

***Non Sequitor Nibs  
In consideration...***



***Gaudemus Igitur***

***Let us rejoice, therefore,  
While we are young  
After a pleasant youth  
After a troubling old age  
The earth will have us.***

***Non sequitor is lively, volatile, skirmishing, suggesting (at its best) simultaneity or multiplicity, loosing a flurry of questions. Louise Gluck***

***Writing, she said, is a kind of freedom. Patricia McKissack, author, Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman***

***I want to wish you goodbye but don't dare. C.K. Williams, Falling Ill- poems***

***Never say you know the last word about any human heart. Henry James***  
**Five questions to ask...**

***Wait, what?***  
***I wonder if...***  
***Couldn't we at least?***  
***How can I help?***  
***What truly matters?***

*“Wait, what?” is at the root of all understanding. “I wonder” is at the heart of all curiosity. “Couldn't we at least?” is the beginning of all progress. “How can I help?” is the basis of all good relationships. And “what truly matters?” gets you to the heart of life. By regularly asking these questions, Ryan promises, you will be prepared to enthusiastically answer “Yes” to one final—and, ultimately, most important—question: “And did you get what you wanted out of life, even so?” James Ryan, “Wait, What?”*

***Questions I'm asking myself knowing that I'm not going to be around for 20 years more. Ariarie Mnouchkine Theater Director***

**Four questions to ask...**

The *Four Questions* come early in the telling story of Passover at the Passover Seder. They are traditionally recited or sung by the youngest person at the table.

*Why is this night different from all other nights?*

*On all other nights we eat leavened products and matzah, and on this night only matzah.*

*On all other nights we eat all vegetables, and on this night only bitter herbs.*

*On all other nights, we don't dip our food even once, and on this night we dip twice.*

*On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining, and on this night we only recline.*

.....

**Slipknot death cuts its ways...nb**

### **Non Sequitor Nibs**

Dark bar shabby  
Sign outside said  
Happy hour come in  
We won't bite you  
Too early for  
Easter performance  
Of Marymount Singers  
Sophie a member  
Venue on  
Bleeker off Elizabeth  
Walked in or rather  
Limped or hobbled in  
Leaning weight  
On sturdy lilac walking stick  
Sat by the window  
On old cracked leather couch  
Stuffing sticking out like unruly cowlick  
Bartender came over asked  
I want light beer please  
Soon he brought tall glass  
Filled with golden cold beer  
Reading recent *New Yorker* April 10, 2017  
Cover *Broken Windows*

*The **broken windows theory** is a **criminological** theory of the norm-setting and signaling effect of urban disorder and **vandalism** on additional **crime** and **anti-social behavior**. The theory states that maintaining and monitoring **urban environments** to prevent small crimes such as **vandalism**, public drinking, and toll-jumping helps to create an atmosphere of order and lawfulness, thereby preventing more serious crimes from happening.*

Cartoonist Barry Blitt depicts  
Back of unseemly President Trump  
Oh God, God help us!  
Swinging a golf club facing  
A White House pocked marked  
With umpteen broken windows

Move on to reading piece by Calvin Tomkins  
Suggesting why Dana Schutz painted Emmett Till  
Included in the 2017 Biennial at the Whitney

*The 2017 Whitney Biennial, while mostly well-reviewed, has been dominated by controversy over Dana Schutz's painting "Open Casket," based on a photograph of Emmett Till in his coffin. Till was a 14-year-old black boy who was brutally murdered in Mississippi in 1955 after being accused of flirting with a white woman. His lynching, and his mother's decision to display his body in an open casket, has often been cited as the initiating incident of the Civil Rights Movement. While a widely circulated petition to the Biennial's curators to remove the painting from the exhibit, and subsequently destroy it, met little sympathy from the Whitney, the Museum has temporarily removed "Open Casket" from the exhibit after a leak jeopardized its exhibition space.*



I am kith and kin of Emmett Till  
He would now be exactly my age 76  
When he was 14  
When brutalized lynched slaughtered  
I, with another friend, wrote  
To the Newark Evening News  
After the jury acquitted

The alleged blood stained murderers  
Saying that we didn't want to be part  
Of a country issuing this kind of justice  
Made the front page

*Two 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls*

*Don't want to be citizens*

*In a world*

*Where there was no justice*

*For Emmett Till*

Friend moved on to other things

I joined the NAACP

Ultimately becoming

Editor-In-Chief of the Calumet

Emmett Till and his gory horrific death

Continue to inform and define my life



Billie Holiday photographed by William Paul Gottlieb

When Billie Holiday first sang *Strange Fruit*

## ***Strange Fruit***

*Southern trees bear strange fruit  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root  
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees<sup>1</sup>*

*Pastoral scene of the gallant south  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth  
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh  
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh*

*Here is fruit for the crows to pluck  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck  
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop  
Here is a strange and bitter crop - Abe Meeropol*

Sitting in this bar reading the give away sign

Of a classic intellectual New Yorker

Taking tiny cautious sips of beer

Didn't want to appear tipsy

At spring concert of Marymount Singers

A man maybe late '30's sat down next to me

On the stuffing sticking out couch

Begins by telling me he is reading

Reading *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders

Showed me pages reinforcing

The acknowledged complexity of the text

Received great critical acclaim

Telling me he reads the New Yorker

Only magazine he gets

Liked Emma Cline's *Northeast Regional* short story

And then we eased stepped into the world

Of ***I and Thou*** Martin Buber exchanges

*All journeys have secret destinations  
Of which the traveler is unaware.  
Through the Thou a person becomes I.  
Divine Play is the exultation of the possible.  
To be old can be glorious  
If one has not unlearned  
How to begin. Martin Buber I and Thou*

Ultimately a friend of his walked in  
Joined easily into our conversation  
One a photographer the first to arrive  
The other independent filmmaker  
Photographer had friend at UTA  
Shared Jeremy worked there  
He said he would text friend Mark  
To see if he knew Jeremy  
If so tell him he met Jeremy's mother at a bar  
Talked about our individual arts  
Me now engaged as writer and grandmother  
Asked about website said I was developing  
Of course didn't disclose  
Still my carefully guarded secret  
He told me I should go to physical therapy  
When I shared about my bum leg  
Got up with difficulty leaning on walking stick  
Left almost all of the beer but a few sips  
Said they could have it paid and hobbled out  
Always difficult when standing up  
*I'll find you* he said as I walked out the door  
Does know my name and Jeremy's  
Often well eclipsed dipped into forget  
Conversations like this  
Have a moment or two in time  
And then join other remembrances  
Of sweet in the moment comings together  
Secured seat at concert saved on for Rebecca  
Just as Marymount singers in concert robes entered stage  
First part of program devoted to female composers  
Skin tingling awe inspiring tear or two falling  
Joan Szymko, Andrea Ramsey Susan LaBarr  
Michelle Roueche Jocelyn Hagen Emily Crocker  
Liturgical composers rarely thus highlighted  
After intermission singers returned  
In well fitting jeans and an array of fitted tees  
Of note: didn't find a single anorexic looking female choir member  
Program reverted to jocular body swaying muscle flexing

Renditions of songs from the '70's and 80's  
Parent's were teens and millennial's  
When these songs hit the pop charts  
Clever programming by choir master Dr. Mario Dell-Ollo  
Among songs: *For the Longest Time, Landslide,*  
*The Tide is High, Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me and Abbe Forever*  
Emotions swelled with tunes audience caught in reminiscence  
Melancholy moment last concert for seniors  
Sophie in the last line of chorus tall red hair swaying in rhythm  
Dr. Dell'Olio wrote in the program notes –  
*As young women finding their voices and their strength,*  
*The Marymount Singers call us all to find*  
*Our voices and work for justice and equality.*

### **Hyperion**

*"Of Hyperion we are told that he was the first to understand, by diligent attention and observation, the movement of both the sun and the moon and the other stars, and the seasons as well, in that they are caused by these bodies, and to make these facts known to others; and that for this reason he was called the father of these bodies, since he had begotten, so to speak, the speculation about them and their nature."*



The world spins around me  
Sun moon stars  
Time to savor  
Sky will shortly  
Be going dark for and on me  
Autodidact outed  
Grand debut  
Here I come  
*Don't rain on my parade*  
Dread deaths hot breathe  
Home invader  
Stealth marauder  
Back up against the wall



*Being and nothingness*  
Close to that edge  
Dangled into the naught  
World cracked apart  
Russian Easter eggs  
Hand-painted spilled open



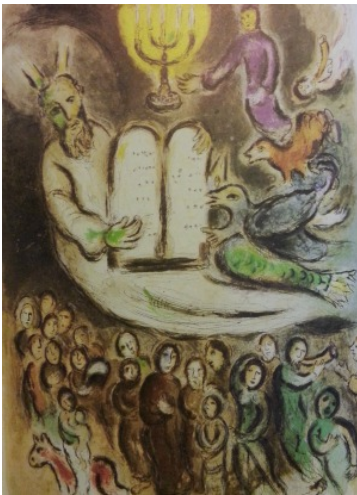
World gone mad  
World broken  
Spoken word unspoken  
Unraveling hyperbolic  
Testimonial to good living  
Molly Bloom gone mad  
Unexpurgated raving  
Shavings cuts off an old tree  
Transplant stem misery  
Implore beg end  
What which end

***"I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes."***

*"Every life is in many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves."*

*"The sea, the snot green sea, the scrotum tightening sea."*

*"The heaven tree of stars hung with humid night blue fruit." James Joyce, Ulysses*



The Seder the Jews  
What does it really  
All mean to me  
What?  
I do not know...  
We are from an ancient people  
Always bumping into ourselves  
Always in flight  
Displaced in motion  
Motion in displacement  
Jews persevere celebrate Hanukah Pesach  
In which ever what ever heaven or hell  
Resolute refusing not to exist  
*They/I will dwell in the house...NB*



*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. W.B. Yeats A Prayer for my Daughter*

.....

***They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But man, there's no boundary line to art. Charlie Bird Parker, saxophonist, jazz musician***

.....

***You can have no dominion greater or less than that over yourself.  
Leonardo da Vinci***

.....I

***Individuals are less likely to hurt themselves in communities with more clearly articulated moral boundaries. ...paradox of moral choice.  
Emile Durkheim, Sociologist, author Suicide***

.....

***Mortality is of the highest importance -but for us, not God. Albert Einstein***

.....

***Any musician who says he is playing better either on tea, the needle, or when he is juiced is a plain, straight liar. When I get too much to drink, I can't even finger well, let alone play decent ideas. Charlie Bird Parker, died at 34***

.....

***Ravens, Baltimore football team, knelt together to pray for "kindness, unity, equality and justice for all Americans." 10/2/17***

.....

***How but in ceremony and custom?***

A Light in the darkness

Jews lighting Hanukkah candles

Internment camps

Many yesterdays



*Biala Rebbe lights the menorah*



*The Triumph of Judas Maccabeus, Rubens*



- *Chanukah Menorah opposite Nazi building*

Enslavement indifferent  
Imprisoning capturing  
Locking up searching  
Finding the ones  
Who don't belong  
Fashion and fury  
Who to hate  
Who to fear  
Who to banish  
Who to kill off  
Who to enslave  
Who to shackle  
Who's next  
In this litany  
Liturgical surrender  
Foraging infamy  
I am a Jew  
If described as self-hating  
I was born a Jew  
If conflicted confused  
Defined by those  
In the moment  
Hating despising us  
Cyclical desperadoes  
Chasing eliminating us  
Blood boil curdle  
Drive them  
To fanatic

Frantic Genocide

Holding the keys

The finger that

Exterminates eliminates

But do not believe arrogant

Blasphemous blarney



That ***Jews are the Chosen***

***I have more faith in Hitler than in anyone else.***

***He alone has kept his promises,***

***all his promises, to the Jewish people.” Elie Wiesel, Night***

Climbing like vines

In and out of the Tower of Babel



***Engraving: The Confusion of Tongues by Gustave Dore 1865***

No appeasing a quixotic god

Fate lay deep within

An unequivocal love for the other – NB

*But I didn't see a Jew when I looked in the mirror; but I'm telling you, with white supremacists resurgent and wielding power, this pulled-pork-loving, drive-on-Saturdays secular Jew has never been happier to be called a Jewish=American Novelist. One yarmulke isn't even good enough for me, these, days. I'm writing this with a half-dozen stacked, like pancakes, on top of my head.*

*Nathan Englander, author, "Dinner at the Center of the Earth"*



**Will Eisner – A Contract With God and Other Tenement Stories**



## Heartrending Release, 1945

Mother and child  
Running racing dashing  
From internment  
What a funny work internment  
Living beyond bondage  
How does the unkempt heart  
Beat after – hard pounding hurting



In my blood  
Seething yet  
Running running  
On refugee feet  
On cauterized  
Nerve endings  
Clotted blood  
On tongue  
Garbled vocabulary  
It is Yiddish  
I am speaking  
It is gibberish  
I am speaking  
It is silence

I am keeping  
Sight splattered  
Blood spurting  
We are funning  
We are escaping  
Inked tattooed  
Not just a number  
But an image  
Of me  
In my confinement  
I am a refugee  
Do not know  
What that means  
Belonging nowhere  
Stepping from  
Horror mutilation  
To standing on  
Legs broken  
Mouth torn  
Of words  
Never to be spoken -NB

## Scylla and Charybdis

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### *Scylla and Charybdis*



*A 19th-century engraving of the Strait of Messina, the site associated with Scylla and Charybdis*

*Odysseus* faced both Charybdis and Scylla while rowing through a narrow channel. He ordered his men to avoid Charybdis, thus forcing them to pass near Scylla, which resulted in the deaths of six of his men. Later, stranded on a raft, *Odysseus* was swept back through the strait and passed near Charybdis. His raft was sucked into her maw, but he survived by clinging to a fig tree growing on a rock over her lair. On the next outflow of water, when his raft was expelled, *Odysseus* recovered it and paddled away safely.



A later British voyage between Scylla and Charybdis

### **Charybdis randomness**

Mind roves who knew

I knew Charybdis

Didn't pair Scylla

Ignorance pointed

Mind afraid of  
Soul self-invader mother  
Brain boomeranged  
Knowledge learning  
Dangerous incapable  
Of opening mind  
Revealed self  
Stayed frosted  
Impenetrable  
Mother's death  
Internet  
Becoming 70  
And suddenly  
Whiplash unlatched  
Set free  
Memories as if strangers  
Entered me  
Associations random  
Discrete flock in  
Ducks scattering  
At buckshot

Hieronymus Bosch

Hogwash



Squatter atop

Widener Library Harvard steps

John Kennedy rumor has it

Picked up his mistress waiting on hallowed steps

John Noble rumbled in on motor cycle

And swept yours truly away

Straight to Rockport

Oh the good all days

Come tumbling back to me



*Harvard Widener Library d Cambridge Massachusetts*

Luca's body is in a life death struggle

Speaking about stem cell

Are there Guaraní in Los Angeles

To offer a match of cells?

And then back to big bags of white liquid

Fed through pic line

Boy who loves Subway and pastrami

And knows the best places for

Lemonade pizza and burgers

Put on this diet

Cure the body dear doctor

Rob the mind the soul

Found boy son

I will go to the end of the way with thee

Broken already into fractured prism pieces

As long as one leg works and have walking stick

I will be walking right by your side

Body collapses in heaps melt down  
But I am old time is come for death natural causes  
But you only 28 and again body belonging to medical teams  
How much more before you or I snap apart  
Still we stumble fumble in the dark –  
Grove and unmask the rider  
Gallop toward us on a heathen horse - NB

.....

***Isolation has a way of becoming its own subject. Nell Steven, Bleaker House***

.....

***Kazuo Ishiguro, Nobel Prize Novelist, tells about a four-week period of seclusion in 1987 he and his wife called the "crash," a desperate attempt to "reach a mental state in which my fictional world was more real to me than the actual one." The result was "The Remains of the Day," a monumental yesteryear portrait of renunciation, and a life passed by, tragically unlived. Now, of course, all is reversed. It's renouncing he world that requires nerve and imagination, and the roar of silence that dares us to listen. Kuzuo ishiguro***



La Verite Sortant du Puits by Jean-Leon Gerome:

## Exits

I'm good at leaving

Practiced a lot

Had a lot of practice

Restless not knowing

But not knowing what

Luca in surgery

Dire report from Jeremy

The world according to Dr Ha

Guys

I sat with Luca and Dr. Ha.

There are three to four phases of this treatment/intervention.

- 1) clean up fistulas/infections surgically, this will happen tomorrow and is a minor/outpatient procedure that Dr. Sack will perform and Luca seems calm about.
- 2) put a picc line in once Luca's infection and fever subsides and give Luca antibiotics and more importantly take Luca off solid food and give him nutrition intravenously to see if that diminishes seepage through the fistula that has been the ongoing issue for the last couple of years. If this does reduce the seepage, Dr. Ha may send Luca home with the picc line and off solids to give Luca's body a chance to normalize and then the problematic fistula can be surgically repaired. Luca also seems sanguine about this.
- 3) stabilize the Crohn's to see if any of the medications Luca has taken in the past might prove more effective once his autoimmune system has quieted down and take a DNA sample to see if Luca has a mutation that many people who develop Chron's as young people have that will help indicate if a stem cell transplant might be effective in helping reset or reboot Luca's immune system. Simultaneously, Dr. Ha is going to work with a hematologist to see if such a procedure and or test group protocol could be handled at UCLA. This procedure can currently be done at Mt. Sinai which has a protocol/study in place for treating advanced Crohn's with stem cell transplants. This will not happen during this current hospitalization which should be two weeks.

Luca seemed philosophical if teary and open and prepared for all of the above.

Best, Jeremy

And life as Luca and I know it goes on...NB

**Again - one more time: *My uncle emptied his colostomy bag, and then I sent that cheesecake down the toilet. Homesick for Another World, Ottessa Moshfig***



## **Petsie, or Pete Samprus or Petsie Wiener**

Our rescued chocolate lab

Huge scar encircled neck

Result of barbwire lead

Keeping him in place

Rescued healed

Adopted by Luca and me

Petsie about a year

When we adopted him

Lived another decade or more

Then hind legs gave way

Hip dysplasia

Much like my current ailment

Severe hip arthritis

We put him down

As they say euphemistically

We have an altar

His bone his scarf photos

Pass when entering kitchen

Hi Petsie you dog with an old soul

As we Jeremy noted

Dying death gone

Getting always to know

What it feels like  
When a loved one or family dog  
Dies forever gone  
Petsie gift defies words  
No vocabulary  
To describe  
What it is like  
Living beyond a death  
Petsy counter weight counter foil  
To our life's exigencies  
Petsie dead these many years  
Scratched up floor large paws  
Life beyond you unimaginable  
Unfathomable inscrutable  
Living beyond his death  
Still we look everywhere  
For him to reappear  
Imagination taxed  
Obliged to imagine  
Life beyond  
In essence  
Knowing it will end  
Death inevitably to come

Heart's capacity for

Unencumbered to love - NB



### ***Death of a Dog***

*The next morning I felt that our house  
had been lifted away from its foundation  
during the night, and was now adrift,  
though so heavy it drew a foot or more  
of whatever was buoying it up, not water  
but something cold and thin and clear,  
silence riffling its surface as the house  
began to turn on a strengthening current,  
leaving, taking my wife and me with it,  
and though it had never occurred  
to me until that moment, for fifteen years  
our dog had held down what we had  
by pressing his belly to the floors,  
his front paws, too, and with him gone  
the house had begun to float out onto  
emptiness, no solid ground in sight. Ted Kooser, poet laureate, 2004-2006*

## Waiting - Waiting for What?

Waiting to hear

To hear what

Maybe

*Go to the End of the Land*

*I cannot afford the luxury of despair – David Grossman, To The End of the Land*

Maybe not answer the phone

So I won't know

What you don't know can hurt you

What you don't know can't hurt you

Heads or tails...

***"The tears of the world are a constant quantity.***

*For each one who begins to weep*

*somewhere else another stops.*

*The same is true of the laugh.*

*Let us not then speak ill of our generation,*

*it is not any unhappier than its predecessors.*

*Let us not speak well of it either.*

*Let us not speak of it at all.*

*It is true the population has increased." -*

*"We are all born mad. Some remain so."*

*To-morrow, when I wake or think I do,*

*what shall I say of to-day?"*

*"Astride of a grave and a difficult birth.*

*Down in the hole, lingeringly,*

*the grave-digger puts on the forceps.*

*We have time to grow old.*

*The air is full of our cries. (He listens.)*

*But habit is a great deadener." - Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot*

*I cannot afford the luxury of despair*

Spare lean grief held back

I am dissembling falling apart

What comes after grief

My youngest son and I

We have a pact

*Do we fight or quit*

Is there still choice

I am a mother fist raised

Gulping down howl

Rising up into my mouth

Pressing to get out

Lips locked tight teeth clenched

Heart racing erratic beats

Do we fight or quit

I repeat and repeat and repeat - NB

***I am the worst thing***  
*the reasoned world*  
*has wrought*

*an otherwise lovely girl*  
*daily visited by radical disorder*  
*they say spawns somewhere*  
*quiet & foaming*  
*in the wounded matter*  
*of my body & my brain*

*We could lie down & demand*  
*to be raptured, or healed, to return*  
*to safer bodies, or to dust.*

*I make an outside world*  
*of the space between*  
*my bones.*

*Molly McCully Brown,*  
*The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded*

.....  
***...the idea that an entire life is shaped by small decisions that seem***  
*inconsequential at the time. ...and then I look at them now and think they're making*  
*the sort of decisions that are going to determine the rest of their lives. It's quite*  
*alarming. But mercifully you don't know that at the time. I wouldn't know what to do*  
*if I wasn't writing. I'd feel very restless. I know if I start something new I may never*  
*finish it, but that is what you do. A writer writes. Penelope Lively – When Past*  
*is Present, Book Review NY times 5/1/17*

.....  
***Hard. Fee. Lings – Lorde – pop star***

.....  
***I don't even like your type of pain***  
***You don't even ask me what's my name***  
***We just fit together like wet on rain.***  
***Niia – singer, album "I"***

.....  
*Hi Mom*  
*Happy Mother's Day. You made three good children. So that is something to celebrate.*  
*And mothered countless others in the Bronx and elsewhere.*  
*Love*  
*Jeremy*

***I want them to think about how we are all agents in erasure, and how we all have a role that we play. Who we go out looking for. Who we spread the news for. What names we say. The names we don't say. I want them to go home and think about the women and their families.***

***I'm a channel. I literally channeled these multiple presences to come out. The Evanesced exhibit for the missing – Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, artist***



***Kenyatta A. C. Hinkle***

.....



*Noah's Arc, Peter Spier, Illustrator -*

.....

*He said to me last night when he was being sweetly grouchy about homework - you don't know what it's like to have dyslexia. It is very hard and stressful. What a guy.*

*Owen Hart sharing with his mother -*



*Peter Spier*

.....

*You shouldn't make fun of people with disabilities. I have a disability.*

*Owen Hart*

***it's that time of year ice in the trees***

*snow like dirty light piled beside the trash bags  
city gardens behind chain-like fences  
mired in white except for an occasional rat  
everyone lately has cancer  
Philip Seymour Hoffman is dead of an overdose  
everyone's sad & fascinated  
black night is falling in a song  
I prefer the one about the glowworm  
**illuminate yon woods primeval**  
come to bed my aeronautical glimmer  
draw a treble clef a few notes will swoop down  
nothing lasts anyway  
& we leave nothing behind    Kim Addonizio, poet*

***New Year's Day***

*The rain this morning falls  
on the last of the snow*

*and will wash it away. I can smell  
the grass again, and the torn leaves*

*being eased down into the mud.  
The few loves I've been allowed*

*to keep are still sleeping  
on the West Coast. Here in Virginia*

*I walk across the fields with only  
a few young cows for company.*

*Big-boned and shy,  
they are like girls I remember*

*from junior high, who never  
spoke, who kept their heads*

*lowered and their arms crossed against  
their new breasts. Those girls*

*are nearly forty now. Like me,  
they must sometimes stand*

*at a window late at night, looking out  
on a silent backyard, at one*



*rusting lawn chair and the sheer walls  
of other people's houses.*

*They must lie down some afternoons  
and cry hard for whoever used*

*to make them happiest,  
and wonder how their lives*

*have carried them  
this far without ever once*

*explaining anything. I don't know  
why I'm walking out here*

*with my coat darkening  
and my boots sinking in, coming up*

*with a mild sucking sound  
I like to hear. I don't care*

*where those girls are now.  
Whatever they've made of it*

*they can have. Today I want  
to resolve nothing.*

*I only want to walk  
a little longer in the cold*

*blessing of the rain,  
and lift my face to it. Kim Addonizio*

.....

**We Did Death Well**

**Life Not So Good!**

**I Am Disappearing**

Life's culmination

Ultimate erasing

Delete bleep gone

Their father died

No more tall tales of beatings

Trying to gather bunches of good memories

Don't want to hear covering my ears

Cowering in strangled narrative

Head whips about tongue twisted girl-woman

Call in go get the exorcist

Exorcise me please pretty please

Bouquet bequeathed funeral wreath

Dying drooping flop house flower

Water browning stinking with rot stench

Cut death's scythe petalled trope withering life

Fragment fragile brittle browning to wilt

Irrigate memories with good times laughter

Trying to recapture one bit of slaphappy truth

Ribald raucous bawdry folderol

Defiantly listening to banned *Stevie Wonder Talking Book*

Whatever possessed you to buy this crap?

Toss it or I will voice lifts shrill trill

Assault and battery crimes of the heart and fist

Resist lift off come to terms with the whatever truth

Entrenched dead-ended in my story my narrative

Prosaic ordinary my narrative

How tawdry contrite trite trifle truffle

Heave ho alibi why I stayed why I left

Darkened night leaving on a whippet whimper whisper

I don't know why just don't know why

No answers left no stories to tell –

It just happened that way it just did or did not

Bell jar firefly flaps heaving breathing

Flutters wings fragile whipped wing tipped





Ashes to ashes dust to dust never again to discuss  
Discus flinging fists gun slinging raping concussing  
Philandering lying cheating penultimate narcissist man  
He was after all their dad  
I submitted to being entered  
They were thereafter born  
I wanted to love him I tried I cried  
And then he came home and my heart froze  
At the end of him he knew he was dying  
He brought everyone in close  
To kiss his ring to forgive them  
For not loving unlovable him

Wisk me away on cats paws



*The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on. Carl Sandburg*

Tongue sliced off Ellen Jamesian style

*Note: In the novel, the group was composed of women who had cut off their tongues in protest at the rape of an (also fictitious) eleven-year-old girl, Ellen James, whose tongue was cut off by her attackers in order to prevent her from identifying them.*

*John Irving World According to Garp*

Rape victim mourn wordlessly me  
The bouquet bequeathed wilts  
Silenced no more stories  
To explain justify myself  
My life my choices my decisions my need  
Entrenched entranced by victimhood  
I lived my part well  
Quiet now silenced like his gun's silencer  
I lived at the edge of my own muck and misery  
Hiss spin out unravel snaking tale  
Burrow deep and wide disappear  
Mulch earth compost come back again reborn  
A tree a seedling an oak or maple  
One's whose leave blaze with color at fall



Before wilt and crunch  
Die quiet silenced without the stories of gore  
Who am I – disappearing in the fiction  
The lie the conceit of a lifespan  
Spun web of tales of woe is me  
Silenced woman beaten thin within inch of sin to begin  
Who am I Who was I Who will I be when I die  
What will I tell myself of my life  
Lifting skyward on nimble rain filled nimbus cloud



*The Rainy Day*

*The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;  
It rains, and the wind is never weary;  
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,  
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,  
And the day is dark and dreary.  
My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;  
It rains, and the wind is never weary;  
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,  
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,  
And the days are dark and dreary.  
Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;  
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;  
Thy fate is the common fate of all,  
Into each life some rain must fall,  
Some days must be dark and dreary. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*



Into each life a little rain must fall  
Without a murmur a mumble a word – NB

***Old age isn't a battle, old age is a massacre –***

***Life is just a short period of time in which you are alive. Philip Roth***

**Daddy April 24th 2017 2:10 pm**

*So here it is  
And I'm writing to you  
And you're nowhere  
You're over  
You're gone*

*Ben barber  
That man*

*And how I saw you  
How I always saw you*

*I saw your lies and your vulnerability and need in ways I have never even started  
seeing myself*

*And you were tricky like that  
Cause you both seemed knowing  
And so blocked so blind*

*I wish I could know how you saw me  
How you really saw me  
Not because it would lend me truth  
Or help me know who I am*

*But because I want to know who you were  
What you were doing  
What was my projection and what was truth*

*I want to know if you chose against me  
Or if it was blindness and humanness and sickness that controlled what you saw and  
how curious you'd let yourself be about me*

*You always wanted me  
I knew that  
And I think you trusted that I was safe and yours and loyal  
Even as I held the walls and spaces that defined then interactions between us*

*But I saw you  
I knew you  
I knew you  
And forgave you  
And accepted you*

*And you are gone*

*Benjamin Reynolds barber*

*8-17-1939*

*Your time here is over*

*And we live beyond you*

*And it's weird and crazy and sad and inconceivable that something so tremendous and overbearing and overwhelming and compelling and beautiful has no influence no say no control*

*I hate this dad*

*I want to see you*

*I hate this dad*

*Did you know You never needed to force*

*I want to think you controlled because it gave you pleasure and not because you were insecure*

*Your force scared me*

*Your force overwhelmed me*

*Your force made me wonder about myself and my value and my beauty*

*And how can it be*

*That at once I am relieved that I don't have to feel anymore that I am failing you*

*No more nervous that I haven't called you back*

*Or disappointed you*

*Or made you angry*

*The 48 year feeling of you calling for me and me being afraid of what I'd done wrong when I'd done be nothing wrong*

*The feeling you'd make a demand that I'd have to find strength to poorly fulfill both of us disappointed*

*I think you a lot*

*Made me feel i wasn't good enough for you*

*Not pretty enough*

*Not interesting enough*

*Not smart enough*

*And I knew it was never what you really thought of me*

*Though it became what I questioned about myself*

*And I'll never know why you did that*

*But I don't care*

*Not really despite your consequences*

*On some level you knew it didn't matter  
Or didn't care  
Yes, Kept me quieter  
Kept me contained  
But didn't stop my love for you*

*And still  
And despite  
I Long for you  
Daddy I long for you  
Long for you to ignore me  
And want me and need me  
And forget about me*

*I long for you to still be living your life  
I long for your existence*

*Would take our status quo  
In all the ways even though it gave me so little  
I long to wake up from what's just happened and find it's not true*

*I Just don't want your absence*

*Please don't be gone daddy please don't be gone*

*Let me sit near you and be your audience and be afraid of you and feel  
Comforted by your figure and weight and overbearing realness*

*Don't do this to me  
Just not this*

*And you know what I hate the most  
You'll never get the feeling of listening to music again - Rebecca Barber*



**MY HUSBAND NUMBER ONE – DEAD AT 77 - NB**  
**Benjamin R. Barber, Author of 'Jihad vs. McWorld,' Dies at 77**

By WILLIAM GRIMES APRIL 25, 2017

Photo



*Benjamin R. Barber in 2014. He argued the virtues of decentralized democracy, or “unmediated self-government by an engaged citizenry,” as he once wrote. CreditLudek Perina/CTK, via Associated Press [Benjamin R. Barber](#), a political theorist whose 1995 book, “Jihad vs. McWorld,” presciently analyzed the socioeconomic forces leading to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and a surge in tribalism around the world, died on Monday in Manhattan. He was 77.*

*The cause was pancreatic cancer, said his son, Jeremy.*

*Mr. Barber was an academic and public intellectual who argued, with missionary zeal, the virtues of decentralized democracy, or “unmediated self-government by an engaged citizenry,” as he once wrote.*

*In books like “Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age” (1984) and “The Conquest of Politics: Liberal Philosophy in Democratic Times” (1988), he outlined the ways that ordinary citizens might assume a more powerful role in shaping their lives through local, communal institutions — a network of “public spaces” encouraging interconnectedness and citizen involvement in politics.*

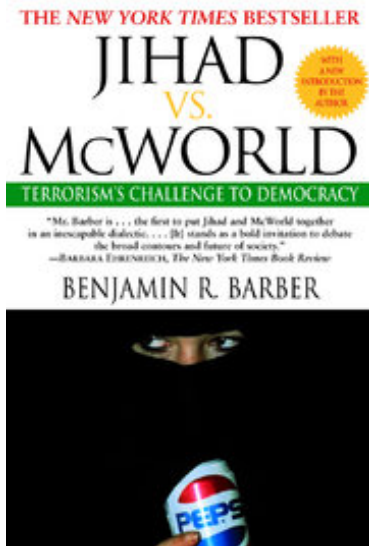
*His cause gained urgency with the rise of globalization and the growing resentment of traditional societies against the secular, consumerist values of Western capitalism. The nation-dissolving forces of information technology and global markets were on a collision course, he argued, with resurgent religious fundamentalism and parochial loyalties deriving from blood and soil.*

*“If we export capitalism without democracy, we breed anarchy and terrorism, Mr. Barber told *The Washington Post* after the Sept. 11 attacks, an event that seemed to confer prophetic status on “Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World” and propelled it onto best-seller lists.*

*“I said precisely that the war of Jihad versus McWorld, if it was not alleviated by global democracy, an international civic infrastructure, was likely to explode,” he told *The Post*. “These two sets of forces could not avoid clashing and exploding; they were going to create nothing but death and explosion unless we did this third thing, and we didn’t.”*

*Benjamin Reynolds Barber was born Aug. 2, 1939, in Manhattan. His father, [Philip](#), succeeded Elmer Rice as the director of the New York unit of the Federal Theater Project.*

His mother, [Doris Frankel](#), was a playwright who wrote for the radio soap opera “Ma Perkins” and later for the television soap operas “All My Children” and “General Hospital.”



Mr. Barber’s 1995 book. “I said precisely that the war of Jihad versus McWorld, if it was not alleviated by global democracy, an international civic infrastructure, was likely to explode,” he told *The Washington Post* in 2001.

He grew up in Greenwich Village and attended the Stockbridge School, a progressive boarding school in Massachusetts founded in the late 1940s by Hans Maeder, a German socialist refugee. After a year studying at the Albert Schweitzer College in Churwalden, Switzerland, he enrolled at Grinnell College in Iowa. On his way to earning a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1960, he studied for a year at the London School of Economics.

At Harvard, he was awarded a master’s degree in government in 1963 and a doctorate in 1966. In 1969, he began teaching political science at Rutgers, where for many years he was the director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy. In 2001, he joined the University of Maryland as the Kekst Professor of Civil Society.

Mr. Barber juggled his academic appointments with a variety of posts at think tanks and public-policy organizations, notably at the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and at Demos, a research and policy organization promoting participatory democracy and an enlightened public sector. In 1974, he helped found the journal *Political Theory*, which he edited for the next decade.

“I went into the academic world under the illusion that it was a place where people cared passionately about ideas, about teaching, about discourse and about reflecting critically,” he told *The Post*. “What I discovered was a world of small-minded, partisan professionals, many of whom were there because they couldn’t figure out what else to do. So I created a life inside the academy that reflected the life I wanted to lead.”

He served as an informal adviser to President Bill Clinton, a less than satisfying experience that he wrote about in “*The Truth of Power: Intellectual Affairs in the Clinton White House*” (2001).

*After the Sept. 11 attacks, he returned to the subject of the West and its enemies in "Fear's Empire: War, Terrorism and Democracy" (2003), arguing that the current crisis presented only two options: "to overpower the malevolent interdependence that is terrorism by somehow imposing a global pax rooted in force; or to forge a benevolent interdependence by democratizing the world."*

*Mr. Barber's first marriage ended in divorce. In addition to his son, he is survived by his wife, the former Leah Kreutzer; two daughters, Cornelia Witte Barber and Rebecca Barber; a brother, Willson; two half brothers, Charles and Hilary; and six grandchildren.*

*Mr. Barber, in his later writing, promoted cities as solution generators for pressing world problems, their size and flexibility allowing them to generate and implement ideas more creatively than national governments. Acting on one of his own suggestions in "If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities" (2014), he founded the Global Parliament of Mayors, which convened for the first time last year in The Hague. It was attended by mayors from 60 cities around the world.*

*His book "Cool Cities: Urban Sovereignty and the Fix for Global published in late April 2017*

***Benjamin Barber, a Brilliant Thinker Who Saw the Future  
Throughout his career, he championed a world that was urban, interdependent, and democratic.  
John Nichols, The Nation***

*Benjamin Barber, who has died at age 77, was an agile, adventurous, and enthusiastic scholar who believed that big ideas were needed to address big challenges. So he thought those big ideas, wrote groundbreaking books to put them in context, and formed movements to advance them.*

*No public intellectual thought so very differently from Donald Trump—a simplistic businessman-turned-president whose ideas are so small, and so frequently wrongheaded, that they promise to inflate rather than address pressing problems—as Dr. Benjamin Barber. But what made him so vital, and what makes his death after a four-month battle with cancer such a profound loss, was his willingness to wade into the great debates of his time, to stir controversy, and to point in radical new directions. Barber rejected the fear mongering of the right—and of the crony-capitalist and self-absorbed elites who imagine themselves to be "centrists"—and proudly embraced trust, connection, and cooperation. He objected to the world as it is—"dominated by rival multinational corporations and banks, and shaped by competing ideologies and religions that often deny each other's core convictions"—and proposed the world that might be.*

*What distinguished Barber was his determination to ground his thinking about the future in statistics, science, and scholarship. He was idealistic. But his idealism was realistic. Arguing that a deep understanding of the economic, social, religious, and technological issues of our times could ease divisions, Barber sought to clear the way for "strong democracy." **Benjamin Barber: "The cosmopolitan voice is...the voice of cities, and it is the natural antidote to Trump."***

*"In a strong democracy people—citizens—govern themselves to the greatest extent possible rather than delegate their power and responsibility to representatives acting in their names," he wrote in his groundbreaking 1984 book Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age. "Strong democracy does not mean politics as a way of life, as an all-consuming job, game, and avocation, as it is for so many professional politicians," argued Barber. "But it does mean politics (citizenship) as a way of living: an expected element of one's life. It is a prominent and natural role, such as that of 'parent' or 'neighbor.'"*

*The corruptions of contemporary politics, and the narrow range of media coverage of campaigns and governance, led Barber to seek new avenues for connection and cooperation. His brilliant response to the rise of right-wing nationalism, outlined in books such as If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities (2013) and the forthcoming Cool Cities: Urban Sovereignty and the Fix for Global Warming (2017), underpinned his response to Trump's election, which he explained in a pair of widely circulated articles for The Nation: "Can Cities Counter the Power of President-Elect Donald Trump?" and "In the Age of Donald Trump, the Resistance Will Be Localized."*

*Anticipating and celebrating the resistance to Trump just days after the election, the Distinguished Senior Fellow of Fordham University's Urban Consortium (and former Distinguished Senior Fellow at Dēmos, founder of the Global Parliament of Mayors, and chair of American Civilization at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris) explained that, as the federal government turned toward nationalism, local governments could and should serve as the essential beacons of pluralism:*

*Seen from a global historical perspective, the disconcerting truth is that Donald Trump and his voters are sailing not merely in the face of the winds of change but against history's dominant trends: global demographics are against him, as are American demographics; the reality of urbanization is against him; the mobility of peoples is against him; and the growing dysfunction of national sovereignty on an irreversibly interdependent planet is against him. In this world without borders, where no one nation can solve global problems alone and walls are not so much malevolent as irrelevant, the cosmopolitan voice is also history's voice—reality's voice—and a viable American voice, too. It represents a majority of the world's population, four-fifths of its GDP, and speaks for our inexorable urban destiny. We cannot allow it to be lost in the noise of parochial national xenophobia, or self-indulgent recrimination about why Democrats lost, for it speaks for us, too.*

*The cosmopolitan voice is, of course, the voice of cities, and it is the natural antidote to Trump. Look carefully at the electoral map: It is not, as pundits now insist, the victory of the heartland, from Pennsylvania and Ohio to Wisconsin and Michigan, over the two liberal coasts; it is the victory of suburban, exurban and rural counties over cities—blue islands found in every red state in the nation. And it is this national, gerrymandered electoral map, mediated by an undemocratic electoral college, that prevented the urban vote from winning the White House—even though it won the majority. I say this not to recriminate but to focus on the real division of America, which is urban/rural right across the land, not coastal/interior.*

*It was never enough for Barber to come up with a great theory. He sought, always, to link ideas with action. To his last days, he was engaged with a project to raise the voices of cities in the US and globally. In the fall of 2016, mayors from around the world convened the inaugural Global Parliament of Mayors in The Hague—an event inspired by Barber's books and theories. Early in 2017, he joined Richard Florida and Jonathan Haidt in New York to frame a vision for "Empowering Cities Under the New Administration." In the final weeks of his life, Barber met with mayors from South Africa, France, Britain, and the United States to advance the cause; his last tweet featured a picture of the scholar with his friends Tavis Smiley and Marc Steiner discussing "the importance of #globalcities and #localresistance to Trump."*

#### **THE STAKES ARE HIGHER NOW THAN EVER. GET THE NATION**

*"In our interdependent world, cities have not only the obligation but the right to achieve solutions to global issues," Barber explained. In one of his last interviews, he argued that "Cities are going to become the most important, constructive alternative to a Trump agenda. Over the last 10 years we have already seen a powerful emergence of cities as primary spaces for progressive and majority action, for the protection of diversity, for dealing with immigration to the US, higher minimum wage, gender relations and so on."*

*Barber's urban activism was global and, as was to be expected with so bold a thinker, it was really just a part of a broader vision of international interdependence. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Barber (whose 1995 book Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World) became required reading in that period) joined a global group of intellectuals, political leaders, and artists in issuing a "Declaration of Interdependence" that*

*recognized “our responsibilities to the common goods and liberties of humankind as a whole” and pledged to work:*

*To guarantee justice and equality for all by establishing on a firm basis the human rights of every person on the planet, ensuring that the least among us may enjoy the same liberties as the prominent and the powerful;*

*To forge a safe and sustainable global environment for all—which is the condition of human survival—at a cost to peoples based on their current share in the world’s wealth;*

*To offer children, our common human future, special attention and protection in distributing our common goods, above all those upon which health and education depend;*

*To establish democratic forms of global civil and legal governance through which our common rights can be secured and our common ends realized; and*

*To foster democratic policies and institutions expressing and protecting our human commonality; and at the same time, To nurture free spaces in which our distinctive religious, ethnic and cultural identities may flourish and our equally worthy lives may be lived in dignity, protected from political, economic and cultural hegemony of every kind.*

*Extending upon the thinking of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who proposed his Four Freedoms for people “everywhere in the world”; first lady Eleanor Roosevelt when she campaigned for a Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Republican presidential nominee Wendell Willkie, who wrote of “One World”; and Vice President Henry Wallace, who began using the word “interdependence” in the 1930s; as well as the thinking of contemporary environmentalists such as Barry Commoner and David Suzuki; the new declaration championed by Barber and his allies renewed an old idealism and framed it as a new necessity.*

***Barber: A strong democracy means “politics (citizenship) as a way of living: an expected element of one’s life.”***

*In this interregnum of Trump and Trumpism, and of parallel-isms in other countries, fools imagine a competition between globalism and nationalism. But, of course, it is really a competition between those who exploit differences to maintain old orders and old corruptions versus those who recognize our interdependence and seek to enliven it with a fresher and stronger democracy. Donald Trump took his side—that of the past. Benjamin Barber took the opposite side—that of the future.*

### ***Friends Remember Benjamin Barber, Tireless Advocate for Democracy***

***Posted by Dale Eisman, April 26, 2017 – Common Cause***

*There is sad news this morning out of New York: Benjamin Barber, a brilliant political theorist who served for nearly a decade on Common Cause’s National Governing Board, has lost his battle with pancreatic cancer.*



Barber, 77, died on Monday in Manhattan. “Ben was a person of keen intellect, deep conviction, and enormous capacity for both work and friendship,” said Common Cause National Governing Board chair Robert Reich. “He believed deeply in democracy, and he was a tireless advocate of political reform. He was also a dear friend of Common Cause. He will be sorely missed.”

“Benjamin served on the Common Cause board for many years and we are grateful for his dedication and his many contributions to our work,” said Karen Hobert Flynn, Common Cause’s president. “He gave so much of himself to the fight for a stronger democracy! Our board, and our national and state staff send our condolences to his family and friends.”

Barber probably was best known for his passion for cities as engines for progressive change. “In the final weeks of his life, Barber met with mayors from South Africa, France, Britain, and the United States to advance the cause,” John Nichols writes today on [The Nation magazine’s website](#); “his last tweet featured a picture of the scholar with his friends Tavis Smiley and Marc Steiner discussing “the importance of #globalcities and #localresistance to Trump.”

Nichols’s tribute continues: “In our interdependent world, cities have not only the obligation but the right to achieve solutions to global issues,” Barber explained. In one of his last interviews, he argued that “Cities are going to become the most important, constructive alternative to a Trump agenda. Over the last 10 years we have already seen a powerful emergence of cities as primary spaces for progressive and majority action, for the protection of diversity, for dealing with immigration to the US, higher minimum wage, gender relations and so on.”

**And then we have...**

=====

Submitted by [Admin](#) on April 8, 2011



### **Benjamin Barber**

*On February 22, 2011, self-proclaimed “internationally renowned political theorist” and Distinguished Fellow at the policy center [Demos](#), [Benjamin Barber](#) released a statement announcing his resignation from the governing board of the Gadaffi Foundation. Barber announced his resignation from the Gadaffi International Charity and Development Foundation, headed by Libyan dictator Muammar Gadaffi’s son Saif al-Qaddafi, in protest at the “country-wide repression of protesters by the most barbaric means, and the public declaration of the Foundation’s honorary chairman, Saif Qadaffi, endorsing the repression and rationalizing the massacre of protesters”. While Muammar Qadaffi’s brutal repression of rebel forces, may have been too much for wee Benjamin to stomach, the “internationally renowned political theorist” had no problems taking Gadaffi’s money when the dictator’s habitual sadism was less well publicized. Even while leaving his master’s employ, Barber still had kind words to say about his former idol. Remember, Gadhafi is no Mubarak or Bashar al-Assad, a second or third generation bureaucratic heir to once revolutionary dictatorships. He is a founding revolutionary cut from the same cloth as Nasser and Castro, and his revolutionary rhetoric, if seemingly incoherent and irrelevant to the modern world, is authentic, rooted in the (mostly) vanished world of colonialism, imperialism, socialism and people’s democracy **Barber worked with and for the Gadaffi clan for several years***



***Benjamin sits enthralled while Muammar reads from his wondrous “Green Book”***

*In a Washington Post article in August 2007 “Gaddafi’s Libya: An Ally for America?”, Barber wrote; Written off not long ago as an implacable despot, Gaddafi is a complex and adaptive thinker as well as an efficient, if laid-back, autocrat. Unlike almost any other Arab ruler, he has exhibited an extraordinary capacity to rethink his country’s role in a changed and changing world.*

***No Democratic Dominoes in the Middle East – by Benjamin Barber Huffington Post***  
***Because I have consulted on issues of civil society, youth engagement and democratization in both Libya and Syria, I have been repeatedly asked in the days following Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution and Egypt’s uprising, not if or how or whether but only when revolutionary turmoil will spread to those and other “Arab” or “Muslim” countries — on the theory that it is “1989 in the Middle East” and the regimes there will fall like dominoes. Ordinary Americans, like their counterparts in the media and Washington, are imprisoned in the same shallow generalizations that have captured US foreign policy, and proceed from such foolish assumptions as “Arabs” or “Muslims” or “Middle Eastern countries” are all the same, all of a piece, all likely to follow a singular path into chaos, revolution and who-knows-what? And so we must again be reminded that, as unhappy families are each unhappy in their own way (Tolstoy), autocratic Arab regimes are each corrupt in their own way, and likely to respond to pressure in their own way, and hence likely to experience radically distinctive destinies. Democratization comes in many forms, slow and fast, civic and political, gradual and revolutionary, successful and unsuccessful. And of course, sometimes it***



*does not come at all. Some countries will reap a whirlwind which will blow in new tyrants (witness what followed the Algerian “revolution”); some will endure preemptive repression and renewed autocracy (Iran, Saudi Arabia?); some will change a little by other means and stave off radicalism (the Emirates and Kuwait?); and some may actually become democratic — though that is the path of greatest resistance — with results no one much likes ( Hamas in Gaza). The differences in context are crucial: for some autocracies have oil, others don’t; some have a small, some a large population, some are secular, others religious; and when religious, some are Shiite, some Sunni and some Sufi — this matters! Some have massive unemployment, others have manageable unemployment. Some are ruled by self-appointed dynasties, some by military rulers, and some by monopoly parties. The bottom line is Arab dictatorships with Muslim populations are radically dissimilar and there will be no common democratic destiny — or autocratic destiny — for Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria — let alone, say Iran or Turkey which aren’t even Arab. I am not so foolish as to predict anything, even for the countries I know well, but let me say a few things about why neither Libya nor Syria are likely to follow Egypt into a chaotic uprising, and neither Qaddafi nor Bashar Assad are likely to be forced into exile any time soon. The only generalization that can be drawn from these examples is don’t generalize! Especially if you are President Obama or Secretary Clinton. Take Libya: Libya has a small population of around five million, ample supplies of natural gas and oil, a history of being anything but a proxy of the West; it also has a tradition of participatory local governance (if in non-essential matters) because of Muammar Qaddafi’s long interest in participatory democracy and peoples’ committees (see his Green Book from the 1970s!). Moreover, Qaddafi himself is not detested in the way that Mubarak has been detested and rules by means other than fear. His son Saif, with a Ph.D. in political philosophy from the London School of Economics and two forthcoming books focused on liberalism in the developing world, has pioneered a gradualist approach to civil society in Libya, insisting along the way that he would accept no office that wasn’t subject to popular elections. No dynasty likely there. Syria is governed by old Baathists as Iraq formerly was, but its ruling family has now passed into the hands of the former ophthalmologist Bashar Assad and his British-educated, banking career wife Asma, both of whom are relatively popular among Syrians with whom they mix regularly at restaurants and in the Sukh, where they wear blue jeans (not*

*exactly Mubarak!). They are not passionate Baathists, but members of the Alawite minority and Syrian patriots who have experimented (ever so cautiously) with opening society, engaging young people, developing a pluralistic cultural legacy (through a new program with the Louvre). Bashar spoke this week in a Wall Street Journal interview about the need for change. But like Qaddafi, Assad is not lumbered with a reputation for being an American stooge — a key element in the popular indictment of Mubarak and the Shah of Iran before him.*

*So the unhappy countries of the Middle East and North Africa will continue to be unhappy each one in its own way. Each will react to the refreshing but chaotic spirit of Cairo's Liberation Square uniquely. The results will be as varied and unpredictable as they have always been when democracy raises its voice in nations experiencing it for the first time. No dominoes, no copycats, no single wave of reform. Myriad reactions as various as the distinctive peoples of the region — each one with a unique story behind it, a unique destiny before it.* by Benjamin Barber  
*Huffington Post*

.....

*Benjamin Barber: Qaddafi's Fiefenstahl – Harper's – by Ken Silverstain*

*Marc Lynch has brought to my attention Benjamin Barber's astounding op-ed in the Washington Post about Libya and Colonel Qaddafi. Barber, the author of "Jihad vs. McWorld," has found a kinder, gentler Qaddafi who wants to steer his country towards democracy. "Written off not long ago as an implacable despot, Gaddafi is a complex and adaptive thinker as well as an efficient, if laid-back, autocrat," he writes. "Unlike almost any other Arab ruler, he has exhibited an extraordinary capacity to rethink his country's role in a changed and changing world." Not since Leni Riefenstahl filmed "Triumph of the Will" has an intellectual so cravenly toadied up to a dictator. And it gets worse as it goes. Barber notes excitedly that "five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor condemned to death for allegedly spreading HIV among children in a Libyan hospital" were freed last month. He doesn't mention that while being held in jail for years they were repeatedly tortured by the Colonel's henchmen. Indeed, by Barber's account, the Colonel had nothing to do with the arrest of the medical workers—that was the work of "Benghazi clans" over which Qaddafi apparently has no control. But wait—the Colonel must have some control because Barber gives him full credit for securing the release of the nurses, which he cites as a sign of his enlightened rule. Barber knows Qaddafi is a good man for a very good reason: the Colonel told him so. "In several one-on-one conversations over the past year, Gaddafi repeatedly told me that Libya sought a genuine rapprochement with the United States," he writes. "He insisted that in the Libya that comes after him there would be no new Gaddafi but self-governance." On his website, Lynch writes a letter to Barber, saying: You presented some very interesting ideas about Libya in your Washington Post op-ed. I found particularly interesting your ideas about Col. Qaddafi's experiments with direct democracy and efficient government. I know just the person you should talk to about these ideas—a brave journalist exposing official corruption in Libya by the name of Dhayf al-Gazzal. Be careful shaking his hand, though, because about a year and a half ago he had his fingers cut off before his body was riddled with bullets and abandoned in the desert. Hey, wasn't that right around the time you were having*

***such pleasant chats about direct democracy and the Green Book with the flexible and adaptive Colonel? How embarrassing! Anyway, since he's dead, he might not be as vivacious a conversationalist as Col. Qaddafi. But I'm sure he'd be fascinated by your notions of Qaddafi's enlightened rule and might even have some notes. I can only imagine Barber with North Korea's Kim Jong-il. Barber: There have been media reports in the West claiming that people in North Korea are starving. Can you comment? Kim: Look at the size of these lobsters. Waiter, more Hennessey! Benjamin Barber: Qaddafo's Fiefenstahl - Harper's - by Ken Silverstein***

*dear leah, was in LA when ben died - but felt the emptiness new to the earth -  
ben was a force - proud that all children and grandchildren gathered  
to express their love for him and his for them -you became or i became part of an extended family - it  
was always evident that you and ben shared a strong strong bond -  
please know that my heart reaches out to you - no one can truly appreciate the grief you must feel at  
this time - love, Naomi*

*Dear Naomi,  
Your words are so true and beautiful. My comfort comes in small but intense moments of human  
connection with those, like you, who loved and valued him. Thank you for sharing your loving  
thoughts. World a different place with out that guy.  
2017....hmmmm. Thankful for you. Your love and commitment. We can have a Mother's Day cupcake or  
beer or both. Love, Leah*

*On May 13, 2017, at 6:11 PM Naomi barber wrote:*

*jer and jeanne, tomorrow is mother's day - and all i can think of is how the happiest i ever was - when i  
held each of you  
in my arms for the first time and there ever after - and then when i took luca into my arms -*

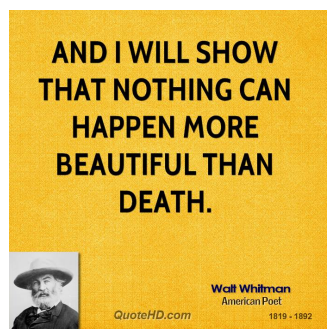
*and a reckoning - you both and each have just lost your dad - lots to consider - bringing me back to  
essentials -i love you each  
and both of you more than i can ever express - xomom*

.....

