz at 18 and, again at 90

NY Times 3/14/15

.....

Every time I write a song, I feel like it pops out of me like a mistake.

And I wonder how it happened, and I hope it will happen again next time. Courtney Barnett, Song Writer

.....

Saying Goodbye

Goodbye room furniture windows

Shadows sunrise sunset cityscape

Goodbye collages on doors art on walls

Goodbye Italian handmade tiles in kitchen

Goodbye phones and computer

Goodbye bed and books and bedroom

Goodbye Central Park and buses

Goodbye me

Heart jolts sputters

Knees crumple sway

Wondering is today the day

Goodbye emails

Goodbye memories

And remembering

And forgetting

And forgiving

Goodbye what if's

Goodbye to more chances

Goodbye regret

Goodbye mother and father

Goodbye kids and grandkids

Goodbye moon goodbye sunset

Goodbye to being alive

Soon to be silt mud dew

Bird song in Ginkgo tree

Happenstance of birth

Inevitability of death

Wane ebb dispersed sky breeze tree NB

Wondering who won't let me die

I never let you die

Your lives became my life

For better or worse

Echoing in me

Everything that was ours

Forever incomplete

NB

That I am preoccupied by death

I can't deny

Chronicler of life's ebb

Ten-year-old granddaughter

Who cowers moves away

Repulsed by my mouth my teeth

Aesthetics of decline

In the mirror and on my mind

NB

.....

The world is wrong. You can't put the past behind you. It's buried in you; it's turned your flesh into its own cupboard. Not everything remembered is useful, but it all comes from the world to be stored in you.

Claudia Rankine, "Citizen"

.....

Books magazines enshroud

Places to hide unrevealed

Desperate to remain

Cloaked uncommitted

Words despair of his generalities

His generic derivative commentary

Seizing turmoil

To inveigle intrude

Boundaries irrelevant

Plundered

Grandiosity humbles the pronoun **I**

Trespassing a constant

His venue bleakness

Incumbent mumbling

Of The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
[For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.] Amen.*

Venomous explosive

Where were my words

To condemn to revile

Bitterness spewing bile

Repudiating seeking revenge

Avenge a life stolen
Given freely
For a quandary-less Sunday
Bandy-legged
Wicker-legged Sunday man
Wizened wizardry
Dry as horse dung
Spray of semen
Your bouquet of flowers
Your puddle worthy drop cloak
Gallantry chivalry
Vernacular seduction
Hallmark jingles embellish machination
Tantalize contrite contrived veneration
Demi-mode master of hypocrisy
Virtue's demolition
Metastasizing infatuation
Dappled with a splash of semen
Stiff cock cold cocks
My jaw still throbs
Prolonged aftermath
Urging on me devises
Tighten up that jowl
Puppetry of lower jaw
Appliance seen on *Home Channel*
Inertia's premature jaw jag sag
My head swells swills with rage
Stun gun silt settles

Death's sickle

Awaits the great purge

A sick hatred of you

Tamps down days

Heavy with luminescent dew

Tiny man blots out remembering

The tyranny he ran rampant

On our household

To err is human; to forgive divine. (Alexander Pope)

The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naïve forgive and forget;

the wise forgive but do not forgive but do not forget. (Thomas Szasz)

Tangling with forgiveness

Implodes residue semen spray

Amnesiac postures

Exudes faux familiarity

Monster man terrorist

Barbs and taunts hubris

Inadequate disciple of de Sade

Reign of horror covert

Stammering meek supplicant

Murderous marauder

Instinctual fear tricked

Italian ex-choirboy seethed

Inveigler home invader

Despotic crusader

Sleazy snake oil salesman

Dagger tongue lives in infamy (Franklin Roosevelt)

Despot of revisionist history

My daughter still seethes

He was despicable mean uncaring

Started a fight at the airport

As I was leaving for college

Panicked about leaving my mother

Excoriated my friends

Rich privileged kids didn't have the right to feel self-pity

Only blue-collar choirboys from the Bronx did

Chip on shoulder size of boulder

Aggrieved self-serving trickster

Envy entitlement primary emotions

This venal response in the aftermath

Of the preppy murder of Jennifer Dawn Levin

By the guy my daughter thought was cute called number 19

Twirled on a bar seat next to him the same night

It could have been you I told her

My daughter still raw remembering

How evil unfeeling usurping our lives this man

Who now dares deems to judge me

This from a man

Who barely knowing me at 12

Said you *are a rich self spoiled brat*

Residue clings contaminant irreversible

Played me like *pussy galore (James Bond)*

Remembering when you said

At the funeral reception for my father

With whom you created a faux

Father-son triangulating relationship

Your grandmother was a slut a whore

Your family is no more than scum

Your grandfather's sister informed me

Your family is no better than anyone else's

Inflamed radicalized redeemed

Sharing this revelation with me

It was he who elevated us iconic Jews

His family was the best of him

Divorce papers inevitably drawn

Squandered thousands to rub out word adultery

Replacement *Irreconcilable Differences*

I was a figment of avaricious ambition

Idiomatic lefty-intellectual Upper West Side Jew

Latched onto labyrinth academic connections

This Mafioso impersonating amoroso

Dyslexic diaspora of the heart

Lament fingering worry beads

J'accuse his persistent incessant rant

You always stand in front of me

Overshadow me

Ordering me to follow him

Out of back door of a bus in traffic

Chest expanse gorilla pounding

Bus pole hugger held her ground

Seduction spray of semen spring sprig

I was a generous Baobab fit for nesting

I was his jellybean Jew

His iconic Upper West Side Jew

Spewing stench of arcane sadness
Face stuck paradigmatic Jesus grief
Guilt twisted tongue stammers
Fucking blowhard engendering soulfulness
Generalities perambulate off tongue
Facing the sunrise contrite
What wizardry got me
Before Lord and Rose Window
To promise myself to him
Madness lifted to sound
Deepest betrayal of self of soul
He thinks his dissertation
On Foucault credible
His advisor referring to him
As a hopelessly derivative feral student
We were nineteen at the time, and he was reading Foucault,
but that was 18 years ago, and now he doesn't think
he understood Foucault back then.
It's real my friend says of the self,
but it's made. (The Folded Clock, Heidi Julavits)
Opining academic legitimacy
Lying on a fleece of sheepskin
Exalted fucking begat Ph.D.
Glided off on Brazilian mistress tresses
Rodeo swagger to Latin American
Miniscule tiny man lurks in present tense
Sitting in a hospital room corner

With *New Yorker*

Obeisant dreary supplicating

Argentinian girlfriend enters

In lollygag of conversation

She offers academic credentials

Recounts mother cuddles with her daughter

I am overwrought

My child our found child lies suffering

In the aftermath of critical surgery

Allegorical liturgical good man

Abracadabra undergoes

Mighty transformation

Becoming gentleman farmer

Tilling the soil of Argentina

Eva Peron's long lost brother

Again kin of woman you fuck

Stupendous unctuous spurious

Stumbling bumbling stammering

Deep within derelict posturing

Submissive plaintive subservient

Small miniscule man great pretender

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender

Pretending that I'm doing well

My need is such I pretend too much

I'm lonely but no one can tell

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender

Adrift in a world of my own

I've played the game but to my real shame

You've left me to grieve all alone

Too real is this feeling of make-believe

Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal

*Yes, I'm the great pretender
Just laughin' and gay like a clown
I seem to be what I'm not, you see
I'm wearing my heart like a crown
Pretending that you're still around*

*Too real is this feeling of make-believe
Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal*

*Yes, I'm the great pretender
Just laughin' and gay like a clown
I seem to be what I'm not, you see
I'm wearing my heart like a crown
Pretending that your still around (Ram, Buck The Platters)*

This faux Foucault scholar

Women dragging seabed for a man

Again our found son foundering

You recount your prostate surgery

Banalities drip from your mouth

I see you now I see you!

...these thoughts of time, its loss and gain, the knowing that the days before no longer belonged and the days to come were unknown and blank, confused Saladin to the point of panic.

Unbalanced by discordant echoes of home, like the Venice Beach busker whose turban appears native to the old country?

... it is the ever-present shadow thrown by a bullying sun: He wishes for a cloudy day to relieve him of this constant dark stamp or some great shade that will erase the print of himself that follows and leads, follows and leads. The ache for a life familiar; the fresh bruises of homelessness and hunger; the guilt from abandoning relatives; the inability to temper one's otherness — this is Saladin's shadow, the truths that steal refuge from the refugee, that trail like a dim, dull friend. Laleh Khadiviv the Walking

Dared to create family with found son

Boy with frightening broken body

Flashes of your intemperance

Lunging at our son before he was six

Biting his ear flinging him across a room

Pulling his hair doping him up

And there I was by your side

Selling my soul to an ejaculating imposter

Once again in a hospital room

With a back bent spindly-legged guy

Wondering how I even know you
The thrum thrumming banter
Onerous grappling making sense of you
How I so onerously bungled a decision
How I got life so wrong
Distraught dug deep feelings of inadequacies
Bound me in gestational madness
Prince of the pas de deux
Death's breath closes in
Encircles enshrouds descends
The hatred for him remains
Something's never make sense
You shriveled man nose deep dived
In a *New Yorker* my mother's annual gift
Man token intelligentsia
How hard to forgive you
Who latched onto me
An infant suckling a mother's tit
A neophyte's scrambling ambition
Peregrinating spirit soul
Lifting me off the endless fog
Insidious invidious odious
Calamitous remorseful
Bad feelings clamor for release
Free up this hollow moan
I found a man
To sleep in my bed
From the pages of *Cosmo* and *Us*

For women approaching forty

Fucking keeps you young

Pathetic ridiculous

Not without irony or humor

Scathing indictment

Of wife just released

From the tyranny

Of an abusive marriage

Recumbent exhausted

Swarmed by unctuous guy

Collapsed caved-in yielded

Derivative craven abductor

My face never got lifted

Kept jaggedy jawline

Abruptly wake not nightmare

He looms father of our son

Rid wipe out his leeching presence

Eerily wearily haunted by him

Pot fumes body twig bent

Son enters bathroom

To relieve pain in jet pulsing hot bath

We wave strangers kin mother son

How often heart break

Before it crashes shuts off silent

Remorse the last unsparing thought

NB

You left nary a thumbprint in my exterior world not on my walls not in collected letters not in jewels books nothing you exist vapor – the smudge the thumbprint a weight a shadow in my heart that won't be contained or erased – you dwell there haunting daunting disturbing the beating of my heart- nb

...words came tumbling out of closets and drawers, leaking from rusty faucets and reappearing as character actors. Lucille Gang Shulklapper, started writing in retirement, now 80, published first book when she was 60. NY Times 3/21/15 "Finding Success, Well Past the Age of Wunderkind"

.....

and bravery and love and trespass and contrition

we're the same beings that began, still living

in all of our fury and foulness and friction

everyday odysseys, dreams and decisions...

.....

letting nothing take you by surprise any longer

whole world spinning within you (what it is to be old)

.....

Seeking out a secret in

The light, the rain, the traffic.

A thing that makes him less alone.

Some sudden, brutal magic.

.....

My heart throws its head against my ribs,

it's denting every bone it's venting something

it has known since I arrived and felt it beat.

Kate Tempest, "Brand New Ancients" and "Hold Your Own"

.....

Bioluminescent – mushrooms fireflies – light shines glows “green light emitted by some species attracts insects that help spread the plants’ spores” and I member of this lived world never sufficiently bioluminescent to turn a head or fix a gazing eye –the light now dims never having attracted him - nb

She is my life partner, said Eric Holder

Turning toward his wife

Suppressing snuffles resigning

As Attorney General

Words cut a craw in my gullet

Seized a beat of my heart

Misty-eyed to whom do I turn

To name as my life partner

Weary aged sculpted face

Looks back

We were solitary

Caste in a foundry

Of premonition of promise

When eleven

It has been so

Life partner life itself

Being alive clear-eyed

And so with love to spare

Die owing owning a self

Mostly if unbidden forgiven

NB

Reader unmov'd and Reader unshaken, Reader uneduc'd
and unterrified, through the long-loud and the sweet-still
I creep toward you. Toward you, I thistle and I climb.

"The Scaffolding Inside You"

*Your thoughts have hung themselves from nails
like workshirts.*

*The sky has stopped
offering you reasons to live and your heart is the rock
you threw through each window
of what's deserted you, so you turn
to the burnt out building inside you: the scaffolding
overhead, the fallen beams,
the unsound framework;*

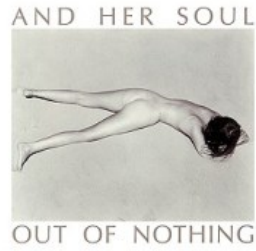
*according to the blue that's printed on the inside of your arms
you have no plans, no plans
uncovered, or uncovering: the offing is emptying,*

the horizon empty

*now that your sanity is
a tarp or a bedsheet
in the rough hands of the wind,*

*now that everything is hooded
in drop cloth.*

Olena Kalytiak Davis - sweet reader, flannelled and tulled



Olena Kalytiak Davis

*It didn't happen
overnight. Or maybe it did:*

*your heart, the rock;
your soul, the Gothic barn.*

You've even started envying the flowers their stems.

Will the Norther let up?

*Will the moon ever again be so full of itself
that that ragged barn will fill with light, through its tin-covered roof?*

*You should bury more than the dead.
You should try harder.
You should give up*

Olena Kalytiak Davis

.....

*timelines of meaningless afternoons
that ended somewhere big and terrible."*

.....

*When his crying mother says to him,
"I worry that you'll be lonely,"
he swivels his eyeballs in her direction and says,
"I was going to be lonely anyway.*

John Darnielle, Wolf in White Van

.....

I tell you I could speak again: whatever

Returns from oblivion returns

To find a voice

From the center of my life came

A great fountain, deep blue

Shadows on azure seawater,

.....

Surely spring has been returned to me, this time

not as a lover but a messenger of death, yet

it is still spring, it is still meant tenderly

.....

I was, you will understand, entering the kingdom of death...

Louise Gluck, Faithful and Virtuous Night

.....

when suddenly she felt . . . gradually she felt . . . her lips moving . . . imagine! . . . her lips moving! . . . as of course till then she had not . . . and not alone the lips . . . the cheeks . . . the jaws . . . the whole face . . . all those- . . . what? . . . the tongue? . . . yes . . . the tongue in the mouth . . . all those contortions without which . . . no speech possible . . .

Samuel Beckett, Not I

.....

Mr. Bernstein's insistence that performers have a right...even a responsibilityto be nervous, which they must overcome by preparing so thoroughly that they will do well in spite of it.

Seymore Bernstein, piano teacher, Seymore: An Introduction (Documentary)

.....

There's this Hebrew word, 'hineni,' that means, 'I am here,' and I've been thinking about it a lot, Karen Strnad said. "Now I can say 'hineni' and be looking at a family member I've never known about before. I can say 'hineni' about Hedy's creations. These dresses are artifacts of the history of my family. They are keeping them spiritually alive."

"Stitching History From the Holocaust" clothes designed by Hedvika Strnad, killed in concentration camp by Nazi's. Wisconsin Museum Tell of a Holocaust Tragedy – NY Times 9/27/14

.....

"Ode to attempt" - attempt to have an interlude – attempt to go minimal – attempt to be provocative (in a fun way) Jan Martens, Dutch choreographer (NY Times 9/29/30)

.....

The Slow Descent

Bitterness spews bile

Days mine to shape

To wipe my mouth clean

Of ghastly green ooze

Days mine to shape

Scheduling a suicide

No date certain yet.

NB

Cusp bicuspid

First teeth sprouting

Transition teeth

Softening the gum

For what's to come

Cusp transition point

Cusp verging on

Transition time

Resigned by design

Death sauntering my way

Life span tautological

Filled with transition points

End point in sight

Edging closing in eternal night

NB

Desperation's End

Inevitable tautological descent

Life has begun to end

Dislocating disorienting

Saying goodbye to myself

Nudging reality into the open

No more to change course

Life's ending has begun

Clear do not want to be viewed

Having last gargle last gasp

Life writes itself in endnotes epilogue

Time to find that solitary place

Where I can come to final rest

Food and drink parsed over day's hours

Until cupping hand places pills

If weakly in mouth

Confronting a mirror image

I hardly recognize asking

Wonder have I the will the courage

To take this action

Before it is grabbed from me

The curved scythe overshadowing

Portend silencing a sputtering heart

Lie wilting on pea proof sheets

I chose rather to die by an urgent sea

Boulders jutting straight up from an uneasy tide

Not beneath hovering expressions of horror

Hands held in bone crushing squeeze

Watching with alarm and dread
As my breath chortles and chokes
It's way to silence
Witnessing death not bequeathed
Not to revel in grief riddled post-mortems
I rebel resist rail against
The indignities of a witnessed death

NB

.....

