

*Selected Poems 1968 - 2022*



*Larry Kimmel*

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## **selected poems 1968 - 2022**

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*For those who have underwritten my years,  
gone the distance, kept the faith.*

---

“Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?”

Andrea del Sarto  
Robert Browning

“I regret little, I would change still less.”

Andrea del Sarto  
Robert Browning

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*selected poems 1968 - 2022*

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# **PART ONE**



# **TAKING NOTICE**

*from:*  
Unworldly Wind



## I Step Out on My Porch Near Midnight

Snow,  
flecked by moon made mica.

Cold, windless air—even  
the roar of the woods  
is faint tonight;

And faint, too,  
the creak  
of my leather jacket—faint

As the rigging of a galleon  
heard across the seas of time . . .

While overhead  
Orion faintly flickers.

## Feeding Chickadees in Winter

Already accustomed to the procedure,  
it isn't long till one  
flutters down from the sky to clutch  
the edge of my hand;

a moment more to twitch and eye  
the seed in my palm, select  
two or three, and flit away—

—such delicate talons!

the sensation lingers, engendering  
a tenuous ache

—a millet of love.



## Branch after Branch

Slats of clear gold sunlight  
and snow like fur on every branch  
and every branch after branch after branch  
as far as thought can reach . . .

I go to see if our road's been plowed.  
The many small birds melt  
before my boots and frosty breath.

Branch after branch, vast in its snowy hush,  
the universe is as big as you think it is—

and maybe one or two trees more.

## Crossing the Connecticut River

A day of rain  
in February and  
from the bridge  
in Sunderland,  
the river—

broad and flat  
and grey  
like gunmetal,  
and in parts,  
sheening—

the trim of trees  
along both banks,  
drab plum and  
pigment of iron—

very lovely,  
very steel,  
like a lithograph  
in some

old tome—tomed  
for posterity.

## The Winter Woods

What presences around the cabin pressed  
my consciousness through  
the ghostly night, that now

in the winter morning sunlight,  
like hoary skeletons, tease  
the eye? The dead and the dormant

all alike; but come the leafy season,  
green by God, will separate the dead  
from the living.

## Spring Beauties

Each year I mark the stationary progress  
made by a cluster of Spring Beauties,  
that at a distance are a band  
of some religious sect arrayed  
in frail lavender gowns, leaning  
southward into the nearly impenetrable grass on  
an endless pilgrimage, remarkable  
for being at once onward yet having  
no apparent point of departure or arrival.  
I look on, fascinated  
by their adherence to a persistent paradox,  
and also by what they are—  
spring beauties – beautiful flowers.

## An Easter Morning

I flung open  
the window  
one daffodil morning;

in came  
the clamoring chimes,  
tormenting,

with faulted  
intervals,  
some weary hymn—

quite suddenly  
prodding  
a childhood bruise.

## Taking Notice after a Long Dark Night

The dew is not yet burned  
from the orchard grass—

Crows range the open sky  
on easy wings—

To the north,  
a chain saw pitch-shifting  
gnars a tune—

The forsythia is yellow, the lawn,  
salt-crusted with Spring Beauties—

A wasp dangles by—

To the north,  
a great conifer falls, sputtering  
like firecrackers—

I raise my coffee mug, greet  
the acrid bite—

How clear, how crisp the air!

## Maple Keys

May caught us in a fall  
of maple keys,

showered us with the sting  
of pure potential,

rained down her dizzy burden  
on our shoulders,

paving this quiet street  
with small misfortunes.

## Jack-in-the-pulpit

*"You kids stop that now.*

*You'll harm it sure"—the*  
Jack-in-the-pulpit by  
Gramma's back porch.

---

O so carefully we scrunched  
the upright Jack,  
where he stood like a spike  
in his purple pulpit

'neath that lick of a canopy, only  
to hear his  
*scritch-scritch-scritch.*  
That was his sermon,

you see, and how Jack, the preacher,  
ever survived our  
curious fingers, our  
inquisitional thumbs

to evangelize another day,  
is a marvel indeed.



## E. H. Shepard's Painting of Eeyore's Birthday

This framed print reminding me  
of childhood playgrounds,  
this pastoral scene where  
"Pooh and Piglet look on as  
Eeyore tries to put the balloon into the jar,"  
got stuck in time  
and just in time for just  
beyond the vanishing point  
a threat to childhood brews,  
like the foreboding presence of Mordor,  
like storm clouds on the horizon  
of a picnic.

## After Reading an Epic Fantasy

Quite suddenly, full blown,  
out of the chubby cheeks of an infant wind,  
a leaf landed on a mud-puddle,  
like a strange, crude vessel launched  
on a fathomless café au lait sea.  
It tacked eastward for seven ticks of time  
then lost its course in a birthday candle blow.

Later, by the sun-shrunken mud-puddle  
that had beached the curled brown leaf,  
an ant swam a minuscule cove.  
But it was a gigantic monster,  
and I saw the horrific peril of yet another episode  
in the epic from which I'd been excluded,  
too huge to be viewed  
even as a comprehensible god.

## Paths that Crossed

Along my back porch bannister, teetering  
with all the caution of an afternoon bibber,  
he carries his barley body with hauteur  
above the dust, on eight hair-thin stilts.

In the long, hot afternoon the mind meanders:  
"daddy longlegs (or harvestman if you prefer);  
race: arachnid; color: albino—"

Albino. The mind shouts. The word becomes  
the generator and I  
the electrical impulse lost  
in the terrible circuits  
of superstition. (Will it be plus or minus?)

Nonetheless, with a child-learned deftness  
I catch one silver wire and place this aberration,  
this frosted transistor  
teetering along like a mechanical toy,  
on solid ground.

I let him go. I let him go but not  
without a shudder and not  
without note  
in this, our long, dark chronicle, together.

## The Weight of One Small Death

When I lifted the dead sparrow  
from the lawn, it was light,  
incredibly light: lighter  
than a sheet of paper; lighter  
than the bird alive; nearly lighter  
than the weight in hand,  
which was light – light  
as the thought of a bird.

## View from a North Window

For a moment, the sun  
on a red barn, dying,  
on dry fields still as a gold death-mask  
warmed yellow only to the eye  
beneath the winter-propheying sky,  
before night's shadow gathers the last straws  
of afternoon to its scrawny breast;  
the sun on a red barn, dying,  
resurrects a lone child, playing.

## Each Stone

What they left behind them  
are the stone fences.

Each stone,  
    now covered by a patina of lichen;  
Each stone,  
    grayish-green, here,  
    in the clean November sunlight;  
Each stone,  
    once held between two palms.

These stone fences  
are their Stonehenge  
to us:  
miles and miles of hand-felt care  
falling back into time  
through the clear November air.

## November Gold

In the aging afternoon,  
at the far edge of the lichen-hued pasture  
on which the remnants of last night's  
snow lie like tufts of cotton,  
the bleak branches of old pear trees brighten,  
on and off,  
beneath the surfing clouds,  
catch November gold  
between the surfing clouds,  
in the hoary snarl of their broken fingers,  
while beyond the pasture and the trees,  
fields the color of copper lighten,  
on and off,  
all as though attached  
to some neon advertising apparatus,  
quietly flashing the hopeless SOS  
of an age,  
soon to slip into the western horizon, forever.