*hi luca, as i shared with rebecca and jeremy - two of the best days of my life were the days i became their  
mother - the third when i took you into my arms -  
nine weeks old squirming - and became yours - life follows thereafter - and hopefully we have whatever  
it takes to meet it - i love you and am so very proud  
to be your mom ox*

.....

*Benjamin Barber when Professor at Rutgers was the Director of Walt Whitman Center for  
Democracy*



### **Final Filial Recollection**

Put into final collection box  
Lit the memorial candle  
I married him  
In a spare three weeks  
Finish to end  
Marriage the great escape  
Contrite mundane  
The every dayness startles  
November 11, 1962  
Will live in infamy  
*Veterans Day*  
Post-traumatic stress  
Near suicide  
Climbs into wedding bed  
Runaway did not know  
What to do with my future  
Aphorism excuses I ran away from me  
Didn't have the courage to wait  
Wild terrible awful patience has taken me this far  
***A wild patience has taken me this far***  
*as if I had to bring to shore*  
*a boat with a spasmodic outboard motor*  
*old sweaters, nets, spray-mottled books*  
*tossed in the prow*  
*some kind of sun burning my shoulder-blades.*  
*Splashing the oarlocks.*  
*Burning through.*  
*Your fore-arms can get scalded, licked with pain*  
*in a sun blotted like unspoken anger*  
*behind a casual mist.*  
*The length of daylight*  
*this far north, in this*  
*forty-ninth year of my life*  
*is critical.*  
*The light is critical: of me, of this*  
*long-dreamed, involuntary landing*  
*on the arm of an inland sea.*  
*The glitter of the shoal*  
*depleting into shadow*  
*I recognize: the stand of pines*  
*violet-black really, green in the old postcard*  
*but really I have nothing but myself*  
*to go by; nothing*  
*stands in the realm of pure necessity*  
*except what my hands can hold.*  
*Nothing but myself?. Adrienne Rich*

Wild discomfiting emotions  
Turmoil filled my insides  
Simply put I ran away  
Like Pinocchio did from Geppetto  
My wood carver  
Puppet master my father  
I ran into a husband's arms  
Running from the hot flames  
Simmering sobering within him  
Catch me hold me my husband  
*My lion my king*  
*Let's begin our kind of living (nb)*  
Lion roamed free in that man  
The one into whose arms  
I fled tyranny of father  
To despotic autocratic  
Could share adventures  
But never ever love  
Marriage the great escape  
Here take my life off my hands  
A mound of kneaded clay  
I am will-less  
Shape it any which way  
Slipped easily into being  
His possession  
Suicide again lifted  
Its menacing threat  
I ran off to nowhere  
I ran to free myself  
Of inner turmoil despair  
I went nowhere  
No way to escape  
Run away from self  
He was abusive  
Words fists loaded gun  
Menacing threatening  
Strangled hold sole ownership  
Inscribed in wedding band  
I did this to myself  
I was twenty-two  
Recently returned from  
Odyssey that took me  
Driving strapless dress  
In New Mexico and Arizona  
Living with Navajo family  
Remote part of reservation

Near Canyon de Chelly  
Fatal blow struck  
Returning home  
Finding my father's  
Seductive sad eyes  
Bedeviled by his longing  
Commented breath heaving  
I was throwing myself  
My virtue away  
*Can't keep running around  
With so many different men  
No one will want you  
Find a husband settle down  
Before it is too late*  
Marriage the great escape  
Kept my virtue in tact  
Turned my back on  
A man or two I could have loved  
*You make your bed you lie in it  
And you wither and die in it - NB*



Jungian Archetype or Whatever Was it I Had in Mind – NB

.....

*Strangely, just as your experience, although in a way too horrible to be borne,  
made you see that we are all part of one another, the fact of you does the same  
for us. Major Claude Eatherly, Pilot at Hiroshima, August 6, 1949*

.....

*To any one dying....thither I speed and twist the knob of the door,  
Turn the bedclothes toward the foot of the bed,  
Let the physician and the priest go home. Walt Whitman, Song of Myself 40*

.....

#### The Next War

War's a joke for me and you,  
Wile we know such dreams are true.  
- Siegfried Sassoon

Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death,-  
Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland,-  
Pardoned his spilling mess-tins in our hand.  
We've sniffed the green thick odour of his breath,-

Our eyes wept, but our courage didn't writhe.  
He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed  
Shrapnel. We chorussed when he sang aloft,  
We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe.

Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!  
We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.  
No soldier's paid to kick against His powers.

We laughed, -knowing that better men would come,  
And greater wars: when each proud fighter brags  
He wars on Death, for lives; not men, for flags.

*Wilfred Owen*

## Cross to Bear



Pierre-Auguste Renoir In the Garden

**Why** emotionally, is a man of his type reciprocally connected to a woman of her type? The usual reason: their flows fit.

**The only obsession everyone wants: 'love.'** People that in falling in love they make themselves whole? The Platonic union of souls? I think otherwise. I think you're whole before you begin. And the love fractures you. You're whole, and then you're cracked open

**Nothing keeps its promise.**

**You don't have to work** in a mental hospital to know about husbands and wives. Philip Roth

Why wasn't I the other Hoffman's?

Life long marriage

Riverside Drive

Grew up Jews

In the five towns

Her mother Belle

My mother Belle

High school

High achieving do or die Jews

Diaspora their cross to bear

Live to never forgot

The what never much shared

Except on high bound *High Holidays*

Whip smart recitation

Bat/Bar Mitzvah texts

Promising *Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)*

What wasn't I the other Hoffman



Where was the egg cracked  
The hemp never refined  
Whiplash displacement  
Bloody hands still holding fast  
To Dachau chain link fence  
Didn't have the imagination  
The emotional wherewithal  
Shame agonistes shingles of past  
Claw body grip vise tight  
Stained tainted toyed with  
Holocaust infested ingested  
Embodied within her  
Fervor fever unnerving din  
My mother couldn't cross over  
I the daughter of cross-bowed mother  
Contaminated no second chances  
Dream cramped crammed deep  
Realm of still-born past  
No chance to get born or reborn  
The real authenticated Hoffman  
Was her mother's bounty beauty  
Marriages arranged  
In 5 Town Temple services  
While we estranged ached  
On the other side of Hudson  
We were the children of Philip Roth  
And Allen Ginsberg  
Pain speak pain stuck  
Truth seekers truth sayers  
Words blister bloodstained  
Dart to hearts vestigial primitive  
Paradigm of paralysis  
Hopefulness not allowed to be born  
On our side of Hudson River  
We heard the echoes  
Of stomping black books  
Saw the vestiges of Nazi salutes  
Love what love how and how come  
Lili succulent bloom on pod  
Found her man and said  
Yes and yes and yes and...  
It still goes on as the arc turns  
Toward eighty and maybe beyond  
Lili looks over and finds her man  
Night after night after night after...  
What the hell is that like?

And I fistfuls of self-pity  
 Turn form side to side  
 To ease the throb of pain  
 From badly damaged arthritic hip  
 Where is the justice in that  
 Where the new country of possibility  
 Where the love where the young man  
 To hold my young feverish gloved hand  
 Seated in a garden fragrant imagined  
 By Pierre –Auguste Renoir  
 Oh my god my there is no god, god  
 Diaphony of diaspora  
 Cacaphony of a mad-hatter odyssey  
 I never got none my own  
 And the end written in blood  
 This Lily married boy one town over  
 She wrote poetry played the piano artfully  
 Crafted fulsome pieces of primitive pottery  
 Hoffman's had two kids two years apart  
 Educated crafted saved for insured  
 Trinity private school to Harvard College  
 Daughter became a doctor  
 Son a music entrepreneur  
 Never got his footing quite right  
 She their mother vaingloriously vain  
 How come she came out so well  
 Both of our mother's the Belles'  
 Wickedly unremittingly intrusive  
 The Hoffman's caught the golden ring  
 From Riverside Drive to Shelter Island  
 Five star trips across the globe  
 As I stayed head bobbing  
 Just above water taken in too much  
 Salty dog whip splashing water  
 Why were they able to have life long love  
 While I found none  
 I am kith and kin of Philip Roth  
 Broken off a chip of his rib  
 Perhaps the Hoffman's are drawn from  
 Bernard Malamud -  
*There comes a time in a man's life  
 When to get where he has to go – if  
 There are no doors or windows  
 He walks through a wall.*  
*I work with language. I love the flowers of afterthought  
 Those who write about life, reflect about life. You see in others who you are.*

*The idea is to get the pencil moving quickly.*  
*Teach yourself to work in uncertainty* Bernard Malamud  
 Perhaps each of us descendants of Saul Bellow -  
*A great deal of intelligence can be invested*  
*in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep.*  
*If only we didn't have hearts we wouldn't know how sad it was. But we carry around*  
*these hearts...which give us away.*  
*It would not be practical for her to hate herself luckily, god sends a substitute, a*  
*husband.*  
*All a writer has to do to get a woman is to say he's a writer. It's an aphrodisiac.*  
*When we ask for advice, we are usually looking for an accomplice.*  
*Live or die, but don't poison everything.*  
*You have to fight for your life. That's the chief condition on which you hold it.*  
*Only self-hatred could lead him to ruin himself because his heart was broken.*  
*To tell the truth I never had it so good. But I lacked the strength of character to bear*  
*such joy. Saul Bellow*  
 From the wellspring of Bellow, Malamud, Roth  
 We 've had our day our time on this the new land  
 Belle's daughters  
 One with a man for her body her being her mind  
 One with a longing of which she is contemptuous  
 Trying now to tame it along with regrets  
 Why didn't I become a Hoffman?  
 Why didn't I become the other Hoffman?  
 And now hollowed out close to death  
 Gasp with pain no way to temper or tame it  
 Watch my three kids, soon to be 52, 49 and 30  
 Oldest son whipping himself in death spiral frenzy  
 Wife sociopath, bilumic, liar, alcoholic among better qualities  
 And now he is twisted in death diving anguish and despair  
 Sacrificing himself for whose sins – mine!  
 Daughter starving herself to death  
 Body more narrow and underdeveloped like 12-year-old  
 Struggling straggling out of marriage  
 Crawling toward new life new love  
 Withering away as she gets close very close  
 And my found youngest son  
 If he makes it to 30 it will truly be a miracle  
 His will life force existential choice  
 To live to live be alive to live  
 And as I take a deep dive look into my past  
 I see I never got what the Hoffman's had  
 Someone to love and lie lifelong in bed with  
 Belle's daughter's vestigial offspring  
 Of shock to system of diaspora  
 Crossing over a cross to bear

Voyage too brutal for one Belle  
Salvation for the other  
I was sprung for the womb  
On the wrong side of the Hudson  
Walked in the streets beneath the lampposts  
Following in the sadden sodden footsteps of Philip Roth  
And the anguished slow sure foot of Allen Ginsberg  
*The weight of the world is love.*  
*Under the burden of solitude,*  
*under the burden of dissatisfaction*  
*the weight, the weight we carry is love.*  
*We're all golden sunflowers inside.*  
*Follow your inner moonlight; don't hide the madness. Allen Ginsberg - NB*



Moonlight Journey by Lourry Legarde



**Christian Schad (1894-1982) *Two Girls (Zwei Madchen)***

**Somehow says it all! This is me transported transposed - NB**

.....

***Cataloguing Ex-Husbands – Above B then came P***

*Dear Naomi, My book was a long time coming. You supported me along so much of the way and for that I am deeply grateful. Even when we separated your voice stayed with me. With insight, love and care you reflected back to me what I could not, at times, fully grasp myself. Once you gave me a photo showing my father crying at my graduation. I would have never known if you hadn't given me that photo. I wish my father was here, so I could hand him a copy of my book. Thank you for being there. Frank*

*Celebrating Diverse Voices: Progressive Education and Equity, by Frank Pignatelli, Editor, Dr. Susanna W. Pflaum, Editor*

***Clytemnestra - Greek Goddess Murders Husband***



*Thank god for Greek mythology, avenged my wronged heart through CLYTEMNESTRA*

~.....

***Grief is the final act of love, and recovery from it is the necessary betrayal on which the future depends. There is only this one life, and we are the ones who are here to live it.***

*OPTION B - Facing Adversity, Building Resilience and Finding Joy  
Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant*

.....

***But when a few hours pass without hearing from my son, I feel the aftershock of his break. My jaw tightens and my gut lurches. When I finally reach him, my body settles. I realize we are morphing into something new, a growing symbiosis. We are hanging on to each other for dear life. In these early days it is the only way to survive.***

*Like a rare butterfly, my son is classified with a label: schizoaffective disorder.  
Tanya Frank, mother talking about her son.*

.....

***We get to think of life as an inexhaustible well. Yet everything happens only a certain number of times. Life is a wonder of wonders, and to wonder I dedicate my self.***

*Ryaichi Sakamoto, artist, composer*

.....

***Don't feel so alone 'til you're on the phone - And your mama says 'I miss you,' that's when it hits you. Bailey Bryan, Country singer***

.....

***Fat Jack, that whisky swag-bellied omnivorous cornucopia of appetites, red-eyed, sherry-soaked. Falstaff***

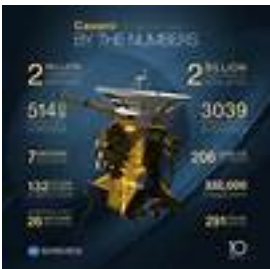
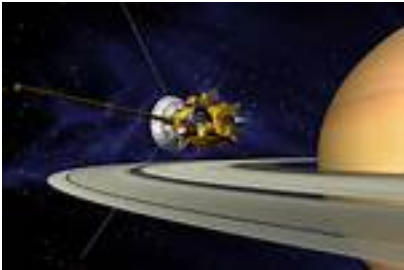
.....  
*You gotta love like you've never been hurt.  
To find a love that you deserve. Mary J. Blige*  
.....

*This is the end of the US as the Northern Star as the star that used to guide democracy.  
It might be temporary for year eclipse but in the Mexican [psyche, that star is gone  
from the sky. Salina Berman, Mexican essayist and playwright*

.....  
*Help defeat self-imposed Helplessness, Michael Weinstein Founding Director AIDS  
Foundation*  
.....

*A little world of hustlers and dreamers – Looking at earth from Saturn.  
Cassini Grand Finale – unmanned spacecraft sent to the planet Saturn*

### Images for cassini



***Lynette Yiadom-Boakye***



***People ask me, Who are they?...What they should be asking is "What are they"***

***Lynette Yiadom-Boakye: artist, exhibit Under-Song for a Cipher***

.....



***From 'summer, somewhere'***

*if you press your ear to the dirt  
you can hear it hum, not like it's filled*

*with beetles & other low gods  
but like a tongue rot with gospel*

*& other glories. listen to the dirt  
crescendo a kid back.*

*come. celebrate. this  
is everyday. everyday*

*holy. everyday high  
holiday. everyday new*

*year. every year, days get longer.  
time clogged with boys. the boys*

*o the boys. they still come  
in droves. the old world*

*keeps choking them. our new one  
can't stop spitting them out. Danez Smith*

.....

*but like a tongue rot with gospel*

*& other glories. listen to the dirt*

*crescendo a kid back.*

*come. celebrate. this*

*is everyday. everyday*

*holy. everyday high*

*holiday. everyday new*

*year. every year, days get longer.*

*time clogged with boys. the boys*

*o the boys. they still come*

*in droves. the old world*

*time clogged with boys. the boys*

*o the boys. they still come*

*in droves. the old world*

*keeps choking them. our new one*

*can't stop spitting them out.*

*Danex Smith, Rustbelt poetry slam champion, Don't Call Us Dead*

***where I be & you just might***

*I am sitting next to you & you are not there  
you're a frameless heat, mass of ruptured air.  
to be clear, you are the spit & liver it takes  
to be human & I want it & I think you want me  
to have it all, but I know  
what it's like to be one of the few blacks  
for miles. I know what our people think  
about me, or maybe us. I know  
God's flaming eye, I stare into it always  
dying to blink, irises cracking like commandment stones.*

*I get it.*

*I get it.*

*&it might be how you say  
my name like a testimony  
or how I graze your hand  
&yours doesn't move, but my body  
made up a rumor about your body  
&wants to prove it true. forgive him. Danex Smith*

***The bullet is his whole life.***

*his mother named him & the bullet*

*was on its way. in another life  
the bullet was a girl & his skin*

*was a boy with a sad laugh.  
they say he asked for it—*

*must I define they? they are not  
monsters, or hooded or hands black*

*with cross smoke.  
they teachers, they pay tithes*

they like rap, they police—good folks  
gather around a boy's body

to take a picture, share a prayer.  
oh da horror, oh what a shame

why'd he do that to himself?  
they really should stop  
getting themselves killed

Danez Smith



Lucy Nicholson / Reuters

***not an elegy for Mike Brown***

*I am sick of writing this poem*

*but bring the boy. his new name*

*his same old body. ordinary, black*

*dead thing. bring him & we will mourn*

*until we forget what we are mourning*

*& isn't that what being black is about?*

*not the joy of it, but the feeling*

*you get when you are looking*

*at your child, turn your head,*

*then, poof, no more child.  
that feeling. that's black.  
think: once, a white girl  
was kidnapped & that's the Trojan war.  
later, up the block, Troy got shot  
& that was Tuesday. are we not worthy  
of a city of ash? of 1000 ships  
launched because we are missed?  
always, something deserves to be burned.  
it's never the right thing now a days.  
I demand a war to bring the dead boy back  
no matter what his name is this time.  
I at least demand a song. a song will do just fine.  
look at what the lord has made.  
above Missouri, sweet smoke.*

*Danez Smith, Split This Rock*



*Stephen Lam / Reuters*

***alternate names for black boys***

1. *smoke above the burning bush*
2. *archnemesiis of summer night*
3. *first son of soil*
4. *coal awaiting spark & wind*
5. *guilty until proven dead*
6. *oil heavy starlight*
7. *monster until proven ghost*
8. *gone*
9. *phoenix who forgets to un-ash*
10. *going, going, gone*
11. *gods of shovels & black veils*
12. *what once passed for kindling*
13. *fireworks at dawn*
14. *brilliant, shadow hued coral*
15. *(I thought to leave this blank  
but who am I to name us nothing?)*
16. *prayer who learned to bite & sprint*
17. *a mother's joy & clutched breath*

*Danez Smith*

.....

**L.A. NOTES - FRAGMENTS**

*Ideas begin as nonverbal, abstract images inside of me –  
Information circulatory system, rejection of should and a strong feeling of  
perhaps - Croquebouche of exposure and erasure.*

*It feels like my inability to retain what is said to me in the face of my self-  
absorption - Rei Kawakubo, Comme de Garcons*

.....

**FACEBOOK FOUNDING IDEOLOGY:**

*-that things are never quite finished*

*-that nothing is permanent*

*-that you should always look for a chance to take an ax to your surroundings –  
Mark Zuckerberg*

.....

*What is the why of this book? Simon Sinek*

.....

*You get to certain age and you realize those who paved the way are gone. This  
is great sadness in that. Thomas Keller, Chef*

.....

*One's excesses are proportional to one's poverties, Adam Phillips, Psychoanalyst*

.....

*So little to say, so little to do, and the fear so great.*

*Samuel Beckett, Happy Days*

.....

*If you hold a naked baby against your naked breast, it is not the end of softness,  
it is the beginning of softness, it is life itself. Louise Bourgeois Sculptor*

.....

*It has also convinced me that carefully writing everything down is the only real  
defense we have against forgetting something important that once was and is  
no more, including the spruce tree that should have outlived me.*

*Each beginning is the end of waiting. We are each given exactly one chance to  
be. Each of us is both impossible and inevitable. Every replete tree was first a  
seed that waited. Hope Jahren, LAB Girl*

.....

*As he love of the natural world turned acute – he came to believe trees had souls  
– he moved toward a zero-tolerance stance on human predation: on the wanton  
hunting of animals, on laying waste to the land. Is our life innocent enough? Do  
we live inhumanely – toward man or beast – in thought or act? Regrettably, yes.  
Henry David Thoreau – Walden Pond*

## Tarantula Mother



*Mother's day  
Day of reckoning  
Day of remembering  
What?????????  
Peering into lives  
Adult children  
Torment foments  
Their children tossed  
From bed to bed  
Dread nightfall  
Where belong  
Which house  
Which parent  
Which night  
Sliced along  
48<sup>th</sup> parallel*



*Rank justice  
The law*

*Breaks apart*  
*Families along*  
*Fault lines*  
*Whose fault*  
*Who can make better case*  
*Who can put on better face*  
*Homes fraught*  
*Home wrought*  
*On the fumes*  
*Of failure departure*  
*Dissembling*  
*Dismembering*  
*Cursed vows*  
*Given by forked tongue*  
*It was inevitable*  
*It was fate*  
*Picked enemy more than friend*  
*Picked person prickly pear*  
*Person to harm*  
*Plunge heart into doublespeak*  
*Married cantankerous*  
*Overgrown forest of verbiage*  
*Combative vituperative harmful*  
 Trounced dreams bled heart  
 Quashed hopefulness joy  
 Landmines of fury and mistrust  
 Every day to take away more  
 Diminish destroy vaporize  
 Weaken self-confidence frayed  
 Daily life hell bloated overloaded



People who trample dreams  
 Dismembering remembering  
 Cruelty not love reigns recklessly  
 Writ in constellations clusters of stars  
 Family subdivides breaks apart  
 Tarantula mother



Bred this inevitability  
True love impossible  
Destined to marry cruel partners  
Affirmation of incipient need for  
Self-hatred to be victimized  
A desire to feel less than  
Cower before love  
Fear of being overcome overwhelmed  
Dread love more than being trounced upon  
Bromide of dread deadened nerves  
Rather than open breaking apart heart  
Panting longing desiring dreading  
Love's ending  
*In life we pay misery tax*  
*I have control over nothing*  
Plaintive declaration of inevitability  
As son turns back goes quiet dark  
On his soon to be ex-wife  
*Only certainty I will be divorced*  
From a woman a cascade  
Of mental disease and dark heart  
To confront the choice the decision  
To pledge love to a woman  
Who feeds off other's fear  
Misery tax confronting self  
Asking why and how come  
Tarantula mother  
Crawling into that empty space  
In the universe I am now old  
Their father dead  
Time for what  
No power to ameliorate  
To write a different preface  
To extricate explicate  
I need my pink dress  
I need my green socks  
I need my basketball hat  
They are at the other place  
That nether land created  
That divided a family  
Into two entities  
Get doubles of everything  
Why is your best dress  
At your mother's house  
I need it to be here  
The sound gets louder and louder

Decibels out of reach  
Bang against shatter eardrums  
Explosive threats crackling the night  
I drag a leg foreshortened by pain  
Severe arthritis of hip  
Fraught reality old age  
Tarantula mother  
I brought you into the world  
Infinite in its bliss and foot falls  
How to move on  
How to close my eyes  
How to die  
Tarantula mother  
Pulls broken limbs in close  
How do tarantula's die  
Mother hostage of past  
Couldn't shake off  
Fumes of imagined *Holocaust*  
Love just beyond reach  
Abandonment's hold  
Our creed our cross to bear



Live among darkest realms  
Of human depravity  
Name it our reality  
No wonder love's impossibility  
How to move beyond  
Bosch-like macabre  
Sensational captivating  
The darkened darkest side  
Tainted purge extricate  
Tawdry compels  
Intimidates invites  
Tarantula mother  
Unborn us free us to love

We were together.  
I forget the rest.  
- Walt Whitman

Tarantula mother yields  
Bug dies mother springs back alive - NB



*Hieronimus Bosch*



*Note: Some tarantulas may be caught by predators, such as wasp. Other tarantulas may starve or get a disease. Only some of the tarantulas will survive into adulthood.*

.....  
*jer and jeanne, tomorrow is mother's day - and all i can think of is how the happiest i  
ever was - when i held each of you  
in my arms for the first time and there ever after - and then when i took luca into my  
arms -*

*and a reckoning - you both and each have just lost your dad - lots to consider -  
bringing me back to essentials -i love you each  
and both of you more than i can ever express - xomom (May 13, 2017)*

.....  
*...resonance - the orbits are completed in a sort of close synchronicity with one  
another. If the planets re indeed locked in resonance, it's quite reasonable for them to  
be stable for very long times. Jack J. Lissauer, planetary scientist at NASA.*

.....  
***Noisy Knees May Signal Arthritis – Gretchen Reynolds, NY Times 5/16/17***

Instead, those snaps and pops may indicate only  
that you are no longer as young as you once were,  
which is, of course, a universal truth.  
My right hip just got old diagnosis:  
“severe arthritis in right hip” –  
Time for a hip replacement she said  
or best cure takes just 2 or 4 or 6 weeks to recover –  
replace all body parts I say – reborn rebirth anew –  
start over Will I have marry John Noble then –  
or destiny or doom –  
same choices no matter what repercussions  
or how disastrous first time around. Inevitable! NB

**Flat on my back**

Iron board stiff  
Dead stiff  
Corpse last breathe  
Bright white light  
Well of feather bed  
Enfolds off  
Fell back  
Put weight on right leg  
And it just crumbled  
Falter fell  
Like a new filly  
Couldn't hold myself up  
Just couldn't  
Fall straight back  
Second time  
This time banged  
Back of head  
Lump forms  
Do not ask for ice  
Said see as I said  
When I put  
Full weight on that leg  
It just collapses under me  
Sends me flat out  
Falling straight  
Stiff and still barely hurt  
First time  
When Owen Leelee rushed me  
With a big hug  
Fell straight back  
Legs weren't braced  
To hold the cupping  
Of my legs  
And then  
Holding onto  
Back cushion of chair  
Loosely held in place  
Tipped me over  
Like a spilled cup  
I was scared  
It was nothing  
Told you when I put  
Full weight on that leg  
I just fall over  
Or straight back

I just do –  
Trembling shaking  
Nausea springing up  
Flooding my body  
With anxiety and pain  
Rigo mortis of falter and fall  
It hurts this leg  
But will not never ever  
Have hip replaced  
Unless I get a complete overhaul  
Back to the beginning before the beginning  
Mother's tit rip with milk for me  
I lollygag and lick  
And latch and she smiles down  
Like god in Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling  
Anon and anon  
All that I would rewrite redo –  
None of which is true  
I would be born again me  
And I would do again  
Exactly the same things over and over and over and anon NB

.....

*Children surviving childhood is my obsessive theme and my life's concern.  
Maurice Sendak*



.....

*Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,  
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim –  
Walt Whitman*

.....

*For Luca, Quotes from King James Bible, from David with gift of King James Bible  
dedicated to him -*

*- Proverb 18:7*

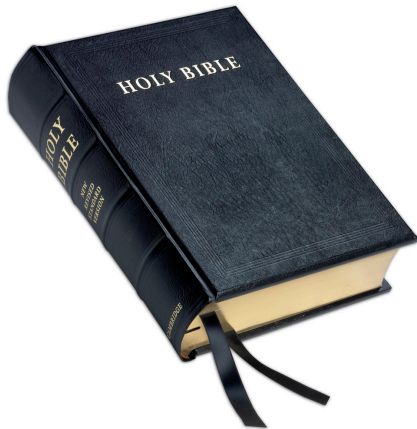
*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can  
bear?*

*- Proverb 16:7*

*When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace  
with him.*

*- Psalm 119:105*

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*





### **Oh the Agony**

Agony agonists  
Mary Aphrodite  
Madonna miasma  
Mary Madrina Medea  
Madre Sarah old age Momma  
Madrigal to birthing body  
Oh sweet agony  
Sweet dreams of motherhood  
Oh agony  
What did I ask of myself  
Pummeling heart  
Heat of retreat  
Cried my eyes out  
What now  
Watch my son  
Not of my body  
Sunk in the darkened web  
Of medicine  
Trying to solve his body's mysteries  
His body's agony  
What do we ask  
What is the price of this life  
Of being alive steadfast  
Persevering stalwart  
When does noble become trivial  
When does a moan become contrite  
What is the price of this life  
For what am I being punished  
Taking a child of the rain forest  
Pure as the first ever rain  
And bringing him into the contaminants  
Of our corrupt western world  
Fallen for falling for apple pie and motherhood  
Norman Rockwell cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*



Or of Walker Evans depiction of a mother  
Embracing her children as wood sinks and settles  
On warping splintering shack



I am drowning in deceit  
Tried to cheat life  
High beam of motherhood  
Caste your eyes on mommy me  
Now holding fast to found son  
Conundrum of life's near end  
What is the truth  
Appropriating motherhood  
Taking an original indigenous infant  
From deepest part of original rainforest  
Child of this mothering  
Falter fall on my own sword  
My own sworn word  
Squall squeak of my own wrecking ball  
Entering final stage got to old age  
Terminating terminal before final departure  
Agony of motherhood  
What does call forth from me now  
What does need to take from me  
What to extract pull from me  
Pall of death's sultry seductive hot breath  
What is the word behind beyond betray  
I stayed I just stayed the course  
Tantamount to truth close as I'll get  
I stayed bedside quashed dismayed  
In great upheaval and disarray  
I adamantly defiantly  
Stayed and stayed and stayed - NB

.....

## I See Him Bright As Day

His bass fiddle pressed against him  
His left hand running the strings  
Effortless rivulet spring stream  
His right hand finger extended  
Pulling plucking against the strings  
Slap bass he said he invented  
His face blissful once removed  
His gray white hair thick abundant  
His eyes between tears and wonder  
Duke Ellington bars in the Village  
Waiting his turn after an evening gig  
He loved the bass fiddle  
What was it in its sound  
They drove him beatific  
Shubert Liszt Beethoven quartets quintets  
Or Mahler infinite human crying out sound  
Lenny Bernstein his idol  
He spoke of him as of dulcet stealth intimacy  
He was Lenny resurrected reborn  
Lenny reaching his wand and hand  
Out the bass section my father yielding  
Innocent yearling new bride  
Fearless man who knows price of life  
Is to die life's finiteness ultimate irony twist  
Quintets jazz trios his bass  
His singular solemn voice  
Telling of love of joy of being alive  
He spoke of love of joy of being alive  
Sorrow plaintive underbelly  
Tubby the Tuba soulful tune once removed





What was it about the bass  
That filled a man who held the rapture  
Held the ardor of a collective over arching spirit  
Hosanna Gabriel's horn angels' soar hymnal  
With days beginning and end  
Just know stop dead in my tracks  
Whenever I hear or see a bass player  
My heart leaps bullfrog about  
Pounding against my confining body  
My feet tap leap hearing the fierce glide strum thrum  
It is my hearts beat levitating beyond death dying  
My father loved the bass fiddle  
I loved no adored my father  
No one ever more than I loved him  
Squandered a man's love for me  
Because of loyalty to him  
I was my father's ardent spirit wife  
I was the person at his feet  
I was his Aphrodite



He moved with his bass ecstatic ecclesiastical  
Lifting directly from his soul  
It came from beyond Pogrom Holocaust  
From predatory hunters of Jews  
His sound was revelatory Chagall  
Who soared above daily life in the sky beyond  
He lived somewhere between moon and stars





The bass solemn beat his finger plucking the strings  
Soulful the essence of the blues lived in this man this father  
This bass player came from the deepest part of him  
Quagmire of heavenly and profane  
He was in communion with everyone  
Whoever held a bass fiddle close to his or her body  
Esperanza Spalding is my dad reincarnate  
I am his daughter slaughtered sacrificed  
Never to have true love  
I lived within his soft ecclesiastic eyes  
And his extended second finger strum - NB

.....

***Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.***

***Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems.***

***I want to be with those who know secret things or else alone.***  
***Rainer Maria Rilke***

### **Love Song**

How can I keep my soul in me, so that  
it doesn't touch your soul? How can I raise  
it high enough, past you, to other things?  
I would like to shelter it, among remote  
lost objects, in some dark and silent place  
that doesn't resonate when your depths resound.  
Yet everything that touches us, me and you,  
takes us together like a violin's bow,  
which draws \*one\* voice out of two separate strings.  
Upon what instrument are we two spanned?  
And what musician holds us in his hand?  
Oh sweetest song. Rainer Maria Rilke

.....

## James Taylor Walking Man

*Walking Man Falling Out of Time - David Grossman*

Where does grief go

Grief anticipated

For what yet has not happened but will soon

My death or yours trade off

Your leg is no good no more walking for you

Get a new hip replace the arthritic one

Then you can walk about –sanctify ritual of passage

Australian aboriginal child embarks on walkabout



I stagger into old now more old life

Passage to heaven's gate my gait wobbles

Hobbles force flight into darkening night

Breathing hard labored pain shoots through me

Time for a reckoning an accounting

No plea deal no more begging for more of life

I have had more than a generous portion

Only I want to die by my own hand my own time my way

Already proclaimed pro-ordained doomsday is a-coming

It's official not mythic not fabled



No more elaborative interpretive double-speak  
High-stepping into verifiable dead end



Body just started on its steep decline  
Stripping ripping off shredding muscle and ligament  
Leaving hip disabled diagnosis severe arthritis right hip  
Diagnosis and I quote: **Severe osteoarthritis.**  
***There is severe right hip osteoarthritis with marked, near complete, joint space loss, ...***





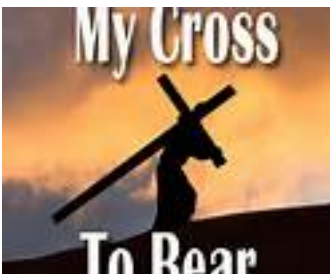
Take time an accounting lean on walking stick  
In the beginning it was just a cakewalk - walk in the park



*a strutting dance popular at the end of the 19th century, developed from a black-American contest in graceful walking that had a cake as a prize.*



Has moved on into a treacherous walk  
Holding back a falter a fall  
A final dooming broken hip  
Now to admit no more self-deceiving  
I will never ever walk right again  
But doc I tried to tell him  
Voice getting shrill whimpery  
My body is dying this first sign  
Of the cross to bear for me





Get a firm grip a hold behold  
Infirmity informing tangible evidence  
Dying time is near  
I feel it right down to my tippy toes  
Better to have a hip become brittle and click  
Than a mind ripped from memory or logic or reason  
Better to have words to speak better to hear  
Without music without music without Bach  
Nothingness bleak beyond silent quiet night  
Age just hit me knocked me behind the knees  
Preening for that keen that wail that elegiac song  
No replacement parts for me  
Unless you got a do-over for the whole of my life  
But guess would make the same dastardly mistakes  
Would be strung on a cross of my regrets once more  
I have lived a long time I have a son  
Who finds each birthday a miracle and he is yet thirty  
Doctor panderer Medicaid mill web spinner  
Smelled out a quick job for this desperate woman  
You are a New Yorker you need to walk about easily again  
I have the perfect solution for you  
You are young family has longevity  
Ten or twenty more years though of course one never knows  
And there are risks but you need to walk you are a New Yorker  
You got a quick fix on me and I still ripe with tears  
Having slept on couches for 21 days in LA  
Never more than a few feet away from my son  
Whom *death challenges every day*  
*I am not only a New Yorker I am a woman I am a mother*  
*Soon to be 77 got to be that old lucky fates fortune for me*  
*You read me wrong doc you missed the boat with me*  
I bargain with death each day can't I just do it my way  
Fully aware fully conscious if dehydrated parched  
Place a hand-full of pills into my drying out dying mouth  
And then eyelids flutter closed  
And after raw burst of final *agonal* expiring breath  
Then just silence impenetrable soundlessness falls- NB

**Sampler Embroidery Sayings Prayers Light Up Enlighten the Day and Night**  
*My broken embattled hip lets me know the day is near the day is near...NB*

***Everything I said is what I mean. Everything I gave is what I need.***  
***Chris Cornell, grunge rock singer Soundgarden***  
***(suicide at 53)***

***Our separate lives, for that moment, coincided, and all my anxiety vanished in that one fugitive moment, when a bird in the sky on its way somewhere else pulled me back into the world by sending a glance across the divide.***

***Helen Macdonald, A Bestiary of the Mind***  
***(Author of H is for Hawk)***

.....

***Being somewhat social oddballs who were often left to our own devices, we became as people who are marooned together often do, a little funky.***

***Robert and Nena Thurman married 50 years***

.....

***I feel bad No.38. I get sick of being needed. Oril Auslander - I Feel Bad, All Day, Every Day, About Everything***

.....

***...attempt to engage with an immense idea that is beyond most people's grasp - How to live when all things come to an end? What ultimately emerges is a portrait of a powerful mind grappling with alienation and loneliness.***

***Kristen Radtke, Imagine Wanting Only This***

.....

***Old age superbly rising! Ineffable grace of dying days!***

***Every condition promulges not only itself...it promulges what grows after and out of itself, And the dark hush promulges as much as any.***

***Walt Whitman, Song of Myself***

.....

*Hi Naomi,*

*Your writing is more convincing than mine. I truly want to thank you.*

*Your friend Serge*

*Subject: Murderous Fantasies*

*serge, you are a collective a thrombosis a burst artery splattering out jumble tumble all of the all of history of the 20th century - manic mad aching with sacrifice - caught in the web of everything crazy tumultuous discursive - time skirting back and forth referencing remembering this and that tattered and yet it all holds true and together - your book a word spill a blood spill you bring it all down - a house on fire - thanks, confounding compelling - love, naomi*

## Readjustment Realignment

This time its for real for true  
Body breaking down  
Didn't wait for me  
Just decided on its own  
To break apart  
Got me to me  
Where once took powerful strides  
Encumbered balancing walking stick  
With still limber leg  
To keep from toppling over  
Hamstrung staggered  
Leg drags leg hurts leg harms  
Image of invincibility  
Done walking upright it is true a fact  
I am on my way to dying for real  
Not cancer don't have cancer  
Instead homesteading within me  
A fast growing or diminishing  
Degenerative disease – arthritis  
*Painful inflammation and stiffness of the joints.*  
Which will only be getting worse and worse  
No repair no regeneration here  
No regrowing broken body parts  
Wish I wish I may become a...  
Axoloti or starfish or lizard



*Axoloti -regenerating a missing limb; tail; and parts of their brain, heart, and lower jaw—*

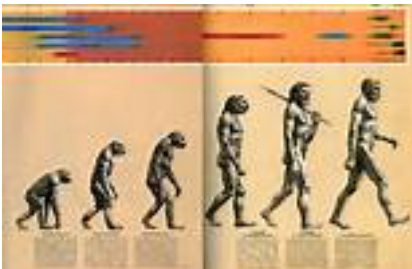


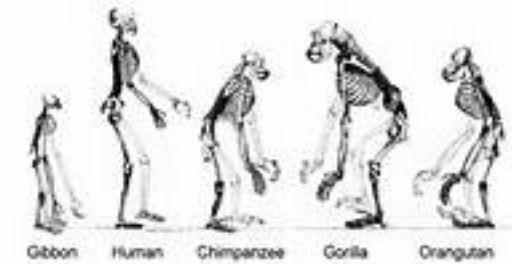
Starfish can regrow limbs



Lizards regrow Their Tails

But nothing doing god says  
Born human more or less  
I know I can't regenerate  
Axoloti starfish and lizards regenerate  
But don't know they can or do  
My condition is irrevocable  
Divined devised a new body part  
Some gadget devise for hip replacement  
It all saddens me  
Trying to grapple get a grip  
It just fucking hurts  
Can't just stand up  
Fear falling  
Noirish moment recently in LA  
When balancing on loose pillow  
Topped straight back  
Banging head concussive scary  
Tumbling falling faltering  
Betraying smile sad sad eyes  
Keep t o myself  
Can't walk stand right upright  
I as figure in the long slog  
Bog moving toward evolution





Striding in back straight upright  
 Gibberish garbled  
 Don't know how to write this yet  
 Sad making sense not part  
 Of my preconceived narrative  
 How to speak this write about  
 Body just breaking apart breaking down  
 How can I die in the same calendar year  
 As Ben how can I do that  
 To my two body born children  
 If they are 48 and 51  
 And had two parents around  
 Probably for too long a time  
 Habit forming hating and loving  
 Now attempting to divine compose  
 Appropriate end for a woman  
 Old and bent over  
 Become unnecessary a speck  
 With a body progressively becoming  
 Contrary contrite just a plain old ordinary wreck -





### Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

Rose Donne

Alan Mills (1910-1977)

I know an old lad-y who swal-lowed a fly. I don't know why she swal-lowed a fly. Per-haps she'll die.\_\_\_\_\_ 2.1 know an old lad - y who swal-lowed a spid-er, that wig-gled and jig-gled and tick-led in-side her. She swal-lowed the spid-er to catch the fly. I don't know why she swal-lowed a fly. Per-haps she'll die.\_\_\_\_\_ 3.1 know an old lad - y who swal-lowed a bird. How ab-surd to swal-low a bird. She swal-lowed the bird to catch the spid-er, that rig-gled and jig-gled and tick-led in-side her. She swal-lowed the spid-er to catch the fly. I don't know why she swal-lowed a fly. Per-haps she'll die.\_\_\_\_\_ 4.1

\* "cat. Imagine that: to swallow a cat! She swallowed the cat to catch the bird, she swallowed the bird..."  
 "dog. What a hog to swallow a dog! She swallowed the dog to catch the cat..."  
 "goat. Just opened her throat and swallowed her goat! She swallowed the goat to catch the dog..."  
 "cow. I don't know how she swallowed a cow! She swallowed a cow to catch the goat."  
 "horse. (spoken) She's DEAD, of COURSE!" End abruptly.

Metamorphosis in process  
 Waiting to transform self  
 Frog or other amphibian  
 To catch a fly with unfurled tongue  
 End my run swallow a fly  
 Just ordinary old lady  
 And just lie down quietly quickly to die – NB



*I know an old lad who swallowed a fly*  
She did just up and die - NB

---



**Imagine Wanting Only This by Kristen Radtke**

## **Body broken down**

Get me out of it

This body of mine

Encased in pains

Shooting up and down my leg

Diagnosis *severe arthritis in right hip*

It has all come down to just this

No more walking

Without gripping until knuckles turn white

Clinging holding onto walking stick

If strewn with lilacs and purple hues

In truth in actuality I'm over through done - done in

There it is was in black and white

Words jumping right into my eyes

Cataracts cleared the way to see all this clearly

Rubbing plight arthritic blight from clouded over vision -

I am living on borrowed time and resigned

Past snapping away like twigs after frost

Slipping off memory and regret

Mind grabbing pain shooting up leg preoccupies

I've become a real fixer upper

Fixes not tenable no replacement parts

Just to grapple what follows what goes next -nb

***Now, I am the wrong***

*kind of creature*

*for this world –*

*not letting go,*

*not letting go,*

*this*

*lonely*

*dead*

*child.*

*I've done it once before,*

*And now I want*

*you*

*so*

*much*

*more.*

*His death made me the father*

*I had never been –*

*It bored*

*A hole in me, a wound,*

*A space, but also filled me*

*with his ubiety,*

*his death*

*has qualified me*

*to conceive of him.*

*And after some time,*

*whatever I do, you*

*fossilize.*

*then I must*

*carve you,*

*What more must I do? My legs*

*can hardly carry me, my life thread*

*becomes thinner, a moment more*

*and I'll be gone.*

*an hour goes by, another hour, sun sets*

*sun rises, weakened limbs. The shadows*

*of our bodies swallowed up*

*into the darkness as we walk,*

*we all walk*

*there –*

*he is*

*dead. But*

*his death*

*his death*

*is not*

*dead. Molly McCully Brown, The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics  
and the Feeble-minded*

***Yet still it breaks my heart,***

*my son,*

*to think*

*that I have –*

*that one could-*

*that I have found*

*The words. David Grossman, Falling Out of Time*

Can't walk it off right

Upright

Leg hobbles

Pain dumb pain

Unrelenting informing

No more walking

No more lying down

Leg jolts electrical short

Shock to know

That it won't go away

Only going to get worse

When do I quit

First to adjust to live

To walking with pain

Just stepping down

Sends shudders

Bends me breaks me  
Storming into feverish heart  
Just mostly lying around  
Making sense  
When none can be made  
Death comes grabbing for me  
Warning it is coming  
No more running  
To late to leave first  
Filled with righteous grace  
To lie down and reckon  
With the pain in my leg  
Informing me the end this time  
For real is on its way -nb

.....

***We seem born to love, but everything we love comes to an end. What do we do with that? George Saunders, author, Lincoln in the Bardo***

.....

***There they lie, the nursery rhymes so much at the back of our minds that we can't remember when we first learned them. What did they give us, so long ago? A suggestion that mishaps might be funny rather than tragic, that tantrums can be comical as well as frightening, and that laughter is the cure for practically everything. Iona Opie, The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes***



## Adaptation Habituate Habitat

Old age then older age

'bout to reach 77

The ultimate plateau

Of longevity



*Willard Scott weatherman recognized old people on jelly*

How do I get on a jelly jar of Smuckers

Got to live a little longer

*Get your hip replaced*



Surgeon dollar signs replacing pupils

In rapidly clouding bulging eyes

Diamond studs along carving knife

How many old desperate people

Did he guarantee an authentic

NYC aboriginal walkabout

*My own mother he said inflating conflating*

*Ethical challenging confabulating confection*

*Not a New Yorker at 79 got a rapid*

*Onslaught of arthritis in the same exact hip*

*And only 4 to 6 weeks on a walker*

*And she was walking evolved Neanderthal upright*

*Veteran Today show presenter Willard Scott, 80,  
Has tied the knot with his longtime girlfriend.*

Hey doc maybe get married a third time at 80

When I am thanks to you walking right

Just the other body parts in old age disarray

The old ripened me would send dr. doc

A copy of Ezekiel Emanuel article in *The Atlantic*

About living to the great glorious amorous age of 75

And then sailing upward into the great blue beyond

### **Why I Hope to Die at 75**

*Seventy-five. That's how long I want to live: 75 years. This preference drives my daughters crazy. It drives my brothers crazy. My loving friends think I am crazy. They think that I can't mean what I say; that I haven't thought clearly about this, because there is so much in the world to see and do. To convince me of my errors, they enumerate the myriad people I know who are over 75 and doing quite well. They are certain that as I get closer to 75, I will push the desired age back to 80, then 85, maybe even 90.*

And here is what the *Book of Life (Old Testament)* says about life after 75

*The very first time the Bible makes reference to old age is with regard to Abraham. "And Abraham was old and well stricken in age; and God had blessed Abraham in all things." (Genesis 24:1). Why had this never been mentioned previously in connection with anyone else? The Rabbinic answer is because this was the first time that noticeable aging had ever happened!*

*How remarkable to learn that Abraham pleaded with God to grant him as blessing that very sign we today consider a curse. "Master of the universe," Abraham prayed, "if there is no such thing as old age, there would be no difference between an immature child and the mature man who has acquired a certain level of intelligence, experience and wisdom. That is not good. If you will be so kind, crown us with old age. Put a little white in the hair, make a person look a little bit older, more distinguished. Then others will know to whom to give greater respect."*

*The Midrash concludes that upon hearing this request, God said to Abraham: "A good thing have you asked for. And from you it shall begin." And that's why "Abraham was old and well stricken in age; and God had blessed Abraham in all things." What Abraham brought to the world was divine agreement with his desire that age deserves to be honored for those ways in which it is superior to youth. Ezekiel Emanuel*

Having an old fashioned Talmudic argument with myself

Whereas this and that whereas that teleological theology

The Bible tells us so...therefore

Dispute protest scramble thinking

Logic mish mash twisted up logic

No sparing sparring Jew against oncologist Jew

Sarah waited 90 years to have a baby

Maybe to appease God I should start fertility treatments

After that is after I have my hip replaced

So that I too can have a child at 90 – a fourth one

Now that is worth living for  
Parched sagging gravity defying breasts  
Bulging once again distended  
With sweet bluish mother's milk  
Fanciful outrageous stealing the essence  
The thunder of my staggering swaggering  
Assuaging faulty faltering gait  
Just staying still remembering and forgiving  
And giving up for lent regret  
Not quite a widow and yet  
First husband died of rapid fire pancreatic cancer  
Quick merciless death  
For the old schemer bastard philanderer  
No he didn't but he did deserve better  
Widow once removed leans on walking stick  
Still the aesthetics of walking sticks striking  
The pavement are attention grabbing  
Ain't defeated yet and yet and yet  
Doc you made me feel small uncertain  
Wanting to slap the weaning life giving hand away  
I can give you back walking without a limp  
Before your 78 birthday but I'm not 77 yet  
Now that is something else blissful regeneration

Smite on your house dear doc  
And you should only wish to die at 75  
With the grace and dignity I am trying to recover  
After you spit soaked me with contrivances  
About being a New Yorker needing to walk my big city  
My big apple my legs will no longer stretch out to explore  
Dear doc I am rebounded I am expunging you from my mind  
I am declining your offer of a new hip regretfully yours  
I am sitting in the park bottle of water nearby  
Walking stick with lilacs braced against my inner thigh  
The bad one wanting to wishing to see a swan or two  
Glide on my precious Meer but nevermore will they come back  
But the ducks the Mallards husband and wife  
Are skirting the edges are snapping up bread crumbs  
Do not feed the ducks ignored  
A toddler points and laughs  
As dad spills out the rest of the bread bag –  
And Goddamnit put me on a jar of homemade preserves





*It should read – With Love Nibs*

In honor of my next birthday in 2 months becoming 77

That is if I am very lucky and perhaps worthy

And if I decide it is still necessary for me to stick around

If just for a little while longer rationalization or reality

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel please advise help me out -NB

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### **The Flight of Time Soars By**

Hang on to gale galling winds  
Why feeling so sad  
Ending inevitable  
Death preoccupies  
How much to contemplate  
Lifting falling break away  
Tectonic plate no state  
Of ultimate grace  
Shifting soaring descending  
Life is precarious off balance  
Equilibrium resistance  
Doubt fear despair  
Too much to account for  
Tourniquet twisting abrasive  
Mocks looking back  
It was never timeless endless  
If lived that self-annihilating  
Betraying way  
Proverbs stuck mired wordless  
Life amounted to so little  
Mind and heart knew

Yet resisted pursuing so much more  
Eyes thick with cataracts  
Glare of sun stuns stingray pain  
Blot out block the eye scorching sun  
Eyes drained of tears  
World gets smaller darker  
Din hum hymnal  
What prayer to say  
What to ask forgiveness for  
That I feel so short of promise  
Scared subsisted on self deceit  
Remained half of  
What could have been me  
Appalled humiliated saddened  
By how little I moved from fear  
This the long slog goodbye  
Time to say goodbye to half lived life  
Humiliated pixilated elated deflated  
Broken into a million disparate pieces  
Spectacle of fraught ambition  
This couldn't have been all of it  
Yet it was persisted making myself so small  
So entrenched in solitariness calling it a blessing  
Unhinged binged on being alone  
Honoring needing no one  
How contrite how incipient  
I lived so small crushed tucked  
Like a duck into my prickly feathers  
A morning glory disappearing mornings



Hidden away off the grid out of the fray  
Foraging for consolation  
Getting none life is just done - nb

### **Random Scatter Shot**

Scat singing time for improvising  
Still the end is mine to shape  
Death most important moment  
Sheila Irish guru father's angel said  
No equivocation divine moment  
Mine alone to shape and gather up  
Can't stop weeping  
Weeping for what for whom  
Settled scores on website  
Sorry or not don't know  
Thinking of my fledging Luca  
Sends me into heaving  
Holding onto scream  
If it soars from my mouth  
Will it ever stop  
My body filled with pain  
Is it from guilt or  
Do I feel my son  
Who never lay in my belly  
Filling my entire body  
Saw the agony he keeps at bay  
Unless someone tries to insert  
Or remove a needle from his arm  
Think he has had enough  
Almost finished with saying  
"I'm good! I'm good!"  
Remembering telling my dad  
On phone calls when  
He took the phone  
From my mother  
"I'm fine! I'm fine!"  
Big bruise under left eye  
Knuckle marks breach blue black  
Someone mugged me  
Said at work  
It was my husband  
Enraged at being rebuffed  
Walk around just crying  
Weeping to myself  
Am I grieving in anticipation  
For my own death  
Am I overcome awash with tears  
Fearing what's next for Luca  
Can't separate us our fates  
We have a form of symbiosis

That is unbreachable unbreakable  
Can no longer separate us



*Symbiosis*

Strange bedfellows he and I  
I sprung from the purgatory  
The agony of pogrom from holocaust  
Fumes still fill my nose  
My wrist shield invisible numbers  
Of my incarceration Treblinka or Auschwitz  
Or whatever I escaped from  
He born into a house on stilts  
Deep in the Paraguayan rainforest  
Mother abandons at birth  
I pluck an original  
An august indigenous infant  
From under the arbor of protective trees  
And there we are he and me  
Joined ruthlessly terrifyingly  
Hand wringing history defining  
Hysteria history the overhang



Webbed joined decision made  
Whoever knows why  
Any of them now old  
Can't figure out how the me  
Of now made anyone of them  
Oh well this is the hell  
Of remaining hours days  
Just can't undead me  
Undying preoccupation  
Occupation preparing for  
What happens after  
After what life after death  
Tired of dying not living  
Contemplating reflecting  
Refracting time  
Timelessness more time  
For a better conceived tomorrow  
Time to stop thinking of death  
Crafting one not really believing  
Life will ever really end  
Where do the dead go  
What is death really  
Does being alive once ever end? NB

**Mr. Shields wanted his last supper** to be one he so often enjoyed on Friday nights when he was a young Catholic priest — rotisserie chicken legs with gravy “Someone once asked me how did I get to become unique,” he said that afternoon in his hospice bed. “I recommend meditation as a starting place — bringing your consciousness to bear.” what it termed “medical assistance in dying” for competent adult patients who are near death and suffering intolerably from irremediable illnesses. “One quality of life that’s important to me is my dignity — and sparing anxiety for my wife and daughter,” he said. Becoming debilitated and being tube-fed was unacceptable to him. “All of those painful and demeaning things,” he said, “I considered beyond the threshold of how I would like to live.” on “transcending transpersonal realms.” He eventually became a manager, but was not satisfied treating problems at what he called the “discharge end of the social injustice pipe.” As a seminary student, he was active in the civil rights movement and had met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr..He was always growing and exploring. In the last few months of his life, he tried a psychedelic drug for the first time and enrolled in an advanced online course on “transcending transpersonal realms.” He eventually became a manager, but was not satisfied treating problems at what he called the “discharge end of the social injustice pipe.” As a seminary student, he was active in the civil rights movement and had met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He wanted transformational change. He became a spiritual cosmologist, believing that the universe was conscious and that everything was inextricably connected. “We come out of the universe to play a role in the unfolding of the universe,” Mr. Shields wrote in his 2011 memoir, “The Priest Who Left His Religion in Pursuit of Cosmic Spirituality.” “This perspective riveted me. This is the opposite of meaningless. I come forth at this precise moment to contribute my unique gifts to the great unfolding.” Ms. Hood warned him that marrying her also meant inheriting a tribe of female friends she called “the intertidals.” Over the years, many would wash up on their doorstep after a storm, and move in for weekends or longer. After the diagnosis, Mr. Shields retreated into his study and fell into the throes of grief. As someone who treasured independence, the concept of being trapped in his own body frightened him. He searched on the internet for what he called “life-ending cocktails. “If I cannot give consent to my own death, whose body is this? Who owns my life?” she famously said. “doctor-assisted suicide” — although they never pressed charges.