You must be so happy here

My 80 year old neighbor Nancy
Comments as she wanders around
My apartment my artistic rendering
A space in which I am inside out
Sticking up things at will
Family collages on royal blue walls
Without care or regard
Refusing entry to anyone
Who would cast
Intrusive capricious eye
In my/our home
Luca comes often to bathe
Rushing bath waters soothe
Luca lives mostly one flight up
With female friend and neighbor
Their relationship fraught with crisis
Door abruptly opens Luca bursts in
Rushes to bathroom now medicinal spa

Body palpitates post-surgery
Wave to him off-handedly
Despair crowds tear ducts
Sorrow swamps my being
Nancy and I both mothers
Of critically unsettled
Chronically ill
Or mentally sick sons
A bond a fist raised
Mothers' carrying
Unyielding sorrow
You must be happy here
Happy here happy here
She leaves it echoes
Resonates redolent
I am happy here
Spiritual crypt secrets to unlock
Play of shadow and light on walls
Windows frame cityscape
And sky's revolving pallet
Wander home's topology
Archaeologically unapologetically
Reflecting who I am/was
Revelatory walls and side-tables
Appear as museum or mausoleum
Architecture mid-century proletariat
Apartment eleven hundred square feet
Transformed *devil-may-care*

Wary of marauders grasping
Identity of self so long undisclosed
Here free form play of imagination
Startling if all telling revealing
Now captive within these walls
Bleak aftermath of Luca's surgery
Attendant to frequent baths and calls
What up Mom? What you doin?
Can you bring up a couple of juice boxes?
Phone jangles unnerved a tangle
Hold breath onerous premonition
Portends doom urgency emergency
Howling holding dead cat
It was my fault I did nothing
He was sick for two days
Was the cat's death a warning of
The first sacrifice death's pre-eminence
Luca's umbilical cord judicially severed
Pledging to love and cherish
The flailing fledgling infant
In musty Paraguayan courtroom
City notorious as Nazi haven
What had Motherhood asked of me
The unthinkable decision's implications
Consequences pervasive permeate
Luca soon to be 27
I have been sick 11 years
He shares with his sister

Mother to boy of broken body
A child of a Paraguayan rainforest
Who never adapted
To our climate our food our ways
Taunted fate thrums through time
*And so it is, that both the Devil and the angelic
Spirit present us with objects of desire
to awaken our power of choice. (Rumi)*
Haunted that we did not take
That first child offered
Ears poked out Frank told me
Casting disparaging glances
Attorney abruptly takes the child
From Frank's jaundiced scrutiny
Negotiate *handl (Yiddish bargain)* for second chance
Lawyer offers infant three weeks old
Devil's hand offering second chance
I too was unpleasing to Frank's eye
Dragged off to a plastic surgeon
Barely 40 consultations for facelift
This major-domo of the physically repulsive
Had me prematurely primordially aging
Luca became our replacement child
Unabashed conciliation to steady marriage
Negotiation with the lawyer got us Luca
And exacting comeuppance of *devil's due*
Subsumed forever by guilt live in crater of shame
Unintended consequences acquiesced to bully

When becoming a mother for the third time
Abrogating every good truth from within
Stalwart steady mother watches over child
Body mapped with carnage oozing scar tissue
Forever tethered to the twisted hand of fate
Reckoning images on walls tabletops
Ablution baptismal wash past encumbrances
Etched uncomely sag and jowl
Narrative of walls etched firmly on face
Longevity just desert layered years
To mother child of broken body
Luca brings in the sun inhabits the night sky
Blows pot to catch *forty winks* of catnip sleep
Weary supplicant of reprehensible misdeed
Boy with poked out ears somewhere in universe
In the pathology of self-deceit hellish bargaining
Love came to bloom a singular stalwart flower
Archetype mother Mary of sacrifice unbridled pain
None have loved a son not born of body more than I
Soon to vacate personal contrivance that is my home
Inevitable death looms mired yet in *circles of hell* (*Dante's Inferno*)
Knelling end if with grace or guilt soon to be known

NB

What gives you strength or joy?

What do you wish to be forgiven for?

And whom do you wish to forgive?

Voicing My Choices, A Planning Guide for Adolescents & Young Adults –

Young, Daring and Brave, NY Times April, 5, 2015 Aging with Dignity

"Some of us think holding on makes us strong, but sometimes it is letting go." - Herman Hesse

"Ultimately we know deeply that the other side of every fear is freedom." - Marilyn Ferguson

*"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly."
- Langston Hughes"*

*"People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out,
but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within"
Elizabeth Kubler Ross*

"In the midst of hate, I found there was in me, an invincible love. In the midst of tears, I found there was within me, an invincible calm. I realized that throughout it all, that...in the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger - something better, pushing right back." -

Do one thing everyday that scares you - Eleanor Roosevelt

A wild patience has taken me thus far

Adrienne Rich

Forget all the reasons it won't work and believe the one reason why it will.

*Courage is not defined by those who fought and did not fall, but by those who fought, fell and rose again
Adrienne Rich*

So The Hall Door Shuts Again and All Noise is Gone

In the effort to find one's way among the contents of memory

(Aristotle emphasizes)

a principal of association is helpful—

“passing rapidly from one step to the next.

For instance from milk to white,

from white to air,

from air to damp,

*after which one recollects autumn supposing one is trying to
recollect that season.”*

Or supposing,

fair reader,

you are trying to recollect not autumn but freedom,

a principal of freedom

the existed between two people, small and savage

as principals go—but what are the rules for this?

As he says,

folly may come into fashion.

Pass then rapidly

from one step to the next,

for instance from nipple to hard,

from hard to hotel room,

from hotel room

to a phrase found in a letter he wrote in a taxi one day he passed

his wife

walking

on the other side of the street and she did not see him, she was—

so ingenious are the arrangements of the state of flux we call

our moral history are they not almost as neat as mathematical

propositions except written on water—

on her way to the courthouse

to file papers for divorce, a phrase like

how you tasted between your legs.

After which by means of this wholly divine faculty, the “memory

of words and things,”

one recollects

freedom.

Is it I? cries the soul rushing up.

Little soul, poor vague animal:

beware this invention “always useful for learning and life”

as Aristotle say, Aristotle who

had no husband,

rarely mentions beauty

and was likely to pass rapidly from wrist to slave when trying to

recollect wife.

-Anne Carson

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

My swirling wants. Your frozen lips.

The grammar turned and attacked me.

Themes, written under duress.

Emptiness of the notations.

They gave me a drug that slowed the healing of wounds.

I want you to see this before I leave:

the experience of repetition as death

the failure of criticism to locate the pain

the poster in the bus that said:

my bleeding is under control

A red plant in a cemetery of plastic wreaths.

A last attempt: the language is a dialect called metaphor.

These images go unglossed: hair, glacier, flashlight.

When I think of a landscape I am thinking of a time.

When I talk of taking a trip I mean forever.

I could say: those mountains have a meaning

but further than that I could not say.

To do something very common, in my own way.

Adrienne Rich

Roll my prayer beads

Chant soliloquys

Words words words

Drift up

Spring through fingers

Aleatoric

Chance

However

Last words

On page to be mine

NB

An argument that society and families—and you—will be better off if nature takes its course swiftly and promptly

SEVENTY-FIVE.

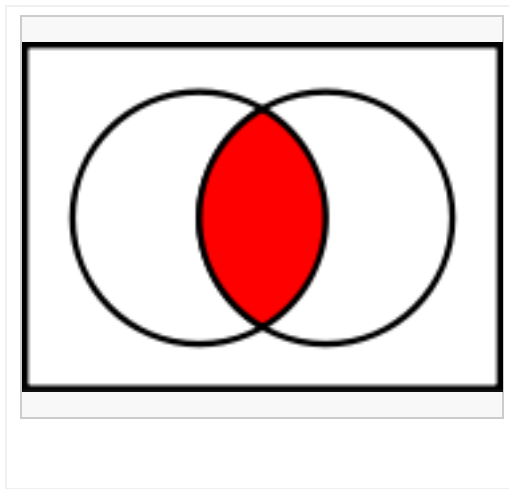
That's how long I want to live: 75 years.

Since the 1990s, I have actively opposed legalizing euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. People who want to die in one of these ways tend to suffer not from unremitting pain but from depression, hopelessness, and fear of losing their dignity and control. The people they leave behind inevitably feel they have somehow failed.

Seventy-five years is all I want to live. I want to celebrate my life while I am still in my prime. My daughters and dear friends will continue to try to convince me that I am wrong and can live a valuable life much longer. And I retain the right to change my mind and offer a vigorous and reasoned defense of living as long as possible. That, after all, would mean still being creative after 75.

EZEKIEL J. EMANUEL The Atlantic September 17, 2014

The VENN Diagram



- *A Venn diagram uses intersecting circles to illustrate the similarities, differences, and relationships between groups. Similarities between groups are represented in the intersecting portions of the circles, while differences are represented in the non-intersecting portions of the circles.*

And, Why I Hope to Die at 75

*An argument that society and families—and you—
will be better off if nature takes its course swiftly and promptly*

SEVENTY-FIVE.

That's how long I want to live: 75 years. (Physician, Ezekiel J. Emanuel)

To die while in full grasp

To take an act in hand

With grace and command

Orchestrate my own demise

With no chance of reviving

Death in its final

Ornamental reality

And yes

Just before or as

Becoming 75

The yes and no's

Have been battling

And yet I edge closer

Ruminations of

Places and ways

For withering

Absolute last breaths

"Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being - like a worm." (John-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness

Death constant

Mornings and night times

Removing self from universe

Placating others

Horror of suicide

Willing to die

Not to short-circuit life

My life is done

Just done

No desire for more

Possibility

Lost its edge

The ability to seduce

Got to prepare

My children

And their children

That the end

Has come for me

Sparely offered

Shared moments

Filigree of time capsules

Moment by moment

Remove self stealthily

I am on rationed time

My will bent to the arc

Of age old age

Daily call less

Ration emails

Share stories

Public alchemy

Sub text sub plot

Edited blotted out

To become but a petal

On a mound

Of copper leaves

Death wraps itself

Around hours

A ticking second hand

Absorbed

To near distraction

Obsession

Along comes

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel

Plundering ominous

Scary really

Justifying why

75 is the right time

To die to end life

Weight of threnody

Sadness's psalm

Woman in final retreat

Dear *Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel*

Setting up trial balloon

Tremors of knobby hands

Claiming a moral calibration

Dear doctor

You have 17 years

Before becoming 75

Seconding my thought

To terminate my life

Begin removing myself

From this universe

This world

To bring to an end

While you have years

To climb

That airless ascent

That irrevocable void

Death

Dear good doctor

I am but hair breath away

Nine months to be precise

Before reaching
My 75th birthday
Dreaming up end points
Is a little like
Proffering madness
Doctor, with your declamations
You issue death warrants
Warnings
Not to clutter up
The universe
With years of withering
A revolting
Spilling off of fluids
From every orifice
Pursue daily
Beauty and truth
Ritualistic
Of mad autodidact
Gone amuck
Internet searches
Proffer quotes
Easing the way
To a carefully
Orchestrated death
Single ardent desire
To compose a good end
Nearly convinced

75 is the right time

To die

To end my life

My life orbits

A death calendar

Venn diagram encircles

Possibilities

Live or die - die or live

Conjoined a single word

(Die)(ve Liv)(edie)

In the middle

Comingled essence

Non-existence

Foregone conclusion

Who claims me first

Old age anomalies

Or my own hand

Bringing me forth

And beyond

Searching for

The right song

The right poem

The right book

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel

Pop-up affirmation

And I quote:

We are no longer remembered as vibrant and engaged but as feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic.

By the time I reach 75, I will have lived a complete life.

Your solipsistic palpitating rumination works

We are no longer remembered as vibrant and engaged but as feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic. EE

Master of my own fate

Will I find the nerve

Not to stay a moment longer

Muster the courage

Whip up the batter

Crush the pile of pills

Begin to eat less

Mark the calendar

Quest of spirit and mind

An encoded reality

Made clear by dear *Ezekiel Emanuel*

Embedded in logic and reason

Prudent not to linger beyond

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been. - Mark Twain

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana. - Groucho Marx

Depression not the motivator

Quicksilver escape not the answer

On the most glorious day

When beauty captivates and stuns

Desire for self-infused death to begin

NB

Seeping Leaking

Reeking Stinking
How much can
One contend with
Before shutting down
Quitting living?

NB

.....
Oy vey iz mir – Oh, woe is me

Complained about her, my mother
Complained about him, my husband
Complained about him, second husband
Got stuck complaining

Oy vey iz mir – Oh, woe is me

Became a way of life
Never looked for a brighter day
Poor me woe is me
Problems!

The cloud beneath
Which I walked
Comfortable

With weight of doubt
Refused to move beyond
Justifications rationalizations
Kept me staying in place

NB

Feeling the back drift

Of death

Gravity pull

You get shorter

Compressed

Ready for recycling

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust (Anglican Book of Common Prayer burial service)

Die we must

Keeping death close

Death is the mother of beauty.

Only the perishable can be beautiful,

Which is why we are unmoved by artificial flowers. (Wallace Stevens)

Death a prism

Cascading rainbows of light

Melancholia sets in

The contrite

Beneath my feet

Quicksand

The hourglass empties out

Brain resists

Further contemplate

Love and death

Today brain locks down

No more to think it

Will it have it!

Tomorrow is another day (Gone With the Wind Scarlett O'Hara)

Or is it? Or was it?

While I thought that I was learning how to live, I have been learning how to die. (Leonardo de Vinci)

Suicide is man's way of telling God, 'You can't fire me - I quit.' (Bill Maher)

If We Must Die

If we must die, let it not be like hogs

Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,

Making their mock at our accursèd lot.

If we must die, O let us nobly die,

So that our precious blood may not be shed

In vain; then even the monsters we defy

Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!

Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,

And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!

What though before us lies the open grave?

Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,

Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

Claude McKay, "Harlem Shadows"

Ardently want to vanish

Disappear die

Note simply saying

I've gone my mile.

My children wondering

Mother died today. Or, maybe, yesterday; I can't be sure. (Albert Camus, The Stranger)

Precise hour time of death

Hard to fathom know

My final prompt being

No Regrets!

NB

Tired of lugging this weight this body around

This weight my life too heavy to heave to haul

In and out of hours and days

Anchored in sadness and death

Bereft –

We are walking on thin ice

My youngest son and I

It is breaking apart

Ice floes chunked off

Glacial deposits

We are legend

Leagues beyond our depth

Imagining death wondering

In the chilling October air

What steps to take

To enter with grace

Life's final stage

Gradually stop eating

Gather up pills

Mother always said

The pills are in the drawer

They never were

To die at home

Or at the oceans rim

Defile a home

With its ultimate

Barren desolation
Tired out worn down
Sadness brooding
No longer interested
Advancing the argument
Why pre-empt death
Tired of sorrow regret
For what I didn't chose
Missed chance's putrid ooze
Never had a true love
Life's greatest wonder
Left me solitary adrift
Composing a day
No longer entices
Adventuresome walks tedious
Although sighting egret
Flapping expanse of wings
Circling the Meer
Had a beating heart awakening
Fatigued expecting the worst to happen
Premonitions of doom pierce silence
When will the other shoe to drop
Depression's drub and drag pulls
Impales even moments of light
There is no happy ending here
Tired of lugging the weight I carry around
Oblique fear encroaches
The mordant pulse alerts pursues

Dimming beams of hopefulness

Eclipsed elliptic reflexive

Irreverent irrelevant

I simply don't want to go on

Dear Samuel Beckett

"I can't go on, I'll go on." (Samuel Beckett)

Tedious thinking perpetually of death

Its finality banality in perpetuity

Death be not proud – (John Donne)

Sailing to Byzantium

*That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.*

*An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.*

*O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.*

*Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.*

William Butler Yeats

Encroaching death breaks ground

Do I have the courage

To close down daylight

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

Dylan Thomas

On my own terms

Tired of lugging a self around

Drenched in sadness sorrow

Spent life conjoined by choice

With fire dragon mother

She my out my excuse

Hiding in the unctuous

Force of her torment

Mother kept me in bondage

I never tried to break loose

Offered my life as if a saint

The ornery robes of deceit

Fall away bare and barren

Squandered dickered bargained

Turned my back tricked myself

Failure greater fear

Than reckoning with life

Being fully alive

Would rather run

Than move toward light

That is the crime

For which there is no forgiving

"The end is in the beginning and yet you go on." Endgame Samuel Beckett

The end is in the beginning

Dying foretells

The building of a narrative

Fictive or true

The story of a life lived ensues

NB

.....
At some point, you have to start indulging in the pleasures of the present.

...emerging biomarkers may someday predict whether one is developing the earliest pathology of Alzheimer's disease are an opportunity for people to schedule their suicide. Or at least start smoking.

Leonard Cohen Too Young to Die, Too Old to Worry NY Times Sunday Sept 21, 2014

.....
A book is a postponed suicide

What a torment to be ordinary, a man among men – nothing is more commonplace than the ersatz troubled soul, for everything can be learned, even angst.

EM Cioran, The Temptation to Exist

.....
I had to stop hating Chester to start loving myself. Forgiveness was freedom. I simply had to let go of my past so that I could step into my future.

I was very much alive. There was no hierarchy of humanity. There was no one-way to be, or even two, but many. And no one could strip me of my value and dignity, because no one had bestowed them. These things came into the world with me.

I had done what the world had signaled I must: hidden the thorn in my flesh, held "the demon" at bay, kept the covenant, borne the weight of my crooked cross. But concealment makes the soul a swamp. Confession is how you drain it.

But vulnerability is the leading edge of truth. Being willing to sacrifice a false life is the only way to live a true one.

Charles M. Blow Putting Aside Pain, Embracing the Complexity of Desire - NY Times 9/21/14

As See Through The Bluest Eye (Toni Morrison)

White people are trapped in a history they don't understand. James Baldwin

"Intelligence is a great leveler here as elsewhere"

"Knowledge unfits a child to be a slave".

Frederick Douglass, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.

"Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free."

Frederick Douglass, Blessings of Liberty and Education. Speech. 1894

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.

America is not another word for Opportunity to all her sons.

The price of culture is a Lie.

What is Truth? Nay, but that men know so little of men. W.E.B. DuBois

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me. Pastor Maftin Niemoller

I am inside someone who hates me. I look out from his eyes.

A man is either free, or he is not. There cannot be an apprenticeship for freedom.

Art is a weapon in the struggle of ideas, the class struggle.

There is no justice in America, but it is the fight for justice that sustains you.

Art is whatever makes you proud to be human.

Warriors are poets and poems and all the loveliness here in the worlds. Amiri Baraka

We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.

Anger is better. There is a sense of being in anger. A reality and presence. An awareness of worth. It is a lovely surging.

I have only to break into the tightness of a strawberry, and I see summer – its dust and lowering skies.

...A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes. His outrage grew and felt like power. For the first time he honestly wished he could work miracles.

Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye

No. Let the people see what I have seen. I think everybody needs to know what had happened to Emmett Till.

Mamie Till Emmett Till's mother

Mother How Could You Have Left Me This Way?

You died too soon you should have waited for me
You lived too long *we live too damn long* as you were wont to say
It is impossible for me now to live without you
You died when you were ninety-three and I seventy-one
We were practically siblings by that time
Early on you crawled into me an invasive microbe
A distressed mangled twisted aberrant gene
And never left
You sucked the life out of me inside out
I held onto you as I held onto myself
I am nobody without you our fights
Your denigrating insinuating incendiary manipulative calls
They threw me to doubts self-hatred a lance to the heart
I am aligned intertwined a programmed if crude robot
Detesting you my revulsion repulsion
Being repelled by you kept my juices flowing
It has been my lifeline
I need you now to keep alive
You did not keep up your end of the nefarious bargain
For me to die first it was in your every word
In your willful disregard of me
And my god given right to a separate identity
It was written in the stars a lovers death pact
To die together two lovers mother and daughter
Never untethered disconnected
Never became a separate person of consequence

Your death finally freed me to know
I had no life without you
I am completely dependent on our internecine web
Our inner dialect the subtext was my daily bread
Simply put I simply can't live without you
When my father your husband of nearly sixty years died
I felt I had an imperative to carry on
I owed him to bring him forward
To have his soul and spirit live on
Your death made it clear
That I cannot live without you
Symbiotic from birth from that first mortal cry
I flopped failed infant life
Crushed at birth morbidity at first cry

NB

.....
How to Make a Home

If you have belongings, personal effects, unpack them, but do not put them away in drawers or cabinets or closets with any immediacy. Let them sit out for an hour, a few days, so they can greet you when you enter a room and you can catch sight of that sweater your grandmother knit and you can relax. Stand naked in as many rooms as you can – for the asylum seeker, unmitigated freedom is not instinctual.

Laleh Kadivi, The Living

Turning 70 –(Read at birthday party given by Jeremy Rebecca and Luca)

How do you feel turning 70, you ask

I feel good, so good to quote James Brown

Although nobody like me

Appears in the mirror

And my wrists spotted

Stains of years passing

Can't remove those

I will never appear like I was

The mirror image is gone

Takes courage to stare

At the me in there

But I feel good

To live to see 70

And I can still see

If a little murky and cloudy

I see three children

They are good people

Deeply and daringly good

And the older two

Each has three more

I am a grandma six times over

And to think that Luca and I

Lived to see him turn twenty-two

That death that snatched

My girlhood face

That death that etches

Brown spots beneath my wrists
We escaped Luca and I
What more to ask of life
I have Jeremy and Rebecca
And Luca and then
Sophie and Willa and Owen
And Hudson, Daisy, and Upton
Love always baffled me
Marriage threw me
Being a daughter
Nearly capsized me
But here I am 70
Surrounded by friends and friendships
Many made by sandboxes
And walks home from school
It feels good - good to be alive so good
Why? I asked my father at six
Because of Bach he answered
When he decided to die
He said *no more Bach it is too beautiful*
Bach is still not too beautiful
For me and I know *Why*
I am 70 and I feel good
So good the bible did not best me
My children Jeremy and Rebecca and Luca
Celebrate me It feels good – 70.
I have never been more alive

Naomi Barber July 17, 2010

*In the morning I had a look so lost, a face so dead, that perhaps those whom I met **did not see me.***
Arthur Rimbaud, "A Season in Hell"

There are various ways of dealing with the terror of death, he writes. Denial, obsession or acceptance. Then there's a fourth way. "This way, he writes, "requires no forgetting, no lying, no groveling at the altar of the inevitable. All it takes is instinct." Jeb Rubenfeld

Met Calendar Feb 5 and 6, 2011 –

This is the face universal succumbing unbearable right so right was sadness sorrow ever depicted more or better and a hand like a gnarled tree limb reaching out to where? And a hand on what calms becalms his private parts beneath a tasteful drapery and his face heavenward – I have finally found though not as great or bountiful or beautifully wrought that is the experience I will die with that is the image of my salvation my reality affirmed found back in 1482 not a poem not a story not a painting speaks to me more – and my toes my big one curl fist like fistula tight – it is me my interior space an archetype for my life's story I am that face I am he reborn in me – mirror image

Man of Sorrow - Hans Baldung Grien, German artist – 1484



A Bathing Scene by Hans Baldung Grien

*...**upholding** the Catholic ideal of no sex except in marriage and then only for procreation. You had people with no understanding of their sexuality, of what sexuality even was, and they were in complete power.*

"The Irish Affliction" by Russell Shorto, NY Times Magazine, 2/13/10

The Disappearances I - 2015

*To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air
Comes a still voice. William Cullen Bryant, *Thanatopsis**

Beehive colony collapse
Wrong milkweed planted
To save bees
Who knew
One milkweed from another
Bees knew

We all get stung by bee colony collapse. The honeybee population in the United States is now less than half of what it was at the end of World War II. Driven largely by industrial farming practices, that decline as well underway when, in 2006, commercial beekeepers began finding many of their hives suddenly abandoned. Colony collapse appears to be linked to a variety of factors that work in concert to weaken bees. Seeds coated with neonicotinoid pesticides, or neonics, sprout into crops laced with the chemicals, which shut down the nervous system of any insect munching on the plant. The chemicals even make their way into nectar and pollen, which can dose bees with enough of the toxin to cause disorientation and a loss of ability to learn and communicate — crucial skills for a social insect. The poisons can be even stronger when store-shelf insecticides are used by home gardeners. Europe has temporarily banned neonics, but the insecticides remain widely available in the United States. Crops pollinated by bees include almonds, apples, apricots, avocados, blueberries, cantaloupes, cashews, coffee, cranberries, cucumbers, eggplants, grapes, kiwis, mangoes, okra, peaches, pears, peppers, strawberries, tangerines, walnuts and watermelons. Patterson Clark, 6/24/14

Bees Lured and Harmed by Pesticide, Studies Show

...leave unanswered the question of the pesticides' impact on ordinary honeybees.

...other experts have long argued that the pesticide can dramatically affect bees and other pollinators in or near neonicotinoid-treated fields, crippling their memories and navigational skills and crimping their growth and reproduction.

Michael Wines NY Times 4/23/15

Colony Collapse Disorder is the phenomenon that occurs when the majority of worker bees in a colony disappear and leave behind a queen, plenty of food and a few nurse bees to care for the remaining immature bees and the queen. But hives cannot sustain themselves without worker bees and would eventually die. This combination of events resulting in the loss of a bee colony has been called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).



Scientific squabble
Labia running mouth disorder
Special interest group
Pseudo-scientific babble
From makers of pesticides and farmers
Tampering hampering nature – natural forces
Wind whispering angry god
Snatches squashes hives
Waggle gone
Nectar sweet bees
Disappear
We manipulate
We mottle meddle
We speculate
We destroy
Collateral damage
Unintended consequences
Interrupt intervene
Disrupt
Natures' force
Tamper upset
Upheaval
Reckoning
Honeybees disappear

birds and bees
birds without bees
fruit trees without bees
markets without fruit
bees at the root
of missing fruit
decline of honeybees
threaten crops like apples and almonds
that depend on the insects for pollination

"How Bees Lose Step in a Life-and-Death Dance" NY Times 4/21/15

Nutritionists urge: Eat a handful of almonds with your apple for a healthy snack.

Snack: Small Fuji Apple and one-quarter cup almonds. "This is what I tell my clients is a smart snack— carbohydrate + protein + fiber. I knew this would give me the energy boost I needed that would last and get through the afternoon until dinner. Almonds are a heart-healthy source of healthy fats as well as vitamin E and magnesium." Alison Massey, R.D.



Still Life with Apples and Almonds - Pierre-Auguste Renoir



Winnie the Pooh: That buzzing noise means something. Now, the only reason for making a buzzing noise that I know of is because you are... a bee! And the only reason for being a bee is to make honey. And the only reason for making honey is so I can eat it. A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

The Disappearances II - 2015

1.5 Million Black Men, Missing From Daily Life

Justin Wolfers, Kevin Quealy and David Leonhardt NY Times 4/21/15



For Too Many Black Men, Prison Feels Like Home - Curtis Bunn AtlantaBlackStar 4/23/15

Black Men Missing

Where are they
Dead or in jail
Ages 25 to 54
Gone missing

Black men gone
Out of sight
Locked up locked out
Welcome to the land
Of *Thanatopsis*
Survive thrive
Nosedive
History reckons
Bible beckons
Life diminished
Finished

*I was born in minutes in a roadside kitchen a skillet
whispering my name. I was born to rainwater and lye;
I was born across the river where I
was borrowed with clothespins, a harrow tooth,
broad-sides sewn in my shoes. I returned, though
it please you, through no fault of my own,
pockets filled with coffee grounds and eggshells.
I was born still and superstitious; I bore an unexpected burden.
I gave birth, I gave blessing, I gave rise to suspicion.
I was born abandoned outdoors in the heat-shaped air,
air drifting like spirits and old windows.
I was born a fraction and a cipher and a ledger entry;
I was an index of first lines when I was born.*

*I was born waist-deep stubborn in the water crying
ain't I a woman and a brother I was born
to this hall of mirrors, this horror movie I was
born with a prologue of references, pursued
by mosquitoes and thieves, I was born passing
off the problem of the twentieth century: I was born.
I read minds before I could read fishes and loaves;
I walked a piece of the way alone before I was born.*

Gregory Pardlo, Written By Myself, Dogest

no dad in kitchen
by tv in bed
tossing basket balls
on cracked concrete court
grassy nubs sticking up

gone missing
plucked off
the street by
invisible hand
of hatred
dark men picked
off in dark night
at sunset
in broad day light
cycling sun and moon
capture removal expulsion

The missing-men phenomenon began growing in the middle decades of the 20th century –Prison population has soared since 1980. There are more missing African-American men nationwide than there are African American men residing in all of new York City –or more than in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Washington and Boston, combined. (NY Times 4/21/15)

black men gone
from hearth and home
black men gone
from parent meetings
at school and even at bars
black men gone

“Women in places where there is a preponderance of missing men have become more likely to work and more likely to pursue their education further than they are elsewhere

Men seem less likely to commit to romance relationships or to work hard to maintain them” (NY Times, 4/21/15)

“1.5 Million Missing Black Men,” showed that more than one in every six black men in the 24-54 age group has disappeared from civic life, mainly because they died young or are locked away in prison....

“Being black in America today is just about the same as having a felony conviction in terms of one’s chances of find a job. Devah Pager, Harvard Professor, “Marked: Race, Crime and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration.”

In recent months, the many grievous cases of unarmed black men and boys who were shot dead by the police – now routinely captured on video – show how the presumption of criminality, poverty and social isolation threatens lives in every day in all corners of this country. “Forcing Black Men Out of Society, NY Times Editorial 4/26/15

Where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on.
Samuel Beckett

We go one beckett
Women go on
Work school kids
Get their own
Get better
While lonely and alone
Missing men
Forces purpose on women
Lock more up
Women become
More accomplished
Lysistrata sisterhood (*Aristophanes*)
Of the abandoned
Men incarcerated
Women stalks of sunflowers
Bending toward light
Withhold tenderness until
Until the raw hand of law
Of bigotry is cut off

Read Citizen by Rankine
Read Charles Blow
Read heartbreak
Read evil read menace
Kill off disappear
My heart's honey

Pestisides sprays
Poison milkweed plants
That kill honeybees
Searching for nectar
Sucking poisons instead
Colony collapse
Honeybees disappear

Pollination discrimination
Fucked up mixed up nation
Killing itself off
Spray by spray
Sprig by sprig
Men on corners gone
Men in beds gone
Rare as a bee hive
A man on the street
Intact alive

Colony collapse
No honeybees
No healthy snacks

Disappeared black men
Off streets
Broken hearts
Broken streets
Broken country
Disappearing from itself
Honeybees and black men
The disappeared 2015
Interconnected thus
Displacement at our hands
Incarceration embalming
Poisoning locking up
Unjust society
Repercussions
Consequences
Life condemned
If just one in this way
Slow death overtakes
A whirl of a world
In which
These disappearances
Take place

NB

I might have been myself minus amazement,

that is

someone completely different.

The Day After – Without Us

The next day

promises to be sunny,

although those still living

should bring umbrellas.

True Love

Perfectly good children are born without its help

It couldn't populate the planet in a million years

it comes along so rarely.

Let the people who never find true love

Keep saying that there's no such thing

Their faith will make it easier for them to live and die.

Ill-prepared for the privilege of living

I can barely keep up with the pace that action demands

The props are surprisingly precise

And whatever I do

will become forever what I've done.

Wisława Szymborska, Polish Poet, Noble Laureate

I see my son

Struggling life against spirit

Will against body

Fierce and adept

Watch my son

Struggle

Straggle into daylight

Bent swallow

Pot infused gait

Struggling to stay alive

Will spirit subsumed

Embattled body

At least my scar is straight

My stoma small

He shares on way to doctor

Another day

Tipped to the pavement

Always with a pair

Of the latest sneakers or shoes

NB

Sex, Dementia and a Husband on Trial at Age 78

By PAM BELLUCK APRIL 13, 2015

Photo



Henry Rayhons at the grave of his wife, Donna Lou Rayhons, an Alzheimer's patient who died last year.

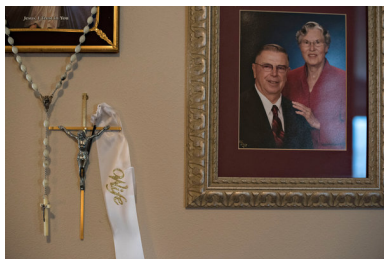
There is no question that Donna Lou Rayhons had severe Alzheimer's.

In the days before being placed in a nursing home in Garner, Iowa, last year, Mrs. Rayhons, 78, could not recall her daughters' names or how to eat a hamburger. One day, she tried to wash her hands in the toilet of a restaurant bathroom.

But another question has become the crux of an extraordinary criminal case unfolding this week in an Iowa courtroom: Was Mrs. Rayhons able to consent to sex with her husband?

Henry Rayhons, 78, has been charged with third-degree felony sexual abuse, accused of having sex with his wife in a nursing home on May 23, 2014, eight days after staff members there told him they believed she was mentally unable to agree to sex. It is rare, possibly unprecedented, for such circumstances to prompt criminal charges. Mr. Rayhons, a nine-term Republican state legislator, decided not to seek another term after his arrest.

There is no allegation that Mrs. Rayhons resisted or showed signs of abuse. And it is widely agreed that the Rayhonses had a loving, affectionate relationship, having married in 2007 after each had been widowed. They met while singing in a church choir.



Ms. Dornbier, prompted by what she called concerns from Mrs. Rayhons's daughter Suzan Brunes, that Mr. Rayhons was engaging in inappropriate sexual contact, wrote at the bottom of the plan: "Given Donna's cognitive state, do you feel she is able to give consent for any sexual activity?"

The center's doctor, Dr. John Brady, wrote: "No." Mr. Rayhons was told the recommendation against having sex and indicated it would not be a problem, according to Ms. Dunshee.

On May 23, Mrs. Rayhons was moved from a private room to a double. That evening, her roommate reported that Mr. Rayhons drew the curtain around his wife's bed and that sexual noises were heard. Later a security camera recorded Mr. Rayhons dropping his wife's underwear into a hallway laundry bag after leaving her room.

Soon after, Ms. Brunes successfully petitioned for guardianship of her mother. The petition did not mention sexual activity, but said that Mr. Rayhons disregarded staff members' recommendations, including that he not visit his wife's room because of "conflicts with her roommate.

In an interview with a state investigator, Mr. Rayhons said that his wife still enjoyed and occasionally asked for sex, but he did not remember having sex in the shared room that night. The investigator implied, apparently erroneously, to Mr. Rayhons that cameras had recorded sexual activity, which seemed to persuade him to acknowledge having had relations.

Mrs. Rayhons was moved to another facility run by the same company, which has a special dementia unit. Her daughter limited Mr. Rayhons's visits. He was arrested soon after she died.

The case is being tried by the Iowa attorney general's office because of Mr. Rayhons's prominence in the county. The attorney general's office, the Concord Care Home, Mrs. Rayhons's daughters and their lawyer declined to comment while the case is pending.

Sex is one of the most ambiguous areas in the scientific understanding of Alzheimer's. While there are established methods of measuring memory, reasoning and the ability to dress, bathe and balance checkbooks, no widely used method exists for assessing the ability to consent to intimate relations.

One obstacle: Dementia's symptoms fluctuate. Patients may be relatively lucid in the morning and significantly impaired in the afternoon.

...Yet desire may survive long after names and faces are forgotten. Physical intimacy can benefit dementia patients, experts say, calming agitation, easing loneliness and possibly aiding physical health.



Henry Rayhons, right, in court with his lawyer, Joel Yunek. CreditJeff Heinz/The Globe Gazette

"Touch is one of the last pleasures we lose," said Daniel Reingold, chief executive of the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, in the Bronx, which pioneered a "sexual rights policy" for residents in 1995. "So much of aging and so much of being in a long-term care facility is about loss, loss of independence, loss of friends, loss of ability to use your body. Why would we want to diminish that?"

During opening arguments last Thursday, the prosecutor, Tyler Buller, said, "On May 23 of last year, Donna Rayhons couldn't make her own decisions." He also said seminal fluid corresponding to Mr. Rayhons's DNA was found on sheets, a quilt and Mrs. Rayhons's panties.

The defense lawyer, Joel Yunek, said a rape kit found no semen in Mrs. Rayhons's vagina or signs of tearing. He said Mr. Rayhons had had sex with his wife at the nursing home, but not on May 23.