*from:*

**A RIVER YEARS  
FROM HERE**

Haibun and Other Poems

## *Ballad*

*There is a river years from here  
That flows without a name,  
I sailed my boat between its banks  
For never gold nor fame.*

*Like Robinson Crusoe all alone,  
Except for a dog named Bruce.  
I had no money, no extra clothes,  
No nothing without use.*

*A jack-knife was my only tool  
A sling-shot was my weapon,  
A magnifying glass for fire  
My fate left up to heaven.*

*I remember well the natives' talk  
By the falls that bear the name  
Of whip-poor-wills that disappeared  
Long before I came.*

*The talk of an enchantment found  
In the woods at the river's source,  
An enchantment never proved by me  
Because there came a voice,*

*A voice as faint as the evening light,  
A voice that called my name,  
A compelling voice upon the wind,  
That called until I came,*

*Came home to supper all muddy from play  
In the creek where I had had  
Adventures to tell to the natives I knew,  
Whom I still call Mother and Dad.*

## **There is a River Years from Here**

All day, thoughts about a river, years from here,  
a creek, really, that flows without a name through the  
green-dusk of an ageless woods,  
and how I sailed there a galleon,  
a halved walnut shell with its wedge of paper sail, beneath  
the spread of a great old maple tree, where the  
creek pooled below the chicken coops;  
and how the leaning woods peered over my shoulder in  
those days when salamanders were dragons;  
and how I searched for neither gold nor fame,  
but for treasures among the water polished pebbles,  
despite humidity, mosquitoes, waterstriders,  
"dragons,"  
and the great granddaddy of a crawfish, who hung out  
among the stones, that were really boulders, below  
the pool;  
and how the chickens just loved a crawfish tossed over  
the chicken mesh—but not the great granddaddy,  
for it would have been a sin and a shame for such an aged  
monster to end up chicken feed.  
All day, thoughts about a river, years from here, that flows  
without a name.

torrent in Spring  
a trickle now—in youth  
my Conrad river

## The Latch

With its miniature rock gardens, grape arbor, and roses (roses everywhere, like a child's experiment with rouge); with its neatly trimmed grass along the flagstone walks; with its birdbath (strategically placed, as was its willow tree)—the backyard had all the aura of a formal garden.

In that lawn (just large enough to frame a family portrait), hemmed in by a wire fence disguised with honeysuckle vines and marigolds, one somehow achieved a sense of privacy; even a sense of seclusion from the nearby neighbors. While outside, a narrow broken alley ran between two rows of other backyard lawns.

All this (after all these years), like the fragments of a dream at noontime. Except for the latch. Substantial as a candy stuck in the throat, the latch remains in mind, as if I'd just stepped out of that microcosmic Eden into the narrow alleyway this early morning, closing the gate behind me with a *click!*; closing the gate behind me *with all that is before time began* locked! in a single syllable, for all time.

in a shaded spot  
the ruins  
of a sundial

## Steel Town

after devouring fifteen  
thousand men daily  
the dragon stretches twelve miles  
along the river  
and sleeps fitfully at night

though its breath poisons our breath  
and its belches bruise,  
with a plum-rubescient glow,  
the black horizon

still we would not murder this  
sleeping *brutus* for  
its fire bakes our daily bread

## Eleven to Seven

night shift—  
see that the chute stays open  
the mesmerizing spill of ore

the salamander glows cherry red  
Camel lit by a touch

night shift—  
pulp novel, every second page  
dimmed by dust . . .

2 a.m., thermos of coffee  
sandwiches, cake

night shift—  
3 to 6, the longest hours  
2nd pack of cigarettes

over the PA system, an argument  
'god-damn hunky'

night shift—  
through the sky hole, snowflakes,  
the faint gray light of dawn

showered and ready to punch out  
"take care, roads are icy . . . "

## The Sliver of Steel

When Carl's steam-powered sawmill blew up  
in Shade Hollow,  
three men were injured, one killed;  
and then there was Ed Jacobs,  
who walked around as if dazed all afternoon.

And when evening came,  
Jack, his brother, found him "out back"  
watching a sunset, "unlike himself."

Doc Schaffer found a pink spot  
beneath Ed's chin, and a pink spot  
on top his head.

The whip-poor-will night found him dead.

## Member of the Club

there were 5 of us  
in the hollow  
and every summer there'd be the club

president  
vice-president  
secretary  
treasurer  
and member

I was always the member

• • •

one summer  
there were only 4 of us  
so there had to be a

president  
vice-president  
secretary/treasurer  
and member

Why?



## Consider the Inch-worm

hunch stretch  
bunch reach  
each inch  
a measured movement  
each movement  
a moment's pleasure,  
each sure inch  
by inch—the inch-worm:  
and I, too,  
would find the good  
in each inch of time  
along the branch of always . . .

## Black Ant Experiment

The black ant,  
    placed on the chip of Arctic CO<sub>2</sub>,  
        ran  
4 to 5 centimeters  
    rapidly slowing  
        (a cheap wind-up gadget  
quickly spent) till  
    frosting over, it stopped;  
        froze,  
with one leg held high—  
    a statuette sculpted of zinc;  
        a micro-monument unto itself,  
the victim of an idle science.  
    And when nudged  
        by a childish finger—  
broke in half.

## **The Wasp & The Spider**

In the dust a wasp and spider caught  
My boyish eye where they grappled and fought

Just when the spider broke free and ran  
From the wasp that circled and circled again.

The spider's eight feet bought a foot  
More desperate life for him till fate

Turned kamikaze and power dived down  
On him. The sting was true! The brown

Back dimpled, doubled, rolled—a stricken  
Ball of frenzied splinters, kicking.

The wasp backed away, became poised.  
Arch-backed, wings spread, sure of her poison,

Gangly-legged now, her delicate toes  
In the dust, she circled the stiffening throes.

The fight was done but I stayed stooped  
Until the last leg slowed and stopped.

## On the Verge of Autumn

I'd seen her about town often enough—pleasingly plump, neatly dressed, with snow-white hair that belied her age, and such blue eyes. And now we were sharing a store front over-hang against the sudden downpour. She must have been about my age, no more than forty then. A classic merry widow, if widow she was.

To be sure, we talked about the weather and other important things, till at length I found myself saying: "... *but I don't drink wines anymore.*" To which she replied, making the moment memorable: "*Oh I know, wine used to make me so romantic, but now I just get spacey.*" It was about then that the rain lessened and she decided to chance the drizzle.

As I said, I'd often seen her around the town - often - but after that I never saw her again. The image of her running across the parking lot, in neat spiked-shoes, dodging puddles with a pleasing bounce, a tabloid tented over her snow-white hair, is the last image I have of her.

on a grey day  
    in a grey town  
        a sprig of asters

## And Other Important Things

The meadow rolls away into the woods. The house is hidden below the crest of a straw mulched garden. We are sitting on the sun-warmed grass talking of things soon to be forgotten. Already, I've forgotten the breed names of the penned chickens—the white, the russet, and the dark brown ones with the orange and black plumage behind their necks.

Absent-mindedly, she feeds them grass, one blade at a time, as they mill and chorus a reedy background to our talk. I'll not remember till later how the window of a door once betrayed her loving gaze on my back.

I tell of my son's first botanical lesson in the woods last week, while the youngest of her two daughters treads barefoot over the glistening straw. When I finish she says: *"There's a small stream down there. It dries up in the summer, but in spring it grows skunk-cabbage and other important things."*

*"And other important things,"* I echo, remembering. And she, too, remembering laughs an old laugh unsettling the present moment momentarily.

As I adapt to the rural mother displacing the urban musician, with whom, shoulder to shoulder, I'd copied manuscripts one winter, the hapless separation I'd held so precious these past five years dissipates without pain or sorrow.

we bid farewell  
the white silence  
of a falling petal

## Evening Walk

The heat still rises from the fields and road mingling the essences of grass and dust. I enjoy these solitary walks after a day of manuscripts and notes.

*her diary—  
if only I hadn't forced  
its tiny lock . . .*

The dog runs ahead, circles, explores a field of buckwheat, then checks back with me before another tongue-flapping foray. He always returns as if to explain himself and ask permission.