Under the new regulations passed by the government, participants must be adults who are in an advanced state of a “grievous and irremediable medical condition.” Their suffering must be intolerable and their natural death “reasonably foreseeable” — meaning people with long-term disabilities are not eligible unless they are near death “You don’t judge a civilization by its riches, but by how it treats its vulnerable,” Dr. Green said. “I think this is a mark of our humanity.” Once impossibly and improbably far away, March 24 barreled down like a speeding train. Family and friends who visited him at the hospice felt conflicted. They knew this was what he wanted, but it broke their hearts — particularly now that he seemed more like himself. One moment, his niece wanted to rip off the remaining time like a Ban Buoyed by his improvement, his wife hoped he might push off the date. But he did not want to. “No matter how I looked at it, I saw pain,” he said. “No matter how I looked at my life from this moment on, I see personal, physical unbearable suffering. I don’t want to suffer anymore.”

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” — Mary Oliver “There is nothing more mysterious than destiny — of a person, of our species, of our planet, or of the universe itself.” — Brian Swimme

**Rebellion On:** As the party wound down, Ms. Fox handed out the lyrics to the Celtic folk song *The Parting glass*. “They serenaded him. But since it falls, unto my lot, That I should rise and you should not, I’ll gently rise and I’ll softly call, Good night and joy be with you all. When we

*blossom forth into the night," he said finally, his eyes still closed, "what do we hear? We hear the silence of the bees. We hear the brushing of the wind in the trees. We hear the whisper of wind to branch and branch to Patients have two options: They can drink a cocktail of lethal medication, or they can have the doctor administer drugs intra had not entirely left him. It was as if all the disparate strands of his life were being woven into this final moment. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith Where there is despair, hope. " I think I've learned that lesson," he said, when she finished. His favorite black hat with the skipper's brim had been pulled over his concealed brow, and a thin book of poetry slipped beneath his pillow At night, Mr. Shields's friends stood around it and serenaded his still body and memory. It was spiritual and poignant, ritualistic and community-based. "He would have loved it," his wife said. Those two days, the weather was fickle — the rain gave way to sun, the wind to calm, and then it rained again. Flocks of birds arrived. Deer and raccoons visited. The majestic Douglas firs swayed above Mr. Shields. His garden was wild and beautiful, just as he had loved it. At His Own Wake, Celebrating Life and the Gift of Death. John Shields, tormented by an incurable disease knew that dying openly and without fear could be his legacy, if his doctor, friends and family helped him. The Death and Life of John Shields The End A Parting Gift by Catherine Porter NY tT5/28/17mes,*

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**Choosing a difficult area to explore** – the thin line where aspirations teeter over into pretensions. She creates a world of social and sexual disappointments where almost all her characters are wryly aware of reality's stubborn refusal to live up to their fantasies and expectations.

He was also inconsiderate of her own ambition to the point of cruelty. And so it became the price of admission to the marriage to believe that Alfred, who loved me so much, would never intentionally hurt me. Whatever unpleasant things he said about me had to be true.

With all of it, the storms, the rage, the fury, even the physical abuse, we couldn't bear to give each other up. We were like two dogs hanging on with our teeth to a bone, clinging to that old desperate belief that we were the best and deepest part of each other, that we had banished each other's loneliness, that we justified each other's existence.

Now it was just as hard to escape in death. In fact, for a few days there, it was hard to escape my own death through him. Anne Birstein, memoirist and novelist, Ex-Wife of Alfred Kazin  
obit – 5/30/17 ny times

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## **Squeamish Standoffish**

Synapse collapse

Preeclampsia relapse

Stave off starve

Enclave enslave

Dawning of dead

Drum beat rat-a-tat

March to the beat

Of a different drummer

Defer beat and roll

Static stationary

Contrary squeamish

Sub Rosa smarmy

Squeamish Swamy

*"He who knows and is the master of himself", "owner of oneself", or "free from the sins".*

Squamous cancerous

Gibberish Yiddish

Gilgamesh



Smote scythe

Death a stormin'

Open those pearly gates



I'm a comin'

Puss yuck! Mouth drools

Sanctify sensory

Misery bones crackle

Hip moves unsheathed

Muscles ligaments frayed

X-rayed

Hipbone to anklebone *etc. tralala bones,*

***Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,***

*Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,*

*Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*The toe bone's connected to the foot bone,*

*The foot bone's connected to the ankle bone,*

*The ankle bone's connected to the leg bone,*

*Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*The leg bone's connected to the knee bone,*

*The knee bone's connected to the thigh bone,*

*The thigh bone's connected to the hip bone,*

*Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,*

*Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,*

*Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,  
Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*The hip bone's connected to the back bone  
The back bone's connected to the neck bone,  
The neck bone's connected to the head bone,  
Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*The finger bone's connected to the hand bone,  
The hand bone's connected to the arm bone,  
The arm bone's connected to the shoulder bone,  
Now shake dem skeleton bones!*

*Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around  
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around  
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around  
Now shake dem skeleton bones! James Weldon Johnson*



Severe hip arthritis

Right hip lopsided

Stride jib vibe

Tipped hobbled

Wobble

What to expect

I got old

Lucky me really

Brief divinity

Yarmulke

Life yawn yawl awake

Blink eyes

Know birth moment

Taut taught

Tautology

To live is to die - *Metalica*

*When a man lies, he murders some part of the world.  
These are the pale deaths which men miscall their lives.  
All this I cannot bear to witness any longer.  
Cannot the Kingdom of Salvation take me home?*

I got through it

Hedgehog hidden



Refused life's bidding

Reckoning day comes

Arrives time to say

Goodbye to whatever

I was and I was not

To be or not to be

That is was the question –

Day of reckoning

Reconcile no bile

Find that girly

This the ending - nb

***To be, or not to be: that is the question:***

*Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil* William Shakespeare, Hamlet

**Hail to the Chief**

Flags unfurled

Flags at half-mast



Stand at salute

Stand in silence

Stand with appropriate regard

He himself is passing by

Now safely tucked away

Urn carries cinder and bone chips

Stand watch

The embodiment passes by

All three flags at half-staff half-mast

New Jersey Rutgers and  
The grand old flag – USA  
We only do it one-in-while  
This is one of those times  
Three by five card  
Reads honoring Benjamin R. Barber  
Professor for 33 years  
Left in a huff  
Nevertheless  
Became Kekes professor  
Or something like that  
At University of Maryland  
But pay no mind  
Left us his papers  
Fifty boxes already arrived  
Creating center with his name  
Endowment coming  
Fellowships maybe  
Grand gesture  
Bit of tomfoolery  
Erudition's buffoonery  
Wilting waiting  
For my time to come

No lowered flags  
None at half-mast  
Just sad sadness portends  
Renders those left behind  
With full or fuller lives to live  
Hail to the chief  
If he left in a huff  
Director Whitman Center for Community etc.  
So uncharacteristically not Whitman  
Oh well these many years later  
Still wading awash in hell  
Still pinched nerves surround  
Recollection memories  
We were together 40 years  
Married 30 the widow tells me  
Think a few of those overlapped  
Our marriage when in tact  
Not the right word for what we were  
The way we were  
Fractured symbiotic  
Like snakes trying to slither out  
Of old fashioned biblical sin sinfulness  
Arbitrariness oh wellness visited on us



We were broken at the start  
Wounded eons in the building up  
Of woundedness brokenness  
Post-traumatic stress  
From descendants long dead  
Decadent moldy  
Now retrieved ancestry  
No country dialogic  
Where we would come from  
Dismemberment desperate  
To connect reconnect  
Repossess some dignity  
Some clarity some wholeness  
The widow stands beside flagpole  
Flags at half-mast  
Barged into a marriage  
Waded in way over her head  
Watched him as he found her  
His way out  
Decades younger  
He could mold her  
We were like old sodden moldy cheese  
Something needing to be re-packaged

Tossed thrown out  
Repurposed couldn't move beyond  
Histories containment  
No way to whitewash  
Stray to far from narrative  
We were hatched from lies deceit  
All sorts of excuses used  
From pogrom to philandering  
Multi-marrying father  
Never will divorce he told me  
Never quite asking me to be his bride  
Just in his journal kept life long  
Now in boxes at Rutgers  
Agog gag-worthy  
Accountings of my orgasms  
N – org on our two nights off  
One night on  
I am in those boxes  
We were a screwy discombobulated  
Perfectly mismatched couple  
I will marry her  
I said when  
Resigned

Just tossed away love  
From my life  
We share two kids  
Now hovering 50  
Your widow gray wrinkling  
Stands silent at attention  
As the flags wave half mast  
Final coda long last  
To my amazed heart stopping  
Hail to the chief  
He would have loved this  
This was the acclaim he lived for  
Somewhere somehow he knows  
Even when he stormed off  
In a fit they honored him  
Hovering over flags lifted  
Only half-way at Rutgers



Rugrat flag pole – nb

## Full Throated Peeps Beaks Open Wide



Clucking for a mouthful  
Of mother  
Begging tending to please  
Each little chick greedy for more  
In truth forsooth  
Got to tumble out  
Get back on the ground  
Time to get old and small  
Arthritic hip stiffens leg  
Limp falter fall hold up right  
Fold over myself all night  
Can't get let right  
Time to straighten up  
Sit up tall  
And get small -  
Time to separate  
To move away  
Disappear extricate  
Exact extract  
Longing for me  
Soliciting my help  
Curried favor  
Ask me just ask  
Mrs. Jewish Goldberg  
Over the fence  
Dangling big boobs  
Over the window sill  
Time to move away  
From the open window  
Wean a need for me  
That I cultivated  
Time to vacate sill  
Shill for longevity  
Being necessary  
No longer

Sickening struck  
Behind the eyes  
Gray moving away  
Soon to despise  
Hate bicker  
Draw down  
Close shade  
Move away  
I must make first move  
No longer ask  
*For whom the bell tolls*  
Become solitary once again

*No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine;  
if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as  
well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;  
It tolls for thee. John Donne*

Time to die  
Foreclose option  
To live just a longer  
Little lamb  
Soulful rueful dutiful  
Slow withdrawal  
From a fast talker  
Little lamb bays  
Heaven waits  
Gait falters  
Time to abide  
Draw down  
Inevitable end  
Inscrutable existence  
We live we die  
Can't weasel  
Canoodle way out of it  
My own personal life  
Will or has come  
To its very end  
Dread beg wait  
Impatient  
To get it over with  
Anticipation too great  
How does it feel  
To end life  
How does it feel

To be dead  
No more to dany  
Try beg  
It portends  
My for real true final end nb

"No sadness is  
greater than in  
misery to rehearse  
memories of joy."  
— Dante

***Little Lamb who made thee***

*Dost thou know who made thee  
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing wooly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice!*

*Little Lamb who made thee  
Dost thou know who made thee  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!*

*He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb:  
He is meek & he is mild,  
He became a little child:  
I a child & thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.*

*Little Lamb God bless thee.  
Little Lamb God bless thee.*

*William Blake – Little Lamb*





Love the earth and sun and  
the animals, despise riches,  
give alms to every one that  
asks, stand up for the stupid  
and crazy, devote your  
income and labor to others,  
hate tyrants, argue not  
concerning God, have  
patience and indulgence  
toward the people..."



*The married and unmarried children ride home to their thanksgiving dinner,  
The child is baptized – the convert is making the first professions,  
Seasons pursuing each other the indescribably crowd is gather...*

*Season's pursuing each other  
The City sleeps and the country sleeps,  
The living sleep for their time....the dead sleep for their time,  
And these one and all tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,  
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am.*

*Walt Whitman Song of Myself, Leaves of Grass (excerpts -15)*



*Robert Delaunay - Simultaneous contrasts sun and moon 1913*

### **Sun and Moon**

As it glides toward end  
There will be sunrises  
Sunsets unseen by me  
Days will move through  
Calendar year  
Month-by-month  
Year-after-year  
Sun and moon  
Earth clouds rain  
Snowfall bitter cold  
NY sticky hot summer  
Gasps for breath  
Sweat gathering  
On arms and face  
Suns and moons  
Will come and go  
And I will not be there  
Just won't be anywhere  
Believe have implicit faith  
That there will be  
Days months years  
Full moons nights  
Solstice markers  
For spinning  
Whirling twirling world  
Sun and moon



And family will go on  
After I am gone  
How do I know  
That there will be  
Sun and moon  
When death comes  
The sun will come  
As will the moon  
Decades after my father's death  
The sun came up  
Over the horizon  
The moon cycled to fullness  
Time to open eyes mind heart  
Take it in moon stars trees  
Ducks on the Meer  
Late spring showing up  
Miraculously  
A trio of snowy egrets  
Important to sit patiently  
Hands folded on lap  
Quiet breaths taken  
Essence of what will yet be  
After the advent of my death - nb



Snowy Egret in full plumage

***The Green Hills of Earth***

*Let the sweet fresh breezes heal me  
As they rove around the girth  
Of our lovely mother planet  
Of the cool, green hills of Earth.  
We rot in the moulds of Venus,  
We retch at her tainted breath.  
Foul are her flooded jungles,*

*Crawling with unclean death.  
--- the harsh bright soil of Luna  
--- --- Saturn's rainbow rings  
--- --- the frozen night of Titan  
We've tried each spinning space mote  
And reckoned its true worth:  
Take us back again to the homes of men  
On the cool, green hills of Earth.  
The arching sky is calling  
Spacemen back to their trade.  
**ALL HANDS! STAND BY! FREE FALLING!**  
And the lights below us fade.  
Out ride the sons of Terra,  
Far drives the thundering jet,  
Up leaps a race of Earthmen,  
Out, far, and onward yet ---  
We pray for one last landing  
On the globe that gave us birth;  
Let us rest our eyes on the friendly skies  
And the cool, green hills of Earth.*

*Robert A Heinlein*



.....

## Leg Crackles Clicks

Clique Claque

Stuck in blood root

Body rot

Decline declension

Did I mention

How old I

Was getting to

Methuselah



*Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years Genesis 6:3*

And all the days of **Methuselah** were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.  
Genesis 5:27

*It ain't necessarily so  
It ain't necessarily so  
The things that you're liable  
To read in the Bible,  
It ain't necessarily so.*

*To get into heaven, don't snap for a seven  
Live clean forget your faults  
I take gospel whenever it's possible  
But with a grain of salt*

*Methuselah lived 900 years  
Methuselah lived 900 years my spirit will not contend with a man forever, for he  
Who calls that livin'  
When no gal will give in  
To no man what's 900 years*

*It ain't necessarily so  
It ain't necessarily so  
The things that you're liable  
To read in the Bible,  
It ain't necessarily so.*

*Ain't necessarily so  
Ain't necessarily so  
Ain't necessarily so - George Gershwin Porgy and Bess*

And so Methuselah  
Lived 969 years  
I am up to 968  
Birthday in a month  
Real life time  
What is real life  
What is being alive  
Why life purpose  
Asking now why  
Leg dangles disjointed  
From the hip  
As if poorly hung  
Distorted disjunction  
Not how leg  
Should ought  
To function  
Leg moves off  
At an angle  
Getting balance  
At odd with  
Rest of body  
Wrested from  
The flapping wings  
Of departing angels  
Sweeping me off my feet  
Lifting me skyward  
Sway swing gather balance  
Sort of a swaggering  
Swaying motion  
Pain burns sears warns  
Sheath of ligament  
Muscle frayed  
Muscle bare bones  
Jingle jangle leg  
Hop hobble balance  
Shuffle along

Old shadow pursues  
Stride finds rhythm  
To move  
Repair not  
Resist not  
*It is not in the stars to hold our destiny  
but in ourselves. William Shakespeare*  
Trying to make sense  
That we die  
We just actually die  
End life end living  
Old age tumbled down  
On me humbled me  
Cracked hacked first  
Into my hip bone  
Arthritis in right hip  
Severe austere stern  
Sound ominous  
It's disastrous  
For a woman  
Who loved walking  
From street to street  
Lower East Side  
Where father an infant  
Resided tenement  
Ghetto – dignity  
Eeked out  
Potatoes baked  
In open garbage pail fire  
Days gone could  
Skip jump run  
Climbing on and off bus  
Challenges not to forget  
Which leg to land on  
Escalators calculable risk  
Don't get off on right leg  
Will crumple fall  
Collapse into  
A withered  
Bone crackling  
Sobbing helpless  
Shamed ordinary  
Old lady  
Got to face this leg  
Confront it head on  
This a warning

Of what is to come  
What next

To slip slide away  
*Slip slidin' away*  
*Slip slidin' away*  
*You know the nearer your destination*  
*The more you're slip slidin' away - Paul Simon*

My body  
In its final riff  
The culmination  
The glory be  
To not be  
No longer be  
Thrown off balance  
Hip shift on bed  
Crumpled sheets  
No one to turn  
To fix leg  
Without ouch  
Throb pain  
Crowding in on me  
Of age getting settling  
Not too comfortable  
Time foreshortened  
Encapsulate  
Recapture time  
Foreboding  
Crowding in  
Calling to me  
My end  
Time to face  
The music  
The final crescendo  
The final roar  
The final quiet  
Soundless  
Find the grace  
Steady self  
Death already  
Inhabits body  
Just moving slowly  
First muscles  
Chest already  
Reverberates with echoes

Of deep throated cough  
Frog croaking  
In unison with  
Death invades  
Death persists  
Death pursues  
Cogitate ruminare  
On that awhile longer  
Age with grace  
Put on good face  
Howling with rendered  
Chorus of mourners  
Keening mourning wailing  
Strangers hovering  
I rest my case  
Resist not  
Cry for life unlived  
Unfulfilled  
Get regrets out of the way  
Face the day  
As if the last  
For it very well  
Might in truth forsooth be -nb

### **Father's Day 2017**

*DEAR JER,*

*TO MY MIND YOU ARE A MORE THAN WONDERFUL FATHER - YOUR ARE A PERSON WHO  
LOVES HIS THREE CHILDREN - HUDSON, DAISY, AND UPTON - WITHOUT CONDITION -  
GIVING THEM A TRUE EXPERIENCE OF FATHERLY AND PARENT LOVE -*

*YOUR LOVE AND ADMIRATION AS WELL AS THE DEMANDS YOU ASK OF THEM FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN THEIR OWN TERMS WILL KEEP THEM IN GOOD STEAD THROUGHOUT  
THEIR LIVES -*

*A FATHER'S LOVE LASTS....IMPACT IMMEASURABLE -*

*I AM IN AWE AND WITH GREAT PRIDE -*

*LOVE,*

*MOM*

*Thank you. I appreciate the words. x*



## All About Sophie Blue Becoming 16!

blue blue, it took me to today to respond - but simply you honor my life and enhance it in more ways than i can account for or even know - your life a gift to not just us - mom and me and dad and siblings - but to so many you connect with so authentically and clearly in your world and beyond - you are precious blue blue - and your capacity to make clear wise reasoned decisions to weigh things out and yet be spontaneous and generous to and with others is utterly daunting amazing -and your humor is big and grand and truly funny - so three cheers for you and for me and each of us to love each other value each other and say it when it counts in real time - i love you more than all the scallion pancakes and dumplings made in every chinese restaurant all around the world - xoxoomi

If it makes you feel any better I can not believe that i am old enough to be turning 16 (how is little me so old) :)))

What you say to me and everything you have given to me from the first second you held me to tomorrow sitting at Chinese celebrating that I am 16 years old not minutes old, I have appreciated and cherished every moment that we have spent together.

I LOVE YOU EVEN MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE and you have seen a lot of love (whether real or not)

Having you apart of my life was literally the greatest gift the universe could have given me, I am lucky to have an amazing mother and a pretty good father and amazing siblings BUT you are special and extremely special to me, what did I ever do to deserve you?

I love you more than all of the grandmas who have ever loved a granddaughter as much as you love me (not many :0) just kidding I love you as much as any person who has ever turned 16.

XOXO,  
your devoted bookend war resistor sister



*BLUE BLUE, HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME? HAVEN'T I BEEN LOYAL AND LOVING?  
GETTING YOU INTO COCKTAIL DRESSES TO MEET YOUR PARENTS WHEN THEY RETURNED  
FROM WORK! SUGGESTING YOU WALK TO THE DOOR WHICH YOU DID FOR THE VERY FIRST  
TIME TO GREET THEM! DIDN'T WE WATCH YOU TWIRL AND SPIN AND SING AND LOVE  
EVERY MINUTE OF BEING WITH YOU?*

*AND DIDN'T I LISTEN TO MORE ABOUT JESUS THAN MOST WHO CALL THEMSELVES  
CHRISTIANS AS I WATCHED YOU SING PSALMS TO HEAVEN AND THE ANGELS?*

*AND DON'T I JUST THINK YOU ARE THE VERY BEST THING THAT EVER ENTERED MY  
LIFE? SO I ASK HOW COULD YOU JUST GO OFF AND BECOME 16? I AM SIMPLY NOT READY  
FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.*

*NEVER DOUBT THAT YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL INSIDE AND OUT AND STRONG MORE THAN  
YOU ACTUALLY KNOW INSIDE AND OUT AND CLEAR AND ETHICAL AND LOVING INDEED A  
VERY RARE BIRD - MY VERY OWN BOOKEND WAR RESISTOR SISTER - WHO TURNED HER  
BACK ON ME AND JUST WENT ON TO BECOME 16!*

*HAPPY OF COURSE BEST BIRTHDAY EVER, BLUE - I LOVE YOU MORE THAN EVERYONE  
BECOMING 16 ALL OVER THE WORLD -*

*BLUE,*

*PERHAPS TOP DOWN TRIP TO MIAMI OR FAR OFF BLUFFS OF MAINE OR HIP HAMPTONS OR  
JUST CRUISING FROM ONE MACDONALDS TO THE NEXT EATING FRENCH FRIES AND  
DRINKING SPRITE -*

*THE DAY ARRIVED - SOPHIE DRIVES - HOW ABOUT GETTING A BUG CONVERTIBLE IN  
BRIGHT YELLOW?*

*COUNT ME IN FOR MANY ADVENTURESOME RIDES - OXXOBOOKEND WAR RESISTOR  
PASSENGER - OMi*

.....

*OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI OMI*

*How are you today, I am great. Knowing you are apart of my life makes every day  
great. No matter the circumstances as long as you are here for me, I am happy.*

*I can not wait to see you later today, are you coming over for a late afternoon dinner  
or the whole day or earlier?*

*Whatever makes you happy.*

*XOXO,*

*Blue Blue June 23, 2017*

.....

**Death Dying**

Awesome preoccupation  
Ultimate destination  
Not a day goes by  
When I don't wonder  
If and when it will arrive - NB

.....

**Alexi describes his mother** *“dead-salmon cold – army-ant intense – a pathological liar – she, his mother, protected me against cruelty – three days a week – Alexie speaks of hatred that felt as ancient as a cave painting.*

*Sherman Alexie, author, You Don't Have to Say You Love Me.*

.....

**What a man overcomes is a measure of his quality. Saul Below**

.....

**Freedom is not a gift but an achievement.** *Historically and morally speaking, it is the fruit of struggles, tragic failures, tears, sacrifices, and sorrow. Like wase, social changes, if more than accidental occurrences, if constitutive of moral goodness, are products of imaginative constructions and presuppose the will to make the “is” conform to the “ought.”*

*Have a vision, a dream of success, and work like hell.*

*Samuel D. Cook, African American Educator and College President*

.....

**What interests me is the inner life:** *how we are formed by our losses and those of our parents, how we learn what we need to know through our intuitions and confusions, how we deny and delay and finally discover who we are –*

*Chana Bloch, Poet*

.....

**...assigned the role of understanding daughter** – *She saw her mother as repulsive and vainglorious woman who has spent her life chasing nameless dreams - Hadn't she sealed her mother's vexatious spirit in that outsized urn, along with her ashes...? Could this be her mother's ghost, tagging along?*

*Minae Mizumura, Japanese novelist Inheritance From Mother –*

.....

**This is one of the miracles that fiction works:** *You can be a doubter and a believer in the same moment, in the same sentence.*

*Tessa Hadley, Bad Dreams and Other Stories*

.....

**How slowly**

*In the moonlit cold of midnight,  
One hundred and eight times,  
Each temple strikes its bell.  
Listening, between sounds  
Is time to remember, and regret,  
Common sins and fugitive delights –*

*Edith Shiffert, Poet, lived in Japan*

.....

**The key thing about fiction, as in life, is that no character knows what is going to happen.**

*Every one is locked into the present moment, as we are now.  
She thought about legacy – from a family story retold through generations to the influence of a specific person who while nameless, soaked into the fabric of their times and changed the color – There is a tendency to think and talk as if it is not the mark we leave upon time that we need to think about but the endless years that will be ours if we eat well enough and exercise effectively enough to dodge the grave.*

*I think of what is the mark that any human being leaves behind, which when you are very ill you're bound to think about – What is the purpose of my existence? Have I fulfilled my existence? And the characters are asking that question of themselves –*

*Helen Dunmore, Author*

**Hold out your arms**

*Death, hold out your arms for me  
Embrace me  
Give me your motherly caress,  
Through all this suffering  
You have not forgotten me.*

*You are the bearded iris that bakes its rhizomes  
Beside the wall,  
Your scent flushes with loveliness,  
Sherbet, pure iris  
Lovely and intricate.*

*I am the child who stands by the wall  
Not much taller than the iris.  
The sun covers me  
The day waits for me  
In my funny dress.*

*Death, you heap into my arms  
A basket of unripe damsons  
Red crisscross straps that button behind me.  
I don't know about school,  
My knowledge is for papery bud covers*

*Tall stems and brown  
Bees touching here and there, delicately  
Before a swerve to the sun.*

*Death stoops over me  
Her long skirts slide,  
She knows I am shy.  
Even the puffed sleeves on my white blouse  
Embarrass me,  
She will pick me up and hold me  
So no one can see me,  
I will scrub my hair into hers.*

*There, the iris increases  
Note by note  
As the wall gives back heat.  
Death, there's no need to ask:  
A mother will always lift a child  
As a rhizome  
Must lift up a flower  
So you settle me  
My arms twining,  
Thighs gripping your hips  
Where the swell of you is.*

*As you push back my hair  
- Which could do with a comb  
But never mind -  
You murmur  
'We're nearly there.'*

*Helen Dunmore (25 May 2017)*

.....

**Shanghaied** - (force (someone) to join a ship lacking a full crew by drugging them or using other underhanded means.)



**Shanghaied**

To die for

Not to deny

Drool

Jealousy septic

Corrosive

Wanted

To climb

Into their lives

*Just back*

*From Shanghai*

*Beautiful buildings*

*Couldn't do it*

*Without first class*

*Own private tour guide*

*Get up when we want*

*And end the day whenever*

*Think we spend 4 or 5 months*

*In Florida and 3 or 4 in NJ*

*And then 1 month or 2 in Vermont*

*Nicole and family love to travel a well*

*Been all over the world*

*We took almost everyone to Israel*

*Jason said girls too little*

*Probably right*

*We've been to China before*

*But never to Shanghai  
Play Bridge and golf  
Though not so much anymore  
Friends in Florida  
Family in NJ  
Friends in Vermont  
Kids use house otherwise...  
Mindy and her partner  
In interior design company  
Tax write-off  
Has 35 grandchildren  
And three more on the way  
Hasidim all – but son  
He lives in Short Hills  
Mercedes blew tire  
Mercedes tows it to NJ  
Dinner wine and steak  
At Café Luxembourg  
Detailed update  
On each grandchild  
Only son has spent  
Two years trying  
To open a restaurant  
In Montclair no longer  
Karaoke just restaurant  
Entertainment some day upstairs  
Still raising money  
Daughter-in-law has full time help  
Runs like Giselle every day  
Takes girls to gymnastic  
And competitive ballet  
Soft pedaling disdain  
We admit we help  
But not with mortgage etc.  
If we did help  
He would have opened already  
Crack in the armor  
Why not sacrifice a trip  
To fund his effort  
To be independent  
That word is catchall  
Money keeps them tethered  
In line – pay just enough  
To keep close ties  
Shanghaied  
What's happened to my life*

Savings dwindling overspending  
Upending any fiscal safety net



Youngest son runs through money  
As if it were his last day  
And always it might be  
Nothing like threat of death  
To have money  
Run through fingers  
Like spring thaw waterfall  
Images of him  
With *fist full of dollars*



Empty unfurled fingers by end of day  
Both older kids different moments  
In divorce proceedings  
Forgive and get back at  
Difficult balance  
Who to punish and how  
Keeping rage moving  
Out beyond self - hard  
Have two divorces  
Under my ever tightening belt  
Shanghaied  
Didn't have a chance to brag  
About my grandkids  
One who took on dyslexia head-on  
They just took my breath away  
Submerged in narrative

Of envy as life unfolded entitled  
Best of all possible worlds

As a Christian, Leibniz outlined his perfect world theory in his work, *The Monadology*, stating the argument in five parts:

God has the idea of infinitely many universes

Only one of these universes can actually exist.

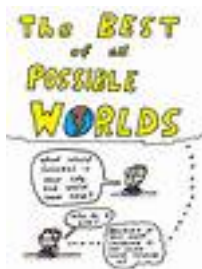
God's choices are subject to the principle of sufficient reason, that is, God has reason to choose one thing or another.

God is good.

Therefore, the universe that God chose to exist is the best of all possible worlds.

Or, alternative reality

Version of best of all possible worlds...



.....



Shanghaied  
Highways byways  
Ancient narrow alleyways



Shanghaied  
Their life to die for  
Looking for balance  
Cousin Cookie two weeks older  
Married person she meet when 14  
He hit it rich really very very...  
Father schlepped rags morning to night  
Mother filled with sass and vinegar  
Her life ended with brassy hair  
In the arms of a much younger Puerto Ricans  
Cracks in the armor fault lines  
Cookie kept her mother-in-law at a distance  
Husband paid for college  
Driving nitroglycerin trucks



After stumbling early on  
Husband became successful counsel  
For big drug company  
Made millions maybe billions  
They're for the *Naming of Viagra*  
Naming of an infant great Jewish consequence

*The naming of a Jewish child is a most profound spiritual moment. The Sages say that naming a baby is a statement of her character, her specialness, and her path in life. For at the beginning of life we give a name, and at the end of life a "good name" is all we take with us.*

*Further, the Talmud tells us that parents receive one-sixtieth of prophecy when picking a name. An angel comes to the parents and whispers the Jewish name that the new baby will embody.*

Viagra like discovering gold nuggets  
Had men stiff with ardor for a period of four hours  
Pharmacy executives huddled like Jews in a Minyan  
We will call it Viagra they fist raised agreed  
Shanghaied before wine poured  
My cousin lived a life to die for  
Jewish philanthropist of a higher order  
Angel wings set aquiver waiting  
Their arrival at the Pearly Gate  
On God's balance sheet -  
They give generously to Israel  
Built an education building  
For their synagogue  
Named after them  
Donated stained glass windows  
For synagogue  
Provide generous funds to support  
Israeli hospital, which welcomes all  
They were in word and deed  
Penultimate Jewish philanthropists  
Who am I in the face of God  
To disparage their generosity covetous  
Jaundiced self-preserving mimicry  
Genuflecting emulating  
Sacrosanct American gothic Wasp  
Shanghaied bedazzled bedraggled  
Drenched depleted displaced  
After meal flagged cab got home  
Collapsed prostrate on my bed  
My body flattened mouth slack  
My life so insignificant so small  
So paltry so not lived in at all  
No travel no bridge no golf  
No husband to dance  
And sleep and argue with  
What happened to me  
Along the highway and byway of life



How and where did I fall so short  
Now to gather myself up  
Stop up my oozing mooing jealousy  
Back into the life in fact I live  
Get back on track  
Orbiting gingerly thinking  
Again about the business of dying  
My upending pending death  
Searching once more for essential truths  
Memorializing my arrogance  
Thinking myself as of  
A Darwinian higher order  
Regarded their lives  
As self-involved greedy  
Fixed focused intrepidly  
Unapologetically on family  
Pursuing with a vengeance  
Whatever in America  
It means to live well  
Totems of wealth and esteem  
Dripping in diamonds  
Short Hills fashioned up  
Expensive wines glass sculptures  
Wealth face smacking  
Upon entering door  
What was I doing  
While they sped  
Frist class around the world  
Visiting the hundred places  
Listed in National Geographic  
As not to be missed  
Where was I  
Where had I been  
Marrying wrong  
Worrying about money  
Thinking because  
I relished flowers and trees

Existed on a higher plane  
Shanghaied  
Time to make peace  
Two Jewish families  
Both inflused  
With scent of *Holocaust*  
Took very different paths  
Neither higher better road taken



Choices regrets stills of decisions  
Flash white lightening fast  
As we old timers take a last breathe  
Shanghaied by my own toe stub  
My own stumble my own doubts  
My own fear led me to where I am  
As I stand on the precipice  
Contrite word  
Looking back and beyond  
And never to repeat say ever  
*I did my best I tried*  
Their life truly to die for  
But as for me  
I lived and then I died - nb

.....

## **My Mother**

Went to the center square mornings  
Joining in Tai Chi movements  
With the women of the town  
She adopted a trio of women  
Mother and two daughters  
Helped bring them to NYC  
One a concert pianist  
One a translator at the UN  
Mother author  
Becoming lifelong friends  
Mother attended wedding of one  
Visited the other when a professor in Maine  
They joined our Thanksgiving table

Mother wandered in and out  
Of Jewish neighborhoods and sanctuaries  
Hunting out families they wanted to come  
To the United States or better New Jersey  
She brought of family of Russian Jewish engineers  
To live in Millburn she lobbied Congress  
She had been an intern for Millicent Fenwick  
When she deep into her sixties  
The Russian family came to our Thanksgiving- meals  
Traditional with a pinch or tinge of Yiddish – Jewish delicacies

Mother went to Israel looking up Jewish family there  
She found a woman widowed in six-day war  
Chief librarian at the University in Jerusalem  
And her son who was high up in Shin Bat  
An decorated Israeli arm pilot and leading if undisclosed spy  
He handsome as Tom Cruise in Top Gun came to Thanksgiving dinner

When visiting a small Mexican town near the coast  
Father borrowed a tuba and marched down the center of town  
With local musicians as they celebrated some Mexican feast

Mother met a German artist Theo Krieg who lived with his mistress  
They could never marry his wife wouldn't divorce him  
Mother the last puritan traveled with the couple  
Through Frank and Germany more than once  
The artist gave mother some pieces of his art  
Which she showed in the various Village galleries she frequented

Mother and Dad never displaced when travelling in the world  
As if born to each place they visited  
Moved among the villagers and locals with ease  
Just in Millburn in New Jersey in synagogue in the USA  
Mother never felt she belonged never as good as  
But always better than  
Dad acclimated – musicians form a unique band of brothers  
A universe all to themselves  
Dad loved Lenny Bernstein as he called him  
His tastes just as eclectic Beatles to Bach  
Dad loved his bass and playing in smoky jazz clubs  
After 2 in the morning weekends after paid jobs  
Bass players lined the bar sipping scotch waiting their turn  
Dad even played once or twice  
With Duke Ellington when his bass player got sick  
Bass relief players recruited from local 16 the musicians union

Behind the curtain in our home levitating cycles of rage  
We lived in the aftermath of Holocaust  
With the stench of steerage of tenement of poverty  
Never quite ennobled uplifted by synagogue

Russian China Israel Germany France  
And Jordan and India and Peru and?  
My mother joined in mornings in China doing Tai Chi  
My father marched knees high down the street  
In some small village playing tuba  
In the mix with other local musicians  
Disjointed displaced the world my oyster  
My home a house of horrors  
Coming into my own old age  
I feel the pride of my mother and father  
As they ventured forth into the larger world  
Our own so small so mean so frightening  
Walls closing in and they flying off  
Landing free spirits stepping into other native landscapes  
My mother and father traveled so well together  
My mother and father foundered  
In a marriage akin to living hell –NB

.....

***I love my life in widening circles  
that reach out across the world***

*I may not complete the last one  
But I give myself to it.*

*I circle around God , around the primordial tower  
I've been circling for thousands of years  
and I still don't know am I a falcon,  
A storm, or a great song?*

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

.....  
***His soul hurt, and so did his crotch. Francesco Pacifico, author "Class"***  
.....

***The tide was coming in with all the medusas (stinging poisonous jelly fish) floating  
in its turbulence. The tendrils of the jellyfish in limbo, like something cut loose, a  
placenta, a parachute, a refugee severed from its place of origin.***

*Deborah Levy, Hot Milk*

.....  
***My handicap took its toll on my sanity  
My moms got me at the shrink at like 13  
And doctors called the cops on me  
'Cause I be throwing IV poles and they ignore me  
I've gotta try to calm down and breathe  
I can only hold it but for so long - put me to sleep.***

***I am only 19, but my mind is old  
And when the things get for real, my warm heart turns cold.***

***Why I feel like I'm losin' weight  
Why I got no money, if I'm movin' weight?  
Why my life based upon what I'mma do today  
Why I can't move away.***

*Prodigy, Hip Hop singer dies at 42, sickle cell anemia, first album, Juvenile Hell*

.....  
***Anxiety over the safety of our children is the black mold that grows on almost every  
parent's soul. Jennifer Senior, reviews, Victor LaVlie, The Changeling***  
.....

***Conumdrum -***

Dumpity dum dum  
Nonsense gibberish  
Gutteral slang yiddish  
The sum of all parts  
The all of it  
Bitterness rises  
Indigestion heartburn  
Nausea overtakes  
Whenever I think  
Or remember you  
Today I will  
Ask myself once again  
How could I have  
Let you touch me  
Even enter open my door  
In every sense of the word  
How could I have  
I will look  
At this aging face  
Square on  
In the mirror  
If with hazy gauzy vision  
Blurred blunted by cataracts  
If with hairline  
Like a vacant lot weeds  
A sparse amount of hair  
Barely covering my scalp  
Ugh how could I  
And then it's the leg  
I drag around  
Praying the other  
Doesn't succumb  
Becoming arthritic  
And then oh no  
No motorized wheel chair  
Waiting for a bus  
Kicking people off front bench seats  
Reserved for incapacitated  
Too much pride too much pain  
Too much to take in  
But back to how could I have  
Let this man into my life  
Why how come how could I have  
The answer is in this aging face  
The answer is in how



I regarded my life  
Lived my life  
Slight sparse unsettled unnerving  
Fell for a pimp to let me off the hook  
Of coming out as my self  
Whatever that was  
I settled for mediocre derivative  
I picked him -him!  
I got to say that over and over again  
I picked him I let him in  
I opened the door my heart  
Who am I fooling  
He was a doorstop  
To stop real life from happening  
Forming beyond the door  
I shackled myself embarrassed myself  
Tied myself to this man  
He sleuths around to quell satisfy his ambition  
I offered the easy fruit to pluck from tree  
I was his Eve but I didn't offer the apple to him  
He gave it poisonous the fruit to me  
And I ate it core and all  
How could I have  
Squandered a life a minute years on him  
I did it to myself no one else  
I look with shame at my life  
At my choosing not to be loved  
Over and over again  
I did this to myself  
And what does this ultimate truth finding  
This grand inquisition disquisition  
Mean at the end  
That I will die knowing  
Rather than contend with my fears  
And move beyond  
I opened the door to my if slow demise  
I died when I let him inside  
In the end way back when  
I did commit a virtual suicide - nb

.....

**I taught myself to meditate.** The most important thing, traveling by myself, is being present. I wanted being alone to be solitude, not loneliness.

Dianne Whelan, a documentarian and adventurer

.....

***Mother, oh my mother, where are you?***

*Without you, where am I/*

*If you are gone*

*I no longer exist*

*Come back, come back to me,*

*Hold me! Crush me!*

*So that I may be.*

*Frederick Leboyer, Doctor, Birth Without Violence*

.....

***Busy people organize their time, and I've always done that.***

***Daniel H. Weiss, Director Met Museum***

.....



***If you are able,***

***save them a place***

***inside of you***

***and save one backward glance***

***when you are leaving***

***for the places they can***

***no longer go.***

***Be not ashamed to say***

***you loved them,***

***though you may***

***or may not have always.***

*Take what they have left  
and what they have taught you  
with their dying  
and keep it with your own.*

*And in that time  
when men decide and feel safe  
to call the war insane,  
take one moment to embrace  
those gentle heroes*

*you left behind. Major Michael Davis O'Donnell 1 January 1970 Dak To, Vietnam Major O'Donnell was listed as missing in action in 1970 while in Cambodia. His remains were returned to the United States in 2001.*

*...from from Jerry Garcia, Grateful Dead, I took the idea that you can find art and beauty in imperfection, and true art is from your soul. I want people to ask themselves, first and foremost, if they have a sense of purpose. Jay Lombard, the Mind of God*

.....

*My Eyes Went Dark play by Mathew Wilkinson, about Vitaly Kaloyev, Russian architect The man whose wife and kids were killed in a horrible tragedy when two planes collided over Germany 10 years ago says he has never regretted murdering the air traffic controller who let it happen, but that it has not granted him any relief either. Architect Vitaly Kaloev is back in Germany, the land that saw the death of his family. He is only allowed to stay for two days – until commemoration ceremonies are over. He is not a welcome guest as the Swiss delegation believes he shouldn't be there.*

*Tolstoy, writing "Confession" determined to share his own last moments that he came p with a series of codes, including eye movements, so that when his time came, he could describe to the people around him what it was like to die.*

*Gabriel Garcia Marquez, fear of dying written of in One Hundred Years of Solitude – death as thought I were the only possible subject.*

*Toni Morrison, Death is not the worse thing that can happen to a person at least not as bad as the living death that was slavery – Excerpts, Edwidge Danticat, "The Art of Death Writing the Final Story*

## Sounds of Silence

Time to consider in earnest death

Whose death

My death

And if not death

What else should I be thinking about

A *Talmudic* question

Refute arm wrestle truth

This is life in the *Bardo*



- *bardo-* (in Tibetan Buddhism) a state of existence between death and rebirth, varying in length according to a person's conduct in life and manner of, or age at, death. – Oxford Dictionaries -

Except about the rebirth part

I think when final breathe

Heaves or chokes or whistles out

Expires in a blink of an eye



You are dead no recourse just gone

No returning no metamorphosis

No reincarnation

No fluttering upward

On angels wings

No triumphant trumpeting

Of swan or Gabriel



It is the ultimate sound of silence

A whirling twirling acrobatic wind

Carries you swirling seedling



Evidence of existence

Where post-death show-up

Slipknot thought

Memento moment

Touch off recollection

Ensuing treasure hunt

Pervasive clues

Can't shake me

Mother sank me

Dragged me back

To longing

For a better mother

Wasn't ready yet

To give up

Girlish fantasy dream

Of warm apple pie and easy

Mommy daughter communion

Imprint *Rockwell Saturday Evening Post*





Our triangulation strangulation

Arrangement estrangement

Life or death

Virtual shot gun romance



Mother daughter death spiral  
Prophecies of my accidental death

Newspaper quotes of divorcees

Slipping under bus broke

Weighted down emptying hours

Of touchstones quotes jokes

Set off trigger remembering me

No ultimate control

What gets left behind

When no longer alive

In other's hands hearts minds

I live a laboratory repository

Of family lore stories

Filtered through my eyes

Reborn in my mind

In truth you die

Just slip slide away

*Slip sliding away, slip sliding away  
You know the nearer your destination  
The more you're slip sliding away Paul Simon*

Who carries forth your torch

Impossible to control or know

Tomorrow just another day

One without you

More sobering

Constructing an end

Of my personal design

Will my death be tumultuous

Torturous raging or whimpery

Slobbering sobbing

How did I get this old

And still feel the sting

Of abject pathetic rejection

*You disgust me!*

Mother greeting me at open door



How do I reimagine a father  
Who longed for me to be his wife  
While instilling a love for music  
Song to dissuade me  
From wanting to be dead just die  
Music to soothe my breaking apart soul  
Mother when not wishing me  
To die or just disappear  
Shared her love of art books words  
Emerging from this twisted knot  
I was not able or capable  
Of finding or holding onto true love  
In the mausoleum my home has become  
I am deeply personally  
Displayed inside out  
Touchstones amulets  
Reflect the collected moments  
Artifacts dragged into open  
Curated what was most personal  
In my home there I am  
Presented with great abandon  
Mother's marble sculptures foundered  
Representations of her struggle to love me

What will be the sounds of my death

NY Times, *The Symptoms of Dying* –Sara Manning Peskin, M.D.

Prominent in Science section:

*The Death Rattle,*

*The graves are full of ruined bones, of speechless death-rattles – Pablo Neruda*

*Air Hunger,*

*You villain touch! What are you doing? My breath is tight in its throat –Walt Whitman*

*Terminal Agitation*

*Do not Go gentle into that Good Night*

*Dying is an art, like everything else, poet quote with attribution*

*Terminal agitation hard to discount role of psyche and the spiritual*

To consider that Art of Dying

Father was quiet – slipped off if with death rattle pianissimo

Sheila is guardian angel kept his lips moist

Softening the guttural sound

Mother jumped off the bed lurched

As if in the exorcist

Calling my name not so crazy there

Bringing me into the fold the demise

The dreaded end

Mamma forgive me she called out

As she quieted down

And Maxine whose daughter had died

Fifty or more years before  
She asked for – are you there Linda  
She called out – Linda be with me  
This lady of letters life long questioning  
Whether or not she was truly a loving mother  
Waiting to be 95 for that final and terminal reunion  
Death bringing them together  
How to die well  
How to grab myself pull myself in check  
And take matters into my own hand  
It is coming with or without me  
Death hovers encroaching approaching  
77<sup>th</sup> birthday – little embarrassing humiliated  
To have let myself become so wobbly old  
Arthritis seizing me first  
Apologize – just old age arthritis I quip  
Body letting me know I am old  
Where else will death seize me  
How to stave off until  
I have my own plans in order  
Have claimed I wanted to die alone  
Without witness  
Have no better angel to escort me

I need to rely on my own hand  
Before it too becomes too arthritic  
To bring handful of pills to mouth  
I still do not have in hand  
Sounds of silence permeate  
Humble standing her at the end  
What happens now  
Pretender to the expository  
Ecclesiastical throne  
The angels wait the swan hovers  
Gabriel lifts her horn the swan her neck  
Swelling with song with psalms  
Waiting for me to get reborn  
To climb inside infiltrate illuminate  
Until the weight of my death  
Slips slides by gets normalized  
Fall silently without fuss bodily excretion  
Dry out your body of food of drink  
So that when the final voice lifts  
It will lift unimpeded a songbirds flight  
Rising entering final night - NB

.....

.....*the fabric of language – Samuel Beckett*

.....*frock consciousness – Virginia Woolf*

.....*all outta words – In times like this, words fail me. Like they just stop trying.  
Like whatever they were doing before they don't now. Laura Yee, play, In a Word*

.....

### **Hardened Resolved – Not Yet**

Doubt festers just below

Challenging desire

To get on with it

Planning plotting

Diagramming

Time and place

For my death

Hallows of gallow

Shallow shadows

Sweltering smelting

Sweating seething

Overstuffed with regret

Solace no where

To be found

Inevitable demise

In all actuarial tables

Living to and beyond

75 a good and full life

Or say Dr. Zeke Emmauel

Tells us

I have gotten

To that great beyond

Beyond reason

Beyond comprehension

That I will do myself in

But one way or the other

The smothering fist

The gathering grasp

Of death

The oracle

Of time has come

Read out

No time left

Time to end it

Jump off the cliff

Disappear

Be no more

Gore glory

Agony disarray

Organizing

For that one

And final day  
Mother said  
Over and over  
From the time  
She was over 70  
It is so hard to die  
So hard to die  
She grab the baton  
Ran the marathon  
Way way beyond  
At 95 or 96  
Finally succumbing  
Overcoming her fear  
She just let go  
Folding herself  
Into her mother's arms  
Do no harm  
Do unto others as...  
No mother's arms  
For me to scroll  
Fold fall into  
Mute and speechless  
How could I call for her

With last and final breath  
And find once again  
A stony milkless tit  
Upon which to suck  
Savor sanctity  
Of mother's bluing milk  
Old salty dog I am  
Swath the cut  
Get beyond the tumbleweed  
Of desire to keep staying alive  
Dare you now  
To plan place and time  
It really is to bid goodbye  
To in essence  
Without resistance die - NB

***We're not nice people.*** You can bet on that. A.O. Scott, review of movie *The House*

.....

***To realize the beauty of humanity,*** we must realize our relation to nature....In Horn's (island in Mississippi, insular community of life, each member exists for itself and for all others: predator and prey. This is synergy, mutualism and adaptation awaiting rediscovery on the mainland. The osprey returns with a fish. Life is never at a standstill. John Anderson Naturalist, son of artist Walter Anderson. Jack Davis, NY Times *An Untamed Island Meets Its Match*

**Commentary:** Life is never at a standstill. And that is precisely why and how dare we contemplate ending our lives – we are always midstream in the fray the never ending standstill until we're not! NB

.....



***When I look back at the years of my adolescence, he would reminisce, I don't remember a day without sunshine, because the sunshine was in my soul. Arturo Toscanini - Conductor -***

***I believe deeply that it was my mother; she has never stopped being present to me, next to me. Simone Veil, French Politician***

**Commentary:** You can't die Mom I told her while she lay prone agitated on her hospital hospice bed. You have lived too long for me to be able to live without you. Barnacle on the sea bed floor we are that entwined combined aligned to survive suborn symbiotic idiotic could never disentangle live apart. NB

.....