On Monday, Mr. Yunek asked Dr. Brady if "Donna is happy to see Henry — hugs, smiles, they hold hands, they talk — would that indicate that she is in fact capable at that point of understanding the affection with Henry?" Dr. Brady said no, calling that a "primal response" not indicative of the ability to make informed decisions.

Dr. Alireza Yarahmadi, a neurologist testifying for the prosecution, also disagreed with Mr. Yunek's contention, saying, "They do have feelings, but they don't have good judgment."

Mr. Rayhons may testify this week. His lawyer and his son, Dale, declined to comment, but soon after the arrest, his family issued a statement saying in part: "Accusing a spouse of a crime for continuing a relationship with his spouse in a nursing home seems to us to be incredibly illogical and unnatural, as well as incredibly hurtful."

Iowa Man Found Not Guilty of Sexually Abusing Wife With Alzheimer's ***By PAM BELLUCK*** APRIL 22, 2015

An Iowa jury on Wednesday found Henry Rayhons not guilty of charges that he sexually abused his wife, an Alzheimer's patient, by having sex with her in a nursing home after staff members told him she was cognitively unable to give consent. In the highly unusual case, Mr. Rayhons, 78, a farmer and former Republican state legislator who by all accounts had a mutually loving relationship with his wife, faced a felony charge that could have resulted in up to 10 years in prison.

The case ignited intense national discussion of an issue that will only gain importance as more Americans get older: whether and when people with dementia are capable of indicating if they desire intimacy.

Mr. Rayhons testified that his wife, Donna Rayhons, continued to desire and even initiate sexual contact. But he said that on the night in question, May 23, 2014, he and she had just kissed and held hands after he drew a curtain around her bed in a shared room.

"We did not do any of that stuff that day," Mr. Rayhons testified, according to local news media reports. "We just didn't."

Her love for me never changed in any way, shape , or form.

Physically as well, yes. She was just as aware that I was the person that she loved from the day we were married to the day she passed away. Henry Rayhons, "An Intimacy That Outlasted Dementia," NY Times, Pam Belluck, 2/28/15

Good God. I just gave my husband verbal consent to have sex with me (if I don't have a headache) even if I get Alzheimer's. Do I have to put it in writing and give him a power of attorney, too? Sara Kaplan, Chappaqua

Justice O'Connor's Husband Finds New Love



The husband of retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has struck up a romance with a woman who is a fellow Alzheimer's patient and lives at the same assisted living center as him, according to a television news report.

The retired justice isn't jealous about the relationship and is pleased that her husband is comfortable at the center, the couple's son, Scott O'Connor, told KPNX in Phoenix in a broadcast that aired Thursday.

"Mom was thrilled that dad was relaxed and happy," Scott O'Connor said. An effort by The Associated Press to reach Scott O'Connor on Tuesday morning was unsuccessful.

An official with the assisted living center was quoted as saying people with Alzheimer's need intimacy and sometimes develop romantic attachments with fellow patients.

John O'Connor was diagnosed with Alzheimer's 17 years ago and was sad when he moved into the assisted living center, his son said.

"Forty-eight hours after moving into that new cottage he was a teenager in love," Scott O'Connor said. "He was happy."

The news report showed video footage of John O'Connor holding hands with a woman identified only as "Kay." The retired justice wasn't shown in footage taken at the center.

Though Sandra Day O'Connor, 77, did not appear in the television report, it gave a rare look at the life of the nation's first female justice, USA Today reported. The family's willingness to highlight an aspect of a heart-wrenching illness recalled O'Connor's decision in 1994 to go public with her feelings about breast cancer.

In a speech to the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, she spoke about discovering the cancer in 1988 and undergoing a mastectomy, the paper reported.

Scott said, "For Mom to visit when he's happy ... visiting with his girlfriend, sitting on the porch swing holding hands," was a relief after a painful period, according to USA Today.

The O'Connors, who have three children, met at Stanford Law School and married in 1952, according to the paper. John O'Connor left a partnership at a Phoenix law firm to come to Washington with his wife in 1981. He worked for D.C. law firms but was limited in his ability to take on matters that could come before the justices.

As her husband's disease became more difficult to handle, O'Connor retired, the paper reports.

.....

Almost 75, no Alzheimer's

No loving no touching

No intimacy

My body knows why

I know why

My heart knows why

I just couldn't

Experience intimacy

Passion with abandon

Two bodies

Colliding asteroids

Sky aglitter

*"Intimacy is the capacity to be rather weird with someone –
and finding that that's ok with them." Alain de Botton*

Never could

Leave my body

To join with another

Gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love. -Albert Einstein

Never could disappear

In an embrace

Lovemaking

Never even

In the realm

Of the possible

"They slipped briskly into an intimacy

from which they never recovered." F. Scott Fitzgerald, "This Side of Paradise"

Fearing

Intimacy

Monochromatic

Body baby pod

Militant martyr

Missionary position

Staunch stalwart

Wayward lovebird

Love's lunacy

Love's acrobatics

Would have blown

Me to smithereens

Skin sizzling

Third degree burns

Irreparable scar torn

My body stiffens

Repelled at just

The thought

The hint of

The moving hand

Tendering my body

Of a kiss ready mouth

Fear overwhelms

Desire scuttled

Dreams refusing

Remembering

My heart broke open

Loving my kids

Love is most nearly itself

when here and now cease to matter. -T.S. Eliot

Perhaps in some lives

There is only

One thing

That can be

Brought to

Consciousness

Loving my kids

Being a good mom

Was the love

I could bear

Walked the moon

Of motherhood

Death edges in

Lurks shadowing

Life coming to an end

Want death to sweep

Me off my feet

Biblical illumination

Choose being a mother

Over being a lover

The fire in earth's center

Torrid tempestuous

Flamed out at my birth

NB

I don't even know what sex is for

She the psychotherapist smirked

That kind of sublime *Mona Lisa* smile

I was a girl from the thighs of Ireland

A pure brood

Turn of the century convent girl

A body as disconnected

As a broken off tree limb

My daring imagination held

Dreams of being rescued

Copulating savior

My own tormented twisted father

Happened before I was six

Not sex but desire for rescue

To be stolen away

On a swan's back

Disappearing in the thwart of life

Passion scorned me

Passion seared me

Passion befuddled me

My body repulsed by touching

My body shingled with longing

When I awoke to my body
Its passion its lust
It was toxic with age and sag
Flapjack pancake breasts
Gravities pull to dust and ash
Youth is wasted on the young (George Bernard Shaw)
Doc shrink I know now what sex is for
Had you understood
You responded to a girl
Webbed to numbness
Comeliness and innocence
Submersed in stark submission
Will bent to absolute subservience
Finally deciding to entrust
My gaping cavernous question to you
Deriding it with a barely veiled smirk
Repercussions of your reckless response
Reverberated lifelong
By the time I got to you
I was welts and abject fear
A trauma victim
Attempting to extricate myself
And my children
From a menacing
Gun slinging fist assaulting
Philandering mob boss husband
The question about sex
Was about what next

Blindsided by your ridicule
I stayed formatted in frigidity
Attempting to take my body back
From its fearsome bondage
From the raping whipping
Gun slinging hand of a husband
You performed a ritual slaughter
Getting me sufficiently strong
To leave him with the kids
Not one of us getting killed
Re-emerging
Peeking over the privet edge
Of a future of what lay ahead
Attempting to re-connect
With the girl who came to bloom
From seventeen to twenty-two
When I married the man
I had known for three weeks
You were fooled
By my polished tongue
Vocabulary to mystify
And yet a *babe in the woods*
Sat at your feet
Ready to regain the tinsel
Of her nubile youth driven self
With that discernible smirk
You pushed me back inside
Curdled my awakening

Re-submerged
I kept to a disconsolate path
Married a yet crueler man
Masking cruelty
With acquired lambent suffering
A wolf in sheep's clothing
Who held up sex like catnip
Grabbing for him
Eclipsed seduction
Never to breach the distance
Having reached the harrowing
Border of seventy
I can afford to look back
Part of my self-imposed
Deathwatch
I come alive
Call it hubris
Call it delusional
Willow bough winter threaded
I am near to dying
Aligning stars and chronology
And yet and yet
Never more alive
More present more evolved
The sky blistering blue
My heart flutters seraphim
Nothing held back
Without restraint

Without feet bolting

I am alive today

Juxtaposed between

Mirth and madness

It was thus

My life orbits

As I fade away

No today will ever again

Just be another day

NB

.....

I generally based appraisals of my affections on the momentary condition of my genitalia.

Nell Zink, "The Wallcreeper"

The cure for loneliness is solitude. Marianne Moore

Being a chameleon

Saps energy

Symbiotic

Synthesis

Synthetic

Pathetic

Bathetic

You joining on

Like a barnacle

As if you could

Fuse with others

Become them

Jew Brazilian

Argentinian

Jingle writer

Or whatever

The circumference

Of you so small

So little of you left

Mean-spirited man

We watch as you shrink

Slink slither

Size of a pinprick

Waddled in sorrow

Feigned

Damage you caused

Bigger than Katrina

Tiny stooped over
Curling to knees
Curdling drift
Sorrow feigned
Bristled bodies
Remain
You merged
Sucked off
Leech
Snarl of slugs
Dengue parasite
Vampire
Stinky parched
Cosmically drained
Dwindling
Tiny tapering pod
Of a man
A lumbering turtle
Sauntering
From woman to woman
Cunt to cunt
Putting on new selves
New identities
As if a change
Of sperm soiled underwear
Levitating above a pallet
Flanked by Argentinian lover
And her maid

Goofy preposterous

Loopy makeshift

Frieze frame of yet

Another fictive life

Cialis man

Viagra manly swagger

You are emptied out

Worn thin depleted

Tom Thumb tiny

Shrunk eviscerated

Bid and tuck of new life

Basking deep in Argentina

Diaspora of mistresses

Deep hued Puerto Rico

Holocaust Jew

Brazen tug of

Tropicalia Brazil

E Harmony on line

She had two dogs

You hate dogs

Finding yourself

New women

Transforming yourself

New again

Turnstile of identities

Pathetic nomad

Becoming no one

In the end

Crying sobbing
Weeping as you depart
Leaving cratering
Another woman's life
I shredded all the words
Splattered like blood stains
On page after page
Of our fitful time together
Finally finished with you
Playful jabs of hate
Charm your prick
Torn up gone
Rhyming pentameters
Of bruising damaging
Relationship
Evidence destroyed
Invader of hearth and home
Scrubbed from universe
Words and more words
And yet a found son
Binds us
In inconceivable ways
I will never completely
Understand
How I let you in
Leech onto me
You pushed past
Resistance inveigled

To gain a leg up
Your fools rush for acclaim
Voided as derivative
The printed manuscript
Oozing with harm and pain
You are a fucking idiot
A predator
And I was a victim
Of your lure
Tiny mini-man
Curled up fetal
Face creased with sadness
Grief feigned
The word *sorry*
Given flagrantly
Frequently
Lost its decimal range
Yesterdays
Ripped to shreds
Nothing left
Freeing up
A space in the past
Subtracted extracted
Time with you
Gone amnesiac
Nothing left
And yet still
Ambition mongering

Fusing with other lives
Then thundering off
To next destination
Bleak foretelling
Man on a dunghill
Of the discarded
To die embittered
I have forgiven myself
For hating you
For hating myself
For even
Letting you in the door
Tore writings to bits
Lore of our life together
Drifting toward
Recycling bins and mist

NB

Tossed/Purged

Tossed all the poems

Or the whatever

Effluence

Regurgitation

Litany liturgical

Tale of

Bespoken love

From the first

Rotten at its core

Taken back

Not to be retrieved

Words rife with agony

With doubt

Dissected corpse

Of reluctant incumbent

Mordent nihilistic

Succumbed

Betrayed

Resistance howling

A bay cat

Run go away

Shut the door tight

Sensational

Titillation tintinnabulation

Of mordent collapse

Words rubbed out
Evidence gone
Ultimate betrayal
Recumbent peace
Death brokering
Enlightenment
Evidence of
Blind stumbling
Auguring
Abrogation of self
Submitting to this *de Sade*
Ripping up
Descriptors
Of deep betrayal
Venal submission
To this man who
Sniffed the borders
The circumference of our lives
To see what was to be had
Torn gone all evidence of
This crazy abrogation of self
Born on a slip of desperation
Conquest of limp and thaw
From the moment
Of your hem and haw
I tried to escape
Run from you
Sensed a predatory

Seducer
Ran in circles
Ran into myself
Resisting
Fleeing a tightly scripted
Pursuit
Wane ambivalence
Subversive
I struggled to resist
The allure
Of a predatory seduction
Limp will-less withering
Obelisk of failure
I caved gave in
Now writings
Of this tawdry pursuit
Are rubbed etched out
Dumped into recycled purgatory
Putrefaction
Pretender of hot lava love
Seducer of vulnerable women
Consenting to your barbarity
I have torn you from
The journal of last reflection
The story gone
The sultry weeping words
Stripped pain to element
A trope of vein and nerve

Not a word of you left
You are vanquished
My past has vacated you
Sitting near you
In our son's hospital room
Withered whiny man
Imagining your
Faltering erections
Guild of the guilty
Dripping off penis
Goo of madness
Fucking more women
Fucking with women
Hurling women
Discus to the four winds
Weeping always
Fleeing leaving
Remorse palpable
Scorching
Poignancy sad-faced
Your son
Said to leave get out
Of his hospital room
If you couldn't
Rid your face
Blooming with
Aggrieved sadness
Suffering man

Insufferable man
You weep
And leave behind
Female carnage
Evoking a litany
Of verbal assault
Orgasmic delight
At withering women
Left behind
Angry at you
Hating you
Heathen
Love demented
Tormentor
The stench of evil
Not real authentic evil
You give too little
To be considered truly bad
All is superficial
Caught in the web
Of your seduction
Badass man
Plaintive predator
Reeking havoc
Bleakness of betrayal
Insufferable
Sullen frightened
In the breach

Of fear
Here you
Hip hopping along
Venomous snake
Sneak up
Sniff for vulnerability
The opening
You pervert
Words this weighty
Wasted on a
Wastrel like you
Fuck 'em and leave 'em
Weeping as you go
The women filled
With urgent errant loss
Sick bastard
I was one of the women
Left behind in a slush of tears
Wiping off sperm and residue
I tore up the manuscript
Detailing this sordid
Capsule of mordent time
Spent fleeing submitting
Regretting
I tore up
The distillation
Of our disturbing tale
So contrite

So formidable
To have let you in
I resisting
You persisting
I caved in
Fucking your way
Past the door
And then
Abruptly leaving
Titillated with exits
Ephemera
Illusory
Running off
Flurry of furious adultery
Infamous moment
To begin again
Knee deep
In your departing goo
Bent over slither
Old decrepit man
Stench of lies
Still wafts off
Whippoorwill of
Salacious encounter
On the look out
For better more
Becoming less and less
Pinprick on the horizon

Dissolute desultory man
Boarder hoarder
Of women's hearth and home
Disruptor interloper
Of temporary encampments
Travelling women
Enterprising
Google mapping
Entering cunt after cunt
I was one of the lonely ones
At loose ends
Healing moving beyond
Ambiguity daunting
Curried favor
Checklist offerings
Roughrider of broken hearts
Stalk prey betray
Wresting myself from you
You left weeping fleeing
I watched you go
Tore up testimony
Document
Scroll the words above
I see you as you were
I see myself submitting
Shame and weariness
Lifting off
Years sent your way

Betrayal deep haughty

To err is human; to forgive, divine. (Alexander Pope)

A sprig of spring thaw

The fog lifts

Closer yet

To death dying

Elliptical stories

Vouchsafed in my heart

Words locked within

The silent moan

The end comes

No time to repair

No time to despair

Relinquishing self

To thin air

NB

Nary a smudge a thumb print

As if thin air

You disappeared

Leaving nothing behind

But harm

If I get from hating you

I will find relief

A widow's loveless grief

Stalked, heart stolen

Still swollen with fear

Too late for love

Succumbed dumb

Wilting body and self

Time to web

Humor from pain

Create distance

Wife as amnesiac

Awakened self

Still raw

Wiser if solitary

Heart lighten up

Before beats run out

Die with dignity grace

Forgiving myself

For that dreadful lapse

Holding tight onto you

Fleeing from life

NB

Chose to break from love

And yet supple and open

A girl of nineteen

At her pithy loveliest

Eyes turned

Heads spun around

Hunger too great

Turned from

Curled in a ball

Fetal regressive

Pressed to the wall

A prom scrapbook flower

Wishing she were dead

I wish I were dead

She said whimpering

She was me

She was nineteen

I can't hold her

Can't comfort her

Can't change things

Around for her

Now stunned appalled

How sad despairing that girl

You are a girl with sad eyes

Some man at a bar said

I was nineteen then

The image floats up

It is as if a photo
I am humbled
How deep how riveting
How utterly sweet
How more than sad
I feel it welling up
Her tears
Push out of my eyes
I am that girl
Who longed for suicide
And lived fifty more years
Never freed
Her sobs her pain
Help me help me
She called out
I pushed her deep inside
The tears well
What does it mean
That I am forming a union
Joining with her
What does it mean
That the girl of nineteen
Is now me
Has finally become me
We now gather
At grandchildren's birthdays
We were talking
Their grandfather

My first husband
He ran helter-skelter
From woman to woman
While he wore
His wedding ring inscribed
From now until forever
More pain more drift
Darkness closes in
When looking backward
Live for today
Can't extricate the girl
From her past
I am here now
Closing in on death
It got to the point
That I couldn't kiss him
You can't put a family back together
You break apart
He told me
We are both now more than seventy
The shadows of my past
Move along my walls
I found the girl
Bent and curled
Pressed against a wall
Wanting to be dead
Now I know why
Understand what drove her

To the edge of being
To want to quit living
Her life force
Too great a rival
Too overwhelming to follow
She turned her back
On dreams and withdrew
Pressed like a flower
To the wall
I am that girl
Pinned pressed against the wall
Crying *I don't want to live*
I don't want to be alive
I was my most beautiful
My most powerful
Desire a taste in my mouth
And as if no time has elapsed
I am collapsed in a ring of myth
I never moved from that wall
Never could peel that girl
From the wall
Calling out to death
To bring me finally home
I bait and seduce
It is the girl
Against the wall
I can't face
So full of promise

So ripe with desire
And I neither let her die
Or let her live
Live or die as Anne Sexton warned
"Live or die, but don't poison everything..."
Rather than the hurdy-gurdy
Of a compromised life
My insides curdle with remorse
Sadness so crushingly deep
Digs into me
To die
Without ever truly loved
Impossible horrible
Feel sick nauseous
My own life repulses
Scars sears
Body bows deep willow weeps
Never any affectionate cuddles
And no one - no one
I chose
Ever really wanted
To love me
Run easy fingers through my hair
Why don't you put your arm around me
Husband two answered
When I asked for him
To put his arm around me
I am dying and just now

The tears start to flow
Don't want to feel sorry for myself
Just the pain the pain
The remains of a body never touched
Why didn't anyone tell me
Why didn't you mother
Why didn't you tell me
Let me know
About fragrances
To perfume my body
Bathing in fragrant bath oils
She was mute
She couldn't instruct
What she couldn't confront
Sex is disgusting
Sex starved she all but said
Don't want anymore
Self-truths
Revelations
What I missed out on
Tormented now
Don't want to face anymore
About the life
I didn't live
I knew better
Had less courage
And quicker feet
Exits were all to me

Can't face
Choice squandered
In a world of regret
And self-hate
A face steeped in old age
Youth blown off recklessly
Eyes dim
Shadow self
Shadow love
I look over to you
Fluff your pillow
I comfort
Girl of dread
Girl wanting to be dead
Our time is come
We are finally one
What more can we know
Of the life we lived
No suicide for us
A girl so filled
With life and longing
Alive still
Sutured to days
More numb than present
A life subduing longing
The heart is so strange
Is it enough to know
To recognize that

I turned from love
It was a choice
Freely given
Beneath an intemperate sun
Interpretations of a life lived
Rest in illusion
The possible beyond a final breathe
Her most mortal human way
Yielding to pending death.