*once in a moonlit orchard  
what might have been . . .*

A great dead tree stands in arrested motion, as if tossed by an airy turbulence, the perfect sculpture for a stormy life, its barnwood gray set off by forest green.

*jazz  
and the neon, nylon nights—  
your fame is everywhere  
old friend  
I am stretched with longing*

Today, I noticed that autumn's tarnish has touched the tree outside my window. In a month or so, it too, will show its structure.

*and the autumn woods  
so lovely that you want  
but don't know what it is  
you want—  
it only makes you sorry*

The serene violence of the sunset, that flared briefly like  
an opened forge, is now replaced by a gray veil.

*stemless in the dusk  
the Queen Anne's lace float—  
the path grows luminous*

The dog has gone ahead now, not asking for my  
permission. He will be waiting at the back door. I crest  
the last hill to home and see an orange moon low in an  
orchid sky.

*as night takes over . . .  
walking knee-deep  
in the chirring  
of crickets*

## Japanese Lanterns

By the doorstep, so country common a thing to see  
—Japanese lanterns. Some five of them, reduced

to their skeletal frame, more delicate than lace,  
caging small orange bulbs—bulbs burning bright

by the doorway this dim December afternoon,  
suggesting something still to be occasioned.

snow flurries –  
stacking an arm load  
of firewood



## Tidings

Across the room,  
the tassel beneath the hanging pot of ivy,

looks like an angel in a hula skirt  
come to sing carols from a leafy songbook.

Happy are the objects that make their own poetry  
—and happy, too, those who can see

tidings of great joy in a fray of yarn.

sunlight on red oak  
newspapers heaped  
with ground pine

## The Putting Away of Rookie

### *Pop and Mom*

"Pop, you've got to do it soon,  
It isn't right to let  
Him suffer. Hear? This afternoon,  
And then you needn't fret."

"You tend your business, Mom, and I'll  
Tend mine," was all he said,  
Then poured a coffee, stirred awhile,  
Before he dunked his bread.

### *Pop and Rookie*

"Come here old *Hund*." Pop sat on  
The back porch in the wan  
November sun. The dog, upon  
Arthritic legs, had gone

To use the apple tree and now  
He tottered back. "We old'uns  
Have got to keep a hold, somehow,  
On all the time we've stolen."

### *Pop to Kurt*

"All right, I guess. I can't complain.  
Mom's been carryin' on  
This noon, in regards to Rookie again,  
That's all. I see you've gone

And put the shop in good repair.  
The plumbing craft has passed  
Me by with all this new styled hardware.  
That's what I said. Mom sassed

Me good, but she don't see it plain—  
What do you mean, you'll do  
It for me? He's in no real pain;  
If there was reason to

I'd tend to it myself. That mean  
Old hound's as good as me."  
All this to Kurt who'd never seen  
Pop act but stoically.

### ***About Rookie***

Rookie: a khaki-colored hound,  
Born in 'forty-two,  
Hence the name; a rover bound  
To be, three times, the view

Some irate farmer held along  
The barrel of a gun;  
He shook at sight or sound of one,  
The fear was still so strong.

### ***Mom and Kurt***

"Kurt, you've got to do it soon.  
It isn't right to let  
Him suffer." "I know. This afternoon,  
Mom, then you needn't fret."

"It's not like Pop to let it go;  
You know he can't abide  
A man who puts off duty." "He's slow  
About what he'll decide,

That's all." "There's nothing to decide.  
He knows what must be done."  
"He knows but—" "Kurt, he's gone inside  
The shed; you fetch the gun."

***Kurt and Rookie***

The old dog trembled when he saw  
The sun glint off the rifle,  
But struggled to his feet, still trustful  
Of Kurt, whose word was law.

They walked across the copper meadow  
Into the leafless wood;  
Among the rags of autumn, below  
The giant oak they stood

A moment, silent, as old friends will,  
Then Kurt began to dig.  
When he had finished, the woods was still;  
Kurt pointed with a twig

And Rookie stepped into the ground.  
Above them the white-gold sun  
Had tangled in the trees. Kurt found  
It hard to lift the gun.

*Pop*

As Pop came out into the wan  
November sun he caught  
A whiff of wood smoke wafted on  
A sharp, west wind, "So autumn's gone  
(He heard the distant shot)  
And winter's come," he thought.

## Star

In his ninety-third year he complained of seeing only one star in the sky at night, saying that it was "a sign of the last days," there being only one star in the heavens at night.

"No, Dad," his youngest daughter would say, "It's only your eyes."

But he was not persuaded and would go off to find his dime store glasses, go off to the dining room to read the news by yellow lamplight, while Nora graded papers on the kitchen table, as she had for thirty years. This was in harvest time and the evening star was Venus.

Winter wrapped them warm around the wood fueled range and when the crocuses peeped above the drab grass once more, he again took up his post on the porch at dusk, and with it his same complaint of two seasons past.

"It's your eyes, Dad."

But, "no," it was "a sign," he'd say. And in a way—

What difference to the man who encounters a sign, if the letters are painted on or all but the letters are painted on? The sign still reads the same. Still reads the same.

wild geese overhead —  
where the homestead stood  
only grass

# **The Johnstown Flood**

May 31, 1889

*from:*

Unworldly Wind





# The Johnstown Flood

May 31, 1889

---

At the beginning only the high waters from the rain swollen rivers  
flooded the streets.

• • •

We had come down to Johnstown the day before to visit with my  
aunt and uncle that lived on Locust Street, and to see the  
Decoration Day celebration, the parade and other  
festivities,

And by then it was late and a long ride home by horse and buggy,  
But still we might have gone home that night, but my aunt said:  
*"Stay and see the flood,"* not knowing, because this was  
nothing new to the Johnstown of those days, the high  
rivers and the flooded streets,

And so we stayed the night.

• • •

And the next day we were to go home, but it had been raining hard  
all night,

And the streets were flooded, and the rivers were still rising,  
And so we stayed on till noon to see how things would go.

• • •

And after the noon meal, my father and my uncle sat at the kitchen  
stove with their boots off and their feet up on a coal  
bucket, drying their stocking feet by the heat of the stove.

And I recall their debating whether to free the horses at the nearby  
livery stable, as the water had already reached the poor  
animals' fetlocks some while ago,

And the waters were still rising,  
And the rain continued without ceasing,  
But they thought they'd wait and see, not knowing.

• • •

And while they were talking at the kitchen stove, with their feet up  
on the coal bucket, the water had begun seeping in under  
the door unnoticed, till one of them put his stocking feet  
down from the bucket.

• • •

It was then my aunt and mother took my baby brother and me into  
the brick building next door,

The brick building that was a millinery, whose upper floors were  
the living quarters of the woman who ran the millinery,

Took us to those upper rooms, where I was given a doll to play  
with,

And there, in those upper rooms, I sat on a bed playing with the  
doll, not knowing,

While my mother, and aunt, and the woman who ran the millinery  
talked of this and other floods, not knowing.

• • •

Not knowing, till my mother heard the sound and, through the  
upstairs window, saw a wall of water rushing toward us,

A wall of black water rushing toward us, with a long rumbling  
sound like continuous thunder.

• • •

Knowing now, my mother called down across the yard to warn the  
men, where they still sat by the stove in the room at the  
rear of my uncle's house.

And knowing now the truth of her words, my aunt grabbed up my  
baby brother and took me by the hand,

And not knowing just what, I thought to take the doll with me, but  
at the last moment put it down on the bed because it wasn't  
mine,

And knowing not what, the men must have come quickly, for we  
were all together now,

And quickly we fled the room by an attic stairway,

And just in time, for I remember seeing the front wall burst inward  
as we clambered up the stairway,

And quickly my father and uncle dragged us with them through an  
opening to the roof just as the roof lifted and floated away,

Floated away toward the swirling debris in the backed up water at  
the stone bridge,

Floated for an interminable time, with shouts, and screams, and  
cries to God, and sorrowful sights all around us.