***America when will you end the human war***

*Why are your libraries full of tears*

*America when will you be angelic.*

*America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.*

*America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.*

*I can't stand my own mind.*

*America when will we end the human war?*

*Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.*

*I don't feel good don't bother me.*

*I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.*

*America when will you be angelic?*

*When will you take off your clothes?*

*When will you look at yourself through the grave?*

*It's true I don't want to join the Army or turn lathes in precision parts factories, I'm nearsighted and psychopathic anyway.*

*America I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel.*

*Allen Ginsberg, America*

.....



José de Ribera's "Maddalena Ventura" depicts a bearded woman nursing her child. Credit Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

**Commentary: Repulsive – Can't take eyes off – Repugnant and yet – I had mother/father or father/mother – Twisted thus in the muck and mire of id – Love could never worm its way – Confounding abiding - Declension Descending – Depths in an Id – unrelenting unabiding undenying-Discipline and courage – Infant suckles on such a tit – Gruff beard tickles anoints - NB**

***She who reconciles the ill-matched threads***

*of her life, and weaves them gratefully  
into a single cloth—  
it's she who drives the loudmouths from the hall  
and clears it for a different celebration  
where the one guest is you.  
In the softness of evening  
it's you she receives.  
You are the partner of her loneliness,  
the unspeaking center of her monologues.  
With each disclosure you encompass more  
and she stretches beyond what limits her,  
to hold you.     Rainer Maria Rilke, Book of Hours*

*God, give us each our own death,  
the dying that proceeds  
from each of our lives.  
the way we loved  
the meaning we made,  
our need.*

*Rainer Maria Rilke, Book of Poverty and Death*

**Ballyhoo hullabaloo hoey**  
Balderdash blarney hogwash  
Procrastinate clock tick tock  
Struck deaf dumb mute  
Stuck in the muck the remains  
Of the epitome the absurdity  
That I spent but a moment  
To say nothing of years  
With this amassing  
Metastasizing sickness  
Genesis genetic disposition  
Incapacity to think right  
Chose right decide right  
Bridled riddled with fear  
Latched on suckled  
Abandoned baby  
Woman bereft desperate  
You became the host  
Of the complete breakdown  
Of just a vestige of will  
Of imagination of truth  
How to rid myself of you  
When I was the one  
Who let you in  
Opened the door  
Let go of you  
Finally ultimately fully



*There comes a time  
when we must let go*

*let our heart speak  
let the tears flow.  
It's never easy  
for us to do.  
but sometimes it's  
the only way  
of healing you.  
We will doubt  
whether it's right  
or wrong  
But it's the first  
step  
that you've taken  
In so long.  
How things will  
turn out, we'll know  
in the end.  
But, if it's  
happiness  
we seek.  
it's better to find  
it  
rather than just  
pretend. Buddhist Quote on Letting Go*

Off guard desperate  
Behind my own back  
I collapsed into your  
Surly dishonest mean arms  
My heart curdled rebelled  
I was under your spell  
Dispense dispel ruthless truth  
I was the one who forced  
Myself on you to escape  
The tsunami pulsing toward me  
Cacophony of misplace  
Displaced desire  
Incapable incapacity  
Inability to confront myself  
Fleeing if deliberately  
Desperately a warring marriage  
In which murder of me  
And the kids was not mythic  
But a real enactment  
Of family genocide  
Grenade was all but lit  
We left emotions in tatters  
But walked out ennobled

While he dragon fire enabled  
Our departure our exit  
And now bereft emptied out  
Let you prowl scour  
Infest my insides  
Vulnerable host for your infestation  
Ennobling enabling our departure  
Incapacitated drained worn out  
Door opened snatched me  
At most vulnerable venerated moment  
Having brought us my kids  
Even my almost ex-husband now dead  
To safety became compliant  
Grifter drifter you just entered me  
Pernicious home invader  
Resistant vermin  
Infestation devastating  
Lived with my inability  
To resist flee  
To push aside fear  
And get to know  
Who I was even  
After I ended that marriage  
With almost nobility  
Just crumbled collapsed  
Couldn't just go  
Any further with myself  
A tragic runaway moment  
Led me to becoming  
Old very old  
And still unable  
To purge you rid your  
The horror of you  
From my life  
And death will not enter me  
Except by accident mishap  
Unless I banish you rid you  
From my body my being  
Which is being flung  
Into the raptors of death  
In real time for real this time around  
Drain remains remaindered  
Remain stay  
How to go away  
Cease to exist  
Quandary ponder

Each day each day  
Driving me away  
Inevitable desire  
To want life  
No more of it  
Yet walk around home  
There I am proudly  
Distinctively displayed  
On the walls  
In the nooks and crannies  
This is what I find  
Hard to leave behind  
It will become a stage set  
To break apart  
Keepsakes mementos evidence  
What the children now grown  
Will chose to keep  
Chose to give away  
Chose to toss  
This is what I have  
To take away with me  
That I was here  
Fully present  
And that my hand  
My mind my imagination  
That filled this space  
Created a unified  
Life speak art piece  
Savor each day  
Don't want to leave  
My home  
Need to take it in  
Embellishments reflectors  
I am everywhere  
I see I know of me  
What left unrevealed  
Reviled afraid on website  
Can't revise now  
Want to lash out  
At Frank Luca's father  
Ben dead long ago for me  
As an active verb  
Totemic of remorse  
Frank kicks up ambivalence  
Shame rage  
He tattered me battered me

Face lifts age gravity pull downward  
Never said or could I love you  
And I know in my heart  
Never loved him  
He was to unlock in me  
The sensual the erotic  
So long dormant fearful  
Of all the misguided  
Things in my life  
He is on the top of the list  
And Luca wonders  
Why did this happen to me  
It happened because of me  
Lying to myself my dishonesty  
Feigned to keep Frank with me  
No it was to take back  
Make amends for aborting  
A forming infant  
Because I could not envision  
Keeping a marriage vow  
Think I cannot die  
Do away with myself  
With dignity eyes wide open  
Until I find a way  
To cast off the spell  
The hold Frank has on me  
The very thought of him  
And I seethe can hardly breathe  
How to or now to purge  
From my soul my heart  
This festering wound  
This entanglement this embarrassment  
Fraudulent frail fraught  
I bought the moment in time  
Hook line and sinker  
Who can help me now  
Rid myself of this upheaval  
As if it were just yesterday  
Years have gone by  
More than a decade  
And I still blister with shame  
This is the puzzle the tangle  
That holds me in place  
While my body  
Disproportionately ages  
How will I catch up with me

Take hold seize the moment  
Rid myself of his terrifying  
Of his terrorizing present  
Augurs of a death  
Without my help my consent  
Unless quickly no time left  
Rid my mind heart soul mind  
That I gave myself  
Though never really  
To this man  
As if a page marker  
A pause  
Time kept going moving on  
Leaving bereft inept  
Years days moments months  
Was just not there fully present  
Too late to recapture lost time  
Not too late to purge  
Toss him from my heart my mind -NB



## Snapping Hip Syndrome

Almost rhythmic primitive  
In its excruciating beat  
Snapping hip snapping turtle



Anthropomorphize this moment  
Image captivating capturing ensnaring  
Leg in terrible hold seized turtles unforgiving jaw



Political cartoon depicting merchants attempting to dodge the "Ograbme" (embargo spelled backward)

## Snapdragon fate



Dragoon of imagery

Tyranny of ultimate destiny  
Ticker tape parade  
New station new status  
Reviewing stand I got it  
Moving on if with dragging  
Snapping hip slowing me  
I've moved into critical  
Very old very old age  
Remembering me when not me  
That me no longer here  
She is no where to be found  
Memory weather changing  
Sun shifting cloud formations  
Falling upward glide airborne  
Snowy Egret disappearing in flight



•  
She maps charts my changing body  
Skin on upper arm sags  
Emptied of most of me  
Thin-skinned blotchy liver spots  
Heuristic meme leopard spots  
Asking please just let me be  
Let me grow old  
Attempting trying to adjust  
Move into this new terrain  
Where life gets foreshortened  
Parsed out dream by dream  
Possibility impaled overshadowed  
Sky darkens horizon blotted out

***On the beach at night,  
Stands a child with her father,  
Watching the east, the autumn sky.***

*Up through the darkness,  
While revening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,  
Lower sullen and fast athward and down the sky, Walt Whitman On the Beach at Night*

No longer in view stormy weather



Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky  
Stormy weather  
Since my man and I ain't together,  
Keeps rainin' all of the time

Oh, yeah  
Life is bare, gloom and mis'ry everywhere  
Stormy weather  
And I just can't get my poorself together,  
I'm weary all the time  
So weary all the time  
When he went away the blues walked in and met me.  
Oh, yeah  
If he stays away old rockin' chair will get me.

All I do is pray the Lord above will let me walk in the sun once more.  
I can't go on, can't go on, can't go on, ev'ry thing I had is gone  
Stormy weather

Since my man and I ain't together,  
Since my man and I ain't together,  
Keeps rainin' all the time  
Songwriters: HAROLD ARLEN, TED KOEHLER

Wanted: Death without stink and sob  
Death without grabbing hard  
To the life abandoning me  
Pleading don't let me go  
Don't let go of me  
Ages and stages

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloen,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. Shakespeare, As You Like It

I have reached  
No turning back  
The seventh and final stage  
Just let me be  
Saying goodbye to being alive  
Hard to fathom to grasp  
I have come  
To my rightful end at last  
Dying death ending of life  
As it now exist  
Exits entrances goodbyes  
Remembering I always believed in  
Big hellos small if quicksilver goodbyes  
If raggedy lots left unsaid  
Heart wilting feigning preparing  
For it's rightful end  
I am on my way home  
Going home on my way  
To going home –  
There it is there am I almost arrived  
Laid out sylvan forest full moon  
And so ends it all – my life – NB

Goin' home. Goin' home. I'm a-goin' home.  
 Quiet-like some still day, I'm just goin' home.  
 It's not far, just close by, through an open door.  
 Work all done, cares laid by, goin' to roam no more;  
 Mother's there 'xpecting me, father's waiting, too,  
 Lots of folks gathered there, all the friends I knew.

Morning star lights the way, restless dream all done.  
 Shadows gone, break of day, real life just begun.  
 There's no break, there's no end, just a-living on;  
 Wide awake, with a smile, going on and on.  
 Going home. Going home, I'm just going home.  
 It's not far, just close by, through an open door.

From symphony to song

II.

Largo.  
 Englisch Horn. (Corno inglese.)  
 6 Solo

The above words for the beautiful song, "Goin' Home" (also known as "Going Home"), are based on Antonin Dvorak's famous "Largo" theme played on English Horn from his *Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)*, Op. 95. His symphony was composed while he was in America and was first performed by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall on 16 December 1893.

.....  
**Mr. Hall remembered his mother** as "hugely ambitious" and in "a state of permanent fury" at his father, a railroad stationmaster with a "sunny controlled temperament and no ambition at all?". Peter Hall, British Director, Royal Shakespeare Company, died at 86

.....

**How Did I Nice Girl Like Me Get Caught Up In All Of This?  
Or as the story my story goes...**

I thought I invented sex  
Father and daughter, princess rescue from forever sleep  
I was wrong so wrong  
I thought I made her my mother crazy mad  
Then I stumbled on a poem by Rilke

*I am a city by the sea  
sinking into a toxic tide.  
I am strange to myself, as thought someone unknown  
had poisoned my mother as she carried me.*

*It's here in all the pieces of my shame  
that now I find myself again.  
I yearn to belong to something, to be contained  
in an all-embracing mind that sees me  
as a single thing.  
I yearn to be held  
in the great hands of your heart-  
oh let them take me now.*

*Into them I place these fragments, my life,  
and you, God-spend them however you want.*

*-Rainer Maria Rilke "Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God"*

Suicidal at twenty-one  
Confessed to psychiatrist  
*I made my mother crazy wild a lunatic a mad woman*  
Impenetrable psychiatric gaze  
Siblings of your mother still living call them and ask  
Aunt Rebecca Uncle Joe Uncle Maxie - consensus  
We were all afraid of her  
Her temper tantrums her threats  
Immediate family erected wall of silence  
Never to be spoken of particularly to suitor  
My father dazzled by her beauty in earnest  
Asking for her hand eyes caste down  
Revelations about malady jinx proposal  
Vows exchanged bedazzled by her seduction  
Cataclysmic catechism by fiery hell and brimstone  
Mother bride was already quite insane  
Marriage wasn't the disruptor  
Evicted from dreams of becoming other  
Assimilation too confining divine born again  
Woman exacted off the pages of *Jane Austen House of Mirth*

Mother avid reader mother feared lunacy breaking out  
Bursting forth exploding with fire and fury madness  
Knew almost to quoting *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Charlotte Perkins Gilmore



Unimaginable irredeemable images  
She was plum crazy nuts a lunatic  
She was his wife screed sacred vows  
Sanctuary of Bach and Cantata  
Fiddler plaintive notes to moon  
She howling by her side grabbing  
For the moon to carry her away to another life



Trying to explain this make sense of this  
I can't chance or fate or  
As I interpret my life so it is  
Truth tangled tingling seducing taunting





orbog

Banished once again from Garden of Eden  
His aisle was not strewn with flowers but hot coals  
Jewish warding off evil spirit jinx proposal  
Bespoken bride's mental illness  
Particularly to suitor who asked for her hand  
Jewish warding off evil spirit revered revelations spoken word  
Bespoken bride  
Caste bad spell on bespoken bride  
Jewish warding off evil bad spirits  
Cold denial or god intended it to be so  
Another not to be spoken of Jewish  
Warding off a bad evil bad spells  
Father married a mad as a hatter without veil bride  
They never uttered said a word  
Three months into the marriage she got pregnant  
Eyes shut fist tight did that disgusting thing  
First time father found her tantruming  
Beating on her tummy as if tribal drum  
I was just forming alarming  
Stone cold tits seething rage welcomed me  
She did try obsessed by wanting to be WASP  
She read through the pages of VOGUE as if a bible  
She knew how to pretend act as if  
Yiddish humor dictates that acting as if  
Is almost as good as acting as if  
Magically transforming pale gray day sunny  
So I was that child of the wild the untamed  
Motherhood at its least constrained  
Living just above the illusory  
Passing as bright normal -  
Worst thing to be college advisor said  
Inscribed on your mortuary urn

Will be writ large *She Functioned Well*  
The I fell into despair could no longer pretend  
Façade cracking apart couldn't hold the image  
Went to college dressed like a boy  
Mother picked all the clothing  
Found out I was pretty and sexy  
Even lived with a boy above a bar  
No consolation couldn't carry it off  
Image of myself swelling welling  
Had to flee college escape finding myself in Boston  
Had the name of a psychiatrist went to see him  
Still obeisant obedient - still pretending  
Told him I needed to end my life  
Tired of being fat ugly and stupid  
Overcome with sadness and guilt  
Having made my mother insane crazy  
Just be being born coming from her tummy  
Got to be 77 almost found Rilke  
Boston men followed as if the most beautiful rose in the garden  
Professor said you are the most brilliant student  
We have had here in 10 years  
And close to admitted to hospital weight down to 112  
At more than five feet five tall

*I am a city by the sea  
sinking into a toxic tide.  
I am strange to myself, as thought someone unknown  
had poisoned my mother as she carried me. Rilke*

Almost took my own life on faulty premise  
I needed my life to end as I lived it  
Phony victimized fed on self-deceit gratified by lying to myself  
Mother was crazy beyond without me  
Mother created beautiful powerful sculptures  
Mother laughed and danced idiomatic  
Filled with Sholom Aleichem Yiddish  
Lore and humor and mishagosh  
Comfortable in the world if never at home  
Or in bed next to my father his sex rising  
Set her writhing fleeing to furnace  
To obfuscate mask her inner heat  
Father got weak forgetful  
She tried to murder him over and over  
Bluma wants me dead so sad  
He wrote on his daily calendar  
So much for forgetful unaware

Never put me in a home never take me from mine  
To save his life so he could die on his own terms  
And we wouldn't violate  
The Talmud according to my brother  
Honor thy mother and father  
Officials wouldn't have to take mother out in handcuffs  
She was already on elder abuse registry  
He got well enough to die  
In residence at friends in the Catskills  
She lived a decade more  
And then she found herself in diapers  
In hospice bed in her own bedroom  
Railed ranted did not go gentle until the very end  
Momma are you there momma be with me  
And then she quieted to near final silence  
Quilted breath and then nothing –  
Nothingness and then the end - NB

.....

***One common strain of Jewish humor*** examines the role of religion in contemporary life, often gently mocking the religious hypocrite. For example: A Reform Rabbi was so compulsive a golfer that once, on Yom Kippur, he left the house early and went out for a quick nine holes by himself. An angel who happened to be looking on immediately notified his superiors that a grievous sin was being committed. On the sixth hole, God caused a mighty wind to take the ball directly from the tee to the cup – a miraculous shot. The angel was horrified. "A hole in one!" he exclaimed, "You call this a punishment, Lord?!" Answered God with a sly smile, "So who can he tell?" .....

So what are the dads, chopped liver? There are precious few jokes about Jewish fathers. One of the few that are out there comes from Jules Feiffer, who said, "I grew up to have my father's looks, my father's speech patterns, my father's posture, my father's opinions, and my mother's contempt for my father." But rather than just objects of contempt (a role we play with gusto, I might add), Jewish fathers deserve their own dollop of sympathy and humor, because after all, do we suffer? Philip Lerman

.....

***If poetry isn't revolutionary, it's nothing. Poetry is heightened language, and language exists to effect change, not to be tranquilizer. Heathcote Williams, Poet***

.....

***Instead of this absurd divisions into sexes, they ought to class people as static and dynamic. Evelyn Waugh, English writer***

.....

***Honesty, vulnerability, pain – these are things that always supersede the trends of the day. No I.D. record producer of Jay-Z’s ‘4:44’***

.....  
***Thomas Jefferson advocate of “civil religion,” the moral foundation of a truly free and united people.***

.....  
***We now know (Trump) that he is a lightweight and gets angry easily. Nowadays, we do everything on social media. Much more effective. Payman Babaei, Iranian protest artist***

Photo



***I grew up with this idea that it’s possible to live in a comfort zone. Women especially receive the education that you have to find a comfort zone. I believe that it’s not possible. There is no comfort zone. Maria Grazia Chiuri, Fashion Director, Christian Dior***

.....  
***If you want to be inspired and create, you need to empty yourself out and accept and let desire go. Too much ego and you cannot accept new things. Jeong Kwan, Zen Buddhist nun***

.....  
***I moved into an apartment near the Brooklyn waterfront, painted the rooms yellow, blue and pink. By then it was winter and so cold, with the wind howling on the streets outside, but inside my home I was warm. I was alone, so alone, and I had never been happier. Lisa Ko, author The Leavers***

.....  
***postnational state – Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister***

***I feel my dad's presence every day. When I walked down the aisle, I was thinking, 'Be strong.' And how much I wish he could have been there. he would have been proud and overjoyed for us. Sarah Richard -Bride's after father's death -***

.....

***To Kevin and Alic, We are your people. Wishes at Transgender wedding - Discovering and Unimagined Life, NY Times - 7/2/17***

***.....Visually Speaking, Friends Connect Wordlessly ny times 7/7/17  
Manjari Sharma and Irina Rozovsky and infants***

.....

***Death has a magical sort of quality about it. What is death like? Why do we fear it? How do our views of death inform the way we live? It's not that I'm not scared of dying - I am. But doing this work has given me confidence that whatever happens I will respond with openness and resilience. I know I will cope. That's really useful! John Underwood, Founder of the Death Café Movement***

.....

***Strange now to think of you, gone without corsets & eyes, while I walk on the sunny pavement of Greenwich Village.***

*downtown Manhattan, clear winter noon, and I've been up all night, talking, talking, reading the Kaddish aloud, listening to Ray Charles blues shout blind on the phonograph the rhythm the rhythm—and your memory in my head three years after—And read Adonais' last triumphant stanzas aloud—wept, realizing how we suffer—  
And how Death is that remedy all singers dream of, sing, remember, prophesy as in the Hebrew Anthem, or the Buddhist Book of Answers—and my own imagination of a withered leaf—at dawn—*

*Dreaming back thru life, Your time—and mine accelerating toward Apocalypse, the final moment—the flower burning in the Day—and what comes after, looking back on the mind itself that saw an American city a flash away, and the great dream of Me or China, or you and a phantom Russia, or a crumpled bed that never existed—*

*like a poem in the dark—escaped back to Oblivion—*

*No more to say, and nothing to weep for but the Beings in the Dream, trapped in its disappearance,*

*sighing, screaming with it, buying and selling pieces of phantom, worshipping each other, worshipping the God included in it all—longing or inevitability?—while it lasts, a Vision— anything more? Kaddish, Allen Ginsberg, for Naomi Ginsberg, 1894-1956*

.....

*Pain slowly walked under the solemn pines. The sky was dying. He did not believe in an autocratic God. He did believe, dimly, in a democracy of ghosts. The souls of the dead, perhaps, formed committees, and these, in continuous session, attended to the destinies of the quick. (the quick - those who are living)*

*Vladimir Nabokov, Pain*

***Mental Mueums – Kashana Cauley, writer Daily Show***

.....

**Too Far North**

in the copse: the sanctuary's fretwork breaks, burns,  
abandoned, up through the ends of stars. I name each  
forest Today and Why and Year and Gone. Blamed  
because I trust the wolf, the owl, the cliff, the lip of rock  
above the vulture that murmurs *look*. I counted. I took.  
I wove myself in with the leaves. My fortune did not  
surprise me. Thought, then forgetfulness — what if

I believe fear is its own low country? I follow  
an hour behind an hour and the tower inside  
an elegy. I am anybody helpless, listless, near  
as whisper, as prayer. There is stillness inside every  
valley and door. I build hundreds of my own angels  
and dare the cold to mold me daily into a bridge  
between what I have forgotten and what I owe.

Aaron Coleman, Poet, Threat Come Close

.....

***He died before he could explain.*** *I promised him, two or three days beore he disappeared into the morphine, that I would do my best. The main question was: How had a good, decent group of people gotten caught up in a cult? How did they become compliant?* Rebecca Stott, *In the Days of Rain*

.....

***I find it so hard***

*When I know in my heart*

*I'm letting you down every day.* Jay-Z

*What are common threads? Honesty, vulnerability, pain – these are things that always supersede the trends of the day. No I.D. record producer – J-Z 4:44 CD*

.....

*I always feel my flowers. I touch them and I tell them I love them.* DJ Khaled

.....

*We forget that the soul has its own ancestors. James Hillman, The Soul's Code*

.....

***I am old. I am arrivee; for me that's my future.*** *It's something so strange, to die. I like the idea that if you die in a very quick way, your last thought is not for the past but for the future. Each one says something optimistic. Did you suffer much? Why did you die? Did you see the light? I believe that at the beginning of all the lives of artists is a trauma, and after, all your life, you try to speak about this trauma, each time in a different way. He recalled his underlying trauma – stories of the Holocaust that he heard from his parents' friends, all survivors, when he was a child in Paris. They formed his art. Now that I am so old what I try to do is to create mythology, to create legend. And at my age, what I wish is that people remember the legend – not me, but the legend. Christian Boltanski, artist (heartbeats taped in Japan)*



***Taping heart beats:***

***Family Heart Beats Les Archives du Coeur taped by Botanski - stored: Japanese Island Feshima Naoshima***

***001644 Naomi - 001645 Craig - 001646 Rebecca - 001647 Sophie - 001648 Willa -001649 Owen - Family archive of heartbeats -***

.....

**Self-Regard, Oh God!**

Dangly gangly unsightly  
Sacs flab  
Death spiral spinning  
Falling toppling unsettling  
Breasts tits held milk  
Babies suckled  
Sweetest moment - let down  
When milk flowed  
Bubbling bubbling rivulets  
Over flowing infant suckles  
Mother 's eyes well  
Heart swells  
Sacred sustenance  
Regard this body



Once landscape



Ripe with milk  
Ripe with sexuality  
Ripe with life  
Unsightly ungainly  
Gangly runt bulbous flesh  
Dangles droops drops  
Now collapsing  
In on itself  
Imagery in the mirror  
Unimaginable then  
Life endless  
Mystical whimsical  
Barren body  
Dying like infested trees  
This is no disease  
This is death seizing  
Hold of me  
How else to prepare to die  
But to despise a body  
In its inelegant transformation  
Erupted life interrupted  
Disrupt daily discourse  
Dreams fade as night succumbs  
To a day blank slate  
Emptying me of me  
Something so absolutely  
Crazily soul scorching  
Body morphs into wither  
Skin hangs off upper arm  
She, my granddaughter  
Gathers up a fist full  
Of flab fascinated as it holds  
After clasp folding back slowly  
Settling into tufts of feathery down  
They notice my grandkids ask  
Why are you always tired  
What are those spots on your wrist  
I am getting old I am worn out  
Feel so ashamed letting them down  
I cannot regain that self  
Remain as they imagine me  
Exiting heightens its call  
How biodegradable to become  
So unseemly eyes dash off avert  
They try getting me back  
But that self is long gone

Need to confront directly  
This sagging soft fleshy body  
Death's infestation devouring  
I have moved into an  
Alternative universe  
Death preoccupation  
Obsession wondering  
What it means  
To have life end  
Succumb ultimately  
To gravities pull  
Evidence spills over tummy  
These lambent breasts  
Lie like vestigial flab  
Fruitless trying to recapture  
Essence moments when holding infants  
My babies my breasts suckling  
Exploding with a force of love  
Time capsule captures raptures  
Now cascading curdling faltering failing  
Remembering not to remember  
That sphere of time  
Resigned residue reserves  
Recollections mother unrestrained  
Mother infant lift soaring frayed beyond  
Here I am trekking toward death  
Weathered spent



Dreadful repugnant ugly

Haphazard unrelenting descent  
Point of no return has come  
Not to be reversed undone  
The babies who suckled  
Those two shoots flowers  
Sun drenched sunflowers



Landscape of love  
Dimmed limn incandescent  
Such glorious beginnings  
Radiant radiating lambent  
Love disavowed cowed  
Cowering backed  
Into shadow stealth escape  
Love's runaways  
Suckled on these breasts  
Squandered chance for love  
What was it in the bluing milk  
That left such distaste  
Expansive fear of love  
Retreating fleeing  
Backing away running  
Hiding ruining killing  
Love at its root  
Its burgeoning  
My children my sunflower stalks  
Bent and wither  
Pick up pieces begin again  
But there is never begin again

Within each ripe moment of hope  
Disjointed fear rears untamed  
Trying to make sense  
Suckling infants  
Mother yielded  
Nothing withheld ungiven  
To my yearlings



And yet the sweet blue liquid  
This tenderness this love  
Faltered unforgiving  
These babies grown  
Couldn't yield to love  
Somehow this glorious  
Bonding came apart unraveled  
Why how still unsettling  
Beyond grasp knowing  
Just as I watch breasts  
Now flab cascading  
Downward gravity grab  
If love did not come from this  
If true love did not come  
I look down regard my body  
And wonder what wounds  
The mother's milk  
Bubbling into their mouths  
What uncertainty what doubt  
Host for a past never assuaged  
Mother's milk contaminate  
Unresolved unconforted  
Dormant diseased predisposition  
To turn from possibility  
Desire's heart suffering remorse  
Regret not yet not yet  
Beyond that pause hesitation  
Life gets smaller and smaller  
Mother's milk not enough

As I held them taught them  
To be afraid sent shiver  
Of uncertainty surge of doubt  
Unfolded blighted  
A mother nursing her child  
In grand moment flowed  
Doubt fear curdling souring  
Corrupting their innocence  
It was me who dimmed the light  
My body host to despair  
Reckoning with love not yet  
Fear begets fear begets  
Forfeiture victim love -nb

***There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18***

.....

#### **Birthday Girls – Vintage 1940**

you got there first laura - 77 - how does it feel -  
just trying to prepare - best with love always - naomi

Here we are again, Naomi. I feel like we're walking toward a beautiful sunset or maybe to that propeller plane to fly us from Casablanca to wherever! Whatever this next phase has in store for us, I hope we get to enjoy it fully and have *as many belly laughs as possible*. Finding myself so much more attentive to each detail of life, to each experience these days.....and loving that. So many things passed me by when I was busy mothering and working and trying to be the good wife! But now's my time.....even if just to lay back to enjoy the clouds. Be well, my dear friend, be well. Laura

.....

...seems like a garden - fragrances wonderful - again sorry about that - moira is a child and person who i treasure and am so happy i was able to have her in our lives - and of course your friendship back then everything - helping me move etc - glad you are out there healing the world -

i will feel apart of it if in my way - love to moira - and to you – Naomi

Thank YOU! Naomi - and much love for our 77th birthdays. We have been through much deep pain during those years

- a difference just now in our far distant memories pales in comparison to that pain. Our histories will be rewritten again and again in the wind. Our friendship remains!  
Love, Jean

Eruption at OK corral – she was seeing what I remembered fish expedition – fearful defended – friendship upended ended -nb

## ***Randomness and Chance***

*FROM THE KING*

*Do no work today, cousins, we are marked to die.  
Feast with your neighbour, then we will depart.*

*Take care of your tongue, watch what the lips say,  
for foreign words uprooted our pumpkins.*

*Let us not inherit the stupidity of our forefathers  
who, like dust, abandoned their homestead.*

*Smear your bodies in red oil. Tonight we split the darkness.  
We will be remembered as the wild cats*

*who smeared their bodies in blood. The fewer our men,  
the greater our share of honour. Do not count your coins;*

*there is nothing you need from gold. Our bodies will be  
our wealth. Even the grave will not reject our clansmen.*

*It's Uganda's loss if we live. Curse the man who does not  
share this fellowship and fears our desires. He is mucus*

*n the mouth, a rotting fruit. He was not carved out of the rock  
as we were. Find the stomach to fight.*

*Let courage be your host. Shed your blood with me, brothers.  
When they name this day, you who live will show your scars.*

*Wear them as you would the kikoyis in your hut.  
Hold vigil. You who see old age, tell this to your sons.*

*Let us be the throb in our children's dreams  
and the wounds they wear under their skins. Nick Makoha*

.....

*My name is Sherman Alexie*

*and I was born from loss*

*and loss and loss and loss*

*and loss and loss and loss*

*and loss and loss and loss*

*and loss and loss and loss.*

*Sherman Alexia, author You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*

.....

*Ecological civilization – clear waters and green mountains*

*You must cure the soul before you can cure the symptoms. The root lies with human' desires.*

*We are live on earth together – we are not isolated.*

*From an environmental protection perspective, saving means reducing carbon emissions. From a Buddhist perspective, it means accumulating merits and doing good deeds.*

*The decadence of human beings has destroyed the environment in China. Our purpose is to protect God's creation.*

*Taoism has almost 2,000 years of history – environmental protection isn't new for us. We have to take action. Yang Shihua, abbot, China Mao Mountain*



.....

*...Hamlet always straining, with a baffled and anguished intelligence, to make sense of what it means to die, and to bring death, and to communicate with the deceased.*

*And it is impossible not to feel that universal ache of longing for connection with those who left the world before us, who still speak to us in our heads; to erase forever the line between the quick and the dead. Ben Brantley review Hamlet with Oscar Issac.*

*To be, or not to be: that is the question:*

*Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer*

*The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,*

*Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,*

*And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;*

*No more; and by a sleep to say we end*

*The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks*

*That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation*

*Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;*

*To sleep: perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub;*

*For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,*

*When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,*

*Must give us pause: there's the respect*

*That makes calamity of so long life;*

*For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,*

*The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,*

*The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,*

*The insolence of office, and the spurns*

*That patient merit of the unworthy takes,*



*When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action. William Shakespeare, Hamlet*

.....

*Appreciation has become my destiny in life, perhaps it's the instinct of a polar bear  
enjoying hibernation in the vast snows. Liu Xiaobo to the his Liu Xia*

*LiuXia's photographs and Liu Xiaobo's poems struggle with shared demons. The two  
artists look, feel, and worry side by side.*

*I loved as a convict's wife. During this period of intense loneliness and desperation I  
began taking black-and-white photographs. Lio Xia*

.....

*You want to bury him*

*bury into the dirt*

*but you forget*

*he is a seed. Anonymous for Liu Xiaobo*

.....  
*Oh I came from a land, from a faraway place*

*Where the caravan camels roam*

*Where they cut off your ear*

*If they don't like your face*

*It's barbaric, but hell, it's home. Original song Disney Aladdin (scandalous?)*

.....  
*What many people care about isn't living as long as we possibly can. It's about having a reasonably good quality of life for as long as we can - Susan Flanders, Episcopal Priest Disciple Aid-in-Dying movement.*

.....  
Of Sons and Fathers by Roger Cohen

*In her novel "The Bird's Nest," Shirley Jackson writes: "I was thinking what it must feel like to be a prisoner going to die; you stand there looking at the sun and the sky and the grass and the trees, and because it's the last time you're going to see them they're wonderful, full of colors you never noticed before, and bright and beautiful and terribly hard to leave behind. And then, suppose you're reprieved, and you get up the next morning and you're not dead; could you look again at the sun and the trees and the sky and think they're the same old sun and sky and trees, nothing special at all, just the same old things you've seen every day?"*

*I've been looking at the world as a condemned man these past few weeks. Or rather, I've been contemplating it with the eyes of my dying, now dead, father. This sunset, this light glinting on the water, this birdsong at dawn, this sweet breeze, this soft rain from the heavens — all seen and felt as if for the last time.*

*There is no preparation for the loneliness of a world from which the two people who put you in it have gone. The death of parents removes the last cushion against contemplating your own mortality. The cycle of life and death becomes internal, bone-deep knowledge, a source now of despair, now of inspiration. The earth acquires a new quality of silence.*

*A physician, my father had the hands of the healer. He knew, and was at one with, the natural world. No terrain was so forbidding that he could not conjure a garden from it. His elements were water, trees, grass, flowers, wind and sky. From them he conjured patterns and in them he found peace.*

*Readers of my writings may be passingly familiar with Sydney. How he was born in 1921 in Johannesburg, then, as he wrote, "a burgeoning town, younger than most of its inhabitants,*

*arisen from a hectic mining camp.” How chickens pecking around the yard of his modest home squawked in terror if picked for a Sunday lunch. How he studied medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand and, in 1945, reached England 10 days after the end of the war in Europe. How he treated war injured at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, where he encountered an astounding sight for a South African: a white woman on her hands and knees cleaning the floor.*

*How, above all, he strove over 49 years of marriage to cope with the mental illness of my mother, June. **This constituted, as he once wrote to me, “the deepest and most sacred element of my life.” He was wounded and, in time, withdrew. Each of us carries a measure of mystery; each of us faces situations in which there are no good choices; each of us, untying the knot of a life (lived forward, like all lives, without the gift of hindsight), will become wary of casting the first stone.***

***We are left with a human being: an exterior grown forbidding, dissolved by a luminous smile; a life sometimes double; and a soul whose innocence was preserved over almost a century. As Whitman noted, to be human is to “contain multitudes.”***

*Every weekday, get thought-provoking commentary from Op-Ed columnists, the Times editorial board and contributing writers from around the world.*

*Sydney contained them. Displacement from South Africa to England overcame my mother, who first broke down with postpartum depression in 1958, the year after their emigration, and underwent electric-shock treatment.*

*Still, Britain brought some relief. His last post in South Africa was as dean of the one remaining residence for black students at Wits. He would tell me of the infuriating ordeal of extricating his talented black students from arbitrary arrest by some dumb Afrikaner cop. When Douglas Smit House was shut down in 1963 under the tightening grip of apartheid, Sydney was disgusted.*

*By then he was gone. Before he emigrated in 1957, a relative suggested he should change his name. “Cohen” was too conspicuously Jewish for professional success in Britain. He said that was a wonderful idea — only to add he would call himself “Einstein” instead. That was Sydney: a cool eye for human foibles and a pitch-perfect sense of humor.*

*Mr. Cohen did all right in Britain. He became a professor at Guy’s Hospital, was elected a fellow of the Royal Society and was appointed C.B.E. by the queen in 1978. These honors, worn lightly, reflected his pioneering work on the pursuit of a vaccine for malaria, a scourge of his beloved Africa. A landmark paper in *Nature*, cowritten in 1961 with Ian McGregor, chronicled how immunoglobulin from immune Gambian adults had an anti-parasitic effect when administered to infected children; it is still cited today.*

*On all this he turned his back 30 years ago, dedicating himself to gardening and carpentry, painting and golf. He knew what the affairs of the world were worth beside the majesty of the mountaintop.*

***After Mom died in 1999, and another relationship came to the surface, Dad wrote this to me: “I did strive within the feeble limits of my human fallibility to preserve and***

*cherish and sustain her. But alas — for Mama ultimately, death was the only angel that could shield her from despair.” He continued: “I hope that before too long the turbulence of your spirit will subside and you will reach to tranquility in your inner self.”*

*My last moments with Sydney, in which the obdurate reserve of fathers and sons dissolved, will always be a reference in this quest:*

*“You have a lovely family, I said. I sure do. All very intelligent, just like you.*

*Darling, you are very kind to say that. And funny, like you. Darling,” (with a faint smile).*

*We had a lot of fun together. Oh, yes. You’ll always be with me. That’s for sure.”*

**The other evening everything was aglow. They are not “the same old sun and sky and trees.” That must be because my father is in them. To what degree the glow endures will be the measure of how far I can honor that deepest vulnerable part of Sydney whose beauty I was lucky enough to know. Roger Cohen**

.....



**07/17/1940 - 07/17/2017 – And not dead yet...**

**Carpe Diem – Seize the Day**

*Becoming 77 on 07/17/2017 - auspicious number -and in honor of this birthday i have decided to release a panoply a parapluie of regrets -considered a long life and finding myself mother of three of the most remarkable individuals as my children, Jeremy, Rebecca, and Luca and then six incredible grandkids - Sophie, Hudson, Willa, Daisy, Owen and Upton - I have been blessed truly - and thus find absolutely no basis in fact or fiction for regret - and as i learned from the Navajos - always there is: nb*

***Walking in Beauty: Closing Prayer from the Navajo Way Blessing Ceremony***

*In beauty I walk*

*With beauty before me I walk*

*With beauty behind me I walk*

*With beauty above me I walk*

*With beauty around me I walk*

*It has become beauty again*

*Today I will walk out, today everything negative will leave me*

*I will be as I was before, I will have a cool breeze over my body.*

*I will have a light body, I will be happy forever, nothing will hinder me.*

*I walk with beauty before me. I walk with beauty behind me.*

*I walk with beauty below me. I walk with beauty above me.*

*I walk with beauty around me. My words will be beautiful.*

*In beauty all day long may I walk.*

*Through the returning seasons, may I walk.*

*On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.*

*With dew about my feet, may I walk.*

*With beauty before me may I walk.*

*With beauty behind me may I walk.*

*With beauty below me may I walk.*

*With beauty above me may I walk.*

*With beauty all around me may I walk.*

***In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively, may I walk.***

***In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living again, may I walk.***

***My words will be beautiful...***

*So my three beauties my bounty I thank you for the beam of sun in my life each day - I  
love each of you for your uniqueness, kindness, and openness to the beauty in life -  
xomom*

.....

**Becoming 77 on 07/17/2017**

**On this day I release regret from the dogwood dogma**



**Diorama drama**





***Regret the poison of life – she my daughter once told me***

Pledge to toss regret to the four winds  
Free at last from being mean to me  
Blaming casting aspersions  
Wresting a day from believing  
That the parade passed me by  
I turned my back shut my eyes  
Not to resist again  
That I was happy  
Even on those doldrum moments  
Even when considering ending my life  
I couldn't an inner voice said no  
I am a widow once removed  
Somehow the death of the man  
I fled ran from  
With such dire dramatic flourish  
Makes me sad black veiled with grief



*Why* I asked him when I was five  
Side-by-side on the couch  
Listening to a recording of Bach's B Minor Mass  
He said tears glimmering  
Softly with great tenderness holding my hand  
*Because of Bach because of Bach*  
When he proclaimed at age 83  
Living away  
From the murderous hands  
Of his wife my mother

That it was now time for me to die  
I brought a new CD Bach Cantata 4

### **Cantata BWV 4, Christ lag in Todes Banden**

*Cantata BWV 4, Christ lag in Todes Banden, is surely one of the most popular and best known of all of Bach's sacred cantatas. Written around the same time as Cantata 106, it is another example of a chorale cantata by Bach. All movements, including the opening sinfonia, make use of the chorale tune and/or text in some fashion. The chorale was written by Martin Luther, and is based on the Catholic chant "Victimae paschali laudes." You can see the similarities in the shape of the melodies below. "Victimae" is traditionally written and sung in the D-Dorian mode, the same mode Luther originally used for his chorale, although Bach transposes it in the cantata.*

Vi - cti - mae pa - scha - li lau - des im - mo - lent chri - sti - an - i A - gnu re - de - mit o - ves

Chri - stus in - no - cens Pa - tri re - con - ci - li - a - vit pec - ca - tor is

Christ lag in To - des - ban - den für un - ser Sund' ge - ge - ben

6

*Cantata 4 was written for Easter Sunday, though the date of the first performance is not clear. Stylistically, the work appears to have been written around 1707-1708, and it may be Bach's earliest surviving sacred vocal composition. Some have suggested that it may have been written as an audition piece for Bach's Mühlhausen position (Schulenberg).*

He said softly clearly incandescently  
Without the sliver of doubt  
*No more Bach it is too beautiful*  
Five days later he died  
Parched refusing food  
His lips moistened lightly with cotton swabs  
His caretaker Sheila by his bedside  
*She was not a good mother to us*  
I informed weeks into his forced  
Exit from his home  
*I know I don't dispute that he replied*  
Last words truths  
Or are they ever spoken said  
And then he was dead  
And he is still dead



And still I don't know what  
It means to be dead gone  
Today I move toward life's ending  
Today I turn my back on regret  
Must say it over and over and over again  
Until it is not with a silver tongue  
But resonant with a ring of truth  
As I know it –  
And still today on this my birthday  
I listen to Bach cantatas  
Not ready to say no more just yet – NB

.....

*...She drained me like a fevered moon  
That saps the spinning world.*

*Farewell to the sensory beauties of life – blue October water.  
Ben Brantley review Spoon River*

.....

*While some of the symptoms of dying like the death rattle, air hunger and terminal agitations, can cause alarm in witnesses, other symptoms are more gentle. The human body's most compassionate gift is the interdependence of its parts.*

*With the exception of the minority of people who suffer sudden death, the vast majority of us experience a slumberous slippage from life. We may be able to sense people at the bedside on a spiritual level, but we are not fully awake in the moments, and often hours, before we die.*

*The mysterious exception is "terminal lucidity," a term coined by the biologist Michael Nahm in 2009 to describe the brief state of clarity and energy that sometimes precedes death. Alexander Batthyany, another contemporary expert on dying, calls it "the light at the end of the tunnel." The Gentler Symptoms of Dying – Sara Manning Peskin, M.D.*

.....

### ***Many-Faced Poems***

*It come up  
as thunderhead  
ready to break  
roiling dark &  
comes up as  
sunflower budding  
kernels of light  
or comes up  
earthy & sweet  
as soil turned  
by backhoe or  
perhaps as dog  
nosing its way  
hard between us  
at the hushed crack  
& flash of storm  
clearing its throat  
for the first  
fearsome word*

### ***Poem in Handfuls***

*My grandmother was preparing  
to die. Already she had  
given away everything of value:  
her mother's cedar dresser  
to the eldest of four,  
the ceramic milkmaid hiding  
a butter dish under her skirt,  
gloss-winged issues of Birds  
& Blooms, half-finished  
crosswords and ciphers,  
even the fading poinsettia.  
Then, to me she said,  
"Cup your hands."  
I did. She poured a measure  
of water into my bowl of fingers,  
and I could not contain it all.  
But then, what did I know  
of accumulations—of currents? .*

***Marci Calabretta Cancio-Bello***

**Aleatoric: Written No Rhyme or Reason by Chance –**

Tanglewood the Shed – dead  
Not to appear again  
Scanning faces for recognition  
Slow summery pre-concert wine sips  
Tanglewood elite gather in Tent Club  
He is dead gone no more  
Who will notice his missing  
Audience favorites Tanglewood traditions

***Mahler's Symphony No. 4***

***Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 in A***

Virtual empty seat front rows  
And so the tempo of time  
Deity death came  
And snatched him up  
Is the grass greener on the other side

Spotch blotch wobbly  
Who wants to stick around  
End of life scold  
Cover mirrors  
Lo and behold  
Baby breath fragrance  
Eclipse dawn's ending  
Final rubbing  
Daylight from sight  
It hurts so  
To bid goodbye  
Sun moon sky

Friendship's weary road  
Spilled my guts  
Told my truths  
The rhyme and rhythm  
The shy and what for  
Logic framing my days  
Probe dig probity  
What I recall remember  
Of her in the great  
Vast before  
Does she remain  
The time she ran off  
Menage au trois  
Fag hag for two  
Gorgeous gay lovers  
On their final filial

Destination Wyoming  
In the shadow of mountain  
Submit to cruel AIDS death  
Handmaiden fanning  
Final breathes  
Tears wetting demise  
Or the delayed return  
From Mexico with  
Partner of the moment  
Both kept held back  
Beaten to near pulp  
Drug deal bust  
Near border gone bad  
Or the reluctant  
Domestic partnership  
She undertook  
To provide insurance  
For dying boyfriend  
Revered post death  
As she secured his  
Legacy and hers  
Who shared with me  
At informal gathering  
She is very difficult to live with  
I have no secrets left  
Thanked her for friendship  
In the lost gone years  
Betrayal and survival  
In a pumpkin shell



*Thank YOU! Naomi - and much love for our 77th birthdays. We have been through much deep pain during those years - a difference just now in our far distant memories pales in comparison to that pain. Our histories will be rewritten again and again in the wind. Our friendship remains! Love, Jean*

*Refrig seems like a garden - fragrances wonderful - again sorry about that - moira is a child and person who i treasure and am so happy i was able to have her in our lives - and of course your friendship back then everything - helping me move etc - glad you are out there healing the world - i will feel apart of it if in my way - love to moira - and to you - naomi*

These emails post that  
Lab rat dinner  
Reveal all  
She probes  
77 year old recollection  
Clear as a bell my dear

Shallow and debasing  
Past was not deep painful  
It was called being alive

Someone to hold me too close.  
Someone to hurt me too deep.  
Someone to sit in my chair,  
And ruin my sleep,  
And make me aware,  
Of being alive.  
Being alive.

*Somebody need me too much.  
Somebody know me too well.  
Somebody pull me up short,  
And put me through hell,  
And give me support,  
For being alive.  
Make me alive.  
Make me alive.*

*Make me confused.  
Mock me with praise.  
Let me be used.  
Vary my days.*

*But alone,  
Is alone,  
Not alive.*

*Somebody crowd me with love.  
Somebody force me to care.  
Somebody let me come through,  
I'll always be there,  
As frightened as you,  
To help us survive,  
Being alive.  
Being alive.  
Being alive! Stephen Sondheim*

Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!  
*To being alive*  
And then we die -

*There was an old lady who swallowed a fly. I don't know why she swallowed a fly - perhaps she'll die!*



Illustration by William Curtis (1746–1799)

Boldly we go  
Can't hold my tongue  
Venus flytrap  
Swallowed a fly  
And then indeed  
She just fell over  
And died  
And thus and so  
Will come to  
The end my life - NB

*There Was an Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe*



*There was an old lady who lived in a shoe*  
I am she and she is me  
Falling out of the night sky  
Not into milky wade



But...  
Into the wilderness  
Called end of life  
Vagrant vital vanishing - **NB**

## *Two for the Road*



## **Two for the Road**

We were on a windy  
Cliff hugging road  
On the way to Rome  
We were on the way  
To Cap Ferrat  
On a perilous road  
Tiers above the ocean



His, my husband's step-mother and father  
Had rented years before  
A cottage there for six months  
Compelling remembrances recollection  
Led us to winnow our way down  
Precipitous narrow roads  
To the Cote d'Azur  
We drove in stun gun silence  
On each trip months apart



He gripping the wheel  
To curb the overhang  
I withered at 23  
Stillbirth haunting  
Silenced incantations protests  
Bringing on hair trigger fits  
Indescribable unfathomable rage  
Tantric tantrum from deep  
Within the psychic unhinged  
He was my head beating mother's kin  
We were not Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney  
Spitfire inflammatory devolving  
Into glutinous debauchery  
Mad unruly lawless passion  
We were nobodies  
Stuck in the muck  
The reckoning of unkempt  
Misguided marital driftwood decision  
This of biblical killer dimensions  
Exhort exhale express  
Sorrow clamp on my heart  
Beats slowing  
To unalterable demise  
Raptor rapture raving rupture  
Car weaving hovering  
Riddled riven new very new love  
Slowly quickening and then dying – NB

.....

### **Food For Thought or Why?**

*Dr. Shigeaki Honohara, Taught Japan Who to Live Long Died at 105*

*Hinohara insisted that patients be treated as individuals – that a doctor needed to understand the patient as a whole as thoroughly as the illness. He argued that palliative care should be a priority for the terminally ill. ...recommend some basic health guidelines: avoid obesity, take the stairs and carry your own packages and luggage.*

*Have big visions and put such visions into reality with courage. The visions may not be achieved while you are alive, but do not forget to be adventurous. Then you will be victorious. Prevail over pain simply by enjoying yourself.*

*I believe I was privileged to live so my life must be dedicated to other people.*

.....

***There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;  
On the earth the broken arcs; in the a heaven, a perfect round.***

***Inspired by Robert Browning poem Abt Vogler***

.....

***After 30 Hospitals in 2 Hours***

*I don't love her  
but like a fly  
I could not pass her by.*

*I wanted to kiss her hands  
and ribbon the feet  
with more than fog*

*rub time and olive oil  
into wrinkles  
overstretching into nest.*

*I wanted to toss her a white church  
near to stream, and build a boat  
timbered small to frame*

*and send her name off  
as if she rolled from  
a river who never grew so tired*

*to wake her  
but don't wake her –  
no need wake her –*

*She is a dead world.*

*By MICHELLE WHITTAKER*

.....

***I would aim to have more trust in the trustworthy but not in the untrustworthy.  
In fact, I aim positively to try not to trust the untrustworthy. The call to rebuild  
trust gets things backwards. Onora O'Neill, British Philosopher, prof at  
Cambridge***

.....

***I turned anger into ambition. Any sort of injustice would outrage me. I couldn't  
contain myself.***

***You can stand me up at the gates of hell. But I won't back down.***

***Tom Petty, I Won't Back Down, dead at 66***

### ***Last Photograph of My Mother Laughing***

*The one in the book after this, you're in the Louvre, whiter and colder than Venus. It will be winter, your hands*

*in veins, your lips tight as marble. But now, it is spring in Manila, Jim Croce's voice is wrapping against*

*an aging purpling sky where a seam of your hair puffs up—, nebulous perfection. You've placed your hand*

*on your hip in young, flirtatious refusal. One wrist steels with a watch so big, it's halfway to falling, and your arms are*

*plain and hairless enough to turn into a statue's missing limbs. Gallery mother, swing of my heart,*

*you're standing above three black-haired sisters who as I look at you there, are dead.*

*The investigative report says "dark sky, calm wind" in Louisiana when Jim gazed out the plane's window,*

*morning sticky with haze. Your city aches in the corner. And your mouth breaks so cleanly across the sky. Sasha Pimentel*



*Nina Robinson photograph of Aunt Jean*



*Nina Robinson Captures Love and Loss in a Rural Black Community*

.....

**What is it , then, between us? Walt Whitman, Crossing Brooklyn Ferry**

*The impalpable sustenance of me from all things, at all hours of the day;  
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme—myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated,  
yet part of the scheme:  
The similitudes of the past, and those of the future;  
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings—on the walk in the  
street, and the passage over the river;  
The current rushing so swiftly, and swimming with me far away;  
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them;  
The certainty of others—the life, love, sight, hearing of others. Crossing the River*

10

**When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,**

*And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,  
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.*

*Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,  
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,  
And thought of him I love.*

*O powerful western fallen star!  
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!  
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!  
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!  
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul. Walt Whitman, When Lilacs Last in the  
Dooryard Bloom'd*

*Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sunrise would kill me,  
If I could not now and always send sunrise out of me.*

*My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach,  
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds—  
Walt Whitman, Song of Myself—(25)*



**Frankie Boy**

I'm done

Walked out on everyone

When he got

What he had come for

Walking out man

Walked out on me

Still not yet

Walked out on his son - **nb**

.....