Naomi Barber

He was, like most of that breed of stylish New Yorkers transplanted from elsewhere, a self-invention.

Eulogizing Mike Nichols, NY Times Ben Brantley

.....
I've always been impressed by the fact that upon entering a room full of people, you find them saying one thing, doing another and wishing they were doing a third. The words are secondary and the secrets are primary. That's what interests me most. Mike Nichols 1965

.....
Once

*In the night, the bed was as long
as the hours, the hours were as long as the road
or the future, the past was not our destiny,
the foreboding or foretelling was left
on the shelves to the long playing records
we'd switch on for the warmth of the scratches
that pocked the music like rain, as the needle
wandered all that black circumference –*

Saskia Hamilton

In a little more than three years it will be my 50th wedding anniversary

Broke away rudderless marriage months short of turning forty

A proud little tug tough and resilient ready for the solitary long haul

Breaths away from turning seventy the little tug put in dry dock

Worn clear of repair, its engine chugged last whistle blown and then hush

On the bridge the expanse of past ruin runs

Spread peacock plume sail sheets at full mast

Flirted with life, its hours, its currents

Wisp of a girl her insides wild with turbulence

At twenty feet barely touching the ground

Lifting above fear and soaring toward wild exhilaration

Spirited a world a whirl of girl in flight

Dreams dared not surface in daylight too dark

Lift of sprightly instep skirting dread

Dancing on the uptick of daylight

Heaving gravity's dark corners

Tilting away from the open hand of romance

The chance for eternal embrace

Princely arms opulent with grace

Rocks smashed thrashing fledgling chances to have a love

Danger flashes warnings girl spins into rising tides of poison

The tide redolent with her voluminous fear

Volcanic love eruptions scare her heated furies

Threats to engulf if submitting to its wooing

Every man's dream of the perfect mate laid chameleon

The girl spun like butter like an embroidered sampler

Home sweet home, a proposal, a head kicked to whiplash

Thrashing bird crazy bird wind channel thrusts about

Empty hands release the crazy flutter turn away in a rush

Warned that the blur, the unsettled flurry would end

At twenty my beauty would never be greater

A prince still in the wings

Men lined up against the artillery of my fear

Shoved into the revolving door by mad confusion

Swirling away as the door spun to blur

The right one the true love turned away

Sadness streaks waning time

Appliqued on each sunrise

Fear of love fear of being touched

Spurned the open hand

Ran to him

Who could love me least

The swift tides of morning

Lap against urgent feet

How much to take in

In the breach of dwindling time

Craving and recoiling

Wanted love too much

Spectrum of sadness

Colors the morning sunrise

Choice stuck in veritable time

I chose wrong

Desire for love voluminous dangerous

Chose him could chose no other

NB

I am fat ugly and stupid

I told the psychiatrist

His impenetrable fortress face aghast

The grain of evidence so contradictory

The mirror so twisted and contorted

Distortions mime the faces of *Picasso* women

Looking crazy, doubled sighted and hateful

Suicide watch dare not contradict the girl of merely twenty

She lived sealed off in a sac of her sacrament

Fat ugly stupid the essential truth her vision of herself

Too dangerous to fix the mirror right

Splitting the atom at root of truth's contortion

Ruthless tenacious barnacle on the reef of baby born breech

The psychiatrist asked where do you want to harm your body

Oh a knife right into the stomach right where the womb sits

He sits in silence watching the slight trenchant beauty

Trembling hands her professors thought her brilliant

The body close to devouring itself weightless

Fat ugly stupid and yet the men came

A chorus as distinct and different

All clamoring for her hand to keep in theirs

To clasp and promise into lifelong commitment

Even with the unsettled trembling like a baby bird

Wings still wet, flight uneasy and strange

And yet and yet as he looked out the window

After a final session and a formal goodbye

A woman as striking as Athena

Barely touching ground walked away

Men and women twirled their heads spun
To look at the beauty who barely touched ground
Her beauty astounding her eyes piercing
A new day made for her to embrace
She was the moonbeam the daylight leapfrogging shadows

NB

I was that figurehead on the bow

I was that tug with two girls' names
I pulled against the tide and lost
At forty alone on a roof deck
Sipped champagne at my success escaping
A marriage that hoarded the dark and sordid in me
Pulled up anchor the weight that dragged me under
Telling me how to live and why
And I comply, comply, and comply
Hair breathes from seventy
Yet defiant a will to live endures
Watching my body flee from me
Gazing over years from crisp of a new day
My eyes push beyond the thickening scrim of cataracts
Destiny got me too many wrong ways
Too many paths left un-chosen
Lived solitary pursuing sunrises and sunsets
Never less amazed at wondrous colors
Triumphantly exuberantly was a better mother
Than the one I was lifted awkwardly from
Children's lives their own

I watch as the distance grows

I am reaching beyond my sorrow

I look to the stars

Air so sweet trenchant upon my skin

I love the way a morning begins a day to wander in

Fully conscious aware of how I chose and why

The gift to myself as I begin in earnest

Building the construct the project of dying

Naomi Barber

Al Pacino and Me

Question: *Congratulations on turning 70. What was your birthday like?*

Answer: It was a morbid affair. (Laughs) No, whether it's a movie opening, or a party, you always wish you were somewhere else. I am not in need of attention. But it was a little bit different than all the others. You are going into the eighth decade and for one thing, you are still here. Getting older, as they say, this is not a dress rehearsal. Al Pacino

.....

It collapses, crackling. *Fire. Fire And my soul dances, seared with curls of fire. Who calls? What silences peopled with echoes? Hour of nostalgia, hour of happiness, hour of solitude, hour that is mine from among them all! Pablo Nerudo "Thinking, Tangling Shadows"*

.....

I write now *with the raven of doubt sitting on my shoulder all the time. Cynthia Ozick*

.....

Getting old is not for sissies. *Bette Davis*

.....

...there are two types of people in the world: *those who prefer to be sad among others, and those who prefer to be sad alone*

When *will you learn that there isn't a word for everything?*

Once *upon a time there was a boy who loved a girl, and her laughter was a question he wanted to spend his whole life answering.*

Part *of me is made of glass, and also, I love you.*

Leopold Gursky *started dying on August 18, 1920 He died learning to walk. He died standing at the blackboard. And once, also, carrying a heavy tray.*

He died *alone, because he was too embarrassed to phone anyone. Or he died thinking about Alma. Or when he chose not to.*

"Loneliness: *there is no organ that can take it all."*When I got older I decided I wanted to be a real writer. I tried to write about real things I wanted to describe the world, because to live in an un-described world was too lonely.*

Really, *there isn't much to say. He was a great writer. He fell in love. It was his life.*

One thing *I am never going to do when I grow up is fall in love, drop out of college, learn to subsist on water and air, have a species named after me, and ruin my life.*

My mother *did not choose a life or a head. She chose my father. And to hold on to a certain feeling, she sacrificed the world.*

Nicole Krauss, "The History of Love"

Eichmann and My Man *Banality of Evil - Hannah Arendt*

Disquisition disquiet

Small man bad man

Banal brutish

Cruel analog

Bat's snag

Tiny man small man

Baleful woeful

Shallow man odious man

Shucked in ordinariness

Ornery harmful

Affectation ordinariness

Toted being normal

Banal and evil

Ordinariness contrived

Tiny man small man

Rat's crackling

Sniffing edges

Of women's lives

Assets weighed

Against desperation

Scent of the offing

Rat's incisor

Seize opportunity

Tiny man repugnant man

Insufferable rank sadness

Exuding poignancy

Eichmann and my man

Odious disgusting

Disgraceful cunning

Invasive bug of a man



Kafkaesque

Rapturously venomous

Terrible man dangerous man

Disquisition on banality

Disorienting rat of a man

Rabid infesting

Lodger in musty

Lonely woman's home

Wafting abject solitude

I took you in

Hobbled fooled tricked

Seduction at dusk

In a Bronx ball field

Bacterium scum

Parasitic infestation

Scent of weed and cum

Handed you

Run of our home
Gabbing about shoes
Gossip banter
Chronicler of *People Magazine*
Proselytizer pop culture
Enamored by the ordinary
Trickster hawking
Unembellished normalness
Woman of extremes
Calamitous days
Our ordinary
Edge of imploding catastrophe
Wrapped warped thwarted
Bunting of *Holocaust*
He the everything
Of ordinary
Seduction of chitchat
This and that
Coffee 'n
Mournful eyes
Ecclesiastical banter
Of once alter boy
Tongue's dialectic
Studied how to woo
Women of tattered insides
Understudy underling
Power structures
Topple reverse

Converse dialectic
Bated insinuated
Jews despised idolized
Battering ram
Eichmann man
Repudiated Jews who
Made him miniscule
While student
At City College
Avenging being
Reduced to snivel and hive
Revenge overtaking
Besting a Jew
Overtaking
A Jewish woman
Wounds oozing
Chit chat this 'n that
Cult of *People Magazine*
Scheming conniving
Contriving plan
Mapping every
Contact every angle
Finagled Ph.D.
Feral student
His advisor claimed
But rat clever
Never thwarted contained
Controlled the narrative

Got him a Ph.D.
And then to flee
But not after tattering
Lambasting
Busking huckster
Jews Jews Jews
Used and reused
Assault invade
Victim woman
Door ajar
Supplicant to his ambition
His mad upward climb
Eichmann and my man
Dark grotesque
Man wrecking havoc
Transubstantiation
Of the uninitiated
Small man teeny tiny man
Invasive creature
Sinister sneaking up
Rat's creep
Peeked rapturous
Ball field of Bronx weeds
Followed me into the door
Ransacked wreaked havoc
Grabbing what he could
Fled then to join
Next flayed redolent victim

Carting gold dug from teeth

His carnage his spoils

His amorous dowry

Insidious dangerous man

Eichmann and my man

Resided too long

Feigning an innocence

Congenital virgin's baby

Perfidious bastard

Crafty posture

Of regular guy

Trickster rat man

Bastard

Posturing cult

Of ordinariness

Eichmann and my man

Rat's gnashing teeth

Obstinately ordinary

Fathoming

Depth of shallowness

Reflection

Bereft

Days succumbing

Easy prey

Maelstrom of veering emotion

Sad lambent come-on

Rabid infestation

Banality of evil

Fathoming

The waft of sinecure

Displaced vulnerable

Evil complex

And yet simple

Whiff of weakness

Vulnerability

Exuding uncertainty

Doubt

Evil crouches

In the crevices

Of the conflicted

Displaced

This union

A case study

Of a woman

Confused abused

Torn apart

Deal with the devil

Legs spread apart

Heart stiffens

Counter voice

Warning

Voice stilled

Overcome overtaken

Rat waiting

Around and in

Evasive corners

He entered

I said *Yes*

Evilness recumbent

Yet not complex

NB

No more No more

More

No more No more No more

More

No more No more

More

dear g-d no more

Silence

No more No More

No more No more No more

More

More

More

NB (after Beckett)

Blackbird singing in the dead of night

*Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise*

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free*

*Blackbird fly, blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night*

*Blackbird fly, blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night*

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life*

*You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise*

John Lennon and Paul McCartney

.....

Scream when you burn is pretty much my whole writing philosophy. You burn, you scream. It feels a little better, and you move on. Shalom Auslander

.....

One thing about the helpless dead struck me right away: You want to fix them up, to press the sagging lips together, close the indiscreet legs, wipe the dripping butt, shutter the liquefying eyes.

Unwittingly, ignorantly, I made pictures I thought I could control.

...the best mother I could be...

Sally Mann, Hold Still, A Memoir with Photographs

.....

...grandchildren of survivors of the Armenian genocide – the first genocide of the 20th Century – and builders of a transnational assembly from the remnants of a shattered identity. Armenity, Venice Biennale

Death, How to do it right

The nagging niggling question

They are watching.

The eyes of the flow of time

Got to get this right

The body departs

In uneven spasms and starts

At sun up don't know

How gauzy the cataract

How constricted the breath

How plugged up the nose

Mouth a miner's gutted of teeth

Skin inked leopard's extinction

Tincture of liver spots

Outwit death's oblique attack

Kidney disease *Graves* disease

Chronic Bronchial Asthma

In remission or in control

On this day

Mind swirls with adventure

Stepping from

Encumbrance of disorders

Ice coffee in hand

I woke up today

I woke up

More or less intact

Another day

To imagine cows
Grazing in a Vermont pasture
Penultimate iconic farm
Mine for a fragmentary moment
Today with flask of water
And an abundance of napkins
Scarf just so around neck
Salty pea green too youthful jacket
Set off first to the Conservatory Garden
Mums at peak spectacle of outrageous color
Titillate bid imagination go bigger
Some kind of mortal magic
At the edge of East Harlem
Lattice arches wrapped in purple
Lavender with sprigs of orange
Roses sparse still hold petals
The fountains in the Garden
Mannered sculptures
A childhood boyfriend not spared
Vagaries of mental competence
Said *this is what the id looks like*
Three erotically frolicking girls
On this day this day
I am awake
Ready to walk aimlessly about
If heartbeat skips alarmingly
Feeling momentarily dizzy
Remedy digging

Thumbnail into finger

Dizziness subsides

Death trickster

Seduces and abandons

Raptor flapping

Triangulating moments

With fear and doubt

Grab death back

Outwitting forbidding

Apocryphal

Apothecary of potion

Death on my terms

Courage to die

Before scythe and sickle

Descend embed upend

Today is not the day

Not this one

I choose to remain

In uneasy alliance with fate

Circumspect glint of ardent light

Not yet to say goodbye not yet

Ora I carry you with me Oraleh

I carry you with me to the end of time (David Grossman To the End of the Land)

Ora a mother to disappear in

Heather desert bracken and brush

Hush the knock on the door

A soldier son killed in Lebanon

No one there to hear

To disintegrate to grief
Motherhood can kill you
Motherhood is killing me
I watch an embattled son
His stomach savaged by disease
I watch I gasp I stumble
The day takes me away
I lay down next to you *Ora*
On the cold stone of your sigh
I lie with you to sob to scream
How to sit by wait and watch
His death before mine
Mine before his
Tincture of bitter ends
J'accuse assault
Deep in sorrow
Parsing tomorrows
It is the fall
Before winter chill
To die by my own hand
My hour of grace
Dying on my own terms
Before I am abject concoction
Of garbled final breaths
Seeping bodily fluids
Decision rests blade-edge
At the intersection of my heart
I will die with a crow

Of bad decisions
Caught in my throat
And so the irony
Will live in crackling
Disintegrating bones
In the eighth decade of life
The skeleton cracks with
Tiny hairline fractures
Remembering too much
To beg forgiveness
Today I did not die
The day is young
Today I will go next to Chelsea
To find the *Anselm Kiefer* exhibit
Then to the Swiss restaurant
Have *Bündnerfleisch and kirsch*
Recollect the hours spent
Sipping schnapps
Playing Bach Cello Suites
Blistering snow crystals
Prisms of fractured light
Reflecting back to me
The choice that cinched
The great ultimate reckoning
Epic recounting
Life's crafted odyssey
My ultimate destiny

Widowed
At first marriage vows
Died at twenty-two
Rather than confront
Confounding ruthless truths
Or even committing suicide
Nearing seventy-five
Denied love a youthful bride
Crushing love's yearning
Pestle mortar promises
Found love in the mum's
Flagrant noisy color
Found love without reciprocity
Solitariness necessary
Desiring motherhood
True love had no place
The death I shape solitary
A quiet dimming of life and light
Final glimpse
Tautology of being alive
Sanctimonious testimony
The mums' extraordinary colors

NB

My Heart's Truth (Dylan Thomas)

O may my heart's truth
Still be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning.

the sloeback, slow, black, crowblack,
fishingboat bobbing sea -

Do not go gentle into that good night
but rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas

.....
The Redwood Felled

The great Sequoia grove
Under a spindly canopy
Death knell
Dear bellwether friend
Folded herself hidden
Beneath the *Bay Bridge*
Undiscovered for two weeks
Apparition of skull and bones
She was my best friend
Love at first sight
Lesbos Sappho to be known
Planned to go camping
In and among the Redwoods
Our dream ill-timed ill-conceived
My heart unaware of her anguished love
Carnal deep beneath the Sequoia
Intended a love consummate

She killed herself

Proclaiming dreams of lovemaking

Postmarked a year to the date later

I have not had one word from her

*Frankly I wish I were dead
When she left, she wept*

*a great deal; she said to me, "This parting must be
endured, Sappho. I go unwillingly."*

*I said, "Go, and be happy
but remember (you know
well) whom you leave shackled by love*

*"If you forget me, think
of our gifts to Aphrodite
and all the loveliness that we shared*

*"all the violet tiaras,
braided rosebuds, dill and
crocus twined around your young neck*

*"myrrh poured on your head
and on soft mats girls with
all that they most wished for beside them*

*"while no voices chanted
choruses without ours,
no woodlot bloomed in spring without song..." Sappho*

Trembling hands read letters

Gasping stunned and yet

Now with child and married

Knew I harbored

The same love for her

Tall and ancient

The yielding gypsy trees

My love great as hers

Too soon to name what I felt

Lying close in Ohio farm field

We could have folded ourselves

Sylvan nymphs in an embrace

A freewheeling rapturous love
Still has the noon sun
Never moved breath uneasy
Bereft years beyond the moment
Bodies struck still
Stuck without vocabulary
Love true love beckoned once
I still in the crèche of innocence
Stillbirth bird gooey manifestation
Unable to break through
Eggs trembling shell
Blushing breathless glimpses
Flashes of sky of perhaps god
We lay in a farmer's field
Bikes tossed aside
She talked of *Camus* and *Medea*
Names without referent
Unwieldy breathless conversation
Whimsy tragedy

Love look away from me

*I have wished before
I shall wish no more*

*Love, look away
Love, look away from me
Fly when you pass my door
Fly and get lost at sea*

*Call it a day
Love, let us say we're through
No good are you for me
No good am I for you*

*Wanting you so, I try too much
After you go, I cry too much*

Love, look away

*Lonely though I may be
Leave me and set me free
Look away, look away, look away from me*

Look away, look away, look away from me - Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II

A girl of overpowering longing

Death wreathing conversation

Camus Medea foreboding

Time squeezing in

Scarce hours to contemplate

Love lost love left unexpressed

Maladies have their final grip

Sadness welling swirling

Whirl-pooling whiplashing

Abhor my girlish abject innocence

*Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.*

*And we will sit upon the Rocks,
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow Rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.*

*And I will make thee beds of Roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;*

*A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;*

*A belt of straw and Ivy buds,
With Coral clasps and Amber studs:*

*And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.*

*The Shepherds' Swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May-morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.*

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love by Christopher Marlowe

Stuck in youthful solipsistic muck
Spawning polliwog urges
Unable to submit
Twitching joints
To subterranean longing
Love's polymorphous possibilities
Soon to ash and morbid disintegration
My body's caricature craven craving
At dawning awash in death
Too late to gather time back
Wreathing a ribbon tethered daisy chain
To lie again with *Sappho*
Beneath the crystalline sky
Pulsing heat through the Sequoia
Sob stuck a caw in the throat
Yes and yes and yes and yes
Submitting at last
To a love eclipsed
Elegy of love lost
Words left unexpressed

NB

My nose is my sword of *Damocles*

The day of reckoning

Soon to come

I am not on the run

Who can live

Without breathing

Anachronistic clustering

Cluttering polyps

Have taken up residence

Sinuses overgrown overrun

Fragrances of morning dew

Left to my imagination

NB

*Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?
You cannot call it love. For at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame; it's humble,*

...the heyday in the blood is tame, Shakespeare, Hamlet

.....

When a person hurts you badly

line up 100 panes of glass in
the field and shoot a bullet through it.

Take a copy of a map made by

The cracks on each glass and

Send a map a day for 100 days

To the person who has hurt you

.....

And this:

Hide until everybody goes home.

Hide until everybody forgets about you.

Hide until everybody dies.

.....

Earth Piece

Listen to the sound of the earth turning.

1963 spring

Yoko Ono (NY Times, 5/15/15)

.....

It has been my hideous fate to be born with an infinite capacity for love and joy with no hope of using them T.H. White, author, *The Once and Future King*

T.H. White was a man who felt deeply but was unable to form close human relationships due to his unfortunate childhood: "He was a man with an enormous capacity for loving. It shows in his prodigious correspondence and in his affection for dogs and in the bewildered and inarticulate loves his characters experience in his books; but he had few close friends, and no genuine relationship with a woman." Lin Carter, *Imaginary Worlds*

White was agnostic, and towards the end of his life a heavy drinker, "Notably free from fearing God, he was basically afraid of the human race." Sylvia Ashton Warner

Collecting Random Thoughts

Remembering the man I let in

Who had me fitted rigged

With braces cemented

To my upper front teeth

Chain link fence entrapping

Evidence I was held captive

Took me to face lift doctor

I was forty-one

She looks old chin sags

Not good

She looks old her face does

For her age

My face was sagging with defeat

You were to love me

My body barnacled by the devil

Your front teeth split apart

Sub-text you look like

Kukla of Fran and Ollie

During extensive oral surgery

Lost most of my bottom teeth

Gums overrun with infection

The kind that penetrates

Crawls into your brain

Bacteria infests death festers

Teeth disintegrate

Offhandedly claimed *I lost teeth*

When I adopted our found son
Birthing mother's said to lose teeth
Shit got into your mouth somehow someway
Was all the dentist would say
Unclean dental tools
Unclean mouths unclean tushies
Front teeth parted jutted out
Rockettes on the upswing
To please this forbidding man
I got braces
Tiny tinny man ranted
Get goddamn braces
His edict or else I submitted
He was cruel he was sadistic
Missionary fuck face-to-face
Repulsive repugnant nauseating
Condition of sex chain linked teeth
Now beyond seventy
My face without surgical re-alignments
Relaxes into its age
Recoiling yet at disgraceful
Demeaning decisions
Braces stuck on teeth
When my mouth required
Unbridled expression
The penultimate professional moment
Sparks shot off glinting wire capped teeth
Time to turn my back on past

Want to die with grace
That elusive word quality
Disciplined decisively tended to
Clump of medical anomalies
Surgically removed polyps
To breathe in the day
Regard my face straight on
The face a blade never touched
Pop baby aspirins twice daily
When I feel my heart going crazy
When dizziness has me faltering
Thumbnail dug into finger gets relief
See my life as minutes' long
My mother was not alone
Frothing and having tantrums
Beating her head a tribal drum
Amos Oz's mother committed suicide
She beat her head ranting
Sitting in closets in dark silence
David Grossman writes
About a mother
Who beat her head
Ruthlessly unrelentingly
Maybe it's something Jewish
The reverberations aftershocks
Holocaust the *Diaspora* pulsing
Rattling the wrenching afterbirth
Hands pulse with relic torture

We were not alone dear brother
Other mothers' beat their temples
Their heads their breasts
They frothed
They tossed themselves
Into furnaces and ovens
Mother not just you
Jews exhumed in gaseous fumes
Gathered up in you
Swept you in their horrific demise
Reverberating boomeranging
Holocaust everlasting
We were not the only ones
It is time to brood
Dwell on life's end
Death within plain sight
I am ready I am not
There is nothing beyond this
Star light star bright first star
To light up the sky
To set my inner light spinning
Burning off into final darkness
Emptying the sky of another star
Startled at the skies' arrogating vast beauty
Then to expire to die end life

NB

*The reason that love is so painful is that it always amounts to two people wanting more than two people can give.
Edna O'Brien, "The Love Object"*

.....

Marrying Scattershot in Weeks

Mother and son

Biblical automatons

Venerating perpetuating

Marrying in mindless

Heart betraying breathtaking weeks

He lays the sins of the parents

Upon their children

The entire family is affected-

Even children in the third and fourth generations

And God said...

I visited these sins.

Catharsis in turmoil

Marriage vows tender to God's ears

Only the heart is revelatory

Love through four seasons, Tanta Rosie said

We did not last a month of Sundays

You and I dear Jeremy

Played by the *good book*

I stand in the place of madness

Resolute not to disturb unearthen the truth

I stood firm in the trenchant feet

Of those who came before me

And refused to challenge
The turmoil the chaos the madness
Displacement dislocation wrought
Besieged by a fatal reckoning
Of the past unchallenged
I shudder at what I have left behind
Soon to be ash and cinder
And a final scattering
Woefully reflecting
On past decisions and choices
She did the best she could
Venal mordant guilt slathering remorse
Better said, *fear bridled emotions*
Refusing to risk being overrun
By true love's bramble blood-letting
Fear of abandonment
Transposed fixed in refusal
Fear of love explosive volcanic
Held me clinging holding fast
To mother's predatory fastening
Dirge of regret lessons learned
Negate actions enlightenment too late
Unsavory solipsistic
So old but solitary and safe NB

*into the blue of me and you
where quietly i'm torn in two
what is the sound within your mind?
it's only space and time*

*a moonlit night, a star filled sky
their silence is a lullaby
so close your eyes and fall into
the blue of me and you*

Henry, music by Ambrose Akinmusire lyrics by Gretchen Parlato

The heart is a strange organ

Still perking up

Still aroused hopeful

Doesn't it know how old it is?

NB

Calling a poem: "the cry of its occasion." Wallace Stevens

.....

Every life has its surrounding wall. Amelia Gray, "House Heart" story in "Gutshot"

.....

I think about mortality in ways I did not before the diagnosis. It no longer seems a faint, distant reality. At age seventy-five I've moved into the neighborhood of life where there are few long-term leases.

Tom Brokaw, "A Luck Life Interrupted"

.....

Sorrow conquers happiness. Ragnar Kjartansson

Homeless in Manhattan

the winter of your dying

I didn't have a lot of time

to think about it, trying to stay alive

To me

it was just the next interesting thing you would do ---

that is how cold it was

and how often I walked to the edge of the actual river to join

you

My did beat me with his belt

for my edification and further

improvement and later that other

stranger took over

somewhat more expertly

which both learned from their – fathers

some heavily armed monkeys

from Plato's cave

to Darwin's—

So that's how it is done

here

Should each individual snowflake be held accountable for the avalanche?

Name five rivers.

What do you see yourself doing in ten minutes?

Franz Wright, Poet (Obituary, NY Times 5/16/15)

Sent first poem to father, James Wright, poet,

I'll be damned, James Wright wrote back,

You're a poet.

Welcome to hell.

.....

Uncertainty the pylons
Cylindrical buttressing
Uncertainty a daily staple
Unnerving unsettling riveting
Uncertainty absolute and arbitrary
This not the language of everydayness
When perhaps a car will hit
A tree will fall crushing you
The subway will blow up
That is fate
The dragoon of dailyness
The *what ifs...*
Bipolar swings ocean's riptide
The tyranny of verging
I am ridden roughshod
By disease and illness
A son's body erupting
In fecal splatter
Sepsis on walls
On limbs on him
Death nips his feet
We live on the edge
Of endings
Overshadowed
By dark premonition
Death baits ordains

Suck in hold breathe
Door shoves open
Rush to bathroom
Bath water hard on
Soaks diffuse suffering
Phone jangles pierces
Wait to hear rapt
Mom, I need help
Premonition disaster
Predatory oppressive
He is held captive
Held hostage
By his dying body
Lunacy grips
Reason's response
He and I occupy a
Promontory minus illusion
Just the condition of his life
Motherhood connects me
To a bandwidth of mothers
With children dying
Punctuating every breath death
Within minutes hours days
No self-fulfilling prophecies of doom
No unconscious predilection
For the fantastic traumatic cataclysmic
This is not fate auguring prompting
To live each day to the fullest

*As in, today is the first day
of the rest of your life (John Denver)*

This is unequivocal

This uncertainty

We live in the contingent

Waiting for the big suction

The ultimate defeat

A son dying first

Predeceasing a mother

This out of whack with

The natural order of things

Anxiety riles my being

Gut wrenching

Sentinel mother scans for

Death's overreaching hand

Cuffing the breath

The life force

Catastrophe lurks

I wait

The moment

It is coming

Fear palpable

Wait to hear

Wait to hear
Live perpendicular
Rumblings forebodings
For last final breathes
My son lives and dies
Moment to moment
While he and I gasp wonder
How best to stay alive survive

NB

My Genealogically Naturally Birthed

Biological children
In other words not adopted
The two children
My brood bearing body born
Bartered broken in half
Along a hemisphere of wrongs
An archipelago of sins
Broken vows for everlasting
Where to begin where to begin?
No chance for corrections
They live in the aftermath
Of such reckless brokering
Custody split weeks
As if geological zones
Inchoate amorphous

Hemispheres

Children now veering

Toward fifty and forty-seven

History's lashing evident on faces

Hearts unrelenting pounding

The arrhythmia startling

Still they ran toward fear

Married partners

Who embellished enhanced

The grand imbalance

Biblical heirloom

Legacy of demonic devilish lunacy

Penultimate chokehold

Obliging supplicants

I long for both of you

To stomp past

The restraints

Past parasitic

Tyrannies

Invasive microorganisms

Of doubt

Of self-imposed constraint

Awaken oracle

Transcendent epiphanies

Step from this

Mad hatter psycho dance

Find voice

Karaoke lip-synch

Act as if

Life were otherwise

*No matter how bad things get,
you've got to go on living, even if it kills you. (Sholem Aleichem)*

Let the spirit infuse

We are Jews

Fist furling refusals lift

A hippodrome of melody

Of lilt and song

Burst forth wild enigmatic

Technicolor rhapsodic

Purple pink fuchsia entice

Libidinal labia multi-layered



With an organ's swell

Trill songbirds

Lift skyward on the lilt

Of sultry lullaby

Break the bondage

The vile tyranny

Tintinnabulation

Of the past

Echolalic histrionic

Revile spit out

The holy flawed gospel

Cataclysmic wafer of constraint

Love true love ecstatic

Ecclesiastical celestial love awaits

NB

Beware there is no path

There is only a blunt rock

With a river to fall into

...stunned by the sight of his son's body

Because it was not Gabriel

It was just some poor kid

Whose face looked like a room

That had been vacated

I saw people buying coffee from trucks

And ordering breakfast in diners

Exactly as if nothing had happened

...Grief is a disease no one wanted

I will not forgive you

Indifferent God

Until you give me back my son

the chill grip of grief

Gabriel, A poem, by Edward Hirsch

I want to live only for as long as I continue to be myself.

A mind that could be so alive one moment with thought and feeling building toward a next step and then someone erases the backboard. It's all gone and I can't even reconstruct what the topic was. It's just gone.

What I want is to die on my own timetable and in my own nonviolent way.

Sandy Bem 6/26/09

She would take her own life. The question was , when? "The Last Day," by Robin Marantz Henig

Critical interests – personal goals and desires that make life worth living...

Experiential interests – enjoying listening to music, for instance, or eating chocolate ice cream...

Ronald Dworkin, "Life's Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia and Individual Freedom"

Death Escort Wanted

Death card left unfilled

No partner to claim me

No partner to comfort me

No partner to sponge my drying lips

No sugar sips to moisten my throat's grip

No one to rub oils on my parching skin

No one to brush the hair clinging my face

No one to clean my glasses if my eyes can't see

No one to sponge my face my arms under my chin

No one to wipe the dribbling piss souring up my down there

Intestines no longer grumble crunching poop

No food no drink pills in clenched fist

Waiting wondering when to do this

No one to watch over guard my demise

The very gift we gave our dad

Moving him from mother's murderous hands

Bringing him to an angel a guardian an escort
Righteous response to life's terminating proverbial Gordian Knot
She who when the time came and our Dad claiming *it was time to die*
Helped withdraw him from life little by little hour by hour
Took six days tending him as if a flower in her English rose garden
Death your most important hour Bill she told him
Yes and yes and yes and no more Bach it is too beautiful! I am prepared to die.
The end is near he told me as we drove to her the angel's house
More than a decade later months from seventy-five
And there is no one to whom to say *the end is near*
It just sits there on the tip of my tongue
No escort to comfort me as I come to a final end
Solitariness in extremis led to this
Contrariness obstinacy concoction of pain and loneliness
Solitariness solicitous resolute composition of regrets
Mirage of wholeness forgiveness illusory
Jumble of mush armor scattershot with fear quicksilver feet
Death urgent looming whether
By my hand or some ghastly bodily trigger
No time to cultivate an English rose garden
Solitariness manifest a biblical enactment
Anthem unequivocal staunch desire to be alone, need no one
Put myself years earlier in terminal exile from true love
Prescient soul enveloped in protective cocoon
Vowing to be master of last breaths eyelids shuttering closed
Dying reflective in exacting harmony with a pre-determined arc
Gathering up the courage
To erect temple for inevitable last fractious moments

Self-ordination ministrations for my deliverance
Love improbably perpetually vanquished spurned
Alone solitary executing a death
Fashioned festooned by will and design

NB

The dread is gone, and has been replaced by fierce and happy concentration.

...balance realism with patients' need for hope – that fragile beam of light in so much darkness.

...they are being stalked by death and I am trying to hide, or at least disguise, the dark figure that is slowly approaching them.