• • •

And after floating to the stone bridge, not knowing what next,

Clinging to the roof, not knowing what next,

Drifting toward Kernville, not knowing what next,

Our roof broke up and we were forced again to jump and claw our  
way onto another roof floating nearby,

And after Mother, and Father, and I, not knowing what next,  
gained that nearby roof (though we nearly lost Mother to  
the black water),

And after leaving behind my aunt, my uncle, my baby brother,  
clinging to the broken roof,

And after floating in interminable fear on the endless debris-strewn  
water, amid the cries and supplications, not knowing what  
next,

And after seeing the three left behind rescued at an upper window  
of a school building on Napoleon Street,

I looked up into my father's troubled face (I can still see that face  
today) and though I was only five years old, I said,  
knowing it was so, "*Papa, God will save us,*" and he  
answered, "*Yes.*"

• • •

But we were not safe yet, there was a time still to drift with what  
sights and sounds around us I cannot say, though

I can still see a woman in a flaming church steeple

I can still see her waving arms—

I can still see no one to rescue her—

I can still see her leap into the water—

I cannot erase from my mind this woman, trapped by water in  
the flaming church steeple.

• • •

And there was debris of every sort,

And there were shrieks and crying outs of every sort,

And there were others on roofs, like ourselves, and

There was nothing you could do,

There was nothing you could do for others,

There was nothing you could do but pray.

• • •

And then there was a house across the street from the school  
building where my aunt, my uncle, and my baby brother  
had been rescued,

And there we floated, finally,

And there we were also helped through a window to a second-story  
room,

And there, a woman in that house gave dry clothing to my mother  
and put her to bed, for my mother had been badly lacerated  
when my father had pulled her onto the second roof, and  
she was surely in shock,

And there I remembered the doll I'd left behind because I'd been  
taught not to take what wasn't mine (it spites me to this  
day).

• • •

And then I had an intense desire for a drink of water, and begged  
and begged, till the woman in that house gave me water  
from the tap,

But it was muddy and did not stay down.

• • •

And then I was persuaded to lie across the bed at my mother's feet,  
And there I lay hearing the groans and cries and the crushing of  
buildings that went down in the water outside,

And saw that the sky was lurid (but did not know that it was from  
the burning wreckage at the stone bridge till later)

And then I slept till morning.

• • •

Of the day after I can remember waist deep water, and men making  
walkways of boards,  
And people going over the walkways to the hills,  
And our family helped to Sherman Street, where another uncle  
gave us food and loaned us a horse and buggy,  
And I can remember the four hour trip home at night, and the  
moonlight and the large, fleecy clouds,  
And can still see the cloud shadows coming and going on the  
hillsides, and remember my fear of the shadows moving  
toward me,  
My fear that they would engulf me as the flood had engulfed so  
many the day before,  
But I never let on.

• • •

And when we were almost home we met another uncle on his way  
to Johnstown with a wagon load of supplies,  
How they knew to do so, how they'd heard of the flood, I don't  
know,  
There weren't any telephones in those days,  
Not way out in the country where we were:

• • •

Yes, of the day after, I can remember all that, that  
And my greatest loss—the doll.

---

Rosa Pearl Zimmerman Bowman (1884 - 1975) was the author's  
maternal grandmother. This prose poem is based on a taped  
account, as well as the author's memory of many tellings.

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# **THE WINTER OWL**





## THE WINTER OWL

The windowpanes were edged in frost, and we  
Four cousins bunched to see the screech owl perched  
On an apple branch above the drifted snow.

"He might be sick," Kate said.

"No! He's sleeping.

He's just sleeping," Freddy replied.

"He's most

Likely hungry," Gramma put in. "Poor thing,  
They don't often come in this close to dwellings  
Unless they can't find food in winter."

"Do you

Think he's starving?" Kate frowned.

"I'll put some hamburg

Out in a moment," Gramma answered.

"Won't

He freeze?" Bess wondered.

"Yeah. How do we know

He isn't frozen dead already?" I asked.

"He was alive this morning," Gramma said.

"I thought for sure he'd frighten off when Pop  
Shoveled the path, but all he did was close  
His eyes and turn his head as if he scorned

To watch." Then Gramma, crossing to the yellow  
Stove that drew its heat from naphtha, added,  
"You kids go play in the dining room. I can't  
Have you bouncing around in here, you'll make  
The dough fall."

Wet cloths covered pans of rising  
Dough on the kitchen's two broad radiators.  
"He'll freeze," decided Bess.

"He'll be all right,"  
Said Freddy, "as soon as he gets something to eat."

...

In the dining room, around the walnut table,  
In the circle of the chandelier's dim light,  
We kids became jewel merchants.

A wealth  
Of buttons spilled from a quart tin box, and we  
Were in business. Fev'rishly we sorted through them;  
Scrutinizing each with an expert's eye;  
Watchful for a button's value in  
Another's eye; haggling, threat'ning, shouting—  
"I saw it first!"

"No you didn't!"

—till from

The kitchen this ultimatum:

"If you kids  
Can't get along in there, you can put the buttons  
Back in the box this minute."

We got along.  
We valued the buttons at more than bickering,  
Being allowed to keep one button each,  
Each time the buttons were allowed.

I found

The best button ever, that day, a gilt  
Edged hexagon (most likely brass), framing  
A thumbnail opal Abstract, with an eyelet  
Behind and so not marred by sewing holes.  
A great find destined to button, some other day,  
The simple fabric of a priceless lesson.

. . .

At noon, we found the kitchen table changed.  
The pans and mixing bowls, the sifted flour,  
The rolling pin, the measuring cups—all gone.  
And in their place were jars of jam, a patty  
Of home churned butter, and Betsy's own rich milk  
In a pitcher, and cold stewed apples, and warm bread  
So fresh you could roll it back to dough between  
Your thumb and index finger, and for dessert—  
The promise of one cinnamon roll apiece.

"He's so small. Do you think he's a baby owl?"  
Kate asked—I answered, "He's a screech owl. That's as  
Big as they get."

"Still he's awfully small."

We all peered out the frosted window and saw  
The winter owl still perched on the low branch  
Above the pathway cut through knee-deep snow.

"Did he eat any of the hamburger?"

"Not that

I noticed, Kate."

"I hope he isn't sick."

"Why would he be sick?" Freddy wanted  
To know. But no one knew or no one said.  
Then Gramma ladled out the barley soup,  
A steaming bowl for each of us.

"Now don't go  
Bolting your food, Michael," she said to me.  
"You don't get all the nourishment you should,  
Eating so fast."

I slowed down as best  
I could.

"Wasn't he scared of you, when you  
Put out the meat?" Kate asked.

"I was afraid  
He'd flush, but he never so much as blinked an eye."

"That's because he's sleeping," Freddy insisted.

"Couldn't we bring him in?" Kate asked.

"Let's give him  
A chance to feed on his own and then we'll see.  
And stay away from the window," Gramma added.  
"He can probably see our movements in the house."

I couldn't help but feel the wintry scene  
Beyond the frosted window. I liked the look  
Of the tangled apple branches etched against  
The gray-white sky, and the hillside's snowy sweep  
With only charcoal-sketch suggestions of what  
The world had been before the age of snow.  
But it was the owl who made the afternoon.

On the twigged branch that sloped over the path,  
Like an arm reaching down to lend a hand,  
He slept—hunched with cold. And as I watched him,  
A feeling, dark and deep, stole over me,  
The kind you get from a grim tale told at bedtime,  
The kind I got from the dark painting hung  
In Gramma's living room.