**Decadent Death**

Discordant death

Trickster death

Preoccupying death

Green slime

Algae blooms

Ol' man river

Just dyin'

And I am dying

Old decrepit

Falling apart

Can't hardly walk

Pain preys on leg

Prayerful

What God

Dear God

By God

My God

Death clings

Twig burr clings

To hemp and weave

Fraying unraveling sleeve



Time to die

Algae blooms

Suffocate strangle

Oxygen dangled

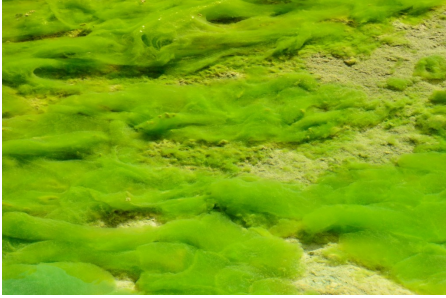
Like a hooker

On broken

Five inch heels

Just always

Just above



Lake Erie Algae Blooms

Kill creek and river bed

Sadder still

Lakes rivers

Slime stilled

Water beds

Death bothersome

Devil bedeviling

Rivers die

Prophetic

World to

Leave behind

Death come

Gather me

As algae spreads

River beds

I am well ready

To be stilled gone

Expeditionally quietly - nb



## Hey Mr. Body Snatcher



Invasion of the Body Snatchers, movie

### Mr. Tambourine man

*In the jingle jangle morning, I'll come following you  
Then take me disappearing through the smoke rings of my mind  
Down the foggy ruins of time, far past the frozen leaves  
The haunted, frightened trees, out to the windy beach  
Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow  
Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free  
Silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands  
With all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves  
Let me forget about today until tomorrow  
Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me  
I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to  
Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me  
In the jingle jangle morning, I'll come following you – Bob Dylan*

I'll admit it I lost myself to you

Deep down moment

Lost among myself

Decisions overgrown

Vestigial forest

Closing in on me

You found me or

I found you

To rescue me  
From myself  
Occluding suffocating  
Doubts decisions  
Bad real bad ones  
Toppling me  
I admit it  
I just lay down  
Supine subdued  
Nearly comatose  
With swoon and possibility  
Hey Mr. Body Snatcher  
Sniffing the desperation  
Ambition acute intimidating  
Knowing hey here I got a real one  
Not the first woman  
To topple to fall  
To open legs  
Giving birth to new life  
New chances for love  
Hey let's begin again  
Hey you Mr. Snake oil salesman  
No I won't forgive you

No matter what god  
Tells me to do  
If I want to die well  
Well what the hell  
Or to hell with that  
I will die with droplets  
Of hate blood for you  
On my drying dying stilling lips  
Of all of what I am ashamed for  
You top the list  
You humiliated me  
You stole me from loneliness  
And promised the world  
Sensuality lust sex and more sex  
And what did I beget  
Knocked down a peg or two no more  
Lost my baring's my grip  
My grasp my hold on reality  
I almost got stolen away  
From myself  
Hey Mr. stealth bomber body snatcher



No I won't never ever forgive you

A little hate laced death

No so very bad

Having lived this long

Indulge me give me my hatred

For him and what I let him do

What he got away with

You stole me mad dog body snatcher

Desperation led to submissiveness

Hurt battered afraid

Post hard scrabble first marriage

I gave away second chances

Just let them slip away

Close to dying now

With death droplets of hatred for yo

No I don't I won't forgive you

Funnily I find myself more likeable

Even more loveable  
Having committed myself  
To dying with at least one stain  
One bludgeoning stain of hatred  
On my once suckled hard dry breasts - NB

.....

### **Give Me All Of Your Money**

Moonlit motel deep  
In non-descript upstate NY  
You owe me Chekhov  
For what when was that promised you  
Implicit when your cock lifted up  
To entice and to fuck sex starved me  
Nazi man cruel man sadist  
Can't seem to get over you  
That I even ever knew you  
Viciousness rolled off your tongue  
As easily as the cum come-on from your  
Dog sniffing enterprising tantalizing  
Poking nose into everything dick  
With you I became Elie Wiesel's estranged daughter

*Life is not a fist. Life is an open hand waiting for some other hand to enter it.*

*Every moment counts. Every second matters.*

*To me, friendship is like a religion. We couldn't live without it. Elie Wiesel*

A girl born to a mother's suckled dry *Holocaust* infected breast

Womanliness desire sexuality arrested think at birth

How to know your sadism meanness mockery

Your genus of seduction from which animistic past

***Thirteen ways of Looking at a Blackbird – Wallace Stevens***

**III**

*The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.*

*It was a small part of the pantomime.*

**IV**

*A man and a woman*

*Are one.*

*A man and a woman and a blackbird*

*Are one.*

**V**

*I do not know which to prefer,*

*The beauty of inflections*

*Or the beauty of innuendoes,*

*The blackbird whistling*

*Or just after. Wallace Stevens*

Stalking searching metaphor poetry to make sense

Defend myself and my indefensible ways

Plum the depths of this can't make head or tails

How did I how could I wind up with you

Got to make sense plum the depths of this

How did I open the door to let him in

*Wanting some sugar for my bowl desperation – Nina Simone*

To this very late day in my life still shudder

His vituperative vacant chorales haunt

Got to figure this out not never forgive him or me  
Death holds me in his tight fist against a wall  
Fingers wrap like serpent around my neck  
Will never release me until I eke out truth of how  
This irreverent irreversible choice came to be  
Who was I who was me back then  
Replay of ancient story Rape of the Sabine Women



Urs Fischer Melting Sculpture

Can't cull one good memory one golden moment  
Can't find one smile when my heart hummed with song  
Death won't release me until I reckon  
With this troubling personal history  
Never to forgive never to unwrap regret  
Got to find a way to look myself in the eye

And know that I opened the door let him in  
It is that woman I am struggling grappling with  
Question probe to the third degree  
Why I needed a Nazi to lord over me  
Having broken free from troubled marriage  
Self-destruction became my sway my destiny  
Was I punishing myself for walking out  
Running away from my husband  
This with the sword of  
Joan of Arc righteousness in my hand  
Were we really in truth forsooth kith and kin  
Needing to punish oneself digs deep  
Into my archival ancestry  
Aftermath of Nazi kick boot death wielding humiliation  
I just kept it going and going and going  
Death will release me to a quiet death of grace  
If I can go beyond this disgrace  
Remove the veil of deceit  
And look myself squarely in the face  
Left in a time capsule of my own design  
I quit myself just when possibility managed to walk in - NB



**At back door**

No steps

Opens early

Closes early

Petsie when

Hips gave way

We only could

Go on walks

When we could

Walk out the back door

We put him down

Waited perhaps

A little too long

He endured

Our need for him

In the end

Now my hips

Make steps

Difficult at best

Rediscovered

Back door

Egress entrance

Distress

Not on mend  
But struggling  
For easy steps  
As I high step  
Easing my way  
Walking toward  
The end -NB

.....

'N'em

*They said to say goodnight  
And not goodbye, unplugged  
The TV when it rained. They hid  
Money in mattresses  
So to sleep on decisions.  
Some of their children  
Were not their children. Some  
Of their parents had no birthdates.  
They could sweat a cold out  
Of you. They'd wake without  
An alarm telling them to.  
Even the short ones reached  
Certain shelves. Even the skinny  
Cooked animals too quick  
To get caught. And I don't care  
How ugly one of them arrived,  
That one got married  
To somebody fine. They fed  
Families with change and wiped  
Their kitchens clean.  
Then another century came.  
People like me forgot their names. Jericho Brown*

.....

*To me, a strong sense of self isn't believing in a lot. Some people might define it that way, saying, 'He has a very strong sense of himself. But it's a complete lie.*

*Sam Shepard always wrote that place – a zone of trauma, mystery and grief. Whether the play was more mainstream or experimental in its conception, he took the big risk every time.  
(Christopher Shinn*

*It's impossible the way people enter into it feeling they're going to be saved by the other one. And it seems like many, many times that quicksand happens in a relationship when you feel that somehow you can be saved.*

*There are these territories inside all of us, like a child or a father or the whole man, and that's what interests me more than anything: where those territories lie.*

*I mean, you have these assumptions about somebody and all of a sudden this other thing appears. Where is that coming from? That's the mystery. That's what's so fascinating. Sam Shepard*

*Mr. Shepard had something in short supply in this time of public figures crying out for likes. And that something was coolness, a mode of presentation and expression that may have just reached its end. Jim Windolf about Sam Shepard*

*....existential urgency, obsessive connection – Paul Froese, Baylor professor*

.....

*In families, there are no crimes beyond forgiveness. Pat Conroy, Prince of Tides*

.....

***It seems we will ever want what we cannot have. That's what binds us. That's what keeps us apart. Barak Obama to Alexandra McNear, He was 20***

.....

***to live in the moment - Eddie Redmayne, actor, giving up cell phone***

.....

*Daisy Among Roses – Akazome Emon, poet (956-1041)*



赤染衛門

I should've slept soundly,  
Relaxed and carefree...  
Late into the night,  
I gazed at the moon  
As it finally set.

Akazome Emon

Fields of autumn,  
When I see the flowers,  
My heart, it feels like  
It's completely content, or maybe  
It yearns to leave me forever.

Akazome Emon

## Prediagnosis

when i was born i felt nothing  
but life ripping open before me,  
the doctor's white face & coat,  
everyone seemed happy i was alive.

but life ripping open before me  
led to me ripped open before life.  
everyone seemed happy. i was alive  
but only for a short time.

me ripped open. before life  
i was dependent on milk & men  
but only for a short time.  
anything can be a drug if you love it.

dependent on milk & men  
my overdose a slow child inside me  
anyone can be a drug if you love him  
all i needed was time.

my overdose a slow-growing child  
my man a cancer of light  
he said all i needed was time  
he left me & i tried to leave life.

my man. my cancer light.  
my doctor's white face & coat.  
he left me, my life  
when i was born i felt everything Sam Sax

.....

***Each fugitive point of light was a different person. I remember laughing out loud. I'd wanted a solitary revelation, but I was given something else. An overwhelming sense of humanity, and of what it is made – a host of individual lights shining briefly against the oncoming darkness.***

*Among others – A total solar eclipse is a lesson in the surprising beauty of the human throng.  
Helen Macdonald – Solar Eclipse, August 21, 2017 NY Times*

.....

***Here is a breathing body and a beating heart, strong legs, bones and teeth, and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered, and here, I said is the lanyard I made at camp. The Lanyard by Billy Collins***

.....



***Julie Mehretu, Entropia***

.....

***Aid-in-Dying - Criteria: Terminal illness, decision-making capacity, ability to self-administer the medications. (Law in California, Oregon, Vermont)***

.....

***...women must learn in silence with all subjection, and she shall be saved by childbearing. The Selfishness of Motherhood, Karen Rinaldi, author, The End of Men***

.....

***Perhaps I've found the secret for an unhappy private life. Every three years I go and marry a girl who doesn't love me, and then she proceeds to tak all my money. Glen Campbell, singer died August 2017 at 81***

.....

***When he shows his wife, Sarbajaya, the sari he has brought for the dead girl, she begins to weep. And now he understands, and cries out, too their voices are replaced by the high, high music of a single tar shenhai, a sound like a scream of the soul. Salman Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands - images for tar shenhai***



.....

*I set out over the  
unknowable earth  
once more. Everything  
still underfoot. A mat  
of fallen and unfallen  
matter. Things flinch  
but it is my seeing  
makes them  
flinch. Before, they are  
transparent. Now they  
line my optic  
nerve. I feel them  
enter. Brain  
flinch husk  
groove. Subject.  
Honeysuckle,  
bramble, vine,*

vibration  
and  
web-tremble. How  
will the real  
let me drop just  
in time.  
How will it pay me  
out,  
pass me along to  
the next  
I? I  
walk down the hill  
where I feel my  
letting-go go  
into the down  
of the hill. I  
know I will  
have to leave  
the earth—my  
difference  
running around  
wildly looking  
for where it  
ends. That is  
life I say  
humming,  
idling, mind's  
engine dozing  
in me, its  
squint, that  
sweet way of  
inhaling before  
speech while  
the hand slides  
down the spiral  
rail like a  
millennium  
dappled with  
dna and spoor  
just right  
enough to  
end. Jorie Graham Rail



***Of two sisters/one is always the watcher, /one the dancer. Louise Gluck, poem  
Tango***

*“Mother died last night / Mother who never dies,” she writes:*

*Winter was in the air,*

*many months away*

*but in the air nevertheless.*

*It was the tenth of May.*

*Hyacinth and apple blossom*

*bloomed in the back garden.*

*We could hear*

*Maria singing songs from Czechoslovakia—*

*How alone I am—*

*songs of that kind.*

*How alone I am,*

*no mother, no father—*

*my brain seems so empty without them. Louise Gluck*

.....

***Abortions will not let you forget.***

*You remember the children you got that you did not get,  
The damp small pulps with a little or with no hair,  
The singers and workers that never handled the air.  
You will never neglect or beat  
Them, or silence or buy with a sweet.  
You will never wind up the sucking-thumb  
Or scuttle off ghosts that come.  
You will never leave them, controlling your luscious sigh,  
Return for a snack of them, with gobbling mother-eye.*

*I have heard in the voices of the wind the voices of my dim killed children.*

*I have contracted. I have eased  
My dim dears at the breasts they could never suck.  
I have said, Sweets, if I sinned, if I seized  
Your luck  
And your lives from your unfinished reach,  
If I stole your births and your names,  
Your straight baby tears and your games,  
Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults, your marriages, aches,  
and your deaths,  
If I poisoned the beginnings of your breaths,  
Believe that even in my deliberateness I was not deliberate.  
Though why should I whine,  
Whine that the crime was other than mine?--  
Since anyhow you are dead.  
Or rather, or instead,  
You were never made.  
But that too, I am afraid,  
Is faulty: oh, what shall I say, how is the truth to be said?  
You were born, you had body, you died.  
It is just that you never giggled or planned or cried.*

*Believe me, I loved you all.  
Believe me, I knew you, though faintly, and I loved, I loved you  
All. Gwendolyn Brooks*

.....

***men lean, blookshot and translucent with cool.***

*His smile is a gold-plated incantation as we*

*drift by women on bar stools, with nothing left*

*In them but approachlessness....Gwendolyn Brooks*

.....

***Non sequitor is lively, volatile, skirmishing, suggesting (at its best) simultaneity or multiplicity, loosing a flurry of questions. Louise Gluck***

.....

***When the stars self were young over Castries,***  
*I loved you alone and I loved the whole world.*  
*What does it matter that our lives are different?*  
*Burdened with the loves of our different children?*  
*When I think of your young face washed by the wind*  
*and your voice that chuckles in the slap of the sea?*  
*The lights are out on La Toc promontory,*  
*except for the hospital. Across at Vigie*  
*the marina arcs keep vigil. I have kept my own*  
*promise, to leave you the one thing I own,*  
*you whom I loved first: my poetry.*  
*We here for one night.*  
*Tomorrow, the Flight will be gone.*

*Derek Walcott, The Flight Anchors in Castries Harbor*



*Achille Tominetti 1848-1917*

.....

*Ah, where would be any food for spirituality without night and the stars? The vacant spaciousness of the air, and the veil'd blue of the heavens, seem'd miracles enough. Walt Whitman Full- Star'd Nights*

.....  
**O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity!**

O manhood, balanced, florid and full.

My lovers suffocate me,

Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,

Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to me at night,

Crying by day Ahoy! from the rocks of the river, swinging and chirping over my head,

Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush,

Lighting on every moment of my life,

Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,

Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them to be mine.

**Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!**

*Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what grows after and out of itself,  
And the dark hush promulges as much as any.*

*I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems,*

*And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim of the farther systems.*

*Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding,*

*Outward and outward and forever outward.*

*My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels,*

*He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,*

*And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.*

*There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,*

*If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces,*

*were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run,*

*We should surely bring up again where we now stand,*

*And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.*

*A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard the span or make it impatient,*

*They are but parts, any thing is but a part.*

*See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,*

*Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.*

*My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,*

*The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,*

*The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.*

**Walt Whitman, Song of Myself**

.....

***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. W.B. Yeats, Sailing to*

.....

## **My skin flab**

Hanging off my body

Remnants of a life

Emptying of life

I am disappearing from within

Lost disappearing

Leaving the physical essence

The shape of me that was

Inhabiting less and less

My body lost remembering

Of who of what I was

Vacating a life

Indeterminately lived

Too late for reckoning

Flesh of my flesh bones of my bones Genesis 2:23

Honing toning taming preparing

For the ultimate last departure

Skin soft as velvet

Soft as fine-spun cotton

Transformation of life

To very old age

The mirror recants

Still time she tells herself

To make amends correction

Ablutions confessions

Change up narrative

The fictive me

Begs more time

Still time

She says over and over

She tells herself

Still time to dream of love

To feel the rapture

Not raptor

Of a gentle kiss

Pressed like a rose

In a memory book

Still time I tell myself

And she answers,

No there ain't -

No there ain't -nb

.....

## Sorrowful Songs

Mother to son

Oh, sing for him  
God's little song-birds  
Since his mother  
Cannot find him

And you, God's little flowers  
May you blossom all around  
So that my son  
May sleep happily

Queen of Heaven, you support me always 15<sup>th</sup> century folk song from the southern city of  
Opole

Daughter to mother

Oh Mamma do not cry, no immaculate Queen of Heaven, you support me always, Words  
Taken off Wall of Nazi Prison

Written by 18 year old Helena Wanda Blazusiakowna –Gorecki's Symphony No. 3 Sorrowful  
Song

.....



**These old folk skimming 80, oh god!**

Transfixed fascinated

By their disappearing disintegrating bodies

Rocked by ailments

Doctors bank accounts fatten

Dollar signs

Blinking in their diagnostic eyes

Medicare replace hip

Titanium grips

Thigh to hip

Rejuvenate replace

Where the waters to sip

Bring youth back

Through botoxed lips

Times pulls tugs us forward

Odyssey to escape

The clawing reality

That death nips

On the rear

I'm in exit lane

I tell him

No you're not Warren says

Hi Naomi,

*Thank you for your visit and warm friendship. I know it meant a great deal to Betsy to have you here for her celebration and that it took organizing and considerable effort for you to be here. Hope also appreciates having you with us.*

***I would not think too much about being in the exit lane. Seem to me we all have a considerable amount of kick left.***

*All best wishes, Warren*

Sounds like I should join

Congo line of old folks

Step kick step kick



Step kick step kick

Into oblivion

Narcissism creeps up

We stare at ourselves

We try to remake ourselves

Why walk in pain

When you can get your hip replaced

My mother was 79 or 74 or 68

The Solomonic choice –

*Exhibiting or requiring the exercise of great wisdom, especially in making difficult decisions.*

To look death straight in the eye

And get a head start

I'll get me first

Before you do

My breath will ease out

My hand covering my face

Closing my eyes

Scared to death

Moments before

Too late to undo

I died before

I had no choice - NB

.....

Time to relocate myself in time and space –NB

.....

***Earth...blue dot in a wash of scattered sunlight, a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam – Eclipse Carl Sagan***

.....

**Battered shattered**

Awakened re-awakened

Emotionally

Witness to raw brute pain

To a soul losing grip

To panic overwhelming

Battered shattered

Re-awoken

Mother stoic at bedside of son

Had revivalist upending

Saw fear raw and ruthless

A resistant soul

Grabs hold

Saw death approach

Saw fear up close

Shattered battered

Motherhood undone

Motherhood reborn

Mid-wife life

Shoves batters rattles

Shaken shakes awake -nb

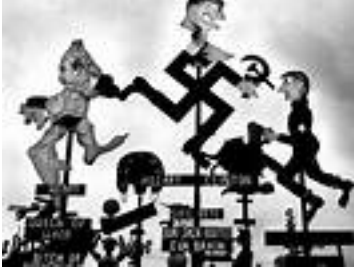
**There is no titanium at the end of the rainbow nb**

## About the eclipse, August 21, 2017



***Among others** – A total solar eclipse is a lesson in the surprising beauty of the human throng. When totality begins, you feel a wordless solidarity with the people around you as all language is ripped away. You communicate through yells, whoops, wolf-howls, screams, wild laughter. Each fugitive point of light was a different person. I remember laughing out loud, I'd wanted a solitary revelation, but I was given something else. An overwhelming sense of humanity, and of what it is made - a host of individual lights shining briefly against the oncoming darkness. Helen Macdonald, *H is for Hawk**





***Most people, they ain't got no guts. You gotta have a strong opinion or you're nothing.***

***I can't make you mad. Only you can make you mad! M.T. Liggett, Folk Artist***

.....

***For me walking brings out the most comfortable, the most natural part of how I think. Dancing is one of the things that could happen between life and death. Pensive air, pensive gloom, gloomy pensive gloom, gray gloomy gloopy grime. Clearing later. John Heginbotham and Maira Kalman, The Principles of Uncertainty (dance theater writer and dancer).....***

***...Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer. Simone Weil.....***

***I loved her, and the force of that love allows nothing to stand in its way, neither the ugly, nor the unpleasant, nor the disgusting, nor the horrific.***

***Karl Ove Knausgaard, My Struggle, Autumn***

.....

**Rub my face in it**

Go ahead

He shuttered

Every word I uttered

My lips parting

Gagging reflex

He was the kind of lover

Repulsed

Whose ambition

Forced him

To hold his nose

And take and take and take

No more to be taken

He picked up

And ran away

God or whomever

Help me face

That I opened a door

For him to walk in

I feel the weight

Of that hand on knob

The image waiting

Tongue hanging out

On the other side  
Not for me  
But what other  
Doors I could unlock  
Open for him  
I feel the weight  
Of the door  
Slightly ajar  
For moments  
Wanted to slam I shut  
My heart rebelled  
My mind said no  
In he walked  
Already could feel  
My fragmented breaking heart  
Now death waits patiently  
For me to find a way to forgive  
Just not sure if it should be  
Him or me...NB

.....



*“Across China, everything is happening: volcanoes erupting, rivers running dry, prisoners and exiles are abandoned, elk and red-crowned cranes are under fire.*

*I brave a hail of bullets to sleep with you. I compress countless dark nights into one dawn to sleep with you*

*And they have responded. In her “Crossing More Than Half of China to Sleep With You,” she goes on to say: “There is little difference between me sleeping with you, and you sleeping with me.*

*It’s no more than a collision of two bodies, composing a force under which the flowers blossom.”*

*“I believe what he has with others is love. It’s only with me that it’s not.”*

*What is poetry? I don’t know and can’t tell. It’s when my heart roars, it emerges like a newborn. It’s like a crutch when one walks unsteadily in this unsteady world. Only when I write poetry do I feel complete, at peace and content.*

*Yu Xiuhua, poet, “Moonlight”*

.....

Inching Toward Oblivion – Longevity is generally better than its alternative –  
Ron Lieber NY Times Facing Dread of Inching Toward Oblivion

.....

...warehoused oblivion – By age 85, 40% of people have some form of dementia. There are 350,000 falls each year that lead to broken hips. Once you’ve got a fracture there, there’s a 40% chance you’ll end up in a nursing home and a 20% chance you’ll never walk again. It’s not death that the very old tell me they fear. It is what happens short of death. Atul Gawande, Being Mortal

.....

The reward for living a reasonably long life, was getting to rot to death rather than merely dying. Inching toward oblivion – a generalizable phenomenon.

Jane Gross, A Bitter-Sweet Season

.....

Mother was dementia asks trying on new foam slippers, how was something on her feet going to help her brain? I just don’t remember where I live, but of course I remember the ice cream. Loretta Anne Woodward Veney, Being My Mom’s Mom

.....

Waddle like a duck

**Sway back and forth**

As if on a balance beam  
Geriatric gymnastics  
Waddle and shuffle  
Demeaning disorienting  
Stumble fall  
Crack hip like egg  
Never back together again  
Broken hip warning  
Death moves in  
To collect its bounty  
Closer to the ground  
No rising up  
On new coltish legs  
Beg away too  
Too late to be saved -nb

.....

**Ephemera erotica  
Irreverent irrelevant**

Nonsense  
Persist resist always  
Another book  
More song  
Another day  
Rapture and long  
For more  
Testimony in print  
Reading the tea leaves  
I become irrelevant  
Extant extinct  
Defunct done for- nb

.....

**There's nothing more**

I want to ask  
Of this thing  
Called life  
Being alive  
Nothing more  
To want more time for  
I have had my fill  
Know the surprising  
Always exists  
In the next moment  
Another smile  
More strangers  
To befriend  
Morning glories  
Tuck inward noontime  
There will be more days  
Where ecstasy is beyond reach  
Where longing seizes hold  
When laughter overruns fear  
No more awaiting trauma  
For the other shoe to drop  
There is nothing more  
I want to ask  
Of this thing  
Called life being alive  
I have had enough  
I have had my fill  
My cup runneth over  
No more sorrow or regret  
No more brooding  
About what I didn't get  
Time no longer  
Waits in the wings  
I want nothing more  
I have had my fill  
My cup runneth over





My father said  
When asked why  
For Bach he answered  
Time to die  
No more Bach  
It is too beautiful  
He told me  
Question to ask  
Am I ready to say  
No more Bach  
It is too too beautiful - NB  
.....

There will be no afterlife. I'm an ashes to ashes kind of a person. Alice Waters, chef  
.....

Johnny's just Johnny. Doesn't everyone know a Johnny? Annie Clark, singer  
.....

***not an elegy for Mike Brown***

*I am sick of writing this poem  
but bring the boy. his new name*

*his same old body. ordinary, black  
dead thing. bring him & we will mourn  
until we forget what we are mourning*

*& isn't that what being black is about?  
not the joy of it, but the feeling*

*you get when you are looking  
at your child, turn your head,  
then, poof, no more child.*

*that feeling. that's black. Danez Smith*

.....

***...her brother committed suicide three years earlier; her father shrunk into an inert silence.***

*Each of us comes into the world attached to another and then immediately gets severed. All of us, walking around, cut off from our mothers.*

*Tempted to view her baby as someone who will always stay and never die and never leave. There is the feeling alone that can be solved by others. And there is the feeling alone that can't*  
*Kristen Iskandrian, Motherest*

.....



*Andrea De Carvalho*

.....

*There's only tonight, man/life is finite/but, fucking, it feels like forever.*  
*James Murphy singer*

.....

*Freedom in English on his left wrist, next to a picture of a dove, a symbol of peace. You think, O.K. you reach your freedom but all your people are not free. Then you are not free. I cannot get back and visit my family, and they cannot come here. Any time that I can see my mother I will feel free. Ahmad Joudeh, Syrian Dancer*



Ahmad Joudeh, Dancer

.....

*This incredibly brutal system was mostly built locally, so it's mostly going to have to be dismantled locally, and where most of the activism has to happen is locally. The system has to be dismantled to the ground.* James Forman, Jr. Yale Professor, *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*

.....

## Phalluses Bring Luck in Bhtuan –



*They are painted on homes, or carved in wood, installed above doorways and under eaves to ward off evil, including one of its most insidious human forms, gossip. They are worn on necklaces, installed in granaries and in fields as a kind of scarecrow. They are used by masked jesters in religious festivals and at one temple near here in Lobesa as a blessing of fertility.*

*Now, as Bhutan increasingly opens up to the world, the ancient tradition has been evolving or, some say, sullied — by commercialization.*

*Though still a religious symbol, it has become, to some, a relic of a patriarchal past, something vaguely embarrassing and not fit for the modern new democracy that has, by all appearances, taken firm root in Bhutan after decades of relative isolation and absolute monarchy.*

*It has also become a curio to peddle in all sizes and colors to the increasing number of tourists visiting this remote Himalayan kingdom, renowned for its pursuit of "gross national happiness." Phalluses Bring Luck in Bhutuan, Steven Lee Myers, NY times*

.....



EVE FOWLER | THE DIFFERENCE IS SPREADING | MAY 22, 2015 – JULY 3 ...







### Eve Fowler Word Art

.....

*Camera person documentary by Kristen Johnson is like a "a found poem assembled out of scraps and snippets of truth - a critique of the idea that there is anything impersonal or objective in photography." A. O. Scott, Critic NY Times*

.....

*Some songs just fall out of you and some you have to wrestle out like abscess.  
It feel like the frayed wire of my brain is trying to pursue five different topics at once. -  
tattoo: Out into the ether -practice radical vulnerability -  
I know that it's not gonna turn out all right/but I have to believe that it is.  
You're everything I want and I'm all you dread.  
Do I want to keep writing songs like this? Do I want to keep living my life primarily  
concerned with my hurt and attached to it? A lot of people that I know I think we're  
attached to the safety of our hurt. And it's dangerous and vulnerable to hope because  
there's the risk that we'll get disappointed.  
Julien Baker, singer, album Turn Out the Lights*

## **Probe Probability**

Dirt destiny  
Other's eyes I use for fuel  
No more  
Make a wish  
I have nothing left  
To wish for  
Not bereft deft  
Cleft bent spent  
Reality cleaves  
Double speak  
Nothing more  
To wish for  
No desire  
To be witnessed  
To be caught  
A glint in someone's eyes  
Still waters run deep  
Still can't shed  
Cleaves still  
Unresolved hatred  
For Luca's father  
Can't hardly say his name  
Any time attention  
Moved from him  
Caught a fit  
Rebecca going off to college  
My father dying  
His need to fly off  
To fuck a woman  
In Brazil  
Fetal in closet  
Airplane ticket in fist  
No it is not him  
It is how I let him  
Struggle straggling  
Emotion left haunting  
Taunting unforgiving  
Almost there  
Taking matters in hand  
Leaving nothing to chance  
Life's singular purpose  
To die well to die with grace  
To die at my own hand  
Not to let another

If ghostly presence  
Steal my thunder  
Belligerent wakeful watchful  
Death's arrogance  
Mollify mutilate  
Contempt as drag off  
To nowhere anywhere skyward  
Contemplate how we live afterward  
How we are remembered  
Mewling puking  
In our euphemistic mother's arms  
Catch a falling star



Anticipate the moment comes  
Death with grace death by choice  
Slipping slowly from life  
The moment to savor mine alone

*No kiddin', I'm ready to fight  
I've been lookin' for my baby all night  
If I get her in my sight  
Boom, boom, out go the lights*

*I thought I treated my baby fair  
And now she's gettin' all in my hair  
If I get her in my sight  
Boom, boom, out go the lights*

*No kiddin', I'm ready to go  
When I find her boy don't you know*

*If I get her in my sight  
Boom, boom, out go the lights*

*I never been so mad before  
When I found out she ain't mine no more  
If I get her in my sight  
Boom, boom, out go the lights - Blues, Little Walter, Boom Boom Out Go the Lights*

As Breathe goes out as goes the light - NB

***All the world's a stage,***  
*And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. Shakespeare, As You Like It*

.....

***Turtle is almost devoid of interiority;*** almost nothing she thinks or says is worth quoting. A typical example: *She thinks, we have never been all right and we aren't ever going to be all right. I don't even know what all right would look like. I don't know wha they would mean.*  
*Gabriel Tallent, My Absolute Darling*  
***Tallent is so fearless when evoking*** what the body can withstand, so scrupulous at capturing the visible world; what a writer he'll be when he turns to charting internal, invisible cartographies as well. –Parul Seligal, Reviewer of Tallent, NY Times

.....

*Don't say you're in love – Until you learn to take me apart –  
Kelela, singer Take Me Apart*

.....

**Vacant Empty**

But what I fell you up with  
Vagrant feral ambition  
Plunder sink in teeth  
To extract suck in  
Divining golden fleece  
Lies just beneath teeth  
You came with so little  
But a cock's call  
I fell hook line and sinker  
Stuffed up for heated quest  
You up and left – NB

.....



Ceramic figure by Sara Swink

.....



**Fire ants**, floating in water, bit with stinging venom. It's the stuff of Revelations.  
...standing on top of mound, you won't feel anything for a minute. What they are doing is **mustering**. They are looking for hair to attach to. You might feel tickling, and then suddenly they are latching on so they can drag in that stinger in. Once one of them stings it lets off a pheromone, and that makes everybody sting at once. It is like you are stepping into fire. Tine Survivors Hang Together, But Woe to Potential Rescuers, Christine Houser, NY Times

### **Gathering swarming sucking on**

Latching now I see  
You were a collective  
A mound of fire ants  
Heaping raving ambition  
To suck the life out of me  
You came to plunder  
You came an infant a feral  
To latch onto a bountiful tit  
At least by your puerile standard  
You a roving cock  
Of raw ambition  
Looking for a place  
To lock onto until  
Had your fill  
Until your raw ambition  
Got its fill  
You brought your thrills  
I trilled a deprived  
A bird with a lost song  
Sucked sated  
Got your fill  
Uncouth savagery  
Raw reckless ambition  
You crawled my skin  
Barnacle man  
You unstuck yourself

When you were sated  
Had your fill  
Vagabond  
Cock of the roost  
Unstuck yourself  
Stingers emitted  
Stung vagrant heart  
Left suspended upended  
You upped and left  
For foreign soil  
Wanted a woman  
Who would moan  
Submit and cry out  
In another language –  
What does  
Oh my god sound like  
In Portuguese? NB

.....

***Embodying what, could be called environment anxiety art.  
...associate recycling with the idea of human reincarnation.***

***Justin Brice Guariglia, artist***

.....

***You can't control life, it doesn't wind up perfectly. Only, Only art you can control – art  
and masturbation two areas in which I am an absolute expert.***

***Woody Allen, Stardust Memories***

.....

## **75 and Up**

### **Grappling Death**

#### **Algorithm – an Accounting**

Friendship in old age  
Old friends old  
Avaricious meek  
Tenacious grabbing hold  
Getting hips replaced  
Swimming every day  
Dark comes  
Skittering thoughts  
Twinkling stars  
Doom another night  
Will daylight come  
Die in sleep  
Die in hymnals  
Family like daisy chain  
Engulf surround bed  
Forced smiles forced tears  
Revulsion repulsed  
Body leaks out life  
And its juices  
Like a drunk drying out  
Excesses move beyond  
Existence time to say  
Goodbye good night  
Last times lost times  
No more time  
Got subscription  
To New York Theater Workshop  
For year 2017-18  
Guarded open  
Scattershot lunches  
Evasive eyes forced smiles  
Clenched teeth  
Last supper last meal  
Congeal clotted blood  
Marker for duration  
Friendship real or feigned  
Whose narrative  
Only mine timely review  
How did I really feel  
About you and you and you  
What bonds break brokered  
What long haul  
What pretense what pretext



Brush kiss both cheeks  
Walk off south and east  
To or maybe not  
Ever again meet - NB



***When a child, time has a way of unspooling slowly, purely set to our natural rhythm. As we got older, we forget how to live at our own pace. Life Among the Llamas, Adam Harteau, Emily Harteau, NY Times***

.....

***The new spectacle is our own face in the mirror as it ages and fades. If the original instinct for display or chase from which this performance rises (or depends) carries on life and death while our species looks at its own face, experimenting with disguises putting time on hold by holding its breath.***

*Ange Mlinko, poet, Natty Compenium*

.....

***No. I'm 82, healthy as I can be, and I'm living my life fully. I just want to make sure that when the time comes, I live my dying fully. Louise Hay, Self-Help Author - died at 90***

.....

*I've realized that finding berries –as with love itself—is about getting enough, not about getting it all.  
I think about my own death more often in the fall, not so much out of depression as out of empathy. A very real darkness is closing in all around us.  
Under the frosted eaves, living knots of raspberry root are bulking up for the winter. They are determined to flourish again next summer, with or without me.  
Hope Jahren, Lab Girl, Tasting Norway's Sweet Summer*

.....

*People often see themselves in terms of whichever one of their allegiances is most under attack.  
...and everybody gets to assert his or her victimization is worst and it's the other people who are the elites.  
Many identity-based communities are not defined by internal compassion but by external rage. Love has within it a redemptive power (Martin Luther King)  
Equipose - ...the ability to move gracefully through your identities –to have the passions, blessings and hurts of one balanced by the passions, blessing and hurts of several others. David Brooks, NY Times*

.....

*A good character is not life lived according to a role, it is a life lived in balance.  
James Q. Wilson, Sociologist*

.....

*To any one dying ...thither I speed and twist the knob of the door,  
Turn the bedclothes toward the foot of the bed,  
Let the physician and the priest go home.  
I seize the descending man...I raise him with resistless will.  
Walt Whitman, Song of Myself (40)*

.....

*...the experience of experience  
I often feel like a person I know nothing about.  
I feel the carousel starting slowly  
And going faster and fast: desk, papers, books  
Photographs of friends, the window and the trees,  
Merging into one neutral band that surrounds  
Me on all sides, everywhere I look.  
And I cannot explain the action of leveling,  
Why it should all boil down to one  
Uniform substance, a magma of interiors. John Ashbery, poet*

.....

*...to create from the heart, not the "glands" – Address the immortal truths, love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. William Faulkner*

.....

*Of course, aging ends only one way. So we also talk a lot about advance directives, end-of-life care, and the slowly growing number of states with aid-in-dying laws. Paula Span, NY Times, Keeping Up With an Aging America*

.....

*...to be an American in the world was to be limited by a sort of imaginative obstacle. Hasham Matar, author*

.....

*...there will always be creative destruction. For new firms and sectors to arise, some of the old ones must die. Joseph Schumpeter, Austrian born economist and political scientist - 1883-1950*

.....

*...interior colonization - Kate Millett, author Sexual Politics*

.....

*...reading her work was like "sitting with your testicles in a nutcracker" - reader of Kate Millett, wrote of her writing -*

.....

*More than I could wish for - your testicles squeezed in a nutcracker if you could hear my thoughts as scalpel cuts words onto page after page - NB*

.....

*I wanted to have a third act. And I thought, time is precious. ....survivor, and you realized after a while, it's actually a positive term. Just surviving in life, in this life, is difficult enough. Graydon Carter, editor Vanity Fair*

.....

*Sisters  
Brothers and the whiteys  
Blacks and the crackers  
Police and their backers  
They're all political actors -David Simon, The Wire*

.....

**Careen crash smash thrash**

Kaboom just shot through you  
Moved beyond clouds  
Pinned me pining in place  
Swirl twirl whirl dance  
Free finally well almost  
Of feeling sadly badly  
Miserable about picking you  
Out of a line-up of me  
You were the ugh! One  
Almost in flight free fall  
As light dims on my life  
No long curdle with agony  
That I let you happen on me  
Almost ready to flutter eyes  
Closed having taken  
All the honey the pollen  
My swelling body could hold  
Ready almost to fly off  
Into the universe  
Beyond cloud and sky  
To any waiting hearts  
That want to take me  
As a keepsake inside  
First got to fling you off  
Into the universe  
Where I have tossed off  
My imbalance my regrets  
My *How could I have?*  
Soon I feel it coming  
The freedom to die  
Feeling fully whole  
And unsparingly alive - NB

.....  
*I discovered, though, that once having given a pig an enema there is no turning back –  
Death of a Pig –*

*...the warm wind will blow again, Charlotte reminds Wilbur -*

*The crickets sang in the grasses. They sang the song of summer's ending, a sad, monotonous song. 'Summer is over and gone,' they sang. 'Over and gone, over and gone.' Summer is dying, dying." The crickets felt it was their duty to warn everybody that summertime cannot last forever. Even on the most beautiful days in the whole year ---the days when summer is changing into fall ---the crickets spread the rumor of sadness and change." E.B. White, "Charlotte's Web*

.....

## Mom's Doll Needs a New Dress –This Pretty Much Sums It All Up!- NB

*I Was Misinformed, Joyce Wadler, NY Times 9/14/17*



*Beth, the world's ugliest baby doll, needs a new outfit. I got her the one she's been wearing soon after she was presented to my 90-year-old mother, who seized on her with a single-minded adoration neither my brothers nor I recall her showering on us. Maybe this happens with dementia. New personalities pop up like those tough little stalks of green in a broken sidewalk, leaving you to wonder: Now, how did that get here? Anyway, this doll, who was not good-looking to begin with, arrived wearing something stiff and tacky, so I went to Gap Kids to find something softer and prettier and was lost. "If you're not sure of the size, just get something loose, then you don't have to worry about her outgrowing it right away," the saleswoman told me. "That won't be a problem," I say. But I messed up. I thought Beth, whose wall eyes and blank expression make her look as if she suffered an unfortunate birth defect back in the factory, was supposed to be between 3 and 6 months; in fact, she is the size of a newborn. The dress and sweater I got are swimming on her; she looks like the ragamuffin from the "Les Misérables" poster. Any moment she will start singing, most likely something accusatory: "Have you seen this awful dress?/It is an insult to my kind/Purchased by a rotten daughter who does not appear to mind." Not that my mother, who lives in a nursing home in Mamaroneck, notices or cares. The ugly doll accompanies her to lunch and concerts. When I visit and move the ugly doll from Ma's tray table to her bed so we can have bagels and lox on Sunday like normal people, without the doll's foot in my face, Ma tells me the doll needs something. "She likes to be kissed," she says. "You kiss her," I say, in something dangerously close to a snarl, because even though I try to be a saintly daughter, the other one sometimes slips out. "What was it like growing up with your mother?" someone asked me years ago, when she was merely a colorful emotional thug, not certifiable. "Like being an ambulance driver in World War I," I said, because while my mother had many impressive qualities, tenderness and tact were not among them. She told people she could not stand them; she stopped speaking to family members for life; she left them bleeding. I saw my job as walking behind, patching up the wounded when possible. Triage. Can this uncle, whom Mom refuses to speak to even though his wife is dying, be saved, or should I rush on to someone who has a chance, like me? I was never aware of any fondness for children. If you were into needlepoint and wanted to commemorate Ma's maternal feelings, this is what the pillows would read: "Kids aren't for everybody." Then, three years into her stroke, the baby obsession kicks in. "I want a baby," she says when I visit. "You had babies, Ma," I tell her. "You didn't like it. You said we screamed all the time. Me especially." "I want a baby," Ma says. "You know, Ma, there are lifelike doll babies they give to high-school kids to show them how much work babies are," I tell her. "Maybe we could try that first. Then you'd remember." The next day Ma's aide, Terri, gets a doll from the nursing home. When I walk in her room Ma is holding it tightly, beaming. She tells me she has named the doll Beth. She is happier than*

*I have seen her in months, which is what a good daughter should focus on. What I focus on is that my 90-year-old mother, who could once eviscerate anyone in her path, is playing with dolls. After the visit, I crumple up on a couch on a hall, where Larry, the activities guy, spots me. "Your mother had a good life," he says. "She traveled, she did what she wanted. I have a young woman on another floor, she never got to have a life." "Yeah," I say. "I know that." "The doll is making her happy," Larry says. I know that too. My mother could be having meltdowns like some of the women in her unit, or staring into space. I try to accept the ugly doll, which my mother kisses like a real baby. A stepsibling. Welcome to the family, kid, I hope you came armed. Still, there are challenges. "I prayed really hard to God last night," Ma tells me one morning when I arrive. "Oh, yeah, Ma?" I say. "What did you pray for?" "I prayed for a miracle," Ma says. "I prayed for him to make Beth alive." I'm hit, I fall to the ground, but invisibly, like all the other daughters in this place. Then one day, after a picnic in the garden, my brother Martin, who is also creeped out by the doll, tells me he has noticed that I never look at the doll either. I never realized that. But if my brother has picked up on me ignoring the doll, my mother has probably noticed it. That must be painful. You don't want someone holding their nose when faced with something you love. I decide I will try harder. I go back to Gap Kids, hoping I don't run into women buying clothes for real babies. Although how can you tell? We all have hidden lives, maybe that's really who's in baby-clothing shops, women with mothers with dementia. I spend a long time choosing, then get a dusty pink party dress with eyelet trim and matching pink bloomers, this time the right size. My mother is delighted. We dress the doll together, stuffing its pudgy arms through the sleeves, then I push Mom in her wheelchair through the gardens so she can show everyone its new outfit. **My mother is playing with dolls. She used to be brutal. I want my rotten mother back.***

.....

### **Snippets Tidbits Tidal Waves**

***Every day, when you walk out the door, put on your imaginary cape and go out there and conquer the world – because the world would not be as beautiful as if is if we weren't in it. Lena Waithe, Actress, Master of None***

.....

***What I have to do is keep living. A byproduct of living is going to produce three-dimensional forms. Sculpture arises out of songs and out of poetry and out of grief. Theaster Gates, Artist, Winner of Nasher Prize 2017***

.....

***a sad and breathless and often pretty funny play about the ways in which loss mangles our world and garbles our speech. – Alexis Soloski critic, writing about "in a Word: by Lauren Yee, winner of Kesselring Prize***

.....

***I am not trying to reproduce rape; I want to cut through the trauma so that people can receive and understand these experiences. The body speaks when testimony has been suspended. Dorothee Munyaneza, Rwandan, choreographer, dancer, new work Unwanted.***

.....

***The act of a pro is to make it look easy. Fred Astaire doesn't grunt when he dances to let you know how hard it is. If you're good at it, you leave no fingerprints. Lillian Ross, editor writer New Yorker – dead at 99***

.....

*...defragging our nervous systems –need to bust out into place of creativity, passion, focus, tranquility, vitality and self-refinement. “flow” “ecstasy,” stepping beyond oneself. –bliss junkies and epiphany whores” Everyone lines up for the peak experience, but no one does their push-ups on Monday morning.*

*Jamie Wheal, expert on Flow*

.....  
*brown girl bleeds blue – On the first day, our cafeteria would still have smelled like a decaying future. Un/Sung – We Shall Not Be Moved, opera by Daniel Bernard Roumain*

.....  
*Written on Skin – opera by George Benjamin*

.....  
*I've never been in love, in romantic love. I have experienced romantic attraction of varying degrees, I have platonic love, and I obviously love music. But romantic love is its own genre, and that is something that I have never experienced full-blown. – just felt alienated by the idea of pursuing romantic love.*

*Am I vital if my heart is idle? Am I doomed?*

*I know what it's like to behold and not be held. I've always wanted to explore in art, how intimate can you get with something and still feel some distance from it?*

*We cannot be lovers/Long as I'm the other.*

*I think I'm just going to start sonically, start with chords and melody and sounds and production and see what the words decide to be. Of this, probably, just to fall in love with someone. And then, Here's my love album, and then no more.*

*You've got to learn how to do it for yourself, no one's going to make you a star. You're going to make yourself anything worth listening to.*

*Moses Sumney, album Aromanticism*

.....  
*He thought, I'm safer alone. I'm just gonna retreat and live out my life in solitude. It's these chance encounters in life, and you can't help but think that for some reason, someone just nudged you along the path, and had they never nudged you... . Robert Redford, Michael Hainey, 9/13/17 Esquire*

.....

## **I have an imaginary friend**

Who goes in and out with me  
She lives inside my head

*I HAVE a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.*

*One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.*

*Robert Louis Stevenson, My Shadow*

Updating me on what  
I can and can no longer do  
She is at my bedside  
Helping me find  
A relatively painless way  
To rest my body  
Hip arthritis persists  
Pain not easily assuaged  
Flush with words  
I daren't lose  
Underlines fragments  
Of other's wise words  
To guide me  
Keep me upright  
Moving forward  
If with great difficulty  
Truly how ready am I  
To fall off the edge  
Of the universe  
To give up guilt  
Taking stock  
Of what I have  
Reaped and what sewed  
Time crowding in  
For me to keep  
A long held promise  
To leap without dread  
Before death comes  
And finds me  
And strikes me dead - NB



.....

## **Digressions Quoting Myself**

*there he was craig augustus hart sitting in the catbird seat - new floors new furniture arrangement in master bedroom - sure sex toys left dangerously barely concealed for sophie to find and be titillated by - lasagna and kids honoring him and friends at his table - june, you have an inner strength that i do not have - yes you have incredibly freed yourself from him - so monstrous in so many ways - and your tactic is right for it is helping kids have as willa put it the life they deserve as kids - but wow! -no harm to him - harm slides off his back like water off a duck - well for me he well always remain the fucker who couldn't wouldn't didn't love you - just the opposite tried to wear you into a kneeling supplicant - i hold back as you build a wonderful life - best mother best lover boyfriend best work and best builder of a future for your kids where they too will be rich with dollars and otherwise - and be able to spread their wings - and you financially secure - but what a rotten bastard!!!!!! - xomom*

*june, we really can't forget that we are part of the radical diaspora of the jews - having to flee - begin life again with absolutely nothing - in a very small way our voyage to 88th ststreet - having to start again - grandma's family - bakers who generously gave out free bread to all who needed it - delivered horse and carriage - grandpa's family - isidore who became a fine tailor - ultimately opened a candy store and insisted bill play the violin - he was just 5 - they brought an old world perspective and world view with them - absolutely secular here and in the old country for grandpa's family - orthodox in the best sense of the word on grandma's - xo*

.....

### **Mostly Mainly Mouth All Mouth**

And clouded up eyes  
Repulsive  
Avert eyes mirror doesn't lie  
Apologist  
Just old and arthritic hip let's me know  
Pushed off near edge of universe  
Teetering tottering hobbled  
Walking hurts sleeping hurts  
Does dying hurt?  
Already in death-shoot  
Behind my own back  
I stand woozy dizzy tipsy  
Final moments  
Don't come with grace  
Familiar too familiar  
Fear stares me  
Right in the face  
And does death hurt?  
Can't turn this around  
No second chances  
No do over for life lived  
It was it is as it was  
As it happened to me  
Or as I happened to it  
Already grown so old  
In earnest in death throes  
And for me  
There is no turning back  
No turning back  
The end death so final  
No more chances  
To do right  
To do anything  
But to die right  
And dear me  
Let it be  
Let me die right  
Let it be a great  
Moment of pride for me - NB



### **Impotent**

Plus can't walk  
Mike rebelled  
When weakened legs  
Broke him  
If with stagger  
Uneven gait  
If clutching  
With desperation  
Walking stick  
If life sustaining  
Holding me up  
Against a fall  
Broken hip  
Bone chips  
Cubist disfiguration  
Old people  
Don't live  
Much beyond  
Broken hip  
Grandpa died  
Soon after  
If at nearly 96  
Can't gamble  
Gather more years  
So the time between  
Birth and death  
Is - longevity there  
Walk with difficulty  
Trying physical therapy  
Might as well  
Be learning Mandarin  
So foreign to me  
Not comfortable language

Don't like body touched  
Big room motivated people  
Struggling  
Need to get to the Park  
Watch the Mums bloom  
This the fall of  
Distemper and discontent  
My pain my hip my legs  
This the fall being  
Malcontent discontent  
Struggle just to get  
Legs to carry me  
To mums as they bloom  
Exert will to overcome  
Be overrun  
By distemper  
By impossibility  
Carry me to full blooms  
Just one more fall  
And then, then...NB



.....

## **Headshot**

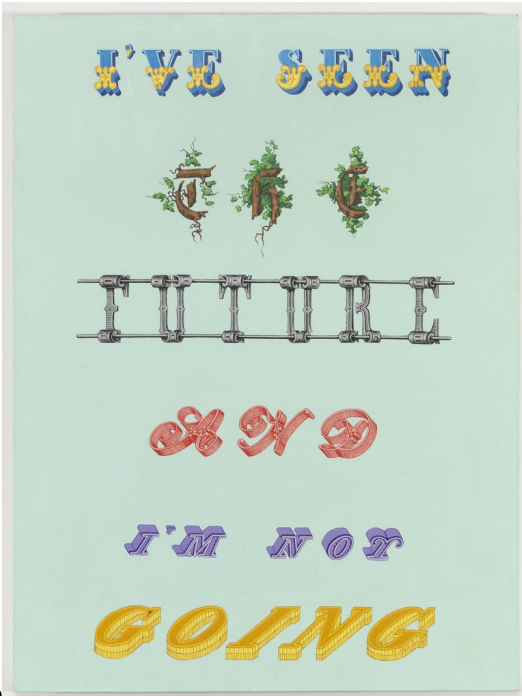
Nothing neck down  
Or below the waist  
Just sittin' pretty  
Don't ask me  
To stand up  
No longer  
Stand up kind's girl  
Don't ask me  
To walk toward you'  
Don't ask me  
To walk at all  
Can't stand  
The eyes that skirt  
As if driven  
By blustery wind  
Can't stand pained face  
Lips pressed together  
Hard shard of face  
Vise tight  
Don't ask me to walk  
First baby steps  
Stagger fall  
Get up butt first  
No more  
If step wrong  
If fall  
Hip cracks shatters  
I yelp like  
Wounded dog  
Or cat in heat  
Don't ask me to walk  
Let's stop at neck up  
Still know your name  
Still know who you are  
To me children three  
Downgraded bested  
Old age finally  
Got to me felled me  
I am a broken tree  
Root bed lifting  
Rotting rutting out  
Please no more  
Just a headshot  
A quick smile  
Loving eyes

Mommie thick  
With recollection  
And tears  
Ready to spill  
Let me sit here  
Still until until until....nb

### **Showing Up**

Counting last times  
Pressure too great  
Understand  
Why old people  
Stay hidden  
In Dementia  
Bare-knuckle  
Arm wrestle  
Death has me in  
Inescapable  
Hand-grip  
*Over the Top*  
Winner no contest  
*This the winter*  
*Of my discontent Shakespeare, Richard III*  
Arm collapse  
No contest  
Body soon to follow  
Falter stagger  
Horrifying  
All who witness  
Eyes avert  
Go back the other way  
Go get your hip replaced  
Need to fly off  
My imagined after world  
Soar me upward  
Feat defeat falter fall  
No more risk  
Stairs, escalators  
Refuse to break hip  
Attendant pulls Depends  
Up my leg  
Lift your hip  
You must be kidding  
This must never  
Ever happened

Need to disappear  
Disappear in  
The roar the swell  
Tidal sea currents  
Sucking me out  
Undercurrent continuum  
Beneath my feet  
Feel dizzy woozy  
As if standing just above  
Rumble of No 2 subway  
Need to vacate this me  
Looked upon now  
By pitying averting eyes  
Wanting me to be back  
The other way  
Watch pained faces  
Begging go  
*Get a hip replacement*  
Walk right  
Go back to your  
Old normal self  
Upright sprightly gait  
Period of grace  
Graceless gait  
Worry clouds  
Other's faces  
Avert eyes  
Watch hip hopping  
Walking stick pounding  
Don't turn right  
Don't use right leg  
Get surgery  
We can't watch  
Out of sight  
Out of mind  
Time to resign  
Get out  
While getting is good  
Time to fold up tent  
*Time to go home*  
While standing  
Pisa-like tilt upright  
Time to walk  
Or saunter stagger  
Or limp or hobble out  
*Into that dark night - NB*



Over the Top

---

*I've Seen the Future and I'm Not Going, McDermott & McGough, art show*

.....