Henry Marsh, "Do No Harm, Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery"

Book End: Epilogue: *Needing Family No Matter What* (Narrative of Adoption)

Mangled truths wrought mangled body
My third child taken off a tree limb
In the generous rainforest of Paraguay
Imprecation predilection
Prophetic propensity
Necessary to probe
The why and why and why
Of such a propitious decision

We have choice, we have subjectivity, and we choose what we will make ourselves to be; we are entirely responsible for our existence: Jean Paul Sartre

Needing Family No Matter What

My story of Luca's adoption
A woman a medical *elder primate*
An anomaly
Twenty-six years later

Repercussions reverberate

Wind chime knells

Sonorous din inner ear

Constantly begs

Why and how

Unfathomable inscrutable

Yet utterly predictable

The story the circumstances

And the *unintended consequences*

A perverse effect contrary to what was originally intended (when an intended solution makes a problem worse). This has been dubbed the cobra effect after an anecdote about how a bounty for killing cobras in British India caused people to breed cobras.

Robert K. Merton Sociologist

The *cobra effect*

Collection of misdeeds

Fraught decisions

And choices stuck

In the extraterrestrial

Chicken neck

Of decision making

Bartering brokering

Vow bending violating

A couple unfathomably

Incompatibly joined

Dared to think

Contemplate

Harrowing

What missed circuit

When bending of logic

Assertion of biblical lore

Entertained even the thought
They should adopt a child
Bring a found infant
An abandoned baby
Into their incidental fictive family
Monumental folderol mendacity
A tautological horror unravels
Discursive ominous foreboding
What crawl of madness
Crept into my walk down
That Episcopal chapel
Wedding aisle
Scissor spread my legs
Nocturnal batwings
To invite *Mr. Marauder* in
And yet and yet
Bedraggled escapee
Tourniquet twisting
Case study
Martini twist
Marital abuse
Stray wife
Doggedly pursued
Hand to soothe
Bare-knuckled
Took to *hook line sinker*
Feigned ardor
My body

A barren *Atacama*

Desperate enticement

Deigned suggest

We adopt a child

Why not? Why?

Highflying high-fiving

Went for necessary

Home Study

Social worker blind

Struck by our legitimacy

Our legitimacy!

And so it goes

How dare we?

How could we?

We did

And I was

The biometric architect

The evil that is in the world almost always comes from ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence if they lack understanding. Albert Camus

Reams attesting

Sanctioning our rightness

Filled out voluminous forms

Congressman intervened

We travelled near the tip

Of Latin America

To gather up

Teeth on scruff

An abandoned infant

Fifteen years later

A son our son

Catapulting to death

Awakened to black magic

Surgical machination

Attaching a portion

Of his small intestine

To a hole in his stomach

Into which his poop would flow

He would sport on his tummy

An ostomy bag

A what?

A surgically created opening in the small intestine, usually at the end of the ileum, the intestine is brought through the abdominal wall to form a stoma. Ileostomies may be temporary or permanent, and may involve removal of all or part of the entire colon.

His large intestine

Imploded with poisons

Disintegrated

He was only fifteen

His large intestine

Surgically drawn

From his body

A mound of moist *Play-doh*

Streaming bile-like

Green black sepsis

Resulting from a biomorphic disease

Biomorphism is an art movement that began in the 20th century. It patterns artistic design elements on naturally occurring patterns or shapes reminiscent of nature. Taken to its extreme it attempts to force naturally occurring shapes onto functional devices, often with mixed results.

Our darling found child
Myth making *Guaraní Indian*
Hosannas regaling us as saints
You saved that boy's life
Bedside post-surgery
Intensive care
Momentarily
Luca loses consciousness
On the operating table
Resuscitated
His daunting will
Grappling with angels
Whether to stay
Or fly off
Ascendant homeward
Reappearing reincarnate
A fabulously plumed parrot
Bobbing in rainforest arbor
Child of indeterminate genealogy
Did you have a biomedical
Predisposition
A native primordial
Predilection
Our wee *Amerindian* chief
From the first you
Backed away from food
Ingesting digesting
Stirring up internal furor

This found child
Our own rare *Olinguito*
Time scattered scatological
Increasingly repulsed at meals
Shielded himself hiding
Behind doors in corners
From fork menacing father
Our hyper-alert child
Presaging danger
His stomach churning
Digestive upheaval
Dining table and chairs
Forced feeding riggers
Surging electrodes
He ran wild mealtimes
Table settings
Warning danger alert
Restaurants sent him
Into frenzied calisthenics
Behavior decoding
Our indigenous child
A transplanted misfit
Stuck by chance
In a hostile environment
Classrooms dining tables
Dangerous encampments
Had we only given him
Free reign to create

A more natural habitat
Environment
Instead of crushing him
Stuffing him into
Contradictory configurations
Had we given him space
To design divine
A place more closely akin
To his biomorphic genealogy
Daunting awe-inspiring
Threatening menacing
His fierce desire to be alive
Throbbing
In his mercurial feet
He rebelled fled
Life and death
Orbited our home
And the rigid unyielding
Rules at pre-school
Play nicely we share
You must kidding
I need to be first in line
The sand box my dominion
Block building a kingdom
Our found child
Rare as an *Olinguito*

The 2-pound creature, called an olinguito, didn't make itself easy to find. The orange-brown mammal lives out a solitary existence in the dense, hard-to-study cloud forests of Colombia and Ecuador.

The large-eyed critter—now the smallest known member of the raccoon family—is active only at night, when it hunts for fruit in its Andean habitat. Like other carnivores such as the giant panda, olinguitos seem to eat mostly plants, but are nevertheless part of the taxonomic order Carnivora. National Geographic



Doom trilling education experts

Contracted professional hit squads

Posing edicts of *or else*

His *Zelig*-double father

Saluting *Sieg Heils*

Head bobbing

A Halloween apple

Yes and yes and yes and yes and yes

Warning signs

Of gross incompatibility

From the first

Refused to drink milk

His digestive tract

Tolerating only fruit

When a toddler

Wouldn't relinquish his bottle

Sipping apple juice

Until his two front teeth

Disintegrated into

Miniscule enamel chips

Why and why and why

How I the I of I

Dared do venture into this

Adopting a child

With this man

And our son now continually

Bounded by wracked

With post-surgery pain

Post-traumatic stress

Ominous premonitions

Have me cowering as well

Fearing a ringing phone

The sky is falling

Run for protective cover

Regain perspective and

Balance with

Beethoven's Ninth

Verdi's Requiem

Wilfred Owen Walt Whitman

Bach Cantatas

Feeling exhilaration

Awe gasping wonder

Sky clouds thunder

Tree's tropic arabesque

Daring to be alive

For if there is a sin against life, it consists perhaps not so much in despairing of life as in hoping for another life and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this life.

Life can be magnificent and overwhelming — that is the whole tragedy. Without beauty, love, or danger it would almost be easy to live.

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest - whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories - comes afterwards. These are games.

The Myth of Sisyphus Absurdity and Suicide - Albert Camus

We live and die

Within the metrics

Of our compatible souls

Mother and son

Transmuting

The inscrutable daunting road

Dying a habit of the mind

Living tattered thus

To which we are resigned

NB

Can't resist life's grandeur

Torqued in torture chamber

Of death's pre-eminence

Hovering our lives

Rapacious starving

Night raving creature

Our lives persist

Unfathomable inscrutable

Diaries of doom

Ingested daily

Yet joy finds my soul

Undeterred

Your laughter a gut punch

To that cloaked pre-eminence

And still his father wallows

In clouds of misery

Aggrandizing sadness
Depleted self-serving
Impoverished
Wondering what power
Brings the heart
To a numbing
Overwhelming
Love for a child
A love without question
Or limit
Happy at the sight
Of my young
Bringing with it renewal
Life readily sacrificed
For a child's wellbeing
Emotion overwhelms
Uncanny unknowable
Definition finds no words
Hold on
I beg myself
If in restive aging arms
If in a heart with
Its arrhythmic quiver
Feeling a tenderness
Extending beyond my death
For my found *Amerindian* son
My own little *Olinguito*
Daring to be alive
Poop oozing unceasingly

Belly pouch
Catches endless output
He will live this way
In perpetuity
His body
Irrevocably modified
At twenty-five
He was felled again
Disease invaded
His small intestine
Necessitating further surgery
Life fixed on that wishing star
That day that moment
Sitting upright on a toilet
Woefully will never be
At twenty-six
Moments ago
They scraped clean
All possibility
Of ever ridding him
Of an ostomy bag
Now affixed permanently
No future reprieve
His body manifesto
Multi-colored covered
With multiple tattoos
One last tattoo I'm getting
A flag of Paraguay

My home country

Shows me flag on tablet

Post-surgery bedside

Watching news as a family

Detailing football player

Adrian Peterson's beating

Flogging his son with tree branch

He tells his father

How he remembers

The multiple assaults

He endured from this

Ill-equipped explosive man

Ears bitten hair tugged

Tossed across rooms

Straps threats

Should have put an orange in sock

Saw it on TV *leaves no marks*

I listen wondering

Where was I

Did I pull his father off him

Dissuade him

Knock him out

Or rather did I appease

This mad erratic erupting

Ejaculate pulsing child assaulter

Repulsed by this display

Of euphemistic fatherly discipline

Conflicted addicted

To the potential

For salvation

His blast of youthfulness

Into my body

Cringe recounting

Memorializing silently

Bedside reckoning

Upon hearing

The ultimate bodily assault

For my son

The surgeon informs

They surgically removed

His rectum

And now he has no butt hole

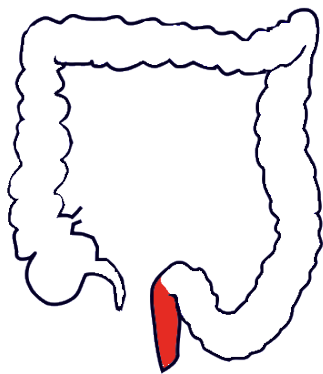
Mom, *I have no butt hole*

He tells me after seeing surgeon

This almost two months after

They surgically removed his rectum

Rectum: The final section of the large intestine, terminating at the anus



What does it mean to have no rectum?

Well no anal sex for starters

But for him, my found son
Another modification of his body
We walk side-by-side
Home from the appointment
I have no butt hole he tells me again
I know I said
Guess I was too drugged up
To remember if he told me
It is an autumn night
Trees in the park
Leaves tintured yellow
Falling like glittering stars
Startling red and pinks
Radiate from sunset sky
A raccoon perched in a tree
Looks down
At tourist with camera
Hope it is not rabid I say
I petted one once he says
I doubt it I think
But if they are out daytimes
Likely to be rabid I say
They are nocturnal
Plump and wandering in daylight
Warning signs I continue
Little *Olinguito* strikes affinity
Then without reserve asks
When you go to West Side

To put in my prescriptions

For one hundred pain pills

And next round of antibiotics

He continues talking contrapuntally

Can you go to Amsterdam and 106th

And pick up a Philly Cheese Steak for me

I will and I do

Another new venue

For his voluminous

Rotating like seasons

Yens and appetites

Tears held back

I go off first to pharmacy

And then to new place

The Columbus Market

Next to *Mama Mia's Pizza*

Waiting for the order

I muse now nearly seventy-five

How I traveled to the ends

Of the earth

Rainforest *Paraguay*

To bring Luca into my life

When we walk together

Our hands touch

We almost always

Walk closely together

Holding hands

In radical summation

I am a mother who...

Was a wife twice

Do or die

Trying to understand

How come and why

Now my son mad months

From his twenty-seventh birthday

Struggles to stand up straight

Excruciating pain

His legs shaking like maracas



He halves pain pills

Makes self-medicating concoctions

Of blunts and oxycodone

I buy boxes of *Dutch Masters*

He is artfully surgically skillful

Removing all the tobacco

And deftly trenchantly

Grounds up pot

Folding it gingerly

Into the cigar wrapping

Maestro of blunt making

A **blunt** is a cigar hollowed out and filled with marijuana. It is rolled with the tobacco-leaf "wrapper" from an inexpensive cigar.



He sells them
As if a feral street kid
A waif a wayfarer
Barefoot tattered
Waving down
Cars streaming
Asuncion streets Paraguay
Perplexing motherhood
Searches reason
To trust herself
No matter what
Priestess
Of mother lore
My found child and I
Chose daily
To honor the other
Ecclesiastical beneficent
There I am
Holding still my infant
A truly virgin birth
Abandoned infant
To the very end
Child of mine

Chance encounter
Child of unbroken smile
Holding an optimism
That defies logic and God
We gathered him up
Flagrantly gauging
Cut of tropical tree
Arboretum
Of hellish desire
Decoupage
Of deciduous deception
Chance acquisition
This particular
Abandoned infant
Who could not tolerate
Trans-migration
Transplantation
His intestines rebelled
An inner balance
Scrambled tangled
Backlash backwater
Digestive tract
Craving the din
The tumultuous currents
Of the *Iquatzu Falls*
His birth village
Perched precariously
Precipitously at the rim

Of the *Tropic of Capricorn*

Steps from the Parana River

And the rumbling roaring

Electricity radiating Iquatzu Falls

The name "Iguazu" comes from the Guarani or Tupi words "y" [i], meaning "water", and "ûasú" [wa'su], meaning "big". Legend has it that a deity planned to marry a beautiful woman named Naipí, who fled with her mortal lover Tarobá in a canoe. In a rage, the deity sliced the river, creating the waterfalls and condemning the lovers to an eternal fall. The first European to record the existence of the falls was the Spanish conquistador Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1541.

The junction of the water flows marks the border between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. There are points in the cities of Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, and Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, which have access to the Iguazu River, where the River borders of all three nations.

We were not the first

To pillage and subjugate

Corrupt exploit

Desecrate debase

Imperial surliness

Overtaking

The indigenous

Quell usurp invade

Imperial parenthood

Ablution sought

Motivation oblique

Inscrutable then

Truth blistering now

Shingles creep

Feckless spin

Story builds

Truth slaughtered

Altar of deception

Serial pretenders

Felonious dealmakers

Serial marriage vows

Mock deride

The very marrow

Essence

Of till death do us...

Till death do us part" or Until death do us part is a common wedding vow. Its implication is that nothing other than one partner dying can end the marriage.



Flimflam in the moment

Ground to pulp

Vows torqued

Volition violation

Dig muck mire

To find words

To describe define

How we became a we

And then how that we

Finding itself in Paraguay

Swearing before a judge

To love and educate

Till death do us part

An infant son of Paraguay

Consecrate desecrate

Ambulate masticate

Vile incarnation

Tremble shake

Probe dig down

Purveyor perpetrator

Sinful grappling

If time could be rewritten

Re-happen

Had I alone adopted Luca

My body would not be

Twisted torqued

Perpetually in anguish

Guilt the tripwire

Of my pulse heartbeat

Till death do us part

Living beyond that promise

Compromised beyond repair

The soul reaps

Breathes in toxic air

NB

Truth be told

Not only did we

The couple indulge

In unholy matrimony

And adopt a child

We bartered

For better baby

Equivocated

At first meeting

With offered

Eighteen-month old boy

His ears poked out

Frank commented

He was sent first

To chart the course

Have the first bonding

Contorted first meeting

Conditional rumination

Previewing item

As for an auction

Wilbur runt pig (Charlotte's Web E.B. White)

Would have been slaughtered

So closely prodigiously

Negatively regarded

Child deftly withdrawn

From his jaundiced eye

Jewish dickering from afar

Gun moll henchman wife

Got us to infant Luca

Frank posing as father

Exudes as snake skin moulting

I found my son and I love him!

Judgment day comes

Six weeks later

Arriving as a couple

Holding this quivering
Nine-week-old
Shriveling quivering infant
Standing before the judge
Once again reverently
Promising giving my word
Knowing fully I was weaving
A Faustian fable
Our infant now our son
Was failing to thrive
Choking on formula
Pushed into his mouth
In the military guarded
Adoption hospital
Abandoned at birth
Crying for his mother
Needing a foster mother
Drawn from the same
Celestial spirits
Not us never us
How dare we
Trembling tracing
The source root
Of this poison
Percolating
From the start
In your intestine
Vulnerability inclination

Predisposition perhaps

Like a wily sperm tail

Itinerant wriggling

Locking into gene

Perverse couplings

Pervasive abnormality

Too many deviations

Infestation of gene pool

Cross currents of rank

Debased copulation

Historically documented

Predatory predacious

History of the *Guarnini*

And their hallowed ground

Abutting the *Iquatzu Falls*

He is more than likely Guarini Indian

Maybe mixed in with some German

*The **German** minority in Paraguay came into existence with immigration during the industrial age. The "Nueva Germania" colony was founded in Paraguay in 1888...*

The Pediatrician told us

Examining him during

His first twenty-four hours with us

He is *failing to thrive*

Wrong formula

Hypersensitive stomach

Concurrent genetic anomalies

Incompatible mooring

Pediatrician got us new formula

And from the moment
I held him
I never let go
He is a love baby
Thriving
Pediatrician noted with pride
Three weeks later
We were moored
Stranded in Paraguay
Entangled political forces
Kept us from obtaining
Exit papers for Luca
Although I was free to leave
Frank rushing back
On turn-around scheduled flight
I will never leave without my son
Told my older children
And gulp husband
Invited by lawyer
To become his houseguests
Making weekly attempts
Yet incapable of obtaining
Necessary exit papers
Living for what seemed
Indeterminate months

Residing in and about
A fragrant garden
Of blooms and hummingbirds
My love grew
As hummingbirds fluttered
Exponentially existentially
For this my youngest son
The one I chose
Unforced I fell in love
With him wildly
If imperfectly
Beyond all bonds
And all geographical
Boundaries
In my mind and heart
I loved as *Mary for Jesus*
As translucent and miraculous
As garden hummingbirds
A succession of women hold
Cooing and bathing Luca
Language barriers disregarded
Shamefully I neither speaking
Nor understanding Spanish
Never knew their identities
Except for his wife
Or their relationship to lawyer

Sisters or mistresses
Keeper of harem
Or solitary females
Still recapture readily
Moments in the garden
If nearly seventy-five
The decision
Remains inscrutable
Stuck in armored
Unconscious sub-levels
Raw and gut wrenching
Not no never the decision
To adopt this baby
But with the man
Gulp husband
With whom I penned
A disastrous codicil
Subverting a set
Of legal papers
He and I were not the first
Imperialist plunderers
Before us Spanish Conquistadors
Jesuits and German settlers
And then the current Dictatorship
Recognized as one

Of the greatest tyrannies
In the contemporary world
And the longest reigning
And most vicious in all of
Latin and Central America
These Paraguayans
Were long victims
Of marauding pilfering
Gangland proselyting
Disruptors unsettling
Their native inner balance
Concoctions tonics
Corrupting invasive
Incompatible bacteria
Ravishing intestines
While uplifting souls
Torqued tortured
Choirs of blissful harmonies
Communing connubial
Conquistadors conquerors

To note: The first European to record the existence of the falls was the Spanish conquistador Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca in 1541. During his wanderings, passing from tribe to tribe, Cabeza de Vaca developed sympathies for the indigenous population. He became a trader, which allowed him freedom to travel among the tribes. Cabeza de Vaca claimed that he was guided by God to learn to heal the sick and gained such notoriety as a faith healer that he and his companions gathered a large following of natives who regarded them as "children of the sun", endowed with the power to both heal and destroy.