"He might be too weak  
To feed himself," Bess posed. But no one answered.  
We were busy with soup and arguments  
Of what to do that afternoon, while Gramma  
Sipped her coffee lost in thought. And then,  
As promised, one cinnamon roll for each of us.

. . .

The stairway opened both onto the kitchen  
And the living room, and with the door shut to  
The kitchen but open to the living room,  
We played a button game which we called "school."

Kate was the teacher first, and stood facing  
Her pupils—Freddy, Bess, and me—who sat  
Crowded together on the first of the two  
Steps to the landing. Behind her back she changed  
A button from hand to hand a number of times,  
Then held her hands straight out in front of her  
For me to guess which hand it was that held  
The button.

Each step was like a grade in school,  
And you progressed from grade to grade by right  
Guesses. A wrong guess kept you where you were,  
And two wrong guesses put you back a grade,

Unless, of course, you were already on  
The bottom step. I made my guess. Kate flashed  
An empty hand—"Too bad"—then mixed the button  
Behind her back a second time to test  
The next student—Freddy. And so it went.

I enjoyed this game as much as any, but  
That afternoon with the dim of winter at  
The windows and the living room in dusk,  
As it always was, but even more so that day,  
I couldn't keep my attention on the game.  
Above the old upright piano hung  
The painting that had always haunted me.  
Inside its gilt frame all was night, and shadow  
Within shadow, and a yellow moon  
Fleecing the night clouds above a black castle,  
A castle so deep in shadow that I knew  
Of its existence only because I'd climbed  
On top the piano once to see up close  
What the picture was about. It had been painted  
Years ago by a relative long deceased.  
And looking at the painting that afternoon,  
I wondered who she was and felt a dark  
Something, the same as I had felt at lunch time,  
Looking out the frosted window at  
The sleeping screech owl on the apple branch.  
It was a brooding mood that made me want  
To be alone.

So after a few more turns  
I quit. I said I didn't feel like playing  
Anymore, and that made Freddy mad  
At me. But Kate said that a person had

A right to their own feelings no matter what  
Those feelings were. And I agreed with her.

. . .

In the kitchen, looking out the frosted window  
To see the owl, I saw how dim, how dark  
The afternoon had grown, and guessed more snow  
Was on its way, and next I saw the owl  
Still perched among the wickerwork of twigs,  
And though a gust of wind ruffed his feathers,  
He still sat on, supremely unperturbed.

"I wouldn't hang around the window, Michael,"  
Said Gramma. "Our movements in the house might make  
Him fearful."

I stepped back, but waited for  
That sense of brooding to come over me  
Cloud-shadow-like, and when it did, I left  
The kitchen window for the living room.  
The game was over. But Freddy still wouldnt talk  
To me. Then Bess said that she was "tahred" and laid  
Down on the braided rug between the living  
And dining rooms.

"You'll catch a cold," Kate told her.

"I don't care."

"Get up, Bess, or I'll tell Mother  
When we get home."

So Bess got up, and for  
A time we milled around the dining room,  
Argumentative and bored, till finally  
We gathered at the frosted kitchen window.

"Did he eat the hamburg?" Freddy asked of Gramma.

"He hasn't touched it, so far as I can tell."

"Do you think he's sick or just hungry?" Bess  
Wanted to know.

"If he was just hungry,"  
Kate said, "I think by now, he would have tried  
To eat the hamburg."

"Unless he's afraid of us,"  
I said. "He probably can see our movements  
In the house."

We all stepped back a step into  
The dimness of the kitchen. Then Gramma said,  
"I'll just go out and bring the poor thing in.  
I can't see sense in waiting any longer.  
Bess might be right, that he's too weak to feed  
Himself."

We gathered close around the window  
To watch. First, a bitter cold burst in on  
The kitchen's fragrant moisty-warmth, and next,  
We saw Gramma cross the porch and step down  
Into the pathway cut through knee-deep snow.  
We watched, and the wind flapped Gramma's apron, and  
A few grey hairs streamed from her bun. We watched,  
And the owl sat stock-still with his eyes closed tight,  
Right over that narrow path where Gramma walked.  
I watched. My guts electric waiting for  
The burst of feathers that would happen at  
The moment of capture.

But when Gramma reached  
Up for the sleeping owl there was no burst



Of feathers, no effort at flight, or attempt to flee,  
No struggle of any kind.

Gramma had simply  
Reached up and taken down the owl from his perch,  
The way you'd take a jar down from a cupboard  
Shelf. And when she reentered the kitchen's warmth,  
Holding the little owl so close, she said,  
"I blame myself. I should have acted sooner."



# **A CUP FULL OF SEASONS**

*from:*  
Unworldly Wind



## A Cup Full of Seasons

The cup  
was a tin cup bearing  
in bas-relief a cast  
of five figures from  
a nursery rhyme.

### *First Season*

At breakfast on cold mornings  
sitting by the oven  
getting warm enough on one side  
for both sides  
and looking out the frosted window  
over snow-laden hills  
to hills ice-blue in the distance  
and being cozy beside the oven  
scorched on one side  
still shivering on the left  
I'd drink my dark brown Postum  
hot from that Winter cup.

### *Second Season*

Over the fresh plowed field  
by the fence line  
where trees grew

with barbed wire deep in their guts  
and brush grew up through stones  
picked and piled there  
from years of spring-plowed fields  
ending along the fence line  
where the dying cherry tree loomed over  
the budding dogwood  
where the maple sap ran down  
the elderberry spouts  
to drip into buckets  
that sat on stacks of stone  
there I'd take a taste of sugar water  
cold and sweet from that Spring tin cup.

### ***Third Season***

Down by the barn in summer  
towards evening  
big green flies caroused the manure pile  
outside the small barn  
that held some rats, an uncle's car  
and standing big-eyed and docile  
in the dusky stall the cow named Betsy  
who allowed herself to be milked by Grammy  
who sitting on a three-legged stool  
in the dusky stall milked Betsy  
amongst the fragrant hay and dung  
the first squirts torrent sounding  
in the hollow bucket  
there amongst the dust of chaff and straw  
I'd have a Summer cup  
of animal warm and frothy milk.

***Fourth Season***

Up hollow  
below the Mennonite Church  
down the road a way by the creek  
where we had fished  
for chubs and minnows the summer long  
in the shade of the giant oak  
its red leaves falling now  
down on the weathered building  
blowing inside the weathered building  
right there in autumn  
with all the good smell of apples  
ripe and bouncing up the clanking belt  
spilling red from the clanking belt  
tumbling down to the grinding  
clattering machinery below  
right there in autumn  
I'd have an Autumn cup of cider  
sweet and warm from that noisy press.

The cup  
was a tin cup bearing  
in bas-relief a cast  
of five figures from  
a nursery rhyme.

## Posterity

I once found a butterfly whose wingspan was a good three inches of untold colors—a butterfly like the paper airplanes I used to decorate, then toss from the porch

to fly

high over the dirt road below,

and

high over the field beyond;

the field cropped by Betsy the cow;

the field with spindly thistles

like scaled-down radio towers—

like those airplanes whose wings,

wings crayon-ornamented or tablet-ruled;

wings that cut the air, that razor-slit a slot to slip through, beneath that strange sunlight peculiar to August Sunday afternoons—

like those airplanes,

—the butterfly, whose wings in death were fixed for flight.



## Catnip Tea

When your mother sent for Granma,  
it was *ring around the rosy* as rosy you lay  
in bed between the twisted sheets, for  
the sure notion of that grave gentleman

was yours. But after Granma came  
and frisked you for flushes and fevers  
and gave her prescription (which was a kind  
of diagnosis and prognosis, as well),

gave her prescription in those two  
familiar words—CATNIP TEA—you  
ascertained you'd not be needing  
a winding sheet; gleaned you'd be oki-dokie

real soon; fathomed you'd resurrect next day—  
and you did.