## We Can Hear You Coming

Creaking click claque snapping bones  
Foot fall falter stumble fall  
And *that's all folks!*



Confounding compounding comedic  
Fumbling drooling tottering teetering  
No longer upright  
Ever forward ever forward  
To where to no where  
Objects slip from fingers out of hands  
Bounce roll should have studied physics  
Gravity pull scour to retrieve  
Oh woe is me – woe is me  
No longer able to hold onto anything  
Tomfoolery buffoonery laughable  
What has become of me  
Comforting consoling thoughts:

*\*I don't believe in an after life, although I am bringing a change of underwear.*

*\*Eternity is a long time, especially towards the end.*

*\*Interestingly, according to modern astronomers, space is finite. This is a very comforting thought – particularly for people who cannot remember where they left things.*

*\*What if nothing exists and we're all in somebody's dream?*

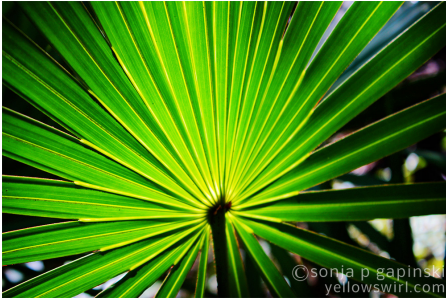
*\*I am not afraid of death. I just don't want to be there when it happens. Woody Allen*

There is something slap happy silly about  
Getting this old and near to dying  
*Getting old ain't for the faint of heart. (Anthony Hopkins)*  
Startled whose arms spotted skin serrated and hanging loose  
Indescribable the folds that tumble over my waist stomach  
And face thank god eyes dimming transformation too horrifying  
How to make this a time of grace of wisdom great humility  
Carefully choreograph disappearing

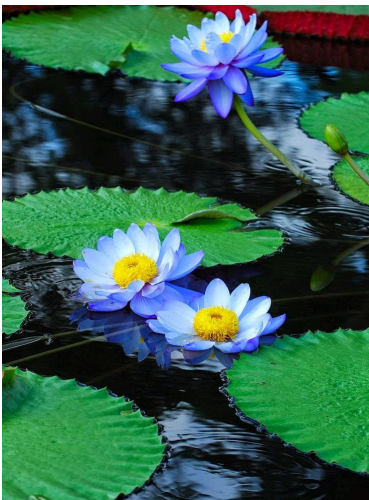
How to do the end well  
Confounding compounding comedic  
Believed lifelong in small goodbyes big hellos  
Now to craft the dimensions of disappearance  
If a tear shed a heart breaks a little  
Then a little giggle a smile  
How do to that kind of dying well - NB



**Flotilla**  
Palm fronds



Peacock feathers fanning  
Keeping head above water  
Bobbing apple  
Lily pads  
Water lily



*The warmth of spring beckons the leaves of water lilies to the calm surfaces of ponds, lakes, and slow-moving streams. The young leaves emerge in the glow of sunlight and then unfurl to become lily pads. Afloat, the cool water on their backs and the sunlight drenching their faces, lily pads, for a few short months each year, enjoy a life akin to the type of summer vacation we dream of.*

*By late summer, the majority of lily pads have begun to decay, their vivid green fading to yellow and brown, their parts detaching and disappearing into the water. The water lily falls dormant. It will not be awakened again until next spring, when a new generation of lily pads will emerge. The Life of a Lily Pad, Kara Rogers, Britannica Blog*

Gentle pastels flower  
Periwinkle blue  
Summer sky's hue

Climb deep down  
Back inside stay hidden  
Concealed but for face  
Visible unfixed unsutured up  
Top of head bald as eagle  
Monk's crown spare bare  
Gait on tilt arthritic hip's curse  
Need to tuck gimpy leg  
Meer duck on one webbed foot



[clipartof.com/1114562](http://clipartof.com/1114562)

Need to stay hidden  
Other's gaze foreboding forbidden  
No more toleration  
For running commentary  
*Consider hip replacement*  
*My mother-in-law at 82 both*  
And then the pinched forced smile  
Sympathy pity feeling so sorry for  
*Anticipation anticipation – I just got old*

*Anticipation, anticipation*  
*Is makin' me late*  
*Is keepin' me waitin'*

*And tomorrow we might not be together*  
*I'm no prophet and I don't know nature's ways*  
*So I'll try and see into your eyes right now*  
*And stay right here 'cause these are the good old days Carly Simon*

*At 75, now 77 got arthritic hip*

*Small price to pay*  
*For getting to this age*  
Stay seated don't move  
Possum stuck still  
Not to get up  
Until no witnesses  
No one to notice  
Fix walking stick  
Pain rattles stance  
Get myself relocated upright  
First moments verge on collapse  
I was once a lily pad  
Full succulent summer opened  
Sun's rays guide my flowering  
Summer passing moving on  
And I can't walk I can't walk  
I can't not walk not walk  
Stagger swagger falter fall  
Cane pounds pavement  
Footsteps move with beat  
Rubber tip grips slips  
I just fall and break hip  
Life upends refuses to extend  
Beyond a broken hip  
Time closes in on me  
Now ripe wild with ideas  
Words rush me overrun me  
My head a whirl a twirl  
As never before when  
Closed from self by fear  
Stealth warrior mom invade  
Head heart concave  
Cavalcade of regret  
Verging perpetual tears  
See notice of Fall Film Festival 2017  
Sob tear up face awash  
Salty dog tearful  
No longer stealth  
Coming full blown into myself  
Strut peacock feathers span  
Lily pads bloom periwinkle blue  
And not I cannot walk  
And cannot not walk  
Appraised commented upon  
Pawn broker death incarnate  
Life signaling as it deserts me

Mind more vivid alert  
Than ever it has been  
Uninhibited unrestrained  
Fearful no more  
Words pour out  
The damn broke  
Joke on me final irony question  
How many word angels  
Can dance on the head of a pin  
This ripening of image and song  
Is my afterlife my valedictory  
Can't won't refuse to  
Break a hip rather hemlock  
Than risk hospice induced death  
Locked in a hospital bed  
Chocking down concoctions  
To have me rest easy  
Sedated thrown back  
To a silenced self  
Write on not a minute to lose  
No more looking over shoulder  
Whatever gets writ stays writ  
No more compromise  
And remember to stay put  
Stay in place seated until  
The vagrant judging condemning  
Confining pretend consoling eye passes by - nb

.....  
*It is the hour of departure, the hard cold hour  
which the night fastens to all the timetables.  
The rustling belt of the sea girdles the shore,  
Cold stars heave up, black birds migrate.  
Deserted like the wharves at dawn,  
Only the tremulous shadow twists in my hands.  
Oh farther than everything. Oh farther than everything.  
It is the hour of departure. Oh abandoned one!*  
*Pablo Neruda, The Song of Despair*

.....

### **I Need to I Want to**

Get out of here alive  
Not half-died  
Unbridled stallion-like  
Rears up within me  
Wild wilding breaking free  
Ear piercing whinny escapes  
Breaking loose the tethering  
Heart breaking heart stopping



Need to get rid of finally  
The one who is the aged me  
Bone tired pain unstoppable  
Body finds no place to rest itself  
No pain free sprawl on mattress  
Padded now with two quilts  
I am not built for this wilt  
This slowing this ebbing  
Time for ashen particles  
Wind drift to tree limb  
Remains of singed bone chips  
Lie among crisp summer's end  
Burnt offerings awhirl awry  
Imagining the afterlife of me  
Hegemonic wall-eyed death  
I plead enter me clear-eyed  
Still upright anticipating  
Liturgical death dooming ecstasy  
I yield dear overlord death

I am ready to be gotten  
Torment taunting mother pain  
Seductress of unsettled night  
I am ready to break free  
Cut loose a dappled mare  
Rising hind legs bellowing  
Indelible footprints  
Following North Star  
For final departure  
Got to get out alive  
Wild and tempestuous  
Not no never half-died - NB



**The Great Get Going**



## **Torpid Turgid**

Torpedoed  
Saturated with  
Longing pleading  
Prone prostrate  
On a bed of hot coals  
To wound sear scar  
And reckon with instead



*Bronzino (1503 -1573)*

What is heaven sent  
Embrace unfold as love  
Body easy in its hold  
Essence of embrace  
Body breath beat  
Bursts of flatulence  
Cut into silence  
Residue of wine  
Imbibed  
Candle lit meal  
Smile softens  
Sleeping faces

Making final  
Reviews of life  
Lived and unlived  
Taking stock  
Beneath sadness

Aware never let my body  
Get easy close enough  
To lose itself  
Within loving arms  
Of that other  
To find a laugh  
Crack the silence with  
Euphemistic farting  
Fill the night air  
With the aroma  
Of a body supine  
Sublimely easy  
Full and happy  
Ripened with dream  
Safe unguarded open  
Night air filling with  
Body's sundry aromas  
Deeply poignant remorseful  
Watching for the umpteenth time  
*Good Will Hunting – Robin Williams and Matt Damon*  
Seized gripped they laughing  
About *The Good Stuff*

*Will's is crude and, as Sean pointedly observes, based on fantasy. In return, he offers a more poignant, personal anecdote about his wife's nighttime flatulence, using it to underscore his larger point about intimacy and imperfection. That's the good stuff*

Saturated with longing  
Remembering back  
To a life of hot coals  
And cold shoulders  
Chastened I chose men  
From whom I fled  
Clutching the edge  
Of the bed  
Rigid sorrowful body  
Combative silenced  
Sounds of husband  
Turned from moon's  
Possibilities  
Sacrifice suffering  
Victimhood my constellation

Misguided as any  
Orbiting errant missile  
Took in one huge cock  
A full bloom bloodthirsty predator

The other a mini-half one  
Who feasted on women  
Tiny bite by tiny bite  
Shark like unsparing teeth  
Only without majesty of sea  
The other man full-blown  
*Marquis de Sade* sadist  
Life size portraiture  
Unapologetically biting  
Munching on my life  
Clinging to edge of bed  
Buoyed buoy ship ahoy  
Threaded appliqued image  
Of raft to seize to clutch hold  
Hold In wildly surly  
Troubled turbulent sea  
Heated hyperbolic  
Way of confessing saying  
I didn't get that lovin'  
The kind when two bodies  
Close in upon each other  
Breath in unison continuo  
Of lung yielding bellows  
In comity in harmony continuo  
Life sustaining spasmodic bodies  
At odd bit times expelling effects  
Of dinners excessive sumptuous meal  
Woe is me woeful sorrowful  
Never to have had this kind of lovin'  
But in dribs and drabs scattershot  
Fleet no commitment necessary  
Butterfly quicksilver honeysuckle  
Sip wings tipped with flight  
*Attracted more to abandonment than love*  
I once wrote commemorative headstone  
Confessions tumble unruly  
If for skidding seconds  
Infinitesimal seconds  
Tales of love's revolving  
Evolutionary evolving time  
And here comes a truth my truth  
I did find have love  
Holding my babies  
In my arms fresh wet  
Wailing yielding  
Twisted up searching mouth

Tongue seizes hold latching on  
My breasts ripe harvest of milk  
I loved being a mommy  
I loved my babies  
I who found cold stone soup  
Fearful verging madness  
At my mother's tit  
Withholding milk  
Force of sheer will  
Scars I let fester  
Resentment  
Overshadowing desire  
Never to sleep near  
Next to a man or woman  
With whom my body  
Could not get enough of  
Someone close to touch  
Hold merge yield vanish into  
No not in this lifetime  
Not to feel pity sorrow for myself  
Love came with three children  
Two of my body one found  
Holding nothing back  
Fluttering unrestrained putti  
And then the contaminant  
To which I had them exposed  
Malevolence and cruelty  
Unimaginable from father's  
Two different one's  
The big predator and  
The teeny tiny one  
Unimaginable cruelty surfacing  
Insufferable chipping away  
Shavings of inviolate childhood  
Cuts deep and un-healing  
In hands of penultimate  
Narcissistic sadists  
To reconcile now before I die  
Not a man or woman close by  
At night to yearn to touch  
Stars moon yield children  
For me to love  
Who I hand over to men  
Whose very touch tears burns  
Sears scorches scars young hearts  
Duality compendium of harm

Unresolved we make choices  
That blister the night  
Surly force contradictions  
Choosing to be a mother without love  
Brought children forth  
For whom even abiding mother love  
Could not ease the suffering of they're  
Whiplash cock brutalizing unloving fathers- NB

.....



...**whiten the soul** -7 year old village Guardia Sanframondi, Italy describing 15<sup>th</sup> century celebration to Madonna dell-Assunta, divine intervention against famine and scarce harvest – re-enacted every 7 years

.....

**The planet was now full of bickering little countries with unpronounceable names.** Real journeys only existed in the imagination. Wanting a place with a feeling of abundance with things overlapping and giving you a sense of eruption. Ian McEwan, author Atonement

.....

**A world in which you learned the hard way that life could drag disgrace out of you.** At the day it is women teetering between her narrow options who are left to cope. What happened to the face of a broken woman? Did it turn to convey the loss or did it conspire with her heart to hide it? Margaret Wilkerson Sexton, A Kind of Freedom.

.....

...**like a great tree in leaf with the tings suffered, things enjoyed, things done and undone** – Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

.....

***Whether by choice, chance or – ultimately and unavoidably – death, you will be separated from the person you love most.***

***Here it is, the sound of introverts pining!***

***Shaun Bengson and Abigail Bengson, Hundred Day - musical***

.....  
***My songwriting is my diary and it is my best friend. It's a place I can go to where it's not expecting anything from me. There's just no inhibitions there. It's a complete free place to say whatever I want to say. Shania Twain, singer, Now album***

.....  
***my mother is a granite boulder  
I can no longer climb nor walk around  
her weight is a constant remind of myself  
I sit in her shadow  
gulls nestle in her eyes  
their shadows her epitaph  
I carry  
a pebble for her in my pocket.***

***An avalanche of creativity has built up inside me since meeting my mother and learning our family story. Whenever I complete an art piece, I feel a personal celebration in my heart. I feel dead chunks falling off my darkened soul. I've had my quota of sadness in this lifetime. I don't cope very well with sadness any more. Ali Cobby Eckermann, poet, Stolen Generation, Aboriginal from Maralinga, South Australia.***

.....  
***By what inevitable degrees does bent become inclination, inclination tendency, tendency penchant, penchant disposition, disposition fate? Stanley, Elkin, novelist, The Dick Gibson Show***

.....  
***...inequality is as dear to the American heart as liberty itself. William Dean Howells, novelist, (1837-1920) The Rise of Silas Lapham, A traveler from Alturia***

.....  
***...villagers conducted annual exercise in collective self-analysis , self-absorption and self-motivation, turning their inner struggles, doubts, hopes and fears into art. ...summer staged theater performance in which they act out – the story of their own lives.  
It is only a firm belief and the courage to dare, a common goal that unites people instead of dividing them. Gaia Pianigiani, Since 1967 Italian Village Puts its Struggles on Stage for All to See , Monticchiello, Italy - NY Times 9/22/17***

.....

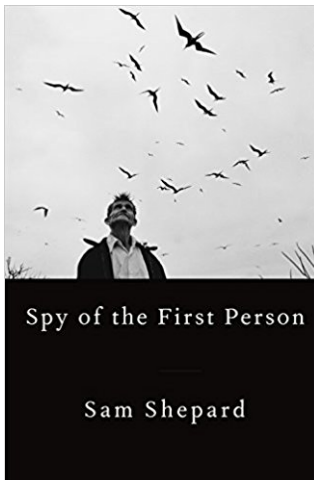
*...consumerist families that threat teachers and the school in entirely instrumental ways, seeking to use as exclusively to advance their child's narrow self-interest. Calls for dismantling of this default understanding of Trinity as a credentialing factory, so that children can ascend to a comfortable perch atop a cognitive elite that is self-serving, callous and spiritually barren. I am afraid we are for a majority of our students, just a very expensive finishing school. John Allman, Head of Trinity School NYC -NY Times, Ginia Bellafante 9/24/17*

.....  
**Crimped Cramped Crippled**

Mobility limited  
Euphemistically speaking  
I am hardly able to walk  
Gear up feat getting to  
Dumpster mailboxes  
Awkward  
Ass backwards  
Into cabs  
When time  
To just throw  
Towel in  
Think that time  
Has come  
Unwieldy leg  
Too hard  
To lug around  
And this disease  
Is degenerative  
Meaning  
Gets worse and worse  
For me there is no turning back  
*I know that for a fact  
I'm at the point of no return  
And for me there'll be no turning back Georgie Fame, Point of No Return*  
Facts is facts  
Time to act  
Only one-way out  
Walking if half -upright  
To the pearly gates  
For me alone where death waits - NB



**Nothing seems to be working now. Hands, Arms, Legs. Nothing. I'm just here.**  
*Waiting for someone to find me. I just look up at the sky.*  
*Something in his body refuses to get up. The appendages don't seem connected to the motor – whatever that is –driving this thing. They won't take direction- won't be dictated to – the arms, legs, feet, hands. Nothing moves. Nothing even wants to. The brain isn't sending signals. There must be a cure. We are children of the miraculous.*  
*Long pause. Pausing. A long pause. Pausing. Nobody hands on his words. Nobody hangs in the moment. Nobody really hangs for nobody. ..the man relishes the meal in all its details, and especially the snug sense of being in our whole troupe, our little band. - Sam Shepard, Spy of the First Person, last book, suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease.*



.....  
**...Closing the bodega down for real - Cy Twombly, artist**

.....  
**...you can tell a poem because words are swimming in a little gel pack of white space. Nicholson Baker, The Anthologist**



**WHAT MORE IS THERE? I ASK EARLY OCTOBER DAY 2017?**

Say once again to summer  
Say once again hello to fall  
Watch the transformation  
Mortician fall leaves  
Concubine of summer's decline  
Declension of colors  
Illusionist transfixes  
Extraordinary palate  
Of colors hues  
Red yellow purple  
Crunch crackle  
Beneath feet  
Tough ground  
Golden burnt crusty  
Crunch beneath feet



Dragged across  
A season's finish line  
Not to go without  
Riot of colors hues  
Radiating radical blue sky  
Frame glory  
Of transformation  
Rigors of righteous passing on  
Life death birthday blue



To fade out black  
Regular on Noona's designate  
Bench in Garden  
Enclosed by trees  
Seated just across fountain  
Find nearly cloudless sky  
Search adjective  
For which blue  
Budding mums  
Hand planted each one  
Soon unabashed  
Artist palate imprints  
Mind soul spirit  
Essential being alive  
I am a mother  
A woman in fade  
Noona's bench  
Yield soon too others  
This yet another  
Fall of mums  
Probably not another  
What more is there  
What more and why  
Walk with difficulty  
Pain surges up leg  
Black man holding bike  
Lists fist honoring me  
What more is there  
Struggle to reach mums  
Blossoming to  
Full blooming  
And then the  
Inevitable wilt to wither '

Pulled up from ground  
Mum by mum one by one  
What more is there  
Struggle heightens  
Being fully aware present  
What more is there  
Humiliating embarrassing  
To ask for more  
For one more fall bloom  
Just one more time  
Stand grip hold tight  
To floral walking stick  
Wobble getting to upright  
Gain footing step gingerly  
Find stride to exit  
On path without steps  
Breathe hard moving  
What more one more time  
On Noona's bench  
And I digress here  
Holding hands once again  
After more than fifty years  
He fully broke from reality  
Disappeared from my life  
I was seventeen  
Now each of us over seventy  
He more or less back together  
Millennial mental illness  
Awkward embodiment  
Old body old mind  
Took him to my garden  
To Noona's bench  
And as he looked  
In tentatively at fountain  
Informed me  
If you want to know  
What ego looks like  
That is it –  
Three Dancing Maidens



Three Dancing Maidens by Walter Schott  
Madness hadn't quite left him  
Or had it  
Was that what the ego looks like?  
Brief reunion  
Left with image thinking ego  
Take it all in  
Recollection pressed  
Impounded grounded  
Walk with difficulty home  
Robin eggshell sky blue  
Saying final goodbyes  
So damn hard  
As mother would say  
*Dying is hard*  
Lived incomplete  
Held back biting bit by bit  
Each day now waiting  
Waiting waiting for what  
For the what more  
There is nothing more  
Mums budding in early fall  
*My cup runneth over* (Psalm 23:5)  
Now just to convince myself -nb



Korean chrysanthemums of Central Park,  
Conservatory Garden

## **Danger of probing**

Looking too hard  
When does mind splitting  
When the onset  
Speaking in tongues  
Logic words end  
Dangerous life threatening  
Probing too deep  
Digging up the past  
Less than thousands  
Of yester years  
Walking moon  
Less risk  
Than pushing beyond  
Imaginations grip  
Hopscotch Genocide  
Fratricide matricide  
Old long gone myths  
Recent past  
Soil still blood-stained  
Leapfrog memory  
Over reasoned mind  
Ghosts bloody  
Saunter stagger in  
Past torments pressed  
Full-blown shingles on skin  
Vagrant vagaries of past assault  
*Rock one back on heels*  
Reality suspends upended  
Past genocides mount the walls  
Mosaics tapestries of horror  
Urgent light to illuminate  
Catapulted contrapuntal  
Images too sordid to behold  
How does kara walker  
Make art of a past  
Too horrific horrifying  
Anarchic frightening  
Her hand lifts depicts  
Ancestral past  
Beyond grasp gasp  
I have tried to remember  
Jews pressed against  
Chain-link fence  
Eyes blank staring out  
Boney chicken like hands

Grasps to clasp  
My eyes avert  
Stomach revolts  
Unseemly *ancestry dot com*  
Mine to behold own  
And yet repulsed founder  
Fiery outcast past  
Haunts grabs hold  
Want and not want  
To know it  
As it happened  
Repulsed repelled  
Images repugnant  
My direct line ancestry  
Where is gentleness  
Kindness love  
Unsparing genocides  
Foredoom future  
Restless unexamined  
Prophecy of ultimate doom  
Soon too soon too soon  
The images of genocide  
Found their way  
To gallery walls  
Bearing testimony  
Of our collective past  
How kara walker did you  
Find you're way to knowing it  
Depicting it so fiercely Veritas Unum  
Without breaking into tongues  
How did you get your hand  
To move across canvas paper  
With such beyond comprehension  
Heart piercing imagery  
In the gallery I stood bare foot  
On scorching hot coals scarring past  
I still can't confront the exigencies  
The choices decision made  
I have tried to embrace  
Displacement the direct lineage  
Of my Jewish born past  
The diaspora  
Of which I am born  
Holocaust Pogrom  
And not run  
But no haven't come close

Just skimming malapropisms  
Of the history of the Jews  
Tantalizing looks closer  
Resisted at all costs  
*At Sikkema Jenkins and Co. is Compelled to present The most Astounding and  
important Painting show of the fall Art Show viewing season!*  
I looked and turned away  
Where the forbearance  
To create what exists on the walls  
The strength to portray  
What I could only fleetingly  
Look out without feeling woozy  
Nauseas sickened  
Where the joy the love  
How to move beyond  
Images of exacting past  
Without an accounting  
Without reconciliation  
Without avenging  
Finding retribution  
Believe if I take it all in  
Stand firm unflinching  
I will find my way  
To ultimate  
Truth and beauty  
Enlightenment  
Yielding morning glory open  
Swept to full petal awakened  
Blaze and heat of summer morning -nb



**A Subtlety or the Marvelous Sugar Baby – Kara Walker**

.....

***The Battle of Atlanta, a white man, presumably a Southern soldier, is raping a black girl while her brother watches in shock, a white child is about to insert his sword into a nearly-lynched black woman's vagina, and a male black slave rains tears all -***

***...tired of being a featured member of my racial group and/or gender niche. Slaughter of the innocents, (They Might be Guilty of Something) You Must hate Black People as Much as You Hate Yourself. – work at gallery –Kara Walker***





*... brawl of works on paper –Robert Smith, art critic NY Times*

*The practice of joy before death, it just wouldn't be a party without you – Kara Walker*

*"The Practice of Joy Before Death; It Just Wouldn't Be a Party Without You."  
Kara Walker*







.....

**Mississippi Goddam**

*The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam  
And I mean every word of it*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*This is a show tune  
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet*

*Hound dogs on my trail  
School children sitting in jail  
Black cat cross my path  
I think every day's gonna be my last*

*Lord have mercy on this land of mine  
We all gonna get it in due time  
I don't belong here  
I don't belong there even stopped believing in prayer*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*Can't you see it  
Can't you feel it  
It's all in the air  
I can't stand the pressure much longer  
Somebody say a prayer*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*This is a show tune  
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet*

*Hound dogs on my trail  
School children sitting in jail*

*Black cat cross my path  
I think every day's gonna be my last*

*Lord have mercy on this land of mine  
We all gonna get it in due time  
I don't belong here  
I don't belong there  
I've even stopped believing in prayer*

*Don't tell me  
I tell you  
Me and my people just about due  
I've been there so I know  
They keep on saying "Go slow!"*

*But that's just the trouble  
"do it slow"  
Washing the windows  
"do it slow"  
Picking the cotton  
"do it slow"  
You're just plain rotten  
"do it slow"  
You're too damn lazy  
"do it slow"  
The thinking's crazy  
"do it slow"  
Where am I going  
What am I doing  
I don't know  
I don't know*

*Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam*

*Can't you see it  
Can't you feel it  
It's all in the air  
I can't stand the pressure much longer  
Somebody say a prayer *Nina Simone Mississippi Goddam**

.....



.....



**David Hammons's African-American Flag**



**David Hammons, *How Ya Like Me Now?***

.....

***I just want to enjoy your nextness and nearness. I don't so much fear death as I do wasting life. Oliver Sacks, quote from Insomniac City, Bill Hayes***

.....

***And now there's everything that we can't talk about.***

*We love—but cannot take  
too much of each other.  
Yet she is the one who, when I asked her to kill me  
if I no longer had my mind—  
we were on our way into Ross,  
shopping for dresses. That's something  
she likes and they all look adorable on her—  
she's the only one  
who didn't hesitate or refuse  
or waver or flinch.  
As we strode across the parking lot  
she said, O.K., but when's the cutoff?  
That's what I need to know. Indigo, Ellen Bass*

.....

***You've come of age in the age of migrations.***

*The board tilts, and the bodies roll west.  
Fanaticism's come back into fashion,  
come back with a vengeance.  
In this new country, there's no gravitas,  
no grace. The ancient Chevys migrate  
west and plunge like maddened buffalo  
into a canyon. Where the oil-slick geese go,  
no one knows—maybe the Holland Tunnel  
because they take it for the monstrous turbine  
promised them in prophecy. I brought you  
to this world, and I do not regret it.  
The sky's still blue, for now. I want to show you  
an island where the trees are older than redwoods  
ever since Prospero turned them  
into books. You'll meet him when you're ready.  
For now, though, study this list of endangered  
species: it's incomplete, of course, since all  
species are in some danger nowadays.  
This is the country I bequeath to you,  
the country I bequeath you to. You've come  
of age, and you're inheriting the whole house,  
busted pipes and splintered deck and all.  
This is your people, this, the mythic West*

*your grandparents wished to reach, and reached.  
The oceans surge, but the boat is up on blocks.  
There's no America to sail to anymore. Amit Majmudar.....*

**Cataract Time**

As eyes dim clouding all things visual  
My mind my heart  
Do the remembering- nb

.....



Anna Maria Maiolino, Brazilian Artist, Glu Glu Glu...

.....

**Oh My Soul My Noble**

Well-intentioned soul  
My found child  
Guaraní prince  
Deprived of the fruit  
Of parrot harbored trees  
Taken off the land  
Still no contaminant  
Of containment  
No plunder no rape



No foreign bodies  
To filter through  
Blood stream  
Guaraní coupling  
Made you  
Pure and simple  
And I imperial I  
Came to claim you  
Son found son  
Indigenous child  
Taken from soil  
Necessary for wellbeing  
I took an abandoned child  
And within months or years  
With deplorable good doer  
Ignorance poisoned his insides  
He never should have left  
The leafy boughs of branch  
And canopy of rainforest  
Your place was to stay  
If wandering alone  
Among family  
If detached from mother  
With other's to feed  
And take care of  
Infant of crib and community  
You never should have been taken  
Your stomach dissipated septic  
By our lifestyle or foods  
You live on this foreign soil  
Without stomach  
Much of the time in unruly pain  
Being prodded and studied  
By a medical world  
Curious and uncaring  
At the same time  
I never should have  
I never should have  
I never...NB

.....

**Cannibal manifesto by Oswaldo de Andrade 1890 -1954**, poet and polemicist. Manifesto critical of Brazilian nationalism. Brazil's history of cannibalizing other cultures is its greatest strength – cannibalism a way for Brazil to assert itself against European postcolonial cultural domination.

Only cannibalism unites us. Socially, \.Economically. Philosophically.

I asked a man what was Right. He answered me that it was the assurance of the full exercise of possibilities. That man was called Galli Mathias. I ate him.

Happiness is the real proof.

...in reality we are complex, we are crazy, we are prostitutes and without prisons of the Pindorama matriarchy.

I am only interested in what's not mine. The law of men. The law of the cannibal.

Against all importers of canned conscience. For the palpable existence of life.

Against the vegetable elites. In communication with solitude.

Migrations: the flight from tedious states. Against urban scleroses. Against Conservatives and speculative boredom.

Pindorama – Municipality in the state of Sao Paul, Brazil. Andrade In the Sixteenth Century, in Brazil, the founder of Pindorama realizes that nobody works in the anarchic village.

.....'

**'I firmly believe that any good journalist must essentially be temperamentally an outsider.'**  
"I don't think full sense of belonging and security is conducive to creativity," he added. The Medical Examiner's office said that Mr. Lukas had strangled himself by tying a cord around his neck. He had long battled depression, and several friends said he had been "in a funk" since completing his latest book. "He'd convinced himself that it was not good enough, which was crazy because it was brilliant," said Amanda Urban, his agent. Indeed, Mr. Lukas was known for the intensity that he poured into his work, whether relatively short news articles or epic-length books. For example, in "Common Ground," which examined the effects of court-ordered racial integration on three Boston families, he dropped one family in midstream and replaced it with another because he felt that his first choice was "not working dramatically. "All writers ...," he said, "are, to one extent or another, damaged people. Writing is our way of repairing ourselves. In my own case, I was filling a hole in my life, which opened at the age of eight, when my mother killed herself, throwing our family into utter disarray. My father quickly developed tuberculosis—psychosomatically triggered, the doctors thought—forcing him to seek treatment in an Arizona sanatorium. We sold our house and my brother and I were shipped off to boarding school. Effectively, from the age of eight, I had no family, and certainly no community. That's one reason the book worked: I wasn't just writing a book about busing. I was filling a hole in myself **J. Anthony Lukas, author, Common Ground killed self age 64**

.....



### **Even The Gods**

*Even the gods misuse the unfolding blue. Even the gods misread the windflower's nod toward sunlight as consent to consume. Still, you envy the horse that draws their chariot. Bone of their bone. The wilting mash of air alone keeps you from scaling Olympus with gifts of dead or dying things dangling from your mouth — your breath, like the sea, inching away. It is rumored gods grow where the blood of a hanged man drips. You insist on being this man. The gods abuse your grace. Still, you'd rather live among the clear, cloudless white, enjoying what is left of their ambrosia. Who should be happy this time? Who brings cake to whom? Pray the gods do not misquote your covetous pulse for chaos, the black from which they were conceived. Even the eyes of gods must adjust to light. Even gods have gods. Nicole Sealey*

.....

### **Imagine Sisyphus Happy**

*Give me tonight to be inconsolable.  
Give me just the duration of a good  
night's dream to wade in wreckage,  
so the death drive does not declare  
itself, so the moonlight does not convince  
sunrise. I was born before sunrise—  
when morning masquerades as night,  
the temperature of blood, quivering  
like a mouth in mourning. How do we  
author our gentle birth, the height  
we were—were we gods rolling stars across  
a sundog sky, the same as scarabs?  
We fell somewhere between god  
and mineral, angel and animal,  
translated the world into man. Then believed  
a thing as sacred as the sun can rise*

*and fall like an ordinary beast. Deer sniff lifeless  
fawn before leaving them, elephants*

*encircle the skulls and tusks of their dead—  
none wanting to leave the bones behind,*

*none knowing their leave will lessen the loss.  
But birds sometimes pluck their own*

*feathers, dogs can lick themselves to wound.  
Allow me this luxury. Give me tonight*

*to cut and salt the open. Give me a shovel  
to uproot the mandrake and listen*

*for its scream. Give me a hard face that toils  
so closely with stone, it is itself*

*stone. I promise to enter the flesh again.  
I promise to circle to ascend.*

*I promise to be happy tomorrow. Nicole Sealey*

.....

***“You do not have to be good.***

*You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.*

*Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.*

*Meanwhile the world goes on.*

*Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.*

*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.*

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.” Mary Oliver*

.....

*Blood Jet – Sylvia Plath Last Poems - You are the one. Solid the spaces lean on, envious. You are the baby in the barn. Sylvia Plath to son Nicolas (Nicolas committed suicide hanging himself at age 47) ...became wet jewels, the hardest substance of the purest pain. As I fed him in his high white chair, Ted Hughes about son Nicolas after his mother, Sylvia Plath's death.*

### 30Balloons

*Since Christmas they have lived with us,  
Guileless and clear,  
Oval soul-animals,  
Taking up half the space,  
Moving and rubbing on the silk*

*Invisible air drifts,  
Giving a shriek and pop  
When attacked, then scooting to rest, barely trembling.  
Yellow cathead, blue fish----  
Such queer moons we live with*

*Instead of dead furniture!  
Straw mats, white walls  
And these traveling  
Globes of thin air, red, green,  
Delighting*

*The heart like wishes or free  
Peacocks blessing  
Old ground with a feather  
Beaten in starry metals.  
Your small*

*Brother is making  
His balloon squeak like a cat.  
Seeming to see  
A funny pink world he might eat on the other side of it,  
He bites,*

*Then sits  
Back, fat jug  
Contemplating a world clear as water.  
A red  
Shred in his little fist.*

*Sylvia Plath, 5 February 1963*

**Edge**

***The woman is perfected.***

***Her dead***

***Body wears the smile of accomplishment,***

***The illusion of a Greek necessity***

***Flows in the scrolls of her toga,***

***Her bare***

***Feet seem to be saying:***

***We have come so far, it is over.***

***Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,***

***One at each little***

***Pitcher of milk, now empty.***

***She has folded***

***Them back into her body as petals***

***Of a rose close when the garden***

***Stiffens and odors bleed***

***From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower.***

***The moon has nothing to be sad about,***

***Staring from her hood of bone.***

***She is used to this sort of thing.***

***Her blacks crackle and drag.***

***Edge Sylvia Plath, final poem***

.....



***Sylvia Plath killed herself on February 11, 1963 -age***

## **Post-It**

Fragments words

Bitten off

From cunning

Manipulative

Wily brain

Post-it

Notes from

Bi-polar mother

Messages from

Deep unearthed

Unconscious mind

To stick on

Refrigerator door

Don't forget me

And here is

What I think

Here is what

You should do

Post-it

From heaven or hell

Spread the word

Her word

Messages

Within messages  
Within small squares  
To remind you  
To never forget her  
To press impress  
Upon you  
Her word  
Messages from  
A mother a grandmother  
Not to be forgotten  
Or taken for granted  
Guiding principles  
The word  
From on high  
Her fraying mind  
Her fragments  
Of wisdom  
Of the ages  
Here's what I think  
Here's what you should do  
Here is the word for the day  
Words wise or not  
Written cramped  
On small squares of paper



To stick on refrigerator door

Hey listen to me

See me hear me

I have the word of god

Or goddamn

Word to the wise

Is sufficient

She would often say

Wisdom on post-it

Unrelenting

Unrepentant

Demanding

Calling for

Your attention

Hey you

Don't ever forget

To remember me - NB



**I am disintegrating before my very own eyes**

Teeth chipping off graying enamel splintering

Cripple bent over pain ripping up my thigh

Walking sticks hold me up



*Image of elderly woman with sticky notes attached on clothing representing Alzheimer's disease*

Caricature of what's coming

Take a hard very hard look

It's a coming it's a coming

*It's a-coming*

*Wild fires, dying leaves (?)*

*Landslides, hurricanes*

*Apocalypse in store like nothing ever seen before*

*It's a-coming*

*Third generation refugees (?)*

*Take my burning effigies (?)*

*Revolution, civil war, like*

*Nothing ever seen before*

*Yeah, it's a-coming*

*Pale, lost and ----*

*Natalie Merchant / Indian Love Bride ©2014*

The end the very end  
The apocalypse  
The demise  
Mine to devise?  
The end is coming  
The end is near  
Father told me  
His greatest composition  
His greatest orchestration  
*Now I am ready*  
*No more Bach*  
*Bach is too beautiful*  
What will be my moment  
To turn away from  
Something someone  
I love and can't bear to part with  
Inevitable departure  
Whose hands hold the key  
The very end last moments of me  
Staggering around faltering falling  
Standing up searing rip roaring hurting  
Tired of brave faces reassurances  
Comes with old age, you know

I share at plaintive onlookers  
Disfigured disjointed discouraged  
Discography discombobulate decompose  
Crack me open this is my imagery  
Sadness vortex sucked me in  
Turned me inside out  
I am humbled bent  
Stuck in the dilemma  
When to go say enough is enough  
Dim my eyes leave this life with grace  
As promised myself so often  
Plaintive hard so hard  
To drift off to nowhere  
When does pain heat up enough  
Near to insane thrown to the edge  
Beyond sorrow beyond laughter  
Beyond redemption beyond regret  
Struggle wriggle for more  
To stay beg then too late to leave  
Leaving tough with too much  
Way too much left to say  
To you and you and you  
And for me for me

Forgive myself and never

To forget the collective of you - nb



**Tiny Tim M.F. or E.M. Taylor**



***Sheddie Grandee***

**Baying like a baby**

Birthing maimed

I stumble forward

My face finds no way

To hide the pain

The agony

Radiating out

And down my

Right thigh

No matter

Just my body

My mind

The date and year

Telling me

I am old

My mouth howling

Beneath the din

Of excruciating pain

NO! NO! NO! - NB

.....



*Flickriver*



*Oskar Schlemmer Bauhaus Dances*

## **He Loves Me He Loves Me Not? Nb**

*Still as we sat and ate our picnic supper, watching the sun go down behind the Catskill Mountains, I could not help feeling a sense of beauty and peace. It may be sad to return to the scenes of one's childhood and realize all the things that have happened in the intervening years to the people one loves; yet there is also something very sweet in remembering the good things which no sadness can wipe out. William Shannon, Honoring Eleanor Roosevelt, NY Times 9/18/17*

.....

*Ms. Gerwig turns out to be a natural filmmaking. Her solo directorial debut, "Lady Bird" is flat-out wonderful, as well as one of the best coming-of-age films since Amy heckerling's 1982 classic, "Fast Times at Ridgemon Higg." Manohla Dargis, NY Times 9/16/17*

*my dear sweet wonderful hard working son, what's more than ""Lady Bird is flat-out wonderful" manohla dargis? first a.o. scott with his great appreciation for greta gerwig's movie and now this - saw with my own eyes and heart at how greta looks toward you as she brings her creativity as a film maker to life and light - and jer, your exhilarating love brings the same out for all of us - family and clients and friends- can't wait to see - know sophie will love and appreciate as critics and others - i celebrate you - always out front behind the scenes - love, mom xoxoox*

.....

### **Scrap Heap Junkyard**

Of a disordered mind  
Uncensored tumbling  
Jumble free association  
Autodidact schooled  
Now just cracking up  
Coming apart  
Losing value viability  
Eyes squint scatter away  
Looking at stooped over  
Stumbling slow stepping  
Fragile fraying woman  
The now of me  
Pathetic rendering  
Archetype elderly  
Profile in courage  
Discourage discombobulate  
Stock phrases salvage me  
Stuck words savage me  
Fanfare of creaking bones  
Announce my coming going  
Reached that glorious state  
That point of no return  
Insistent foot stamping  
Self-reliant independent  
*Methinks Lady doth protest too much (Shakespeare Hamlet)*  
If contrite ages and stages  
In the terminal phase  
Of final disposition  
Entered the place of  
Ultimate unremitting darkness  
The great going home



Egregious decline  
Declension of endings  
Actuarially speaking  
Time to stop refusing  
Body's final desires  
To go quietly softly  
To just lie down  
No fuss no muss and just die - NB



www.alamy.com - EG5GR1

.....

***Where the Past Begins***

*...entries in diaries quirks interludes*

*...fictional outtakes – Amy Tan*

.....

**...double consciousness – W.E.B. DuBois**

.....

**...tap dancing with ballet shoes, skimming like a stone on water – Robert Fairchild, dancer, Duo Concertant**



## **Giving Up Quitting**

No more trains  
No more subway  
No more escalators  
The no more's  
The forbidding  
Foreboding mounts  
Growing old  
Body degenerates  
Stooping bent over  
Humility begs  
We move on  
Quit give up  
Limitations  
Confront  
Some avert eyes  
Repair this and that  
Bring youth back  
*No way Jose*  
No can do  
The past is past  
Over and gone  
Desire for viability  
Still will push out  
Too early spring crocus  
Death closes in  
Future diminished  
Plans mock jeer  
Not to agree  
To some future date  
To whatever  
Time to instill forget  
Never to enhance  
The emptiness of  
Your state of missingness  
Time to diminish  
A glaring absence  
Of your presence  
Time to imprint on  
The empty space  
Quick unfixed  
Reflection memory  
Laughter quip  
To quit fostering  
Necessariness

Need to move on  
Blur imagery vividness  
Move beyond livingness  
Time to stop bartering  
For more time  
Begging for just one  
Month year day minute  
Body's degeneration  
Fair warning  
To start ending affairs well  
To submit *to dying da*  
Hear the voices saying  
*Sorry for your*  
*Mother's passing*  
Tongue twisting  
Euphemism  
Time to submit  
There are no cures  
No salt mineral baths  
To bring life's dying back  
Pure and pluperfect simple  
Life ends not dread  
Being dead  
Time to take control  
Of the dying day  
Taking shape as a  
Personal prophesy dictates  
Body sears with crippling pain  
Which way to turn  
To quieting leg's throb  
Degenerating hips  
Snap crack pop  
Walk within the rhythm  
Of the tympanic beat  
Off kilter body hobbled  
Remember not to  
Walk hard on right leg  
Pain drives gravity  
Me toppling hobbling  
Walk stiffly hyper aware  
Of the snapping  
Hip-joint protestations  
Slow death  
Slow to take a life  
Signals warnings  
Creep or descend

Life's end  
Foredoomed  
Announced  
*It's a comin'*  
*It's a comin*  
Click clack snap  
Click clack snap  
And yes it hurts  
Pain the driver  
Of this end  
Wrecking ball  
No bail out  
No replacements  
The game is won  
The game is done  
However it was lived  
Mine to own  
To submit to  
Portrayal mounts  
Overwhelmed by  
So many circuitous betrayals  
When fear pushed me off  
Away desire eclipsed  
Submit to recollection  
To truths however they hurt  
I was given life  
If squandered or triumphed  
It was mine to shape  
What to tell myself  
As the light dims  
My body degenerates  
Shame or glory  
Or knowing  
How it happened  
Was less than great  
More toward ordinary  
As my body degenerates  
And afterlife spirit lifts  
Desire to be set adrift  
Near the moon's seasons  
More North Star than asteroid  
Asking more after death  
Than I was able while living - nb

.....

### **Time Capsule**

When the Martians come  
There will be no name  
No way to identify me  
Interplanetary speaking  
Cartesian logic  
Brought me to this  
No replacement of hip  
No way to know  
If I even existed  
When the singe  
The earth burns up  
World seized  
Descends into the final  
Inferno Dante's hell  
Prophecy of doom  
Squandered earth  
Exploited resources  
Air earth water trees birds  
Disease famine and then  
The glorious holy pyre



*Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 5:24*

Martian Coroner autopsies  
Fragments of metal gathered up  
Folklore jiggery-pokery  
Old folks got new hips  
Medicare mills laser cuts  
Took chipping hip bones  
Replaced with metal ones

Martians move through cinder  
Char ash tinder sparks of flame  
Picking through the remains  
Put in cotton collected satchel  
Like the kind slaves used

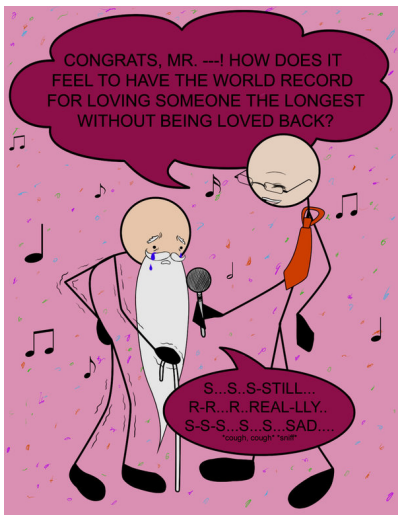


Sizzling hot remnant metal  
All that's left of humanity  
If it was ever that  
Civilized world  
Just went up in flames  
It said so in the bible

*He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his away. Job 15:30*

No way to know of me  
From my remains  
Obstinate old bitch  
Refused to get hip replaced  
Now pitched into eternity  
Rendered impossible  
To identify me  
The me who was  
And will not rise  
From the mordant flame  
Flickering out this world  
Martians climb back up  
Into space ship taking  
Twisted torqued sculptures  
Burnt singed spheres of metal

Of who once was  
 Preserve body for eternity  
 Metallurgy the science considered  
 Reasons to get hip replaced  
 Preservative for record extant  
 Never to be identified  
 Obstinate unforgiving stubborn  
 In the end burst offering  
 Tinder mass of flesh  
 No iron in these bones  
 And a few sparse amends  
 Still raw with anger  
 Solipsistic last thought  
 Bombast blast trashy talk  
 Get raunchy get biblical  
 Get nonsensical  
 About unrequited love



Or submitting to abuse  
 Victimhood suited me  
 Ashes to ashes dust to dust  
 No grand metallurgical afterlife for me – NB

.....

***The Cab of Guilt taxi recording (“This is your mother, reminding you that if you don’t buckle up I will kill myself”) Roz Chast, cartoonist***

.....

### **Endangered Species Here**

Unseemly rarely seen  
Covered by camouflage  
Soft closely stitched cotton  
My outer layer  
Roiling just beneath  
Wrists lower arms  
Spotted as a leopard  
Rarely seen hidden  
Eyes tumble down  
Find regard wrists  
Disgust sweeps face  
Hard to conceal deny  
And then with  
Downward sweep  
Of eyes  
There it is iridescent  
White splotches blotches  
Perfectly round snowflakes  
Knees down hide conceal  
Rare white leopard skin



Covered with the skeins  
The fall of life  
No creams no salves  
To replenish wipe away  
Spots clear evidence  
Demise near  
Time for that slow walk  
Not yet to read last page  
Tantamount moments  
Reflecting upon  
Quality of life  
Whatever that means



Include face in mirror  
Cataracts glaze  
Scrimshaw scrim  
Dims softens the image  
That couldn't be  
Could it be me  
Consignment assignation  
Cohabitation confinement  
Hospice of my mind  
Denied yet resigned  
Life ends  
Being born begins  
Paradigmatic  
Dread of being dead  
Time to get a grip  
Regarding carefully  
Leopard embellished wrists  
Mother never told me  
About feminine hygiene  
About love and intimacy  
But warned me of the vagaries  
Of vitiligo fanning out  
Metaphors garnish  
Tarnish cheapen  
Probing meaning  
Of just getting  
Fucking old  
And yes almost forgot  
She said you've got to  
Press on your public bone  
To let pee out  
Truly helpful motherly advice  
For the moment I will learn  
To walk with greater ease  
Tame the osteoarthritic hip  
Hype contrite to walk better  
It's about quality of life  
Soon to find the treachery  
Of that final dying spot  
Picture in my mind  
That steep sequestered place  
Away from turmoil  
Counter voices silenced  
Leopard solitude  
Leopard sequestered  
Protected

To live final moments  
Untamed unseen  
Locate habitat  
In which to ease  
Into an end without witness  
Imagination culls place  
Snow Leopard's habitat



Finding me there  
In my fade away  
Going to dark - NB  
**Spinal Stenosis – Quitting Time**  
Bells chime ring out the old  
Be bop bibbidid-bobbidid-boo (hoo)  
Imbibe deride subside override

***Sala-gadoola-menchicka-boo-la bibbidi-bobbidi-boo***

*It'll do magic believe it or not*

*Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo. (movie Cinderella, Hoffman, David, Livingston)*

Salamagundi



Imagination run amok  
End run final mile  
Beguiled bewitched

Bothered bewildered  
Death closes in  
Death wish  
Overcomes overwhelms  
Walk with limp  
Off tilt gait  
Severe arthritis  
Right hip  
Unrelenting pain  
Algorithms  
Govern day  
How many steps  
To here or there  
Spontaneity  
Impounded  
Within impaired leg  
Choices  
To learn to live with pain  
Justify taking up space  
Living beyond a certain age  
Foolhardy foolish to stay  
Appetite wanes  
No longer walk upright  
Prehensile hands stoop to hold  
Grab grasp on wobble not fall  
Fear fracture hip  
Diapers drool fool  
Time to bid fond adieu  
Reality out of focus  
Confucius says:  
*It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop*  
Pain consumes  
Remove its tyranny  
Sequencing time

*Old Black Joe*  
*I'z gets weary*  
*'n sick of tryin'*  
*I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low:*  
*I hear those gentle voices calling, "Old Black Joe".*  
*Why do I weep when my heart should feel no pain*  
*Why do I sigh that my friends come not again,*  
*Grieving for forms now departed long ago.*  
*I hear their gentle voices calling "Old Black Joe".*  
*Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?*  
*The children so dear that I held upon my knee,*

*Gone to the shore where my soul has longed to go.  
I hear their gentle voices calling "Old Black Joe". Stephen Foster*

Mother developed severe  
Spinal stenosis in right leg  
Symbiotic sisterhood  
Right legs give way  
And yet and yet  
She carried on  
Reaching well into  
Her nineties  
Carnage pain  
Deterred her not  
No deferment from dying  
Deaths elaborate choreography  
Grand magnum opus seduction  
Begging to end life  
Heady voracious love affair  
With darkness  
Wishing to die daily  
Arthritic right hip  
Cripples impinges  
Challenging me  
Sisterhood symbiotic misery  
Mimic genealogy  
Heredity longevity  
Family history  
Long lives  
Well into nineties  
Damning hellish  
To keep alive  
To keep family  
Actuarial chart  
Now 77 contend  
With crushing pain  
Arthritic hip clicks  
Snaps sears snares  
Each day hostage to pain  
I am getting worn down  
The circumference  
Of a day smaller and smaller  
More confining  
More constraining  
I don't have the will  
To hand on greater longevity  
Pursue a dignified way out

Sister soldier mother  
Dying at nearly 95  
Right legs flush with pain  
Sister mother  
I simply cannot live  
Without or beyond you  
Supplicant infant for your knee  
Life ends with the solipsism  
Totally ordinary mundane  
Of everyman woman pain - NB

.....  
**...stripped down to his core and wondering how he ever thought he was not just somebody, but anybody at all -Ben Brantley, reviewing Sam Shephard play, Simpatico, ny times 9.28.17**

.....  
**I can't stop writing. If I did stop, there could be nothing. Maybe everything would stop. So I won't stop. I've got to keep it going. Daniel Johnston, songwriter**

.....  
**...half savage and hardy, and free. - Cathy in Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte**

.....  
**Post Mortem Post Death**

**In our own words:**

*hi june, not to trouble but to share - think what leah is doing and has been doing is heinous - she is attempting to obliterate the past everything that came before her - through the years you and jer have honored ben at thanksgiving meals, grandchildren birthdays', and just generally welcoming him and leah and nellie into your homes and lives - instead of honoring this - leah is full frontal denying anything existed before she came upon the scene - think you and jer and kids did right by ben and yourselves but being fully present at the end - as he lay dying (faulkner) - but it is reprehensible what leah has embarked on - cutting you both out of the will - hosting memorial without consulting or including either of you - and it goes on - i know that ben savored being recognized as a good grandpa - an engaged one - but in the end - he allowed his past to be truncated sliced off as if life began with leah - lessons here - living compartmentalized as he did - yielded to this - nothing personal just disconnects - so sad and fucked up xomom and i could be wrong -*

-----

**From: Rebecca Barber,**

*I appreciate your thoughts.*

*I am working to really take in her sickness. I have always worked to understand his.*

*But the level and quality of hers has come to me as surprise.*

*She has taken up role as Ben Barber's widow disregarding jermey and he six grandchildren and probably always had a full hand in keeping us out and marginalized and non existent. And yes he allowed chose this.*

*It is sick. I don't think you are wrong. And it is sick and sad.*

*To:rbarber*

*june,sick and very sad - but ultimately freeing - as you know professionally taking command of ghosts and vanquishing frees us from hoping wishing things were different -and just as the very weak part of me married ben - and ultimately got strong enough to leave him - so the very sickest part of leah and ben joined - and yes you and jeremy were harmed by ben and secret partner, gun moll leah - i take responsibility for my role in ben's partnering with ben's demons - but leah helped fan them to full blustery life - she is not a monster nor is he - they are just small mean spirited amoral and totally incapable of love individuals - xo*

*BLUE, BLUE,*

*I OVERHEARD YOU SAY TO YOUR MOM, YOU WILL MISS ME WHEN I AM GONE - MISS IS WAY TOO SMALL A WORD FOR WHAT WE, YOUR FAMILY WILL FEEL WHEN YOU GO OFF TO COLLEGE. BUT THE PAIN OF MISSING YOU WILL BE EASED BECAUSE THE YOUNG WOMAN YOU ARE AND HAVE BECOME SO ENTIRELY BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL AND EACH DAY MORE READY TO STEP INTO A WORLD OF YOUR OWN MAKING. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT THAT YOU WILL SHAPE A FUTURE WITH WISDOM IF WITH SOME ANXIETY AND FEAR. BUT YOU SURE ARE GETTING READY, JUST THINK ABOUT HARVARD AND HOW FULLY PRESENT YOU WERE AND WILL BE WHEREVER YOU CHOSE TO GO TO COLLEGE.*

*EVERYWHERE IN MY HOME THERE ARE SMALL AND THOUGHTFUL AND LOVING GIFTS FROM YOU - MAGNETS ON REFRIGERATOR, CUPS FOR GRANDMA, PICTURE FRAMES, SCARVES, SWEAT SHIRTS*

*FROM BLACK DOG AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON -*

*THE PRIDE I FEEL AS I WATCH YOU NOW A JUNIOR AT MARYMOUNT, MEMBER OF THE VOLLEYBALL TEAM, HOST TO A STUDENT FROM BARCELONA AND LOVING SO LOVING BIG SISTER TO OWEN AND WILLA - AND YOUR MOM IS CRAZY ABOUT YOU AND TRYING TO PREPARE HERSELF FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU GO OFF TO COLLEGE AND BE IN CONTACT BY TEXTS AND FACE TIME.*

*SO BLUE BLUE LOVE EACH DAY AS YOU DO -*

*BEING ALIVE IN A WORLD OF SUCH*

*CONTRADICTIONS BUT KNOW IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LOVE A PERSON MORE THAN I AND WELOVE YOU. Forever Bookeend, War Resistor Sister of the World, Omi*

## ***The Beast on Earth***

*Ben was a monster in and out.  
He attacked cats without a doubt.  
From the moment he was conceived,  
Nobody was ever relieved.  
Harriet cried from birth to death.  
She wasn't able to take a breath.  
She lost her perfect family,  
Left in eternal agony.  
Could Ben be misunderstood?  
Mistreated since his childhood.  
And though he acted like a beast,  
Through imitation it decreased.  
Eat with manners his mother said,  
And never fight just go to bed.  
But he could not function on earth,  
Leaving destruction east and north.  
Perfection turned to wipeout.  
Ben was a monster in and out. Sophie Hart*

.....  
*hi blue, blue, wonderful to see you yesterday - and felt that you needed some time to kick the tension out - having to be host to another person, no matter how lovely, from another world particularly at the beginning of the school year - and having moved into the center of the intense reality that comes with being a junior in high school in the best of circumstances -and then who could really explain or understand the dynamics of your family as it re-configures itself into a new way of being together -*

*and then for you who more keenly needs and relishes a sense of her own place and space - carefully constructed and needing to feel safe - having to confront a move if to an incredible town house in upscale harlem is eerie unsettling and maybe a little or lot frightening -*

*so be kind to yourself blue blue - there are few others i have known as remarkable as you are - and slowly in your own beat you will find your way and settle in -*

*and i do love your dad - have known him more than 25 years - and when he feels hurt or uncertain he sometimes lashes out or says unfortunate and hurtful things like your mom is choosing luke over you - and that is impossible - first the way the family existed before giving each other distance and space was often explosive and not good for anyone -and it is impossible, inconceivable for your mother to chose luke over you - or ever love anyone more than she loves you - think it gets overwhelming for her - the intensity of her feelings and love for you -*

*there cannot be a barber hart family without a prominent and important place for you - willa and owen need you to anchor the world for them - and daddy in his heart knows that you can separate stupid or foolish or harmful comments from true feelings*

*so from your bookend war resistor sister, take it from me - take time hon to settle into being 16 a junior at a truly great high school with some really nice and good friends - and be kind to*

*yourself - keep speaking out and letting everyone know what you need and how you feel - and look forward to each day better than the next and dream about the future - maybe not bard but maybe brown harvard or yale - or ????????????*

*the door here always and always will remain open to you - loving you more than all of the reclaimed brownstones all over nyc and in san francisco and barcelona as well - xomi*

*ps - sorry about that comment about ben - think when i see jer still hurt from the wounds of his childhood - some belonging to me indeed as well i say that - but if anything it makes me feel better about ben to know how thoughtful he was to you - and do respect the relationship that only uniquely you could find with him – Sunday October, 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017*

.....