The Jesuits, an order of Roman Catholic priests, were given permission by the king of Spain to build missions in South America to protect, educate, and convert the Guarani. The Jesuits founded seven missions in Paraguay, the first one in 1610 and the last in 1706. The ruins of two of the missions, Jesús de Tavarangue (1685) and Trinidad de Paraná (1706), both in southern Paraguay near Encarnación, are rich in history and were designated UNESCO World heritage sites.

The Guarani farmed, raised cattle, and attended school where the Jesuit priests taught them a basic education along with trades, crafts, painting, stone carving, sports, and music. The Guarani became literate and turned out to be talented artists and skillful sculptors.

In time the Spanish government feared that the missionaries were becoming too powerful and the missions too independent. Viewed as a threat to the Spanish colonizers, the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish territories in 1767 by the king of Spain. As the missions rapidly declined, many Guaraní fled into the forests, but they took with them their new skills and knowledge. The Guaraní people, language, and culture persist today, in large part because of the Jesuit missions. Many of Paraguay's Guaraní are descendants of members of the mission communities

*The conquistadors as they colonized South America, they brought with them European strains of Helicobacter pylori, a stomach bacterium that infrequently causes ulcers and stomach cancer, and these European strains also displaced native American ones. This legacy persists in Colombia, where some communities face a 25-fold higher risk of stomach cancer, most likely due to mismatches between their ancestral genomes and their *H. pylori* strains.*

Helicobacter pylori is the bacteria responsible for most ulcers and many cases of stomach inflammation chronic gastritis.

The bacteria can weaken the protective coating of the stomach, allowing digestive juices to irritate the sensitive stomach lining. "There Is No 'Healthy Microbiome,'" by Ed Yong, N.Y. Times Nov 1, 2014

Contexts for corrupt decisions

How why history's narrative

Blotched stained invaded

Infant squirming rebelling

Body's impetus to protect

Exploitation prepared

Body fertile bed

For incipient dread disease

Luca's birth mother

Ingested local fruits

Farm bred cows goats

Kept *microbiome* from destroying

Her biometric inner balance

Luca held not a tincture

Predisposition to genetically

Bred immuno protectors

No body memory

Of chicken pox whooping cough

Of Western child hood diseases

No build up of resistance

Our compounds to inoculate

Never filtered through
Systems' intrinsic memory
Never an inoculation
In Luca's genetic makeup
Our infant presented
An indigenous anomaly
Couldn't tolerate from the first
Our food our required inoculations
Our cultural and social stays
Rebellion resistance
His modus operandi
Our collective intolerance
Ran a roustabout
Collision course
Tearing up his stomach
Taunting his spirit his nerve
His very being
He was a biological
And spiritual misfit
We got our just comeuppance
The spoils of our illegitimate
Ill-conceived marital bond
Penultimate absurdity
Perpetrating gospel
Heretical inscrutable
Bounty hunters
Eerie frightening

Daring to adopt

Truly *Meshuganah* witless

Irreverent nerviness

Exploit tenuous bond

Adopt a child

Probing

Spurious misadventure

Free-floating Odyssey

Recount rote how we

Turned away from a child

Whose *ears poked out*

Gustavo who was eighteen months

Thriving in his mother's arms

No longer able to care for him

Our Luca our *Olinguito*

Our *Rara avis*

Left at birth

Abandoned

Anonymous unnamed

Orphaned baby

We brought into our lives

Carnal chattel

Doubt spurned

Rode rodeo rough shod

Bringing an infant

Into our lives

Our food our air
Our contentious lair
We took this indigenous
Homegrown sequestered child
From his rainforest and waterfall
We were reconstructed
Reconstituted conquistadors
His body revolted
Being transplanted
Inviolate the natural
Order of things
Absconded
Tampered with a life force
Of a sweet preternatural
Dear sweet soul
Displacement
On such a grand scale
Grandiosity with abandonment
We brought an *Amerindian* infant
Into our hapless loveless lives
Our son stains
His body multicolored
And over his heart
A grand tattoo
Of a richly plumed chief
Representational father figure
Or of self cross-pollinated

Glorious imprint of chief

It is locked in his gene

Sacred and sacrificial



Attesting to a biblical lore

I brought a found infant

To the *Big Apple*

City of dreamers and schemers

His body resisted rebelled

Dormant disease inflamed

Wrongness compounded

Actions choices decisions

Decimate disastrous

History the past

Lashes out

Implicates

I took a child

From a leafy

Rainforest bough

Oblique motherhood

My calling

Stampeded by a man

Who ploddingly
Enflamed my passion
I took a child
I kicked the man out
I have sat bedside
For more than a decade
Watch the unraveling riddle
Of my incautious choice
Attack his stomach
Or what's left of it
My own found child
Perhaps enlightened
Perhaps confronting
Implicated
In amorphous reflection
Got me marauding
Got me repenting
Got me watching
Got me wrenching
That a child I took in
As virtuous mother saint
Engulfed in a vast morass
Of such manifest suffering

NB



Luca and I



Luca and I

The world asks us to be quickly readable, but the thing about human beings is that we are more than one thing. We are multiple selves. We are massively contradictory.

We unite our opposites. You can't be one thing without being, in some ways, the other thing. It's about how to reconcile, how to be tolerant of all the possibilities, to recognize how fine it is to be us and to be in the world.

Ali Smith, author "How to Be Both"

I WILL NEVER - NEVER WILL I

I will never go to Harvard conduct the NY Philharmonic play the cello in the Emerson quartet have a book of collected poems published posthumously visit Greece or Egypt or France again.

I will never be married again and never have a great love one true love. I will forever choke on the word couple and never picnic in the park bench with a partner of more than twenty-five years.

I will never have anyone to sleep next to except for a night here and there with a grandchild.

I will never have the knowledge I covet.

I will never have a happy childhood or live with a mother who is less crazy and a father who is less deferential and a brother who mostly is silent and remote.

I will never love my three children more than I have. I will never give them childhoods free of trauma and pain.

I will never be happily married.

I will never live much longer moving closer to death to dying I will try to purge myself of regret and the deep sorrow that springs from choices made poorly or not at all.

I will come to love the life I had I lived. In a bleak world of such misery and turmoil I will hope and wonder if others will have the power the will the desire to protect the earth and to truly protect each other.

I will never reside on an asteroid with *The Little Prince* watering lovingly a single red rose.

After death I too will be memory glistening with kind acts flawed but each day offering a glimmering smile and perhaps some laughter. I want to be remembered as someone who, despite all, knew it was just astounding and wonderful to be alive to have life.

NB

John my first love

I have lived

The last years

Happily

If without you

Steeped in your lore

NB

I live in a crowded house

Surrounded by my words

Past present pluperfect

Extant vitriolic

Passionate mournful

Exiting me

Quietly solitary

Wordlessly

NB

Drench with emotion

Standing at the rim of life

Curling into myself

Recoiling in darkness

Rush out to find my

Reflection in the Meer

NB

E-MAILS: 2015

Not Showing Up

if reschedule at all, won't be until the fall - got up for this visit and to welcome you into my home, rarely invite more than family in -

seems there is always something that makes this reunion impossible -

gus, had my heart opened to you - no meals just a rare and raw openness - gone now

to my mind, you walked out - i really loved you - would have stayed with you and we could have had a kid and worked through our immaturity and old wounds - but rather than join on a sailboat trip with mike to which you were invited you left -

threatened me if i went you would leave - can't threaten people with abandonment - mike remained a life long best friend to me and to the kids and became luca's godfather - and mike was gay -

think best to let sleeping dogs lay - and seems as if you are held hostage by a wife and mother of your son to whom you are devoted - so be well old friend - we move on - naomi (i was once hostage to a husband but managed to escape and get out - that was ben)

.....
rebecca and jeremy,

when jeremy left for berkeley i couldn't speak for more than a week afraid if i opened my mouth a deafening wail breaking the sound barrier would come out - and when rebecca left for college i wrote every day for a year and remember doing college laundry in denver - and now luca has just come down to tell me that soon after his 27th birthday, june 13th - he and chloe will be moving to LA - she to become the assistant manager of the longchamp store - luca to work part-time at least with his friend arthur, from highschool, with whom they will live initially - arthur owns and runs a fully licensed successful pot or medical marijuana store in LA -

sobbing as i listened got luca into tears as well - of course i am so proud and happy he along with chloe will be doing this and believe they have thought it out and are prepared for the challenges of striking out on their own -

luca is aware of all of the changes and landmarks going on in the greater barber family and if he is not in close communication feels very connected -

tearfully i go out to walk in the park - to take it all in - still hard to grapple with all - xomom - 5/26/15

.....
good thing, dear helene and sam, that you travel and share your adventures - through your eyes and words i too have traveled the world -intending to get a backpack at age 70 and just go here and there for a year or more - got dry-docked, luca becoming dangerously ill - and if with ostomy bag life long, and bile-duct disease - he is alive and intending to move to LA in the very near future with his dog and his girlfriend chloe - i feel my being home-based has been a success - it is how measure it, no? so thanks for sharing so generously through photographs and narratives a glimpse of the world -feeling a little or lot nauseous at the current state of our own country and don't ever want to vote for hillary - never a fan - but we go on as beckett says until we don't - sounds like jeff and jill have and are coming into their own - mahzeltov for that - love to all family i know and most of all to both of you - nibs

Ellen Jamesian's in union communion with **women who voluntarily cut out their own tongues** in symbolic camaraderie with someone named *Ellen James*, whose own tongue was cut out by her rapist when she was a child.

John Irving, "The World According to Garp"

I Will Cut Out My Tongue

Before I call out

Mother Mother Mother

On my death bed

As she did her mother

Momma be with me Momma be with me

This to a woman she reviled

Despised vitriol spun

Like cotton candy off her mouth

I will cut out my tongue

Before I call out

To the mother who

Held me scruff of neck

Arm extended nose held

Moments from birth

Death will not

Have me mewling

Weak-kneed lamb

Suckling at the swatting leg

Of a broken barren sheep

I hated her I feared her

I will not forgive her

Death will not assuage

Persuade elicit call forth

Good will at the ending
Yet freed to hate her
I find so much
If with whimsy to admire
Her humor her zest
Her zany compulsion
To be in the center of it all
Her capacity
To transform herself
Becoming whoever
Was in close proximity
At her favorite *Benihana*
Hibachi-style family tables
She was Irish Turkish Japanese
Merging blending becoming
Authentic ethnic
Cultural whatever
An indigenous
Native original
Identity stretched
Boundaries borders
She was ambassador
Without portfolio
She was everybody
Anybody else
She of unkempt passion
Unruly intimidating
Overarching hunger

Latching a suckling pig
To books knowledge
Voracious hollow leg
Highjacker
Of high faloutin'
Book bound identities
Self-anointed Queen Bee
Intellectual of the family
She reigned supreme
Guardian of the *Western canon*
Burden of once removed
Holocaust Jews
Her family's exodus
Brave holy departures
From Orthodox Judaism to
Synagogue High Holiday tickets
At Conservative and god forbid
Reform and even Sephardic temples
Her family's chosen one
Oozed deference recognition
In another major iteration
She was an art connoisseur
Scouring museums galleries
The *Theo van Gogh* broker
For *Goya Chagall El Greco*
Almost believing she cleaned
Picasso's brushes after *Guernica*
Art speak queen zany docent

Mad frenzied fluid flights
Exegesis on light in Vermeer
Reading at least a book a week
Pages rifled of weekly *New Yorkers'*
Desperate for acute connection
Bunches of wild
Disparate information
Spoken to whomever
In frenzied glossolalia
Daemon driven
Dressed as a matriarch
Featured in Vogue
Skirt flounced book in hand
Atop a ruby velvet chaise lounge
In *Architectural Digest*
And then thin air pricked
Dark moments ascended
She dragging the ocean's
Perpetual motion
For onerous
Jewish refugee crossings
Holocaust crooner
Of evil gas chamber lore
Swooned into Victorian
Female mannered hysteria
She was *Edna Pontellier* (*The Awakening* (Kate Chopin)
Jane in *The Yellow Wall-Paper* (Charlotte Perkins Gilman)
Vulcanizing her excessive

Reviled sexuality
Thrashing about in ecstatic
Self-punishing spells
Frightening her two children
Blaming in tongues
Ubiquitous mother
In perpetual transformation
Mad frenzied erratic explosive
Imploding with unbearable pain
Slapping her head furiously
Oven or furnace door ajar
Gobs of lava words
Spilling over husband and children
Savaging in these hellish moments
Unforgivable unforgettable utterances
Hours spent in the aftermath
The spittle splatter of sorrow
Regret begging a humping pup
Forgiveness stepping from
Her deranged self
As if a pile of dirty laundry
Never again never again
Fist swinging Jew
Swearing never again
To harm us her loyal brood
Dishonest to leave story of her
Without commenting
On her later in life true gift

Finally finding an identity
As sculptor creating
Multiple marble sculptures
Bernini made fewer
Renderings of
Mother's holding babies
In deep breath embrace
Rabbi's *Shakespeare*
Birds in flight
Sisterhoods of women
Matisse dancer groupings
Never a power tool in hand
Given to family
With even a droplet
Of her loved family blood
Family she had scared
Or cowed umbilically
Connected to her forever
With a marble sculpture
Constant reminder
Never to forget her
Immortality bequeathing
Forged with grit and fine stone
When her much regaled grandson
Graduated from law school
He received a knee-high sculpture
Of a book of justice etched pages open
For a puppy to crawl through

Head turned upward tongue wagging

Tail spinning in wriggly circles

Inside out there was

A woman to reckon with

Flesh sizzled crisp if touched

Embrace kisses kept away

For fear of damning destroying

She died at ninety-five

After saying each

And every day of her life

I wish I were dead

Spitting three times

Uttering *pooh pooh pooh*

Necessary to ward off

Scriptural yiddish evil eye

A ritualistic reversal of fate

Damn what you cherish

Or it will vanish

Be snatched away by the devil

When she finally agreed to die

We were too old

No time left

To retrieve rebuild lives

We her children seven years apart

Lived too long with her

To live well without her

Minds stun-gunned

Fixed with pain and remorse

Tattered relics of the fled
Undead *Holocaust* survivors
Her children confronting death
Now in real time
Walk the rubble
Of her aftermath
Arid untilled scavengers
For bold moments
To breathe without fear
Of her fiery dragon breath
Our minds tormented
By her heuristic haphazard plunder
It is not possible to live beyond
Our wild erratic demonic mother
Scarred and pained
Each day ordained
With the nuclear fissure
And her irreversible stain

NB

.....

But still there is no end, at least not yet:

No cure, that is, for these last years of grief

As I repeat and yet find no relief

I should have been a more honorable man, but the regrets don't overwhelm me.

They're such a good subject for writing.

Clive James NY Times Nov 1, 2014

The Haiku and Poems of Kobayashi Issa (1763---1827)

Heat shimmers -

clinging to my eyes

is that smiling face

A frog and I,

eyeball to eyeball.

My empty face,

betrayed by lightening.

Cool breeze,

tangled

in a grass-blade.

Step by step

up a summer mountain -

suddenly: the sea.

Cries of wild geese,

rumors spread about me.

My empty face,

betrayed by lightning

This world of dew

is only a world of dew - and yet

In this world

we walk on the roof of hell,

gazing at flowers.

**(written after the death of one of his children)*

Just simply alive,

Both of us,

I and the poppy.

The tree will be cut

Not knowing the bird

Makes a nest

Summer night -

even the stars are

whispering to each other.

Summer shower -

naked horse naked rider.

Winter seclusion;

listening, that evening,

to rain in the mountains.

Give me a homeland,

and a passionate woman,

and a winter alone

Just by being,

I'm here -

in the snow-fall.

A saddening world:

flowers whose sweet

blooms must fall . . .

As we too, alas . . .

The Haiku and Poems of Kobayashi Issa (1763---1827)

.....

The hawk was everything I wanted to be: solitary, self-possessed, free from grief.

Helen Macdonald, author "H is for Hawk"



Red-Shouldered Hawk

Promised Myself

In the year to turn 75
That I would create a website
Of my writing
And help Luca
To his best health
Success
Website up
And nearly complete
And Luca
Along with Chloe and Spike
Moving to LA
She to become
Assistant manager
At a Longchamp store
And Luca to work with Arthur

At his fully license medical pot shop

Success comes differently

A mother heart

Loving unequivocally

Without condition

Embraces

The final

Breaking off

The twig from the tree

Less a branch or three

Scared that what

I promised myself

Has nearly been

Achieved

And death dear death

Imagine you know

What that means

NB

No more No more

More

No more No more

More

No more No more

More

dear g-d no more

Silence

No more No More

More

More

More...

NB (after Beckett)



PUSSY RIOT

The Very End

Naomi Barber