## Home Of The Brave

For three days Grandma's best milker frothed at the mouth, then died—clearly poisoned. A year later, old Mike Kovitch, with a skin full, said:  
*"It a shame about that cow, someday I tell you*

*Mister Mahler,"* and so we knew what we already knew, and Grandpa spoke true when he told us a desire to see justice done would only result in something else dying or burning down, and all

Grandma had said to old Mama Kovitch was:  
*"Those aren't your cherries to pick,"* it being Grandma's one cherry tree and she counting on the crop for preserves, and old Mama Kovitch

had gone off mumbling: *"Me think this free country,"* no different than any other time.

## In Memoriam

*John Ira Bowman 1884-1974*

Aged ninety, he said to Milly, his daughter,  
*"Something goes out of life when a man can't  
plan his work the night before and see it  
through tomorrow."* Later that year, shortly

after the untimely passing of a son-in-law,  
he said, *"Milly, now there'll be someone  
over there to meet me."* And that night  
the last of the strokes took him, taking

a week to do so. I believe life to be  
a continuum, and having experience  
of others gone before me, why not him?  
Sometimes I think a stern grandfather

(still the very image of a stoic) frowns down  
on once-honed tools that I've let rust.

## Wooden Chain

Found in an attic and given to me, years back,  
this wooden chain of three links, holding  
the shackle of a lantern-like cage, a cage  
of four corner-bars that hold, in turn,

a wooden ball the size of a marble, on which you  
can see the fly-eye faceted flatness of  
the knife's work, yet perfectly round, and all  
this marvel carved from a single piece of wood.

I ponder its pedigree, as no one remembers  
who carved it, and ponder, too, how the works  
of an artist live on, have a life of their own,  
taking their chances about the same as any

progeny, and further ask why it is  
that old half-known things so tease the mind?

---

clasping my dad's hand  
as once he gripped his father's hand  
whose hand had once . . .

## The Class Ring

I hold in my hand a ring. Moxium High.  
Class of '58. The initials my own.  
Within weeks, I'd left it by a public sink.  
Loss noted and steps retraced—both

immediate, but ... *c'est la vie*. Seven  
years later it returned, having found  
its way to the alma mater with its  
postal pedigree, some half-dozen

other Moxiums. A worthy scholarship,  
the particulars of that seven year odyssey,  
which remains mute within the zero of  
this prodigal trinket of youth, inanimate

wanderer, whose encircled secret rests  
upon my palm, yet forever beyond my grasp.

## October Elegy

After the burial she walked with me,  
Where tall trees, standing in a clear  
Sunlight, cast strict shadows across  
The drive—a woman just past fifty,  
Elegant and gracious, lovely to see.

"You came all the way from Maine, they say.  
You must have been very fond of Kurt,"  
Meaning her brother, my uncle by marriage,  
and that was true.

A far hill seemed the reds and golds  
Of an old tapestry kicked against  
The horizon, while the branches near  
At hand were clad in tatters, and one  
Old oak in rags of penny-brown.

"You were just a boy when I left home."

That, too, was true, and true still,  
The infatuation a boy once felt  
For her—though now as mellow as  
A bronze medallion smoothed by the wear  
of a quarter century.

She took my arm, her white-gloved hand  
Around my sleeve, and we walked awhile  
In silence. Her step was steady, stately,

Despite the cant of her narrow heels  
On the cinder drive. And leaving the drive  
We crossed a quilt of yellow leaves,  
Dimly reflected in the branches  
Overhead, and I was made  
Momentarily giddy by  
the lightness of its color.

And as we joined the others, she let  
Go of my arm, saying, "I must  
See Joan before I leave," meaning  
My aunt, her sister-in-law, and smiling  
A smile of October charm she left me.

All that was eighteen years ago,  
And now I am her age then, and now  
I do not think that I shall ever  
See her again, and that, I allow,  
Is as it should be, now as the reds  
And golds of old tapestry  
Return, once more, to distant hills—  
the same but not the same.

## Regret

*Rosa Pearl Zimmerman Bowman 1884-1975*

The log house, also, the homestead,  
seemed smaller with the furniture gone.  
And in the empty room that was once the kitchen,  
there was a scrape mark, a crescent scar, worn  
in the wide-plank floor

*" ... and all I can figure is,  
Grammy must've, for years, dragged  
her foot getting up from the table. She had  
such bad arthritis, you recall,  
and she could never sit still for a moment,  
always doing for others ... "*

And I did  
recall, that and other things—

And if I could see her again ... if I  
could see her again, I would not be impatient;  
if I could see her.



# Seeking the Hermit-Sage

*from:*  
Unworldly Wind



## Once In A Parking Lot

"... my stress lay on the incidents in the development  
of a soul: little else is worth study ..." ROBERT BROWNING

Talking in the parking lot across  
from the library, where it is shaded  
by tall maples, we hear this *chit-chit-chit*  
and, wondering, we look up and see a squirrel

watching us from a high branch,  
while rotating the nut he's gnawing at.  
Seeing us see him, he stops his eating,  
stops his busy little teeth, and stops

the *chit-chit-chit*. Silence. Eyes meet eyes.  
Then ... he scampers to a higher branch—  
and we? I don't remember what we said  
or did that day, after the squirrel, or before

the squirrel. Recall only an incident  
whose soul-value was its greater value.

## Red Squirrel

In summer sunlight the red squirrel scoots up  
and down the apple tree, free from all concern,  
while the cat watches from the window, and  
I from behind the screendoor. Next he runs

along his highway through the greeny treetops,  
his highway in the sky, his highway  
invisible to me, once run. And now he  
takes the shortcut home, leaving branches jostling,

where he's leapt from tree to leafy tree—not  
suspecting all the eyes that tracked him. I  
suspect we, too, live free of inhibitions  
we might otherwise be feeling, if we but knew . . .

And now on ground he swirls  
                around around  
and rounds the corner,  
like water  
                down  
                a  
                drain  
                .

## To Not And Wish You Had

Think of it. Jenny Wade. The only  
civilian causality of that three day battle  
at Gettysburg, eighteen-sixty-three.  
Killed in a kitchen while baking bread.

Killed by a bullet that strayed through the door,  
which, as a lad, I saw, and the hole, too,  
that the bullet made, enlarged and worn smooth  
by all the fingers that had verified

the fact. I did not, myself, with finger, further  
wear away the truth, for propriety's  
own sake. (For we, I understood, were not  
so common as to do as common does.)

But I wish I had. Still, to not and wish  
you had, is also an experience.

---

thirty long winters  
a misplaced fidelity  
still rankles

## Reflections

In the dark depth of the one clear  
pane of mine, I saw her love gaze  
on the back of me, and in that same clear  
glass, looked her in the face—saw

her darkly, until she saw that I  
watched her and turned those loving  
eyes aside. And when I turned to  
face her, in the here and now, I saw

nothing of this affection. O,  
her loveliness was ever hers,  
and her cheer was ever mine, but  
we were never again so intimate

as when we met in that clear, black glass—  
that dark,

ethereal

otherworld.

---

frost-starred window -  
I stare through my reflection  
into the moonlit orchard

## Rose In Window

A small snow sprinkles down—dandruff  
through scraggly trees—and dawn's gray  
effusion grieves for lack of color,  
lack of warmth, lack of leaves, for lack

of all, but also framed within  
the window, a narrow stem, sprouting  
up from an oboe vase to end  
in a ruby explosion or

a scarlet napkin, unfolding.  
Against the lack you are too  
richly crimson, rose in the window.  
You are a red, red torch in the midst

of a dim awakening—yes, rose you are  
and are beyond all reason.