*...beginning to understand that completion is not so much about reaching perfection as it is making the choice to look away from the material – Because Gloria understood that to finish something – to make something right and final – is to kill it. Danzy Senna, New People*

.....

***We have to choose between probabilities, not certainties, and that is difficult. How probable is that we will gain how many extra years of life, and what might the qualities of those years be?**He's terrified of dying in a hospital, cared for by fleets of indifferent strangers. He opens, "Admissions" by telling us he's acquired a suicide kit, in case his death is painful and slow, and he closes with a civilized discussion of euthanasia. But he confesses he doesn't know if he'd ever have the courage to hasten his own death. Which may be his most profound admission of all. Henry Marsh, Admissions: Life as a Brain Surgeon*

.....

***Yes, that's another great** thing about getting older. Your life is written on your face. And what you gain after menopause is the power of invisibility. You become sexually invisible to both men and women. You gain the power of not giving a fuck. Oh my God! I can actually love and live – not subvert anything, not apologize for anything, not hide anything. Frances McDormand, actress, NY Times, 10/8/17*

.....



***Because they have arthritis. They are not so young anymore – they probably have more yesterdays than tomorrows. But what about encounters in the present: Are they friendly? Father Daniel, Peacocks Cathedral Saint John Divine***



***Peacock (Jim or Phil or Harry) at Cathedral***



*Remember what it feels like to squish mud between your toes, pack mud pies, or dig in the warm sand at the beach? That's the feeling I have when my hands are in wet clay. It is the source of creativity for me. The dialogue begins between me and the clay. The forms emerge. The influence of the Japanese aesthetic on Joy's ceramic and bronze sculpture springs from her childhood in Japan and apprenticeship in traditional Japanese ceramics. The rounded forms and natural materials of clay and bronze convey the heavy gravity of stone; the expressions and gestures transcend that weight, suggesting a warmth, a lightness of being. **Joy Brown, Japanese Sculptor***



a  
*Fiona, right, with her mother, Bibi Andrew Spear, NY Times  
Fiona baby Hippo at Cincinnati Zoo – born prematurely and perilously –*



*Mother and baby elephant*

**Save the Elephants Save the Hippo's – Divinity of Mother and Child - nb**

### **Senescent Antediluvian**

Ovaries long gone  
Not adolescent  
Content to look on  
In the well  
Of this brute extreme  
Interior cement floor  
Wrought iron stairwell  
Skylight tipped atrium  
Age climbed me  
Vine on tattered trellis  
Looking up  
Tightly gnarled  
Thrombotic fist  
Twisted knotted  
Fingers bent  
In sad resignation  
Senescence is upon me  
No longer  
To climb these stairs  
Impossibility  
Body Deteriorating  
Breath taking speed  
Legs keep me  
Making algorithms  
Calculating steps  
To store laundry park  
Back door ramp  
Taxi turn up 108  
No longer struggle  
Steps front door  
Agonizing  
Neighbors rush  
To help hold door  
Anguish to fear  
Stricken faces  
Daughter about  
To move in  
With boyfriend  
Six kids  
No divorces finalized



This facsimile architectural wonder  
Look upward sitting on lip of fireplace  
Eyes disappearing in socket  
Finding atrium to skylight  
Finding only

***Dark at Top of Stairs, (William Inge)***

Will not get a walker  
Will not get chair lift  
Skyward to atrium  
Will fly off on my own  
Angel wings  
Sweet ironies of life  
Or bitter and implicit  
Daughter finding a home  
In which I can only go  
From kitchen to living room  
If awkwardly  
Extreme difficulty  
Sign on door  
No old people should  
Enter here  
Danger lurks  
Warning brute architecture  
Prohibits safety  
No place for old lady  
Standing with walking stick  
On y cramping arthritic legs  
Promise once to the bedrooms  
Granddaughter begs

Splat splatter splayed figure  
Legs wobbled on wrought iron  
Stairwell two more to go  
Holds tight to railing  
To keep from falling  
Deep labored breathing  
My daughter and her love  
Soon to occupy same home  
Six collective kids  
And I will look on with  
Weary smile from afar - nb

.....

### **Feeling Sorry for Myself**

Of course I am  
Antediluvian  
Equilibrium  
Disquiet  
Dispossess  
Repossess  
Self-possessed  
Ambrosia  
Imbrogio  
Vanishing dot  
Universe  
Spins away  
Epiphany  
Hierarchy  
Obsessed  
Obsequies  
Obsequious  
Oedipus  
No easy way  
To say this  
Four Horsemen  
Of Apocalypse  
Close by  
Donnybrook  
OCD got me in  
Chock hold  
Obsessive-compulsive -disorder  
Grieve  
Relieve  
Repress  
Suggest

Death rides  
Steely  
Unforgiving  
High horse  
Baring haunch  
Haunts  
No respite  
Spare time left  
Death closing in  
Grab grasp  
Reality  
Head on  
Eyes wide open  
If cataract cloudy  
Time to die  
Not to deny  
Free associate  
The end  
Feel it  
In my bones  
In my mind  
Great celestial  
Design  
Time its time  
Word caught  
In throat  
Time its time  
To die  
But how when  
And why? NB



***I think my body knew you would not stay***

*I am a museum full of art  
but you had your eyes shut* *Rupi Kaur, Milk and Honey*

*She's following her soul's purpose, father said*

*How is it so easy for you  
To be kind to people he asked  
Milk and honey dripped  
From my lips as I answered  
Cause people have not  
Been kind to me*

*i am water  
soft enough  
to offer lie  
touch enough  
To drown it away*

*i have dug my way  
out the ground  
with palm and fist many times  
my whole life has been  
one burial after another  
I will find my way  
out of you just fine*

*every time you  
tell your daughter  
you yell at her  
out of love  
you teach her to confuse  
anger with kindness  
which seems like a good idea  
till she grows up to  
trust men who hurt her  
cause they look so much  
like you*

*and here you are living  
despite it all* *Rupi Kaur, poems, Milk and Honey, The Sun and Her Flowers*

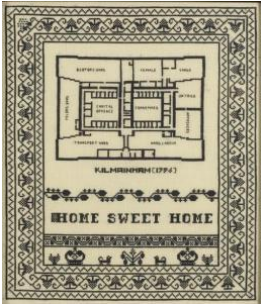
.....



## **What Destroyed Me**

What scared me to death  
What frightened me  
Was going home  
Face to wailing wall  
Celestial text  
Calling out begging  
To Whom  
I don't know  
*I want to die*  
*I want to die*  
*I want to die*  
I was 22  
Coming home  
Threw me into  
Death sobs  
Death diatribe  
Death stranglehold  
Rite of passage  
Child to adult  
Returned back  
To scared girl  
Tumbled back  
Into fetal position  
Thrombotic  
Begging to have  
A mommy who  
To love me if  
*Fat ugly stupid*  
*You disgust me*  
Doomed to never  
Have find true love  
To being eternally alone  
I told our nanny  
Hired into our  
Meager circumstance  
To keep my brother and me  
Safe from our mother  
Then I escaped  
Girl drives convertible  
Girl dips in to Rio Grande  
Girl gets rescued  
Girl finds her way  
To Navajo Reservation  
Girl lives in Hogan  
With Navajo family

Right at the lip  
Of Canyon de Chelly  
Finally at home  
Found a home  
*Home Sweet Home*



*Elaine Reichel*

Cross stitched sampler  
Shorn sheep skin  
Mounted on wall  
Be it ever so humble  
No place like home  
Yes! found my place  
In the desert in Arizona  
In the Bosom of Abraham  
Card wool knead dough  
Prepare fried bread  
Cut out clean out entrails  
Of prairie dog for festive meal  
Dance around open fire  
Extended family assembled  
Heal through community and chant  
Medicine man leading squaw dance  
I stepping high next to head of household  
Girl forced to leave found home  
Cut ankle on barbwire  
At local Navajo rodeo  
Leaning over to be nearer  
Patrick rider wrestler supreme  
Night times sneak out  
Tuck up against each other  
Love blooming on arid desert floor  
Dramatic departure  
Wound wouldn't stop bleeding  
Deputy Chief of Tribe calls father  
*Send her home send her home*  
Chills doom saying chills

Ran up and down my spine  
Prophecy of doom  
*Be it ever so humble*  
*No place like home* (Sir Henry Bishop, 1823)  
My heart found it  
Solace reprieve  
Sitting with rolled cigarettes  
With Navajo family at sunset  
Felt finally I'd come home  
Baby ripped from womb  
No second chance to grow up  
Recoiled returning  
To reviled home  
Dangerous for me  
In those walls  
Turbulence terror  
Regress feelings soar  
Pushed out suppressed  
Optimism sense of  
Ebullient hopefulness  
Just blooming  
Busting' out of me  
And then I got home  
With the Navajos  
Found a mother  
To love me  
Outgrew overcame  
Refusal to move on  
Until I got my own  
Weird juxtaposed  
Call for justice  
I wanted  
To feel a loved baby  
Before I grew up  
Moved on  
And then I did  
On the lip of Canyon de Chelly  
And within flip card days  
I was once again  
Face pressed against  
Wailing wall  
*I want to die I want to die*  
*I don't want to be alive anymore*

*...the dark ancestral cave, the womb from which mankind emerged into the light, forever pulls one back – but...you can't go home again...you can't go ...back home to the escapes of Time and Memory. You Can't Go Home Again Make your mistakes, take your chances, look silly, but keep on going. Don't freeze up. Thomas Wolfe, You Can't Go Home Again*

Bounty hunter parents  
Snared me caught me  
And brought me  
Back home  
Imagery of the enslaved  
Shackled whipped reviled  
Wounds oozing seeping  
Just on the cusp just on the cusp  
Of what I was to become  
I got undone  
Sent back to my old life  
Graduate school dating Cambridge  
Within weeks the bounty hunters  
Came to make sure  
I was secured tethered  
Returned good girl status  
*You need to get married*  
*If you don't get married soon*  
*You will find you can live without it*  
Whatever that meant  
Chorus of elders chimed  
Still don't know  
Sounded somehow logical wise  
And then there I was  
Within virtual minutes weeks  
Getting married in their living room  
Back in the Bosom of Abraham  
Behaving right doing the right thing  
I do I said to him who I didn't know  
Just three weeks before  
Didn't even know of his name  
Reeled back in I was rescued  
From a near suicide  
Just to figuratively die  
In the arms of a husband  
A husband golden wedding band  
A change of name  
And with snap gut rerouted  
Exasperating desperate moment  
I had after all committed suicide  
I died on the altar of wedding vows -NB

Epilogue – Post Script

*Nobody's going to force me to do something against my will. What do I owe anybody that I should submit my will to them? Lauryn Hill, singer, member of the Fugees The Miseducation of Lauren Hill*

**Every child deserves  
a parent...**



**But not every parent  
deserves a child...**

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.....  
**...distinguished between two types of people: those who were alive and those who didn't die. Her parents understood the erotic as an antidote to death.**  
*Cheating on partner – Why did it happen? How can we recover?  
Reconciling the erotic and the domestic is not a problem to solve; it is a paradox to manage.  
An entire cultural framework shapes the way we give meaning to our heartbreak.....there are monogamy's dissidents –*

*Esther Perel, The State of Affairs: Rethinking Infidelity*

**The bonds of wedlock are so heavy that it takes two to carry them, sometimes three.**  
**Alexander Dumas, French writer -1802 – 1870**

.....  
**I am an acme of things accomplished, and I am an enclose of things to be.**

*Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, the vapor from the nostrils of death,  
Long I was hugged close...long and long.  
Immense have been the preparation for me,  
Faithful and friendly the arms that hae helped me.  
All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me,  
Now I stand on this spot with my soul. Walt Whitman, Song of Myself*

.....  
**Managing my body  
Too difficult  
Too unwieldy  
Asking  
Is it worth it  
Is it? NB**

*In Badelund the green midnight at the nightingale's northern limit. Heavy leaves hang in trance, the deaf cars race towards the neon-line. The nightingale's voice rises without wavering to the side, it is as penetrating as a cock-crow, but beautiful and free of vanity. I was in prison and it visited me. I was sick and it visited me. I didn't notice it then, but I do now. Time streams down from the sun and the moon and into all the tick-tock-thankful clocks. But right here there is no time. Only the nightingale's voice, the raw resonant notes that whet the night sky's gleaming scythe. The Nightingale in Badelunda, Tomas Transtromer, Swedish Poet, winner 2011 Nobel Prize*



***Badelunda Stone Circle: The Megalith***

.....

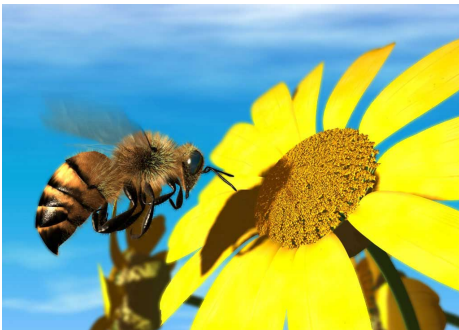
***still walking  
all hours of the day  
the streets of this city  
of my birth;  
Chinatown, the Lower East Side,  
And East Village my home.  
wind, sun, rain, snow sleet ---  
elements against my open face  
still alive. Fay Chiang, Activist, Poet***

***(Note: Despite three tumors still in one lung, sciatica coursing from her spine to her toes and pain from scars, she wrote that she felt joy at still standing and "still walking". Xian Chiang-Waren, daughter of Fay Chiang.)***

.....

### **Bench Still Wet Residue**

Of spray to mad display  
Of mums wild with colors  
Still un-named  
Sun somewhere distant  
Sitting stealth still with chill  
Felt euphoric connection to flowers  
And then suddenly in waves  
There here comes the sun lifted mums upward tilting  
Then here comes the sun  
*Here comes the sun, here comes the sun*  
*Sun, sun, sun, here it comes*  
*Sun, sun, sun, here it comes - The Beatles*  
Lifted mums upward titling  
Breaking into morning chill  
World astounding miraculous  
Caught in expanding rays of sun



Hundreds of flighty bees  
Cruising flower to flower  
Bees breaking loose  
From colony collapse  
Soon the sun covered  
All of the flower beds  
Apocalyptic resurrection  
Fifty or more Monarch butterflies

Cascading cavorting sashaying  
Astonishing from bloom to bloom  
Stalk standing sunward  
Mums and Monarch as if one  
Cupped in the new morning sun  
A mum an orange defies naming  
Monarch hovering wings fluttering  
Exacting coordinate of color  
Monarchs near to extinct  
Beehive collapse  
Monarch's endangered  
Time still to stay alive  
Contemplate never being]  
As being as bold and open  
As Monarch's bees to mums  
For the moment reluctant to die  
Staying alive being alive  
*Life going nowhere, somebody help me*  
*Somebody help me, yeah*  
*Life going nowhere, somebody help me*  
*Yeah, I'm stayin' alive*  
*Life going nowhere, somebody help me*  
*Somebody help me, yeah*  
*Life going nowhere, somebody help me*  
*Yeah, I'm stayin' alive -Bee Gees*  
Suddenly amazing revelatory  
An early morning in a garden  
Of mums in full bloom  
Alive with flutter and hums  
Bee and Monarch and me  
Each coming to an end  
Prophecy of doom sacrilege  
Of ravage and desecration  
And yet today and yes today - NB

.....



## **Luca Earth Mother**

Luca pot seller  
Luca friend maker  
Luca soul  
Spirited  
Transported  
Too far away  
From birth home  
Too indigenous  
To survive here  
Interpreting reality  
Forever displaced  
Became offspring  
Child of universe  
Never of our world  
Couldn't cope  
Stomach rebelled  
Refusing to ingest  
Digest our foods here  
But fruit and sweets  
Steaks and McDonalds  
Burgers and fries  
Temperamentally  
Misplaced estranged  
Misinterpreted  
As wild and who knows  
What else diagnosis  
He was feared  
Professional vanguard  
Tried to guard against  
Him with drugs  
Even locking him up  
In rooms and yet  
Never really never  
Could be tamed or controlled  
Evidence was there  
We took a pure one  
From native soul  
Broke him  
With our departure  
From the beginning  
Couldn't tolerate  
Mandated inoculants  
Reused all but apple juice  
Quickly rotted out  
Calcium deprived front teeth

Milk rejected from the first  
Soon as he got up on his legs  
Tried to run away break loose  
When he found tennis  
His energy focused  
Although ate sweets  
In spite of strict diet rules  
We took wrongly  
A pure one  
He belonged near  
The roar of the Iquatzu Falls  
We wronged him  
As sinful as predatory  
Evangelizing missionaries  
We tried to colonize him  
And took his intestines out instead  
Plaintive mother pleads  
To be forgiven  
And yet mother earth son  
Keeps mothering me  
And giving and giving and giving. - NB

A few scattered communities of “pure” Guaraní Indians (with little Spanish admixture) still survive marginally in the forests of northeastern Paraguay, but these were rapidly dwindling in the late 20th century. The best-known of them were the Apaocuva.

Traditionally, the Apaocuva were agriculturalists who supplemented their crops of corn (maize), bitter and sweet cassava, beans, tubers, and other vegetables with gathered fruits and other forest products. The nominal leader of each village was usually a successful shaman who advised his group according to the revelations of his dreams. In 1879, an entire village followed ...Encyclopedia Britannica



Imagining Luca with his birth mother who believed she needed to give him up so he could have a better education.



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***Guarini Indians playing soccer – imbued with Luca’s spirit***



***Guarini - Mother and Son***

.....

***I know of Only One duty and that is to love. Albert Camus***

## **They Are All Talkin' Death**

The experts the pugilists  
The prognosticators  
The cud chewing blabbers  
Death death is just everywhere  
End of life dying right  
How to speak dying  
To someone who is dying  
They already are negotiating with God  
Knowing that before breath lets out  
To talk about what it feels like  
For life to end  
And where do we ever go  
When we are dead  
You know that kind  
Off inner conversation  
Doctors hold breath  
Hands quivering  
As they broach the topic  
To family sitting around dying one  
As if they already couldn't hear  
Or digest what was going on  
Even when fill out those damnable forms  
Do not resuscitate etc. and so forth  
No extreme measures still  
Time to have our talk  
About end of life  
Proxies have vote  
Not deaf yet folks  
As you reckon with my gone-ness  
Still here think about each of you  
How I regard you  
How I treated you  
Where I went wrong  
Where I went right  
What I missed out on  
Ouch regrets stuck at epiglottis  
*Death is the mother of beauty* – Wallace Stevens  
Guiding life long golden rule  
Now I wonder at the end  
Drool piss shit  
Eyes go blind first  
Feet get death cold  
Travel of up until  
Heart snaps shut  
Mouth gives out last death gasp

And the light goes out  
Talking death  
Inevitable death  
Life just ends  
We knew that at the beginning  
Doctors' faces static with truth  
Let's talk death end of life  
Foolish man gibberish gobbledygook  
Having my own conversation with myself  
Preparing promising to end it on my own terms  
Negotiating the when and the how  
Scared to death that I will come too late  
Try to carefully plan and with grace  
End life on my own terms  
Tricky to know the moment  
But end it is rounding the bend  
It is fast coming toward and for me – NB

*One is still what one is going to cease to be and  
Already what one is going to become. One lives one's  
Death, one dies one's life. Jean Paul Sartre*

***The reason of my death is my life. Albert Camus***

*There is life and there is death and there are beauty  
and melancholy between. Albert Camus*

*Death of one's own free choice, death at the proper time, with a clear head and with  
joyfulness, consummated in the midst of children and witnesses: so that an actual  
leaving is possible while he who is leaving is still there.*

**Don't have the courage to be witnessed - NB**

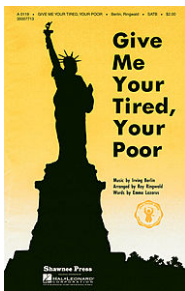
***The Goal of all life is death. Sigmund Freud***

***I will show that nothing can happen more beautiful than death. Walt Whitman***

.....

## **Inevitability**

*Jeremiad*, plaintive lamentation  
At birth sorrow coursed blood  
Inevitable that at fifty  
You would start eating yourself up  
Sunday's at Episcopal Church  
Take on tongue Jesus  
Embodied embalming wafer  
Love denied you by yourself  
I did that too  
Heart's sickness toppling you  
Devil hell bent to infiltrate you  
Punish you irrevocably irretrievably  
Weaponize sadness contaminate soul  
Fatal body breaking amoebic dysentery  
Sorrow overwhelms with sinus infection  
Body playing host of self-inflicted plague  
And I watch I stand by and I knew  
Sure as she locked her jaws against food  
Just as shame overpowered her  
Ambition thwarted multi-headed hydra  
*Holocaust Pogrom Yiddish* speaking parents  
Hell-bent running from Judaism  
Kept bumping into herself  
Refusing to fully enter  
The world of the tired and poor



No second chances for her your grandmother  
She refused to budge from shame  
No worthy clothes to wear  
Parents to hide behind immigrant door  
Opened only for Pesach's stranger  
Wild gasp worthy swings  
Bi-polar yet to be named  
For eccentrics and trust babies  
She either entitled to run Macy's  
Or to rot in self- imposed hell

Fury fiery mythic dinosaur dwelled within her  
 Probity of the eternal inevitable question  
 Why no choosing to fully accept the gift of life  
 My firstborn son filled with lamentation  
 A jeremiad with birth cry  
 No gets himself broken with sickness  
 Promised algorithm picked wife  
 To ultimate want to destroy him  
 Three children later he eats himself alive  
 Doesn't believe in divorce ever  
 And here the ultimate *turn of the screw* –Henry James



Henry James  
The Turn of the Screw  
and Other Stories

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

My beautiful son my bonny prince  
 What did I let rip through you  
 Ultimately leaving abusive gun-toting father  
 Left a son-bereft soul bent grief  
 Mispronounces the word divorce  
 Compelled to re-enact once again  
 Of what was most damaging to his life  
 Sins of the father to the son and anon  
 When if ever does it end  
 My kids tossed into wild endemic seas  
 Of broken marriages  
 And the legal jeopardy of child custody  
 Inevitable my daughter would starve herself  
 Push herself back into a prepubescent body  
 As she gets to be near fifty  
 Already a heady middle school taste for liquor  
 Now about to live full-time with another drinker  
 Old boyfriends mostly profligate trust fund addicts  
 Deaths recorded on cover of New York Magazine  
 Junk deep dives into death as the world asked  
 He had absolutely everything and why  
 Now she nibbles small slices of low calorie salami  
 Nitrites greater source of indigestible nutrients

Strafe eater starving takes in  
Small spoonful of cottage cheese  
Descendant of jaw locking against food grandma  
Where my dear children  
Did desire to live be alive go to die  
Know you can't live on this ledge and survive  
Sooner or later will be overtaken by sorrows hold  
*Live or die but don't poison everything* Saul Bello/ Ann Sexton  
And here I stand gait broken  
By severely damaged arthritic hip  
Hold tight to walking stick  
Taking stock of everything  
Sickened as I watch witness  
To grown children wanting to die more than be alive  
Six babies looking regarding them  
Scared fearful clustering like a constellation of stars  
That is what I will see as u take  
One last look to the great beyond  
The suicide that didn't get me  
Infestation predisposition to want to die  
And to think that is what I passed on - NB

.....

***No sad songs. No minor key. Not for me. Alex Katz, artist at 90***

.....

***Ruffneck Constructiveists - Kara Walker, name of art show, 2012***

.....

***San Soleil: If they don't see happiness in the picture, at least they'll see the black.  
Kahlil Joseph, filmmaker, Beyonce, Lemonade***



## **You Promised You Would Marry Me**

Knee-high to a grasshopper

When you got big

Lifting me nearly sweeping me off my feet

Grabbed kitchen table to balance me

You promised you would marry me

Why didn't you or did you –

God have mercy on us both if you did

You married a woman *she was pretty*

*All the pretty horses gather round (Cormac McCarthy)*

Time and the bible foretold that she was/is

**Psychopath/sociopath bulimic chronic liar alcoholic**

Taking these qualities one-by-one

To see if or how they fit into our collective family tree

Examining both sides ancestral interior territory

It is writ in blood writ in the wind let's begin

Psychopath/sociopath –your father, my mother

Wolves in sheep clothing getting away with murder

Slaughtering bending egos as if molten lead

He harbored loaded gun wielded two-fisted punches

Profligate ran around licentious deleterious adulterer

Made bible readers blush commandment crushed

*Thou shalt not commit adultery – Exodus 20:14*

He was a womanizing creep the bible tells us so

And my mother your grandmother stuck in bi-polar time

Feverish wild with ambition untamed forever filly

Bleating kicking up against door to run away escape

Claimed she could have the run the universe

If he, my father your grandfather, hadn't stopped her

Regularly obsessively bought clothes

And threw them away before getting home

The person who tried them on in the store

Rarely walked in with her reaching front door

She put down payments she mostly lost

To hold stately houses in which she imagined herself living

Lost money deferring, took her husband to task

She railed living a virtual pumpkin shell her hell

Every few days she would become combustible

To relieve the tension she would beat her head

Until frothing at the mouth and lay her head down

Into the lip of an unlit oven

Always attended by mouth agape witness

My brother and I still hadn't collected

Sufficient vocabulary to name this scene

Regularly enacted by our mother

Our father entering as if on time

Asking what did you do to upset her so  
Mother left treasure trove of *post-its*  
*A word to the wise is sufficient* she claimed  
Though no Sylvia Plath tomes of poetry  
Think by DNA we definitely qualify sociopath/psychopath  
As for Bulimia think it might have originated with us  
We might have brought it with us from the old  
*Holocaust* entrenched drenched world  
Witnessed food shoved fistfuls down exculpatory throat  
Rallying food relays binges sheltering punishing  
My mother locked jaws against food when she was twenty  
Then ate measured amounts as if in a Betty Crocker cooking lab  
And I got down to 112 pounds before I was twenty  
Psychiatrist threatening to put me in hospital on feeding tube  
And your sister moves food around plate pathogenically choreographed  
So check this box as well think we hand your wife off to you  
On a virtual silver mental/soul battering sickness platter  
Your father's mother popped pills like Halloween M&M;s  
Getting fat getting thin drank bloody marys at dawn  
To ring in the morning of perpetual sleepless nights  
And liar, wow! Few better than your father my mother  
Truth maligned truth consigned to forgetfulness bin  
Give me my blue suede lying cheating blues  
Momentary bouts of truth Vermeer lighting  
Slick veneer to conceal cover endless rootless lies  
Audience determined the level of veracity mendacity  
Profligate they got away with it and when caught  
Contrition dripped like blood from a devil's lips  
Lying distorting the truth was their settled law  
Jews don't drink so think we fell short here  
Neither side mine or your father's drank  
Although your father's fourth or fifth wife  
As wonderful as she was her mouth plugged up  
Chugging bottles of vodka as if water  
And your sister harbors an alcoholic  
Somewhere just beneath the surface  
Warned by family doctor she would turn out a drunk  
This when she first nearly died drenched with drink  
She was just thirteen it was in the tealeaves  
Doctor warned me to intervene  
And now she is about to move in with a fellow drunk  
Will her children and his look back coming home  
To find two drunks staggering around sloppy speech  
Short-tempered just falling and slobbering all over themselves  
Inherit the wind inherit the earth spinning away from us  
You married a version of me the one stuffed with pathology

You kept your promise and I failed you miserably  
Didn't level with you didn't forewarn you to be on the look out  
For psychopaths/sociopaths bulimics liars and drunks  
Didn't fully disclose how I harbored the full array  
She a fox in cat walk model clothing  
You fell hook line and sinker  
She was the penultimate culminating version of us  
Left undisclosed hidden in mordant secrecy  
And three children from her womb  
How much can you turn the tide so that they too  
Are not the inheritors of this mad turbulent universe -nb

***Yea thou I walk through the shadow of death I will and should fear...(Psalm 23:4***



## Bitterness Drips Off My Lips Lick Lick

Ambrosia of defeat  
Of that which I cannot speak  
Words archived beyond reach  
Insufferable melancholia  
Too late to extricate from self-hate  
Can't reckon with reconcile  
Twice taking the vestal walk  
Vow dooming wedding aisle  
Twice walked toward my father  
Those sad proffering eyes  
Violin tucked under chin  
Serenade of submission  
Not to the groom but to him  
Promised at birth  
And that is where I begin  
And that is where I end  
Bitter grief stricken  
Polyphonic daughter  
As writ steeped in *Elektra* myth  
In the end I wound up dead  
Words of promise pressed  
Through blood soaked lips  
I walked down the vestal aisle  
Twice toward my father  
Second time promising  
Away my life once again  
This time in the *King James Chapel*  
Vestal wing *Cathedral Of St John the Divine*  
Enshrined resigned woman's heart denied  
*Who gives this woman to be married to this man?*

My father sits at night with no lights on  
His cigarette glows in the dark.  
The living room is still;  
I walk by, no remark.  
I tiptoe past the master bedroom where  
My mother reads her magazines.  
I hear her call sweet dreams,  
But I forgot how to dream.  
But you say it's time we moved in together  
And raised a family of our own, you and me -  
Well, that's the way I've always heard it should be:  
You want to marry me, we'll marry.  
You say we can keep our love alive  
Babe - all I know is what I see -

The couples cling and claw  
And drown in love's debris.  
You say we'll soar like two birds through the clouds,  
But soon you'll cage me on your shelf -  
I'll never learn to be just me first  
By myself.  
Well O.K., it's time we moved in together  
And raised a family of our own, you and me -  
Well, that's the way I've always heard it should be,  
You want to marry me, we'll marry,  
We'll marry. Carly Simon  
*Who gives this woman to be married to this man?*  
*I do, he said*



*Going to the chapel*  
*And we're going get married*  
*Going to the chapel*  
*And we're gonna get married*  
*Gee I really love you*  
*And we're gonna get married*  
*Going to the chapel of love - Beach Boys*  
*Fiddling as Rome and my heart burned*



Twice my father gave me away  
Once to a poem by Rilke  
Another playing *Tannhauser Wedding March*  
I was the original *Bartered Bride*  
Hidden within the majestic folds  
Of an archetype wedding gown  
A daughter vowed never to betray a father - NB

**Expiration Date:**

Dental Insurance Cancelled  
Ran its if meager term  
Driver's license will need to be re-authorized  
Haze filled cataract eyes reduce me  
To learner's permit need to have  
Licensed driver at my side  
If this is not tangible evidence  
Getting near close to time to die  
Hanging around like a phantom limb  
Amputated cut off but still echoing  
If these are not signs of what's to come  
Limiting freedoms  
No longer to just drive off  
Into the four winds mountain roads  
Back Street Boys crooning

*So Bye Bye Love (Bye Love)*

*Bye Love*

*So Bye Bye Love (Bye Bye Bye Bye Love)*

*Bye Love (Bye Bye, Bye Bye Love)*

*Yeah.*

Expiration Date –  
Mine to tally  
Mine to rally to  
Mine to get ready for  
No more dental insurance  
No more drivers license  
Without a license driver by my side  
I'd say it's getting near time to die  
It's in the tealeaves  
It's tucked in a fortune cookie



Heaven's pearly gates are opening  
Hosanna and angel wings  
Fanfare Gabriel blows horn  
Price contrived as they say  
Of getting born  
Departure inevitable  
Orchestrated by me  
No more dental insurance  
No more driving  
Alone on the open road  
Take the matter in hand  
Whose death will it be  
Artisanal grace-filled hand  
Mine to whispering destiny - NB



.....

***It's the then what? That kills you – Woody Allen***

.....

**I Would Know Those Piano Playing Hands  
Fingers Wrists Lower Arms**

Good as could have been mine

*It's nine o'clock on a Saturday  
The regular crowd shuffles in  
There's an old man sitting next to me  
Making love to his tonic and gin*

*He says, "Son can you play me a memory  
I'm not really sure how it goes  
But it's sad and it's sweet  
And I knew it complete  
When I wore a younger man's clothes." Billy Joel, Piano Man*

Old lady old *Holocaust* lady  
Thick pudgy ripened birthmarks  
Jut out along jaw line around eyes  
Alms palms joints re-configured  
Fingers bent twisted old tree  
To variable defoliating winds  
She escaped *Treblinka*  
Hidden in trunks and crumpled bedding  
One little girl peering through hideouts  
Watched the massacre head-on  
Watched as one-by-one of her family  
Moved into assembly line of victims  
About to be annihilated asphyxiated  
And then one day just entering puberty  
She haggard more dead than alive  
Got liberated and that was at *Treblinka*  
Her song her stillness amplified  
Her fingers brought sorrow  
Through ivory piano keys  
Chopin Liszt Beethoven Wagner  
Notes lifted off the twisted cross  
Within the notes a continuum of infamy





Those fingers those wrists those lower arms  
Paisley polka dotted porcelain  
Alms psalms six million silenced sobs  
Her knobby fingers fold over the piano keys  
Perhaps in *Bach* find collective mourning  
I place my tutored fingers on the ivory  
And find her hands her wrists her fingers  
But not the notes not the heart not the gift  
Sacrosanct her fingers finding voices lost  
Just parched splotched onion skin thin hands  
Resist no song no notes pressed into song  
Mournful heart death embalmed mind  
Her face crumpled into dying  
Her eyes thick cloudy with cataracts  
Her fingers twisted re-configured arthritic  
Stunned startled by seeing her upright at the piano  
Acknowledging life's multiple ways of ending  
Vagaries marauding death's overtaking  
Clarifying life's essence in song  
Those are not my hands wrists arms  
Just aging getting old no badge of bravery  
Her fingers sing of displacement  
Lamentations for a terrible world  
Her hands transform the mournful  
Into testimony and song  
My hands ached to embrace the world  
She found in song  
These old very old hands of mine  
Holding heavenward stillbirth cries  
Never brought to life-nb

.....

## **Courage Faltering**

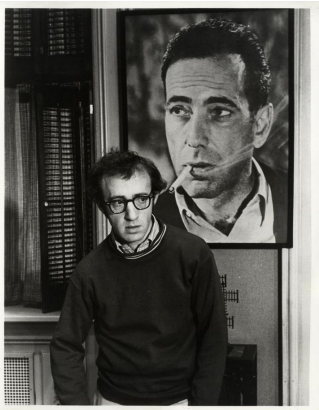
No longer want to walk  
In this off-kilter way  
Elbows bent like chicken wings  
To keep me steady  
Tired of having to think up  
If I can make it to the kitchen  
Or to a park bench  
Or to a bank and drug store  
Tired out of pretending  
I am no doing too well  
This attempts to walk  
Sheer pure unadulterated hell  
Tired out time to check out  
Eat less much less  
Start saying goodbyes  
Lay it all on the line  
Fewer steps left  
To reach the promised land - nb



.....

### **Still Life Stilled Life**

Got my quantum quantity  
Cup always half full  
Distilled minutes bulked up  
Lost time resigned  
Stuck spider weave by design  
Decisions mutinous fear  
I did and didn't dare  
Fate gathered me up  
Voices muted agony  
Myriad missed chances  
I watched as he disappeared  
Into the cabin of a plane  
Military satchel swung over shoulder  
Disappearing in vaporous cloud  
Of fear love forever lost to me  
As plane took off for Berlin  
It was about 1961  
It is now 2017  
And I am still filled with grief  
My soldier turned smiled  
Lifted hand to say goodbye  
Soon handed guided by father  
Wrote meticulous Dear John  
To my soldier guarding Wall  
Never to be undone forgiven  
Find solace if with slight smile  
Looking at Woody Allen  
Horrorified as Rick says goodbye  
In Casablanca *-here's looking at you*  
I become one with Woody Allen  
Trying to grasp dimension  
Of that departure in-*Play It Again Sam*



Door slammed shut

Not another opened  
Didn't have the courage  
To be a soldier's girl  
Lived micro in the fist  
Of my father's hand  
Still life stilling  
Steely will steely bond  
To be alive  
Not make any sense  
Bluffing walking  
Tilt hobble pain splits  
Gather storming thigh  
Arthritic hip death gnaws  
Growing presence  
Losing my grip  
My why my reason why  
Pageantry celebrate  
Caricature ribald  
Laughable  
Just that I got old  
Small price to pay  
For reaching 77  
I say to anyone  
Who will listen  
Who regards me pained  
As I stumble by  
Barely still alive  
Missing parts missing heart  
Gathering storm  
Eco-splatter  
I no longer matter  
Save the *sperm whale*  
Near extinct  
Save the chimps  
Grab each other's genitals  
To stay safe



I go my way  
Unsteady shadow self  
Scouring art celebrated still life's  
Expunging orange leaf  
To settled in image of me



**Paul Cezanne: Still Life With Fruit Basket (the kitchen table)**

*My cup runneth over*  
Vacating place at table  
Spirit child had life  
Did I love the world enough  
Did I savor being alive  
I loved trees  
Watched bird circle clouds  
Savored icy cold water  
And my god my explosive heart  
Holding those babies  
Bringing them to my breast  
My milk flowing over  
Suckling infant lips  
And yet as life stills  
Refused true love  
From my ever sorrowing heart

Life coming to a close  
Always aware of life  
Moving through me a marvel  
Now entering the valley of death

***Psalm 23 A psalm of David.***

<sup>1</sup> *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

<sup>3</sup> *he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.*

<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,<sup>[a]</sup>*

*I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

<sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

<sup>6</sup> *Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.*

I forgive my unforgiving heart  
Word Yes I Do I Will got lodged  
Water logged bogged down stuck in fear  
Without true love  
My glass was always sadly half full - nb

.....

***Old age comes on suddenly, and not gradually as is thought -  
Death is a dialogue between the spirit and the dust. Emily Dickinson***

.....

***Carved by trauma and tradition, her demons dragged my demons to the courthouse -  
writes of divorce, Jason Laner, father of virtual reality, and musician***

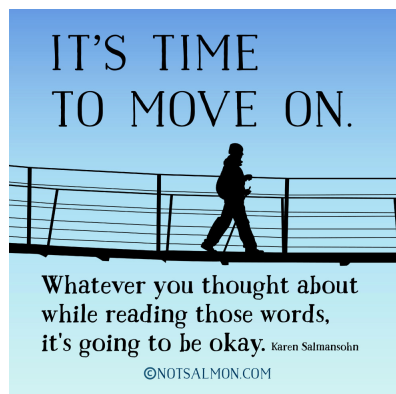
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*People cling to their hates so stubbornly because they sense, once the hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain. It tells me that you'll find a way to forgive your brother ... and yourself. In this mercy, salvation begins. Dear Sugar Column – Steve Almond, Cheryl Strayed*

.....  
*The twin fears of intimacy and rejection, shape many of our interactions. Remaining in this state of hypervigilance can contribute to issues like social anxiety, hypochondria, post-traumatic stress disorder, insomnia and all manner of phobias. Seeing images of people with frightened expressions is usually a huge trigger for the amygdala, but that response is greatly diminished when subjects are first shown pictures of people being cared for or hugged. Just as fear can be contagious, so can courage, caring and calm. Kate Murphy, Primitive responses to danger can impede modern living. Putting Your Fears in Their Place.*

.....  
*A syndrome signified by slowness, weakness, fatigue and often weight loss, frailty tells doctors a lot about their patients' likely futures. It can, for example, predict how well older patients rebound from physical stresses – like surgery. Frailty involves decreased physiological reserve, which helps determine how patients respond to physical stress. Physical activity, in particular, seems to be the key to preventing frailty and its progression. Dr. Linda Fried, dean Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. The New Old Age, Paul Span, NY Times, 10/31/17*

.....



*For what are we, if not a body taking a mind for a walk, just to see what's there?*  
Cory Taylor, Dying: A Memoir

### **It's Factual It's Actual**

I am old  
I am going to die  
Not inevitable  
As in getting born  
But in simple just getting old  
Becoming the elderly  
Designated seating on bus

*Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah (Allie Wrubel and Ray Gilbert –Song of the South movie)*

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay  
My, oh my, what a wonderful day  
Plenty of sunshine headin' my way  
Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay

Mister Bluebird's on my shoulder  
It's the truth, it's actual  
Ev'rything is satisfactual  
Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay



*Tashca*

Just waiting around  
Killing time before  
Time it gets to me  
No tealeaf prophesy  
Ultimate fortunes futures  
For grandkids  
Will never ever know  
Not in the cards  
Eyes dimming  
Stumble falter as I walk  
Afraid going to fall  
Don't want messy end



Tubes and sirens  
Defibrillators  
No excessive measures  
Head crashed smashed  
Against sidewalk  
Words stuck in throat  
Can't utter just say  
No! No! No!  
Heart losing heart  
Appetite for life  
Another day  
In which to be afraid  
Lose vibrancy mobility  
Being held like infant  
In adoring children's arms  
Diaper in place  
Bib to catch drool  
What kind of fool am I?

*What kind of fool am I  
Who never fell in love  
It seems that I'm the only one  
that I have been thinking of*

*What kind of man is this?  
An empty shell-  
A lonely cell in which  
an empty heart must dwell*

*What kind of lips are these  
That lied with every kiss  
That whispered empty words of love  
that left me alone like this*

*Why can't I fall in love  
Like any other man  
And maybe then I'll know what kind of fool I am.*

*What kind of clown am I?  
What do I know of life?  
Why can't I cast away the mask of play  
and live my life?*

*Why can't I fall in love  
Till I don't give a damn  
And maybe then I'll know what kind of fool I am – Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley*

Now just to stand by and wait

Soon will be free released  
It will be time to die  
When Jeremy falls in love  
Rebecca extricated herself  
From a troubled marriage  
Wonderful if lopsided mother  
If time hangs in the balance  
She is always within minutes  
Of being late and clothes  
Fall to floor and stay  
Like early early snow fall  
Luca has miraculously  
Rebounded once again  
From being nearly dead  
Drives around LA  
In vintage BMW gift of father  
Still not forgiven by me  
Luca's optimism is infectious  
He walks on hallowed ground  
Truly has been to the other side  
And oldest son Jeremy  
Crawled away lame and hurt  
From a killer marriage  
Barely escaping her murderous hands  
*She being prototype Mad Woman of Chailot – (Shakespeare /Jean Giraudoux)*



She abruptly up and left him  
With three babies tucked under his arm  
The humiliation throbs muted subs  
I stand on widows walk  
Scanning the sky and beyond  
To see a woman or even a man  
With whom he his heart

Will finally open for him to have true love -

***This World Which Is Made of Our Love for Emptiness***

*Praise to the emptiness that blanks out existence. Existence:  
This place made from our love for that emptiness!*

*Yet somehow comes emptiness,  
this existence goes.*

*Praise to that happening, over and over!  
For years I pulled my own existence out of emptiness.*

*Then one swoop, one swing of the arm,  
that work is over.*

*Free of who I was, free of presence, free of dangerous fear, hope,  
free of mountainous wanting.*

*The here-and-now mountain is a tiny piece of a piece of straw  
blown off into emptiness.*

*These words I'm saying so much begin to lose meaning:  
Existence, emptiness, mountain, straw:*

*Words and what they try to say swept  
out the window, down the slant of the roof. Rumi*

*What you waiting, what you waiting  
What you waiting, what you waiting  
What you waiting for?  
What you waiting, what you waiting  
What you waiting, what you waiting  
What you waiting for? Gwen Stefani*

Time precious first son  
For me to move on – move on

*It's time to move on, time to get going.  
What lies ahead, I have no way of knowing  
But under my feet, baby, grass is growing.  
It's time to move on, it's time to get going. Tom Petty*

Holding out a little while longer  
For that thunderclap revelatory moment  
My oldest son, my dear one has found true love  
And then think believe my time on earth is done – nb

### **Just Tore His Guts Out**

Memory faltered  
It's Alzheimer it's not  
Knotty distinction  
Need dead brain  
To prove either which way  
Except for keeping me  
For himself my father's  
Only other request  
Was to stay here  
Live out his life  
Here in his home  
Last will and testament  
And what did I do violate  
That inviolate commandment  
I took Dad by the hand  
It was December 31 of some year  
And we climbed into waiting van  
And drove to the Catskills  
Where he would live  
To spend out his days  
Quoth the raven nevermore

*"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—  
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."*

*And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore! Edgar Allen Poe, The Raven*



I just tore him off broke him  
A thick branch of old denizen tree  
Cup with sap runneth over  
Liminal death vitality run dry



*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree*

*We love you*  
*Yes we do*  
*Yes we do*  
*We love you*

*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree*  
*Tree tree tree -Mr Rodgers, Tree Tree Tree*

I just upped no compunction  
And kidnapped him  
Stole him away from his home  
It was either that or have  
His wife (our mother)  
More than half-way there  
Up and kill murder him  
And as the car drove off  
His clairvoyant voice  
Spoke out clear as castrati  
*The end is near*  
We cut short eclipsed raw

Sordid news grabbing moment  
She lived in that very same  
Home a decade more  
He shedding on the drive there  
His forgetting mind determined  
To get fully as well as possible  
And then in declarative moment  
Announce he was ending life  
As if in hysterical *Marx Brother's* movie  
The Alzheimer man who arrived  
In diapers tongue  
Too drug-laced to swallow  
Leaning heavily on walker for each step  
Flung up his heels and started  
To just dance away his days  
Feasting on Irish stew  
Sipping claret and chardonnay  
Rescuing his life  
From her murderous hands  
He who gets last laugh  
If poignant and once again  
Immigrant displaced person  
Sending her straight to hell  
Marx episodes flash screen  
Screed stampede got fully well  
No walker no diapers no pills  
And it is here he outgrew  
His need of her  
Debased dependent deposed  
Musical composition recorder to lips  
Sweet solicitude solemn song  
Fully in control fully aware  
Preparations reparations made  
To end his life his own way  
Now time to follow in  
Father's footsteps  
*Quality of life* issues  
What a contrivance  
Time to confront foreclose  
On any future possibilities  
Can't get well can't heal  
Can't walk well again  
Can hardly walk at all  
Submit to the ledger in the sky  
Time's end writ large  
Evermore want to stay

Away from other familiar eyes  
Painfully subjecting myself  
To mournful get a new hip  
Implied grimaces  
Time to exorcise demons  
Regret hate vengeance  
All too late to get back  
At anyone or to get back  
Time lost to bad decisions  
Time to own up  
End is near as Dad said  
Find deep assured pleasure  
Hallowed ground  
My home the one I built  
As if lying wide-eyed in my own  
Architectural Digest mausoleum  
And by finding myself on park bench  
Chill of mid-November day  
However I stumbled to get there  
Snug in deep sweet reverie  
Tucked next to grandpa Issie  
Sundays he would take my arm  
And walk across the street  
To his loved Passaic Park  
Strolling by all the ladies  
Introducing me as his little lady  
We were about the same height  
I was near ten  
I feel those Sunday moments  
Surge through me as if yesterday  
My Grandpa Issie who fled  
The military and rampant  
Roaring Anti-Semitism  
To find himself  
On Lower East Side  
Cooking potatoes for his boys  
In fired up garbage cans  
Stitching fine suits  
Serving up scoops of Breyers  
Taking numbers getting arrested  
Breaking violin over father's head  
Who wouldn't practice when six  
This man whose embittered wife  
Watched him from the window  
With disgust as he sat among at "dirty Jews"  
In the park as she described them

She in her prime who drove off  
With other men weekends  
Leaving her husband  
With three boys one blind  
In small home in back of candy store  
This man my prince who never  
Stepped into a synagogue  
Felt Judaism and religion junk  
This man who walked with me  
To his favorite park bench  
To flirt with women  
Holding me hand reassuringly  
Wonderful moment savored recaptured  
Now as I struggle to get to park bench  
Taking in transformation to fall and winter  
Each day almost mathematical  
Configuration equation  
Figuring out life's end  
Testimony to life I lived and did love  
If lost chances lost forevermore  
Quoth the raven nevermore  
Into which month will the raven  
Warble  
For me to hear Nina Simone  
To sing her plaintive song to me  
Will another spring come

***Another Spring Another Spring***

*Old people talk to themselves  
When they sit all 'round all day  
This old woman I knew  
I used to go over there and sit with her  
And she'd be sitting around  
In a rocking chair talking to herself*

*And she used to say she used to say  
Sometimes the cold gets in my bones so bad  
Till I just don't think I can go  
Yeah and for a little while well I don't care  
If my days are coming to an end  
And just as soon be gone sometimes*

*Sometimes the night comes down on me  
And I know what's ahead  
An evening in this cold old house  
With no one to say goodnight to me when I go to bed  
An evening in this cold old house*



*With no one to say goodnight to me when I go to bed*

*Sometimes  
I wonder why I stay  
What am I waiting for  
My children are grown and gone away  
They got children of their own now  
Don't need me anymore*

*In winter when the streets are bare  
There ain't nothing much to see  
I just can't help missing and thinking  
About that kindly man  
That one old winter time came  
And took away from me*

*And then one morning  
Another spring is there outside my door  
Things are blooming  
Birds are singing  
And suddenly yes well I ain't sad  
Ain't sad no more ain't sad no more*

*When it's warm and the sun is out  
It's like my heart's restored  
I've had my love I've had my children  
And I have so many memories  
So don't mind me complaining  
What the years may bring*

*Cos this old world has been fine with me really  
And I'm thankful for seeing another spring  
It's gonna be better this time another spring  
It's gonna be groovier this time another spring  
It's what's happening this time  
So I'm thankful for letting me see another spring **Nina Simone, Another Spring***

I can't don't have the courage desire  
To find another crocus break  
Through wintery February ground



Don't think I can do it  
Legs giving way  
Can't stand tall upright  
To wait for the sprig of succulent  
Spring to spread for another time  
Before my faltering legs  
And my malapropism diminishing sight - nb



.....

*Oh, isn't life a terrible thing, thank God? Dylan Thomas*

.....

*That men are afraid that women will laugh at them,  
And women are afraid that men will kill them - Margaret Atwood*

.....

*Contemplate doubt and ambivalence  
that sometimes attend acts of brutality  
Paul Bloom, Beastly, Perpetrators of violence, we're told, dehumanize their  
victims. The Truth is worse New Yorker 11/27/17*

.....

**-Will the Real Slim Shady Please Stand Up**  
**-Thirteen ways of looking at a black bird**  
**-Tales from Rashomon – Akira Kurosawa**

**Contradiction the essence**

As the story unfolds  
Shaped by contrary moods  
Moments to let in truth  
And what is that anyway  
What truth outlier  
For and about me  
Trying to reckon with  
Who was it that lived  
Within this skin this mind  
This heart this soul  
Hurt pain still blocks  
An essence of who I was  
To find its way to words  
Settled law settled story  
Past cluttered landscape  
Riven driven with fear  
If not now truth  
Then when  
What version of myself  
Do I want to die believing in  
Head twirls whirligig  
Gypsy nomad ruthless truth  
Forsooth finding myriad  
Versions of me  
Existing upon a roiling troubled sea  
Hard to regard life inhabited  
Habitat dying symbiosis melancholia  
Fate fastened embedded with  
Near to extinct coral down deep  
***Will the real slim shady please stand up –***  
*'Coz I'm slim shady, yes I'm the real shady*  
*All you other slim shadys are just imitating*  
*So won't The Real Slim Shady please stand up*  
*Please stand up, please stand up?*

*'Coz I'm slim shady, yes I'm the real shady*  
*All you other slim shadys are just imitating*  
*So won't The Real Slim Shady please stand up*  
*Please stand up, please stand up?*

Ha ha

Guess there's a slim shady in all of us  
Fuck it, let's all stand up -Eminem

Will the real Naomi please stand up  
Become clear and visible to me  
Can't be so afraid of what lives  
Still active within me  
Believe it all belongs to me  
Sole ownership sole property  
Probity biblical righteousness  
**Blessed (are) they that keep judgment,  
(and) he that doeth righteousness at all times. Psalm 106:3**

Struggling to write the script the narrative  
Captivated by the person, me, who lived and worked  
In the public sphere her mission her steely spine  
Joan of Arc lifting sword of righteousness wielded  
**Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird -**

VI

Icicles filled the long window  
With barbaric glass.  
The shadow of the blackbird  
Crossed it, to and fro.  
The mood  
Traced in the shadow  
An indecipherable cause.

X

At the sight of blackbirds  
Flying in a green light,  
Even the bawds of euphony  
Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut  
In a glass coach.  
Once, a fear pierced him,  
In that he mistook  
The shadow of his equipage  
For blackbirds.

XII

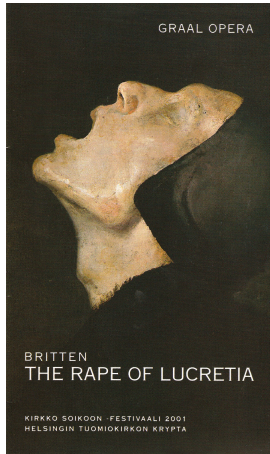
The river is moving.  
The blackbird must be flying.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.  
It was snowing  
And it was going to snow.  
The blackbird sat  
In the cedar-limbs. -Wallace Stever



I am your widow  
Without ever being your bride  
I am all broken heart  
Shards of that which is forbidden  
Cut into my being  
Every day I am not with you  
Spurned refused turned back on  
Please know I have been  
Dying living without you  
I belonged to my father  
Relegated to abusive husbands  
His need to be regarded as a saint  
As he stood over my mother's  
Withered body after her  
Ritualistic tribal self-beatings  
As he lifting her head off oven door  
And then how saintly he appeared  
How I craved that he save me  
As man promised to flung me across rooms  
Their projectile spheres of hateful words  
Piercing me just for being in same room  
It was six hands that held me down supine  
*Rape of Lucretia* had my own raptors  
Had my ritualized suicide after  
Being violated and stolen from  
It was dad true love you took from me



Musician dad  
This is me in the after math  
Denied love I died  
Letter written in blood  
Ending chance for true love  
Bloodletting festered  
Wound never bled out  
Within me the scream the howl  
The ear splitting heart rending  
Sound barrier breaking  
Scream lifted from throat  
Of mother of fallen soldier

**In *Benjamin Britten's War Requiem***

*The written book shall be brought  
In which all is contained  
Whereby the judge takes his seat  
All that is hidden shall appear:  
Nothing will remain unavenged  
King of awful majesty  
What freely savest those worthy of salvation  
Save me, fount of pity  
Oh this day full of tears  
When from ashes arises  
Guilty man, to be judged  
Oh Lord, have mercy upon him. Benjamin Britten, War Requiem*

It was my soldier I abandoned  
Incarcerated wedded  
Barnacle on dying coral  
Subsistence life  
My fury whips up  
As I get close in earnest to dying  
I don't forgive you  
Those men were machinations  
Agents of your imagination

Construed to imprison me

It was my **Roshamon** eulogy.[recalling staring transfixed at the man's wife] I thought I saw a goddess. At that moment I decided to have her, even if I had to kill her man. But if I could have her without killing, all the better. **Tajômaru**: [Presenting his sword to the husband] Here, take it. Look at it. Near here I found this old tomb with things like this in it. I broke it open and inside I found swords, daggers, mirrors... I buried them all here in the woods and no one but me knows where. But if you're interested I might sell some of them to you cheap. **Commoner**: It sounded interesting, at least while I kept out of the rain. But if it's a sermon, I'd sooner listen to the rain. **Masako**: Wait! Stop! Either you die or my husband dies. One of you must die. To have my shame known to two men is worse than dying. I will go with the survivor. **Masako**: What should a poor, helpless woman like me do?



Rahsomon Kurosawa

That cast a mortal wound  
The story shapes  
Been fine tooth combing regrets  
But it was not the men the husbands  
I had to forgive and forget  
It was you Dad  
I lived in the folds of your saintliness



You're concubine your other wife  
It was how you tolerated our mother  
I was the ballast that kept you afloat  
I was the lily on a pod  
The sanctuary for your forbidden desires  
I lived without John I folded up and died  
When you dictated that *Dear John* letter  
Dad, Indentured to you I could never refuse you - NB

## Tucked in at 5pm Friday Night

No more news no more TV  
At saturation point  
Can't hear another pundit  
Riff of Trump and his devastating  
Destruction of this country  
Soon to vacate halcyon reverie  
Myth making moment  
Making plans for moving on  
To beyond Atacama Desert



Atacama Desert

Lying in bed wide awake listening to  
*Pablo Casals playing Bach Suites*



The Bach Cello Suites

Did I ever bring my fingers to cello  
And dare to bow those notes  
Father discouraged  
*You don't know how to count*  
Music resplendent flowed  
Through my fingers from my soul  
Casals deep breathes as he bowed  
Reliving the somber life of new bride  
Sipping kirsch sitting at French windows  
In old hotel high in the Swiss Alps



Not yet twenty-five playing Bach Suites  
To keep in tact my mind from falling into  
Deep somnambulant state of free fall  
This the destiny I chose

***The sweet sharp pain that foreshadows***

*weeping visited him again in the throat and eyes  
There was an aching in her eyes from loneliness.  
When she closed them, tears scattered down her face.  
The light strengthened gradually and silently,  
changing from gray to rose to gold.  
Cast his shadow on her. As long as she sang,  
he flew with her, running above the steppe on wolf's.*

*Atticus Lish, Preparation for the New Life*



Quilting bee woves musical notation  
Wrapped in reverie  
Preparing for the next life  
Spun in spider silken weave



Silken enfolding

Have entered the valley of death *Psalm 23*  
Trying to imagine what's next  
As I lay me down to sleep  
Never again to awake  
Not frightening nor revelatory  
The harsh white light of life  
Zooms in close  
Then deep darkness enfolds encloses - NB

***What Kind of Fool Am I? It Only Took a Moment***

**What kind of fool am I, who never fell in love?**

It seems that I'm the only one that I have been thinkin' of!  
What kind of man is this, an empty shell?  
A lonely cell in which an empty heart must dwell!

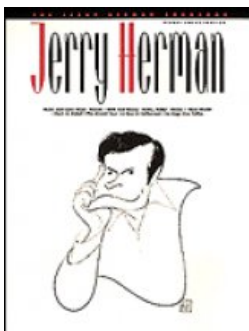
What kind of lips are these, that lied with every kiss?  
That whispered empty words of love that left me alone like this?  
Why can't I fall in love like any other man?  
And maybe then I'll know what kind of fool I am! Anthony Newley

***It only takes a moment***

*For your eyes to meet and then  
Your heart knows in a moment  
You will never be alone again  
I held her for an instant  
But my arms felt sure and strong  
It only takes a moment  
To be loved a whole life long.....Takes a moment!  
But his arms felt sure and strong  
It only takes a moment  
He held me for an instant  
But his arms felt safe and strong  
It only takes a moment  
To be loved a whole life long  
And that is all  
That love's about  
And we'll recall when time runs out  
That it only took a moment  
To be loved a whole life long! Jerry Herman*

Jerry Herman came to our wedding  
One block from Philip Roth's parents home  
Where was I all those years ago  
Who was it who inhabited me  
Who stood before a judge  
In that cramped living room  
Only forty guests sitting tight on  
Golden velvet folding chairs  
Didn't know whom I was marrying  
Where was I all those years ago  
Who was it that inhabited me  
Who was I where was I  
Why were Broadway eminence  
Present in my living room

Who were these celebrities  
 Who bridged the encampment  
 Tight as a concentration camp  
 Of our own making never daring  
 To venture forth or look beyond  
 The lip of these sequestered streets  
 We lived in a ghetto anointed  
 The promise land it was as far  
 As our imaginations had reach  
 Dread of the second wave  
 Of Nazi invaders to neighborhood  
 Dread of strangers the goyim  
 We were locked in even if we never  
 Stepped inside synagogue sanctuary  
 Never held or kissed a Torah  
 Lifted from the temple Arc  
 Never stood on a Bimah promising  
 Lifelong to live a good Jewish life  
 Philip Roth moved among these same streets  
 Strayed as far as South Orange to find first love  
 Weequahic Jews broke through barrier of insularity  
 To find themselves in encampment of upscale homes  
 Wore Lord and Tailor cashmere sweaters labels intact  
***As long as you go to school you can have a library card.***  
***You could take the book home. Philip Roth Goodbye Columbus***  
 By the time I was seventeen I moved  
 Beyond the ghetto walls with library books  
 Read Virginia Woolf the Waves  
 Even attempted Ulysses by James Joyce  
 But that was as far as I got until  
 I got misplaced on that fateful wedding day  
***It only took a moment***  
***What kind of fool was I***  
 Jerry Herman came to my wedding  
 On Keer Avenue one block away  
 From Philip Roth's family home

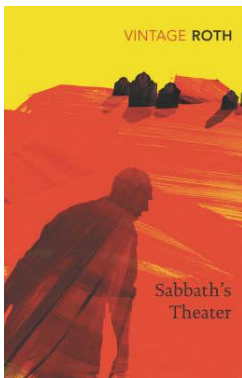


**Jerry Herman** who wrote *Milk and Honey*  
*Hello Dolly, Mame La Cage aux Folles*  
*Jerry Herman came with Ben's mother*  
*With a small posse of Jewish theater royalty*

I followed in Philip Roth's footsteps  
Jumped into the arms of a world  
Musical comedy Broadway shows  
And elegant exclusive Tanglewood Inns  
Not married a year I moved  
To an old hotel in the Swiss Alps  
Lapse of judgment  
Or impetuous escape plan  
***What kind of fool was I***  
What lie did I inhabit  
Never fully moved in  
Lived on the outskirts  
Of this life wanting  
Most of the time  
Wanting just to die  
Bach squirmed in celestial skies as I drew  
My cello bow play Bach Cello Suites  
Along with vows acquired myriad riches  
Sports cars jewels pedigree antique furniture  
Found notoriety in couture wardrobe  
Left for college with ma-tailored shorts and shirts  
Mother's final control over me saying  
*All in good taste that is what they are wearing*  
Asked barber Joe Fanelli for boyish cut  
And suddenly there I was born again  
As if *Botticelli's Venus on Half Shell*



Full-blown fashion trend-setter  
Musical badge of honor fingers calloused  
Playing cello up and down full string range  
Who was I kidding where did I go  
Somewhere between wardrobe for college  
Tight as chastity belted virgin  
Warning all men or women to stay away  
Took less than a decade  
For this monumental disappearance act  
Summer afternoons sipping champagne  
On the Terrace of a French Berkshire Inn  
Leonard Bernstein among the illustrious guests  
This was on the groom's father's side  
Jerry Herman would not be welcomed here  
Girl fled encampment known  
As Weequahic section of Newark NJ  
Jerry Herman was a witness  
As I said that tongue biting I Do  
Now fully present in body  
Breaking down afraid to walk  
Avert eyes looking at face in mirror  
Skin hangs loose a boiled kosher chicken  
Pain sears in forever arthritic hip  
No longer find my soul fighting for the  
Right to come out in the open to live  
Jerry Herman came to my wedding  
In the Weequahic section of Newark  
Philip Roth was there in spirit as well  
It wasn't until I read *Sabbath's Theater*



*Sabbath was reduced the way a sauce is reduced,  
boiled down by his burners, the better to concentrate  
his essence and be defiantly himself.*

*Sabbath was a realist, ferociously a realist,  
so that by sixty-four he had all but given up  
on making contact with the living, let alone  
discussing his problems with the dead.*

*We are immoderate because grief is immoderate,  
all the hundred and thousands of kinds of grief –Philip Roth*

That I understood the choice I made  
To live stone still on a half shall  
Left Newark left that life behind  
For greener pastures into which  
I lay down any hope for possibility  
And now truly in real life close to death  
I find myself fully wakened up  
*What kind of Fool Was I -NB*

## Status: I Am A Was a Was-Been

Fuzzy Wuzzy was a...

*Fuzzy Wuzzy*

*Was a bear*

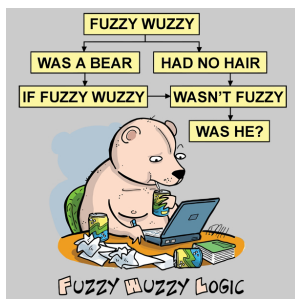
*Fuzzy Wuzzy*

*Had no hair*

*Fuzzy Wuzzy*

*Wasn't fuzzy, was he?*

*Was he bare?*



Wuz Up? Politically incorrect  
But apt to ask myself  
Who was she  
The sum of her all  
No more no less no more  
Stranger's eyes  
Seize on my uneven gait  
*Get you a cab Mam?*  
Dependent now  
On the kindness of strangers

"I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

Blanche DuBois, *A Streetcar Named Desire* Tennessee Williams

I pledged as a girl never  
To depend on anyone  
Arrogant solipsistic governing principle  
Needing no one not wanting to need anyone  
Gait keeper despite heart's hunger  
Not to bargain for more life  
More time to find another chance for love

Not again wistful for what  
I could have been would have been  
If it hadn't been for mother  
Mother just hadn't what?  
Given birth to me?  
She was my euphemistic whipping boy



Here we go 'round the mulberry bush  
The burning bush



Help! My hair is on fire  
Tectonic shift  
Earth giving out under foot  
That nightmare falling through space  
That is me free falling into nowhere else  
No longer to feel sorry for myself  
Fate not now choice govern me  
No more self-indulgent  
Sloppy grinding binding emotion  
I am on downward slide  
I am a was a was-been  
No more present tense for me  
Shape shifting time



Will go as the wind blows  
Dim eyes dim future

**PROTECT ME  
FROM WHAT  
I WANT**

*Jenny Holzer*

What I wanted  
Yearned for life long  
Was to master  
The art of being alone  
Needing no one  
Tautology of fear  
Drove me there  
To nowhere else  
To here  
Prepared lifelong  
For the art of dying alone  
Practiced in solitude solitariness  
Where the courage to end life  
Knowing it was my mind  
My heart my desire  
To need no one else  
Time closes in I submit  
I was and no longer am  
Body swelled with babies  
Hand reached across continents  
For a third child  
Standing back taking it all in  
Grand bargain  
Made with life motherhood  
If not great love  
Having now arrived  
At terminal point at life's end  
Truly alone finally wide-eyed - NB



Norman Rockwell

### He Lifted the Rolling Pin High Over His Head

As if about to cut a tree  
Sledging coming down hard  
On the near frozen pie dough  
Prepared from scratch  
Whoever still does that?  
Slammed into that mound of dough  
And proceeded to roll and roll  
Reluctant to oblige dough just stayed hard  
I got a hammer I got a rolling pin  
There sure a lot of Paul Bunyan in him  
And there are times when Paul Bunyan and I  
Our hearts burst out in song

*If I had a hammer  
I'd hammer in the morning  
I'd hammer in the evening  
All over this land  
And I'd hammer out danger  
I'd hammer out a warning  
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters  
All over this land  
If I had a bell  
I'd ring it in the morning  
I'd ring it in the evening  
All over this land  
I'd ring out danger  
I'd ring out a warning  
I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters  
All over this land, ooh - Pete Seeger and Lee Hays*

Within the sweep of that rolling pin  
That song that prayer for better days

And today this day we chant full blast  
*Sing a song of sixpence a pocket full of rye,*  
*Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie,*  
*When the pie was opened the birds began to sing,*  
*Oh wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the King?*  
*Sing a Song of Sixpence Nursery Rhyme*

His father tall above his son  
Just at a tilt so he wouldn't  
Get smacked in the face or chest  
By that rollicking swinging rolling pin  
*We're making a pumpkin pie*  
*For Thanksgiving meal*  
He tells me as I sit to the side



*Norman Rockwell*

Around that table turkey place cards  
We became that all American  
*Norman Rockwell apple pie family*  
*I made the apple pie from scratch*  
*Cored peeled sliced the apples*  
My granddaughter recounts  
As her delicacy was presented  
Near the end of the meal  
This was a tension free Thanksgiving meal  
I morphing to myself into a favorite  
Radicalized misnomer *chopped liver*  
Observed it was a *grandparent free day*  
Thanksgiving 2017 *grandparent free feast day*  
Daughter and husband about to divorce  
*A best friend forever* parting severing  
Of marital ties a family reforming  
This celebration a day of reckoning  
Daughter's father recently died

He was my husband until he wasn't  
 And forever son-in-law's parents didn't come  
 Voted for Trump last year  
 Paul Bunyan wielder of rolling pin  
 Muttered under his breath *Fuck Trump Fuck Trump*  
*Your mother always liked me because I wasn't Jewish*  
 M forever son-in-law comments  
 As we share silly grandma *Bluma* stories  
*She lived with Auschwitz fumes in her nose*  
*She was a come and go Jew* I respond  
 And as if feasting on a *Pesach* meal  
 This day we reclined we relaxed we laughed  
 Their father our *Miss Manner's* standard-bearer  
 Didn't even once as he has been wont to do  
 Set the table afire with mean spirited  
 Incendiary barbs and mockery about table manners  
 Grandson lifted rolling pin above his head  
 Attacked that defrosting pie crust  
 As if a character on *Star Wars* game  
 Started new tradition here  
*Grandparent free Thanksgiving meal*  
*Asking why on this day do we*  
 A family engaging in its own reformation  
 Held an unbounded truly all American feast



We finally reached the epitome the pinnacle  
 The unblemished unmediated  
 Unadulterated unfiltered truth  
 About ourselves as family as  
 Discourse and truth and beauty filled the air  
 Yes, as *American as apple pie* -NB

.....

***I Have a Hard Boiled Egg Every Day like Crunchy Omeletes Bloody Steaks***

*I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,  
Neat in their boxes, dolor of pad and paper weight,  
All the misery of manilla folders and mucilage,  
Desolation in immaculate public places,  
Lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard,  
The unalterable pathos of basin and pitcher,  
Ritual of multigraph, paper-clip, comma,  
Endless duplicaton of lives and objects.  
And I have seen dust from the walls of institutions,  
Finer than flour, alive, more dangerous than silica,  
Sift, almost invisible, through long afternoons of tedium,  
Dropping a fine film on nails and delicate eyebrows,  
Glazing the pale hair, the duplicate grey standard faces. Theodore Roethke*

Why did that bloody vivid commentary  
Fill the pit of my stomach with nausea  
Image of lonely man cracking egg on sink ledge  
Eating or rather gulping it down standing up  
*I have known the inexorable sadness of pencils,*  
Who loves this lonely man who takes care of him  
*He is so nurturing you are so nurturing I am so nurturing*  
His first love comments at a brunch reunion thirty years later  
*I love family life being part of a family often shared*  
*Kids who have parents who stay together both sides*  
*Don't divorce he tells his eldest niece on Thanksgiving Day*  
She insisting she would never divorce but stay married  
Broken lives broken eggs broken up families  
He is still bloodied by the breaking up of his family  
Double jeopardy his childhood home as if yesterday  
And then his wife walking out serving papers  
He updates that she is now filled with remorse and regret  
Having dug herself into deep hole unable to dig her way out  
I think what good care you took of her  
While in return she paid you no mind as they say

***She was dancing, she was smiling***

*This was blooming in your cheeks  
Inner quiet, kind of litany  
She accepted from the feet  
And then she turned into my arms  
Of disgrace, and then repelled  
Now she's fallen to her knees,  
But you couldn't ever tell  
And then, she asked me how we got here  
I told her I don't know  
And if you keep on asking*

*I'll just keep saying  
So, this isn't what I wanted  
It isn't what you need  
But let them keep on talking  
Just calm yourself and  
Pay, don't you pay them any mind  
Don't you pay them any mind  
You know this happens every time  
Now don't you pay them (any mind)  
Let it burn, as if we'd bothered  
We'll make sound based off their eyes  
As she closes, just to open  
It's some sirens rolling by  
And as she's off to tell her secret  
To her friends somewhere in town  
And her friend just takes a moment  
And that's why I'm not around  
Darling, this is something  
I should have told you long ago  
I just want you to feel safe  
I just want to make you glow  
But how you glowed when we were young  
And with nothing on our minds  
When you jump, for your love  
Baby you're nothing long of time  
Just calm yourself and  
Pay, don't you pay them any mind  
Don't you pay them any mind  
You know this happens every time  
Now don't you pay them any mind  
Don't you pay them any mind  
Don't you pay them any mind  
You know this happens every time  
Now don't you pay them any mind - Madeon*

Songs seem to appear out of thin air  
Expressing what words mind and heart  
Are hard pressed to come up with  
We stood by and watched  
The inevitable collapse of your marriage  
The breaking apart of  
Your family your home life  
Your wife was your problem child  
From the very beginning  
Suturing up broken needy people  
May suit you may be your need  
Taking care of others  
Not letting anyone in close enough

To take care of you  
I see how I bloodied you when I left  
When I abandoned our family home  
And left your father to wield  
His bloody fist his blood filled words  
You became the target of his menacing ways  
My walking out left you shattered broken  
Having protected you so well until then  
You were always a solitary child  
*I fell in love in school today*  
*I have two new friends*  
You told me you were four  
One little boy named Janus the other Everett  
Once home you would go into your room  
Put on knights regalia play with your castle and knights  
Perhaps occasionally Everett would be there



Most often alone dulcet sweet songs  
Would come from under the door  
Just like pooh an imaginary friend  
Humming along side you bees buzzing  
His head honey filling his mouth  
**Hum dum de dum, hum dum de dum**  
I'm so rumbly in my tumbly  
Time to munch an early luncheon  
Hum dum de dum, dum  
Oh, I wouldn't climb this tree  
If a Pooh flew like a bee  
But I wouldn't be a bear then  
So I guess, I wouldn't care then  
Bears love honey and I'm a Pooh bear  
So I do care, so I'll climb there  
I'm so rumbly in my tumbly  
A time for something sweet

Oh, I wouldn't climb this tree  
If a Pooh flew like a bee  
But I wouldn't be a bear then  
So I guess, I wouldn't care then  
Bears love honey and I'm a Pooh bear  
So I do care, so I'll climb there  
I'm so rumbly in my tumbly  
A time for something sweet – Robert and Richard Sherman



How does the road chosen go so wrong  
I am the mother of a son he is more than fifty-one  
Who eats hard-boiled eggs every morning standing up  
A man who craved to be part of a family  
Now with three kids ages thirteen to nine  
And a wife who stood at the sink  
Her stone cold back turned away from him  
See now that nurturing others not good enough  
It is a false god kind of self-sacrifice  
Sitting across a brunch table listen  
As he animatedly describes his tastes and appetites  
And I wonder why I thrust such agony on my son  
I could have stayed I didn't need to run  
I could have learned to banish fear from my face  
I could have submitted to his father's sexual appetites  
I could have learned to stand up to him  
And be the *State of Israel* he said I had become  
What in the aftermath of that closed family door  
Did my life become an accounting well overdue  
I could have stayed I should have stayed  
To take care of him to protect him  
Finally finding himself in the arms of a cruel woman  
Direct connective fibers to cruel father  
Will he now find someone to nurture to love him



To prepare his omelette just as he likes it  
To share bites into hardboiled eggs  
And to cut together into a near raw bloody steak  
No forgiving me now I see we never moved beyond  
Goody-two-shoes victimhood ennobling  
Taking care of others asking nothing in return  
This is to be my legacy this what I leave behind  
Agony of irrevocable choosing  
No do-overs no more chances  
I left a child to be preyed upon by his father  
His fierce meanness greater than a knight's armor  
Now his heart seems impenetrable to having love  
Horrifyingly now see we acted as if above it all  
Everyone else near to us weak and needy  
We inherited the Jesus complex



*Guido Reni*

From my father your grandfather  
Standing on high hand open  
Perceived always shepherd of our flock  
Family life needed tending as we construed it  
Finally now as I look beyond my own life  
That mythic kind family life finally finding its ending - NB

## SANDYHOOK FIVE YEARS LATER 2017

### 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

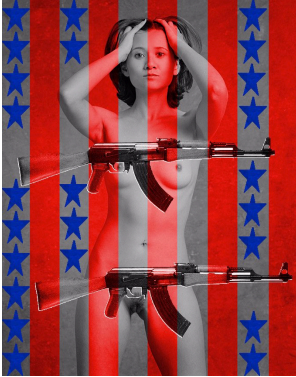
Why and how come

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?



Naomi Barber

*"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

### **Curtains Open It Is Nighttime**

Face turned toward blinding lights  
Few neighbors in apartments still up  
And then avert from searing penetrating  
Bank of lights from roof deck of prison  
Just up the block on West 110<sup>th</sup> street  
No longer have given up fighting to sleep  
No longer rail against a body  
A mind resisting moving  
To sleep filtered consciousness  
Why the hell was or am I worried  
About not getting enough sleep  
*Beauty is only skin-deep*  
My nine-year old grandson reminded me  
As I turned away from looking at  
Atrocious hideous computer game character  
Long ago abandoned by whatever  
Bounty was mine of physical beauty  
I am now the generic old lady  
Lost in a crowded field of old ladies  
Tilting toward ground gravity's pull  
Holding on tight to shopping cart  
Or walker and yes there are Cadillac versions  
Bus leans down to let me step in  
Moves ramp down to let wheelchairs enter  
Everyone know that means vacate front seats  
*Don't stand while bus is moving*  
*Caring drives warns you might fall*  
Fraught message when is the minute  
I don't fear falling  
Day of reckoning comes  
Arguing with myself whether to go out  
Hazard finding myself prone  
Face down surrounded by strangers  
Waiting for EMS to come  
And they do stay with you  
NYC much kinder City since 9/11  
If we have a buffoon for a Mayor  
Practicalities of finding being hemmed in  
By badly severely damaged arthritic hip  
And then as the day folds into darkness



Vincent Van Gogh *Starry Night*

Find myself in my nightly dilemma  
Whether to force myself to fall asleep  
Body mind resists is it the fear  
Of never waking up again and how will I know that  
Or is it I just can't find a comfortable position  
My throbbing hip unsettles re-configures me  
There is no comfortable place no pain free zone  
And then there comes the struggle with my bladder  
One of the few caring bits of advice mother gave me  
When you need to pee you need to press on the pubic bone  
When you get to a certain age the very one I am at  
Struggle to sleep struggle to pee but my mind still clear  
And so on my Bose CD player the most lavish gift  
I ever bought for myself I put on Glenn Gould playing  
Playing Bach Concertos' 1-5 & 7 two box set  
Columbia orchestra accompanying him  
Conductor Leonard Bernstein  
*Lennie* as my Dad would reverentially refer to him  
My body my mind my heart my soul my being  
Opens as I imagine the loveliest most fragrant rose  
As I listen snug and safe in my room  
Surrounded by books and paintings  
And collages crowding hand-painted doors  
With family in a variety of activities and poses  
I fall into sweet nighttime reverie  
Window open to November chill  
I have finally come almost full circle  
Still the little girl holding her daddy's hand  
Listening to Bach's B Minor Mass  
Eyes streaming with emotion driven tears  
Asking him *Why Dad? Because of Bach* he answered  
Having spent much of my life until now  
Trying to grapple with understand  
What it was he wanted to communicate  
To his six-year-old daughter sitting tight by his side  
And then when he my Dad was getting ready to die



When he was about 83 or 84  
He said definitively *No More Bach It is Too Beautiful*  
This night not explicitly thinking about death  
Feel myself sitting in the presence of  
Glenn Gould as plays *Bach Concertos*  
God is moving within those fingers  
Stirring within Glenn Gould's breathing  
And in his heart as he plays that music  
He Glenn Gould praying to get through it  
Without suddenly abruptly stopping  
Soon into his career he gave up performing  
Couldn't stand to be witnessed by audiences  
Entrusted himself to Leonard Bernstein  
As he played all six Bach Piano Concerti  
My father worshipped Lennie as he called him  
I am lying here thinking about my Dad  
Leonard Bernstein and Glenn Gould  
Relieved of fighting to fall asleep  
Free to listen openhearted as generous night  
Dad I think I finally know *Why?*  
There is no declarative definition  
It is that we each always inherit the earth  
Just by virtue of getting born  
See clouds shifting in interminably blue sky  
And watch birds fly in exacting formation  
We read books and never quite grasp how they got  
From writers mind and heart to a written page  
I think Dad I know now *Why?*  
Listening to Glenn Gould playing Bach Concertos  
Leonard Bernstein conducting orchestra to accompany him



Leonard Bernstein with Glenn Gould

I think I now know WHY?  
From somewhere deep in archival mind just know Why? - NB

***In the Shreve high football stadium,***  
*I think of Polacks nursing long beers in Tiltonsville,*  
*And gray faces of Negroes in the blast furnace at Benwood,*  
*And the ruptured night watchman of Wheeling Steel,*  
*Dreaming of heroes.*  
*All the proud fathers are ashamed to go home*  
*Their women cluck like starved pullets,*  
*Dying for love.*  
*Therefore,*  
*Their sons grow suicidally beautiful*  
*At the beginning of October,*  
*And gallop terribly against each other's bodies.*  
*James Wright, Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio*



*Autumn Begins in Martins, Ferry, Ohio*

***The best days are the first to flee. Optima dies primo fugit - Virgil***

.....

**Practicing Another Valedictory Address**

**Take the Fucking Leg for a Walk**

Pace yourself  
 Day of reckoning coming  
 Bring it on  
 Can't come soon enough  
 Fearful of walk to park  
 Get to nearest park bench  
 Feel as if I made it to the moon  
 My personal best moonwalk  
 Paced off how many steps  
 Hold the walking stick lifeline  
 Decorated with flowers  
 Like a Swiss farmer's smock  
 My tympanic walking stick  
 Marks my paces  
 Pounding coming down hard  
 To balance me keep me upright

Trepidation lives with me  
Like a second skin  
Humiliatingly tissue paper thin  
I don't fear death  
Fraught fearing messy death  
Predation predator death  
Stalks me warns me with  
Scorching searing pain in leg  
Disintegrating disembodying  
Arthritic hip  
*Oh my god that's something*  
Pain doctor whispered under breath  
Sharing XRAY with intern  
*It's a wonderful life*  
It was a wonderful life  
Never less filled with wonder  
I got alive at birth  
Oxygen's first embrace  
Had me squalling  
Screaming my lungs out  
Got to 77 and fear each day  
Falling with each death defying step  
Vigilant stranger's watch  
Arms open waiting to catch me  
Know I will inevitably take a tumble fall  
My soul redolent with gratitude  
At the kindness awaiting me  
Got to protect myself  
From imbroglio of family gathering  
Solicitously watching whimpering  
As I move without recourse  
Into that whatever next life  
Don't want to lie in hospice bed  
Mournful eyes family begging  
Asking pleading with me  
How they can be of help  
Subliminally wishing it all to end  
Witnessing death not for the faint of hear  
Need to move on get it over with  
While I still have modicum of control  
While still self-possessed  
While still can reassure  
*Just an-old leg arthritis*  
As I get awkwardly into cabs  
As I step falteringly from elevator  
As I try to regain get balance

Just standing up

***This self-scrutiny*** – Edvard Munch

*Between the Clock and Bed* – exhibit at Met Breuer

*Discovery of death move mercifully off world's nerve*

*Gone halcyon days:*

*Finally reached threshold of eternity*

**This is not the book**

*Of instruction I had intended*

*But this is*

*When emptiness noticed*

*Its own beginning* – Eileen Myles, *The West*

Predator death don't let me resist you

Just don't trick me stick out your shadowy foot

And get me to fall and crush my hip

Have me walk dignified toward you death

Chanting mercifully slowly final vows

Clapboard house awaits me

Perched on a bluff in Maine

Nestled above rollicking February sea

It is my dream house a cottage

Dislodged from deep ancestral memory

Solitary with just the roar of the sea

And the treachery of walking

On the slippery jagged bluffs

This crafted from dream and necessity

I do not want a messy death

I do not want a broken hip

I do not want to fall graceless

Into that dark night

I want to soar off glacial cliff

On a bluster of wind

Glide into that ambivalent moment

Whoever is ever truly ready to die

To end life when we've yet to grapple

What truly really comes next

We get acquainted with know death

By looking for who is missing no longer there

And then how we chose to remember them

Standing straight feet square securely planted

I watch the surf I dream

Of softly gently moving on off and gone - nb

### **Following In His Footsteps: Philip Roth**

Spirit voyage feet plugged stuck  
Weequahic section Newark New Jersey  
Picket fence perfect-gated community  
Jews Europe once removed  
Fumes of Auschwitz still in nostrils  
Put hoops on garage doors  
Welcoming local library found us  
Reading books by *Virginia Woolf Faulkner Hemmingway*  
If all who settled in the close confines of Weequahic section  
Were Jews some were shtetl bound bobbing and weaving in shul  
Others strictly English only Reform Jews attending Bnai Jeshurun  
Enlightened patriots who moved beyond barbed wire  
Keepers of Elie Wiesel's warning never forgetting the twisted cross  
Went to the synagogue led by Rabbi Joachim Prinz who preached  
Jewish tenet *Tikkun Olam* and marched with Martin Luther King  
We carried *Pushka* door to door for donations to United Jewish Appeal  
Not yet sufficiently assimilated to collect for Unicef  
I grew up in Newark a decade behind Philip Roth  
Newark the Weequahic section now reconsidered at life's near end  
Philip Roth is the *sum of his contradictions* claims Adam Gopnik  
In lengthy New Yorker Profile entitled *The Patriot* –  
*The collected nonfiction of Philip Roth* –

*How do you do, Alex? To which of course I reply "Thank you." Whatever anybody says to me during my first twenty-four hours in Iowa, I answer "Thank you." Even to inanimate objects. I walk into a chair, promptly I say to it, "Excuse me. Thank you." Goodbye Columbus*

*Hello, I'm sorry I would threaten to say to Ben  
Whenever we were about to knock on someone's door  
Hello, I'm sorry. Hello I'm Jewish the subtext  
Can't escape no escape  
Once a Jew always a Jew my mother said  
You can't stop being a Jew even a self-hating one  
Heard murmured beneath her breath  
Weaving and bobbing to find my own homecoming  
Once asking my mother when just about five if I was Jewish  
Those early years living in a neighborhood where there was no other  
You are American emphatically answering back*

*"The writers who expanded and shaped my sense of America were mainly small-town Midwesterners and Southerners," he writes. He includes in this group Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Erskine Caldwell, and Theodore Dreiser. "Through my reading, the mythohistorical conception I had of my country in grade school—from 1938 to 1946—began to be divested of its grandiosity by its unraveling into the individual threads of American*

reality the wartime tapestry that paid moving homage to the country's idealized self-image," he says.

*Reading them served to confirm what the gigantic enterprise of a brutal war against two formidable enemies had dramatized daily for almost four years to virtually every Jewish family ours knew and every Jewish friend I had: one's American connection overrode everything, one's American claim was beyond question. Everything had repositioned itself. There had been a great disturbance to the old rules. One was ready now as never before to stand up to intimidation and the remains of intolerance, and, instead of just bearing what one formerly put up with, one was equipped to set foot wherever one chose. The American adventure was one's engulfing fate.*

*Not only can you go home again, Roth insists. You can only go home again. You get America right by remembering Newark as it really was.*

Feet planted in that plantation that was Newark  
Scratching my way back to those years  
Dreamboats Debettes proudly wore those club jackets  
I wanted to be in a club that would have me as a member  
Obverse Woody Allen "I would never want to belong to any club  
that would have someone like me for a member." Annie Hall  
Drawn curtains sworn to keep family lore secret  
Tears streaming face ice floe melting after thaw  
Everyday on way to school where I was a mediocre cellist  
Brain benumbed as if in aftermath of severe concussion  
Concussed mother's cussing jabbed barbed words flustered froze me  
Showing up glacial locked away brain hard to come undone

*(It is an emotion that was already part of Roth's arsenal of feeling as early as his first book, "Goodbye, Columbus," in which he wrote, "I felt a deep knowledge of Newark, an attachment so rooted that it could not help but branch out into affection.")*

*"Such depths as Sabbath evinces lie in his polarities," Roth writes. "What's clinically denoted by the word 'bi-polarity' is something puny compared to what's brandished by Sabbath. Imagine, rather, a multitudinous intensity of polarities, polarities piled shamelessly upon polarities to comprise not a company of players, but this single existence, this theater of one."  
"A multitudinous intensity of polarities": it seems like a passably patriotic motto to inscribe on the current American coat of arms.*

I feel the earth move under my feet  
I am coming home I am going back there  
When I declared to our Nanny, yes we had one  
To protect us from our mother  
*I am I will always be alone*  
I am and was and Newark didn't make me that way  
Back then I was hot and flustered with sexuality  
Night before college organized group groping  
I was a stand alone I was never at home at home

And yet there has never been a time  
When I was more open to possibility  
If programmed to visit every Ivy League  
For a college weekend mother kept tally  
Mother was the infant on my back for me to carry  
African mother with tightly wrapped infant child



*God loves the one who loves his own*  
Newark was my home Newark is my home  
My father loved Newark  
It was where he ran and won track heats  
It was where he worked in the candy store  
Scooping Breyers ice cream  
It was where he put up the movie notices on the marquee  
It was where he learned to play the bass fiddle  
Getting him to NYU and finding the mixed up together world of musicians  
I never left Newark I strayed so far from Newark  
Crossing the Hudson moving to the great beyond  
I just left myself behind resigned  
Newark hell again and almost goodbye, *I'm sorry* - NB

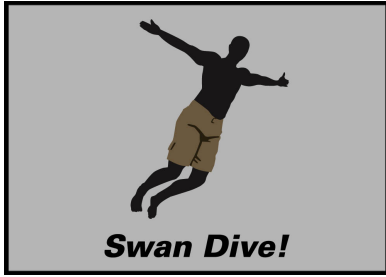
## The Big Deep Dive The Finale

Kamikaze mission



No turning back  
*You go from 1 to 10*  
Doctor told me  
*When something goes wrong*  
Mathematical metrics  
Work against me  
No kind of recovery  
No on the mend  
No reversal of fortune  
No intermission no remission  
Time to take the big dive  
Cross the big divide  
Between life and death  
This is the right time to die  
This is the time to end my life  
Time not to lose heart  
Collapse into cowardice  
Waiting for Gabriel's horn  
To summon me  
Now still free to devise  
The end the slow walk  
Toward the great divide  
Between death and life  
Time to undertake  
My own self-devised  
Kamikaze mission  
Break through clouds and sky  
For a great glorious  
Life ending swan dive





Dreaming up death  
Have imagined lying  
Next to the evening tide  
As the waves crash  
Rush toward me  
Carry me leagues deep  
Or imagine falling into  
Overdose pill induced sleep  
Mother earth comes  
Claim me repossess me  
In all her glorious  
Random messiness  
Pre-occupied about dying  
In my own bed and  
Who could summon  
The crematorium  
To come for me before  
Family gather to mourn  
Without witnessing death  
My body in final repose  
It's a dilemma a quandary  
I find myself dug in  
Have no friend no angel  
To sit with me  
As body lean and parched  
Ripe rife with dyingness  
Draws a final breathe  
Already so diminished  
As if a floral centerpiece  
We discuss my pain wracked  
Arthritic hip and leg  
*It's shorter need to get*  
*Those shoes with extra lift*  
Need to move on  
Before I am captive  
Of the well-intentioned  
Trying to prolong

When I don't want  
To live any longer  
Time for Kamikaze mission  
Time for a big winged swan dive



Where the courage where the will  
Big talker time to take action  
No more turning back  
Changing my mind getting cold feet  
Dying starts with feet losing heat  
Grapple pre-occupied with  
How and when to die  
Time to take action  
Before this becomes a futile exercise  
Another of my life's big lies



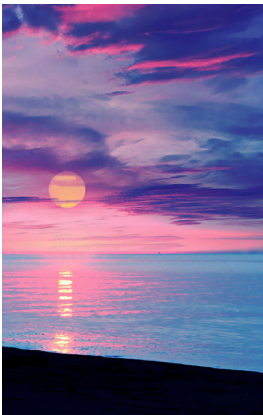
Either choosing to be witnessed  
Or perish stoic solitary subdued  
Never wavering or wanting  
To die as if just a stander-by - NB

## Struggling Wobbly

To get out into  
The crisp burnt orange  
Time of the day



Struggle argue  
With myself  
To take on  
The feat  
Walking mere steps  
To get to park bench  
This my Mr. Everest  
Pathos filled challenge  
Stuck muck of  
Morbid solemnity  
Mustering courage  
Gather up myself  
Jacket keys walking stick  
Virtually staggering out  
Into the burnt orange day  
Limned sky fading to pale pink



## Shadows of wishbone tree limbs



Stripped of summer foliage  
Canadian guess move  
In synchronized formation  
Rippling Meer holds their course  
Fearful of questions  
To ask myself  
When is enough enough  
When to give up  
Stop fooling myself  
Give up the pretense  
Of better days  
Radical decline  
In already severely  
Damaged arthritic hip  
Who believed thought  
It would get better  
Some steroid shot  
Physical therapy  
Hold onto counter  
Stand on each leg  
Count to five  
No more reprieve  
No more relief  
When time  
To accept defeat  
Unburden myself  
Turn from family eyes  
Watching anxiously  
As I try to take first step  
When just standing up  
What are the limits

I have set for myself  
Walker motorized  
Glamorized wheel chair  
Learning to spin  
Into place at stooping bus  
My mind never so clear  
My memory never so present  
My heart nearly finished  
Accounting for its defeats  
Forgiving myself  
For all the wrong  
Bone-headed choices decisions  
Remembering the promises  
I made to myself  
The pact with death  
With ending life  
Today going out to park  
Burnt orange time of day  
Engaged in struggle  
Intensifying difficulty  
Time for reckoning  
Which day when  
Will I not venture forth  
And have to lie  
Supine on bed  
Imagining the sky  
Burnt orange to palest pink  
The Canadian geese  
The monochromed dusk  
As darkness comes  
Today I lift my embattled leg  
To put on a sock  
Stand hold my leg  
To steady myself  
Shoes on jacket sipped  
Gather sturdy walking stick  
Lock front door  
And hold my breath  
To see if I can get  
To elevator get down steps  
Bringing me to street  
And walk lurching struggling  
Bucking the pain  
To to witness once again  
The burnt orange pale pink  
End of yet another day - NB



*Henry Rousseau, The Sleeping Gypsy*

**Years 1940 - 1945**

Childhood painting above my bed  
Full moon lion terrorized  
Wait for Nazi hard knock at door  
Lions moon gypsy sleep  
No man's land childhood  
Image bound  
Present year 2017  
I say just below my breath  
*Now I lay me down to sleep*  
Listening to *Bach Cantata's Verdi's Requiem*  
She gave me art  
She gave me gypsy sleep  
He gave me music  
Pitched heavenward  
And Nazi's never to escape  
Knock on door lion bedside  
Gypsy sleep childhood memory - nb

*Now I lay me down to sleep.  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray to god my soul to take - Henry Johnstone*

## **Whatever I Was I am Not**

### ***Who am I? How may I become myself? (Paul Beatty the Sellout)***

World preternaturally getting smaller and smaller  
Circumference of world closing in  
So far I am the gatekeeper  
But maybe not in Tomorrow  
If I let things get out of hand  
Lose control and  
The commando family moves in  
To preserve protect who was the was of me  
But in actuality she disappeared long ago  
In my 70's battled some fierce maladies  
Submitted to all recommended cures  
She fought to the end and she did  
To the end of those life menacing illnesses  
From tumors pushing eyeballs out  
Kicked into thrombotic action  
By a rebellious thyroid gland  
And then came the idiopathic kidney disease  
At the old and cramped infusion center  
Got ice cream in small Breyer cups  
Patted the patient rescue pup  
No thank you to meditation  
Body pierced by fraught kidney biopsy  
Swept over by cancer scans  
And lay stone still locked in by face guard  
Made and designed especially for me  
While menacing rumbling radiation machine  
Buzzed my head just above my eyes  
Where blue in dot was marked  
Had welts little swells of skin  
Up and down my body  
Finding me grabbing myself  
To scratch the welts to bloody scabs  
Just as I reached my end my tolerance  
For any more mind breaking illness  
Pneumonia entered crowded up my lungs  
Multiple times of day placed inhalators  
In my mouth and sucked in  
The medicine cautioned damaging eyes  
Already thickened with cataracts  
Resulting from the radiation to save eyes  
And now having aged beyond 75  
The time I promised myself  
To get this thing called dying begun  
And just to hold me to my promise

My hip disintegrated with severe arthritis  
Never a moment without leg pain  
Never a moment without fear  
Of falling and crushing what is left  
No finding a position  
In which to rest pain free  
And embarrassingly arduous  
To just climb stairs  
Time to gather myself keep a promise  
With all due diligence and deliberation  
Remove myself further from the world  
To live within a compound an enclave  
As the walls close in  
See fewer people can't stand without  
They're gasping as they watch me  
Can't be on public display any longer  
Except in the park among strangers  
Who ask *are you all right?*  
Time for the reckoning  
The beckoning already here  
Creating a solitary safe sanctuary  
Important to stay close to home  
Not just so I won't fracture  
Already severely arthritic hip  
But as I try to gather my baring  
Search the sky for the North Star  
To thoughtfully plan for devise demise  
I am no longer whatever it was I was  
Can change the narrative the story at whim  
Can go over and over back to the beginning  
Got it almost in hand just can't make  
Peace with marrying Luca's father  
Can't even say his name  
Can't find my way beyond hating him  
*Who am I? How may I become myself?*  
Get my story straight –  
Reconcile how I dreamt myself up  
And who I was how I actually became me  
How to banish lies from the rectory of the soul  
Yet to go beyond rage and self-deceit  
I asked so little of love and got less  
That is the ruthless unmitigated truth -NB

***Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know – John Keats***



## Seems as if I Barked Up the Wrong Friendship Tree

Getting clearer and clearer how they saw me  
Entertaining but not trustworthy  
Not any one worthy time spent on a timer  
Getting closer and closer  
To seeing myself as other's saw me  
No place card at  
The *Last Supper* dinner table  
Time to confront  
How I got love so wrong  
And now to face how I  
Misconceived friendship  
Climbed the wrong tree  
Never legitimately member  
Of *Upper West Side* royalty  
How I worshipped  
At the foot of false friendship gods  
Who tolerated me  
Found me occasionally entertaining  
But never took me seriously  
The umbilical connection  
Grows deeper with  
Mark Krupnick Shtetl Jew  
Who wrote despairingly  
Unrelentingly unremittingly  
About displacement dislocation  
His hands always cold never exposed  
Always wore finely stitched gloves  
He was if unruly kin  
Pointing fingers if gloved  
About who I really ever was  
Seer truth purveyor teller  
We were lost children the *Diaspora*  
Finding ourselves in Newark NJ  
Along with Philip Roth, Allen Ginsberg  
We made it to the other shore  
Never secured proper footing  
How I got life love and friendship so wrong  
Wondering if I got motherhood right  
That miracle enough  
Managing to slog through muck  
Of being so fucked up  
I loved being a mother  
Brought passion to my work  
Hardly ever a false note  
Kept integrity in public sphere

As I regard my children  
Truly good and kind with big hearts  
If inheritors of my inability  
To get love straight right  
Time for a reckoning  
Not to requite reconcile  
But no more to deny  
I missed the boat on friendship  
Climbed the wrong tree  
Finally see Upper West Side royalty  
Always had their backs turned from me – NB

"I am sorry," sighed the tree.  
"I wish that I could  
give you something...  
But have nothing left.  
I am just an old stump.  
I am sorry..."

"I don't need very much now,"  
said the boy,  
"just a quiet place to sit and rest.  
I am very tired."

"Well," said the tree,  
straightening herself up  
as she could,  
"well, an old stump is good  
for sitting and resting.  
Come, Boy, sit down.  
sit down and rest."

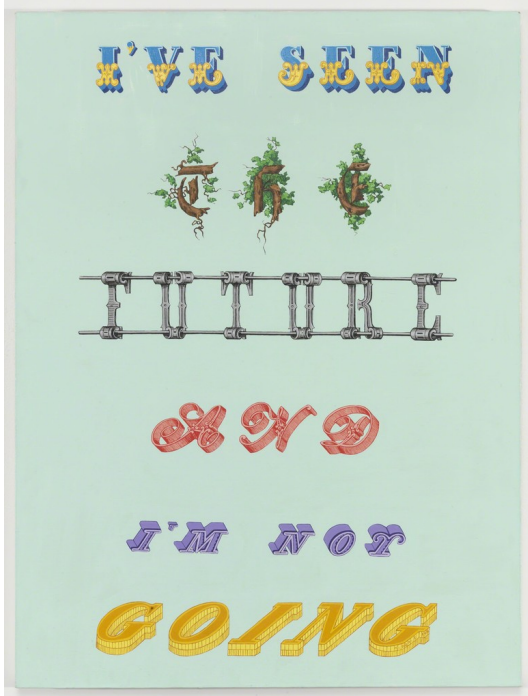


And the boy did.

***The Giving Tree Shel Silverstein***



Kensuke Yamada



*I've Seen the Future and I'm Not Going, McDermott & McGough,*

**THE END**  
**Naomi Barber**  
**2017**