## Of What Significance

For some years now, this phantom tableau, often seen.  
A knight; a snowy field; a barberry bush,  
its red berries bright above the snow, but  
prickly to the eye without its leaves. The knight

on a palfrey beside the bush, and all environed  
by clear air and hush of snow—an expanse  
of snow bounded by a distant smudge. A smudge  
which is forest. And like the forest, the middle-

distance vague, as well. Details adverting  
from any tic to know, like peripheral  
presences which will not be confronted with  
a stare. Turn, and like that! they aren't. Unlike

the knight; the snowy field; the barberry bush;  
and this—words without voice—this: "The Christ Child."



## The Chronicler

Quill, scriptorium, ink of pokeberry,  
a lasting stack of parchment. I see myself  
in a tower overlooking a mountain pass,  
with a ribbon of road below that follows

the twisting glint of a khaki river. A scant  
traffic passes—carts, wagons, families on foot—  
from which I deduce fires, famine, armies  
out of control. A world in flux

or ended. Another not perceptibly begun—  
begun, regardless, in this scripting now  
of a past for what future? Have I brothers?  
No matter. A lavender twilight entralls me,

enchants this hour of my lonely work. I  
am he who lives to scribe the chronicle.

## Seeking The Hermit-Sage

I see myself on a mountain, an old man  
loafing in sunlight, who long since came seeking  
the hermit-sage, who not finding him,  
lingered, among the pines, a night, a day,

another night and day, to this very hour.  
Loafing, I finger the beads of incidents past:  
recall the earth-cave found beneath an oak;  
the foraged-food enough; and the learned-fire,

friend against winter; the rude hut built;  
and the quieting of mind, which I compare  
to the slow clearing of muddied water. And now,  
on this ledge, as an old man reflecting, loafing

in sun-warmth, it simply comes to me that I  
am he, found at last—the hermit-sage.

## New England Palms

Somewhere between weed and tree, the sumacs that jungle my  
unkempt property. I like them. My neighbors don't. I call them  
New England palms.

cliffside cottage  
blue hills in the distance  
here I could be  
a Ryōkan  
or a Han Shan



# **Unworldly Wind**

*from:*  
Unworldly Wind



## Winter Cottage

---

Unworldly wind, and dark the midnight forest. So cold the  
branches click like antlers. Beyond that, not much to  
know.

*in the black of nothing –  
phantom bucks  
battle*

---

## Spring Woods

---

Skunk-cabbages that yesterday were green napkins folded  
to stand upright, now forge the bog, swarm the wooded  
hillside . . .

across the path  
a snake  
too cold to care

---



## **After the Spade**

---

Tossed and meant for the field, but hanging looped and  
limp from an apple bough, the snake's carcass.

after the spade  
three inches and the tongue  
still flickering

---

## **Strange Harvest**

---

His first day home on the farm, unscathed by combat, he  
loses an arm to the combine harvester.

last night  
a sister's auburn hair  
this morning white

---

## Bright Days

---

Bright days, hand-in-hand—what a friendship we had then! You said, "The river is shampooing its hair," and we played Pooh sticks from its bridge.

that glint  
in the forest –  
where did it go?

---

## Herr Stein

---

I can still hear Herr Stein saying: "... but it is a good F, in fact, if there was such a thing as an F+, that's what it would be."

at the nursing home  
explaining myself  
to a puzzled man . . .

---

## **The Doe**

---

As the headlights touch her, her legs fold to unfold on the  
far side of the fence where she isn't . . . having vanished  
into thin dusk . . .

gone -  
but the wonder  
of blood and spirit  
remains

---

## Winter Lightning

---

Revealed as being himself, I hate a favorite uncle for not  
quite being my childhood hero.

talking of old times  
as dusk crowds the kitchen window  
winter lightning

---

## From Now On

---

She sleeps beside me bathed in moonlight. Saw what I  
saw, know what I know. Great sex still, but no heart  
for lovemaking.

is this it?  
an empty canoe  
on a river  
slow  
as from now on

---

### **Another Take on Saturday Morning**

---

Would like to be dark-haired, handsome, lean as a hickory,  
famous, and have a sense of well being—all on the same  
day.

greying at the temple  
and still “the poem”  
unwritten

---



# **Of Destiny and Moonlight**

*from:*  
Blue Night



## **Of Destiny and Moonlight**

In the moonlight the quilt has no color.  
Is a patchwork of different darks, only.

In the woods the hoot owls are calling each  
to each and my destiny is three score spent.

This afternoon you visited, wanting to talk  
of old times. It seemed an adultery to comply.

Lying here, awake in the moonlight,  
I recall an ingot of sunlight that lay

on the floor between us, a wrenched geometry  
of gold that could not be lifted.

## **Past Midnight**

Past midnight, I turn off the lamp,  
sit listening to the wind. Christmas tree lights

make fern shadows of spruce branches  
on the ceiling. Somewhere,

in the vastness of night, the young poet  
who will become my friend,

the famous actress I will never meet.

## **Enlightenment**

A disc the yellow of old ivory, and then,  
for the first time in a life oblivious,

it comes into focus, the face of the man  
in the moon. Not just a disease of pock

and shadow, but the full faced caricature,  
the same as seen by you, unknown illustrator

of my Mother Goose, fellow artist  
once maligned – now vindicated.

## Night Journey

Unable to sleep  
I stand at the northeast window. A pond  
of snow-melt,  
                backdropped by five spruces  
                with a streetlight just beyond,  
swamps the lawn—is a lake  
where moonlight,  
                shredded by the ragged top  
                of a midnight forest,  
paves,  
                with golden cobble stone,  
a pathway from glacial shores into the dark  
of myth and mystery,  
                into the very Land of Færy.

## **Lacuna**

And in those days,  
when living as if there were no tomorrow,

I woke not to a new day, but rather to the rewinding  
of a watch. On the wall of the room where I slept

and changed clothes hung a three week calendar  
that skipped to someday. Podunk and Now.

### **At Moonlit Window in Negligee**

Secretly, through slitted eyes, I watch.  
Once in the Strasbourg cathedral she drew me  
  
into a niche and put my hand where she needed me.  
Since then all that was romantic in me has  
  
fallen away. Cliff into ocean. Put your ear  
to the conch shell of my used to be.



### **Nude #27 & Musings**

She has turned from a dormer window, clothed  
in a sheen of sweat, peach in hand. This world  
  
of dust, indeed. If fruit grew on mountain cliffs,  
I'd turn recluse. You know I would. But here  
  
in the fertile, I wipe my chin, endure her mocking eyes.  
Fear some unspittable aftertaste.

## **Meadow Gospel**

Where the grass is luxurious, she lies  
with an arm across her eyes, her skirt to mid-thigh.

What the mind can't spit, you live with  
as a kind of shrapnel or you digest it. Food

for a healing growth. Enabled by the cooperation  
of opposing wings, a butterfly lilts about her.

## **Dropping in On an Old Neighbor**

Once promiscuous as a carnival ride she spends  
her days in a trailer watching television and smoking

five packs of cigarettes. Thin as a rail and hollow eyed,  
she doesn't remember me, and I wonder that I ever thought

her erotic. From her tin can hovel, canned laughter  
follows me down the moon bright path.

## **New Property**

Scent of hot grasses. The sun a coin  
of molten electrum. In a white dress

of thin muslin, her areolae bloom  
dark as the plums warm from the tree.

With a thirst like this there's no help for it.  
You thief and wipe your chin,  
laughing at the myth of ownership.

...

Wicked pretty  
with eyes the blue  
of burning alcohol,  
eyes  
to fuck a heart.

## The Stonecutter's Daughter

Well, he was a great artist,  
so he could  
(when he passed that beaten farm house)  
think – “*God, that little girl's in there.*”

and all day think,  
‘how that young girl was there’

that young girl captured in time  
captured in aching temperas,  
for all time.

...

*“working up on the farm  
we go topless*

*my uncle doesn't mind”*

umpteens since  
still playing  
this over in my mind

## Vienna

that room –  
can't remember  
if there were pictures on the wall

can remember  
how it was to enter her

the deliciousness

\*

nude  
in a stifling room  
she opens her legs

positions the cello

outside, the sticky sound  
of mid-day traffic

\*

arriving by shaded streets

the apartment empty  
no forwarding address

how it ended  
one Viennese  
afternoon

***The Photographer & After***

outside the concert hall, after *The Photographer*,  
Glass shattered by a taxi's blare.

at the reception,  
a tinkle of ice in cocktail glasses, as across  
the room a woman lifts her wine glass  
at the very moment I lift mine—world wide,  
how many others? and what might Philip  
be doing this very moment—wherever?

later,  
in the square, a frozen fountain spirts,  
making of itself an ice palace.

once,  
walking winter streets past  
yellow window shades, the perfect female profile  
- happened!

once,  
outside a Fasching party on Gaisberg—stars  
the size of Christmas lights.

—think of it!  
to have been Mohr & Gruber, to have written  
*Silent Night*

## One Tree Island

holding my eye  
she undoes her blouse  
my strict attention

an arch smile  
then photons clothe her

wavelets lapping toes  
the forest lake  
there to receive her

wading out  
till her breasts float  
voices

diving under  
a flash of bare bottom

she waves  
from the one tree island  
an exaltation of larks

---

in a shade of pines along the lake's edge  
I clothe her  
in a bikini of kisses



**Loud and Clear,**

from the dressing booth  
at the Railroad Salvage warehouse,  
this exchange—

“It's cold in here.”

“I know it. And I don't got  
no bra on neither.”

—giving shape  
to a pointless morning.

### **At Lew's Sunoco**

"Fill it up and check the battery."

"Fill 'er up?"

"And check the battery."

"Right. Fill 'er up."

Across the street

lawn louts lounge on the grass  
before St. Anne's.

A pigeon detaches itself

from the sunlit campanile  
circles

(a fleck of grey weather)  
and returns

to the yellow brick ledge.

Pop's raw clumped hand,

a root accepting  
the foliage of commerce—

and the battery goes unchecked.

**After the Fireworks,**

in blind night, draining  
from field to parking lot,  
the 4th of July crowd murmurs  
over a system of sidewalks;

its camaraderie expressed  
in one syllable fixed  
(on successive lips) at the lip  
of a curb and "curb" that syllable,  
like a ripple on a stream,  
or a culture—generation unto  
generation

## **Downtown Café**

Two raindrops  
rivulet down  
the café window—

Two tears meet,  
one drinks the other,  
takes a moment  
to digest,  
then runs away  
with the sun.

## **Woman Playing Guitar**

Her breast  
fit  
like a fruit

in the curve  
of the small guitar,

and I  
would have been  
her Picasso,

some  
Spanish afternoon.

## Sudden Lyric

I wake to a daffodil morning  
and to the first day of my seventeenth year.  
Overnight,  
spiders have pitched camp across the lawn  
– hoary napkins of silk and dew.

Today we will sing (lugubriously),  
    *“Up from the grave He rose,  
    With a mighty triumph o'er His foes”*  
and I will love it.

. . .

Thirty years hence,  
I will recall this unforgettable morning,

where a bite-sized Casablanca fan pinwheels,  
awry and wee,  
    in the lustre of a coffee spoon—

where my wife, not yet born, leans back  
from strawberries and cream, laughing  
    at my licentious wit—

where two wires cross and part  
in some unknowable circuitry.

## Waiting and Then Not Waiting for a Green Light In Greenfield, Massachusetts

The red pulse of three turn signals and the click of my own  
—a serial music, more for the eye than the ear.

Images of unseen birds sweep the rear window of the car ahead,  
like a school of neon tetras through an aquarium glass,  
but swift swift—each concise image pulled awry,  
as the flock, itself, is warped, is bulged—is gone.

An hour ago: Gray whispery wisp of a man standing  
a little less than the librarian on duty:

*"... I have always been very sensitive,  
very creative —yes-yes— have been all my life,  
very sensitive, very creative ... "* and on the street  
outside the library, a drunk grabbed a parking meter,  
stiffened—heaved

—well there you have it,  
a hot lunch. And now it is—the awaited shift from red  
to green—the tachometer needle jumps.

(When you redline  
on fear you redline, and everybody has a battlefield,  
and it doesn't matter where or what the battlefield  
when you redline).

I still have 20 minutes on a meter  
in Brattleboro—but that's another town, another state.

"REDLINE MY HEART 3-PERSONED GOD!" I'm coming home,  
home to meat and potatoes and look at that!—

old apple tree? or bonsai and me incredibly shrunk?

All these years, I have been wasting, wasting, wasting the poem.





**KEEP ON KEEPING ON**

*from:*

Betrayal On Maple Street



## Keep On Keeping On

Making my way along the winter streets  
at the violet edge of day, enticed  
by neon, flickering deceits  
that keep me keeping one foot further on;  
I don't recall—never knew the reasons,  
scarcely see the change of season  
anymore—

more and more,

this monotony of hours  
spent in rundown downtown bars  
erodes like water from a dripping tap.

In an alleyway,  
between a church and all night bakery, I stop  
to light a cigarette—

And there, stirred

by a *Föhn* of oven fragrance, I recall,  
I once had what I wanted,  
but still wanted and wanted what?  
I never knew.

And there, for a moment, stirred

by an air of fresh baked bread, I embrace a time  
by time distorted—a mere *Gasthaus* of a town  
so briefly dwelt in, this pinprick *Heimweh*  
is not mine to say.

Then wondering

if there might not be some brand new brand of aspirin  
to stump this seven year long ache  
for an amputated youth, I step, again,  
into the evening wind, wanting again,  
and again not knowing what I want, feeling  
inside my chest, again,  
the smoke's familiar tightness, again knowing  
the city's limits—  
that nowhere to go, no one to know feeling.

\* \* \*

At last, or finally, I sit once more,  
couched in the rumble of a tavern,  
booths along one wall,  
a bar, bar stools and all  
the people together  
doing the same thing together  
not needing to speak together  
to be together.  
Strangers in companionship  
—that's a tavern, and shaded lights  
and perchance sights  
of certain wiles and certain smiles, and guiles  
all hip and lipstick;  
the body warmth; the smell of beer and smoke;  
the signs  
concerning ales and wines,  
the electric signs  
of whiskeys, tonics, gins, and Coke;  
and perchance the chance  
to slip into companionship.  
But even this glow passes,

and you're left among the glasses  
that froth and ring the table tops.

Her drink is tasted; mine is gone,  
another ordered; the cluttered mirror betrays  
a calculating gaze;  
then with familiar disgust I follow  
the forlorn ploys that ply me onward,  
onward to the roads I've traveled  
to turn the turns ahead.

*I always hoped beyond the bend—  
I know it is the same beyond the bend,  
always and all the same,  
but still I wait to go around again,  
though the meaning's grown lame,  
of late.*

However, it's not roads or women I speak about,  
couched here amid this cloud of mumble-jumble, rent,  
from time to time, by shrieks of lightning laughter;  
couched here among the ocher glasses  
that having frothed go flat; here  
where the jukebox blurts its not uncommon malady. No,  
roads and women are not my meaning, but  
seeing as the skit's begun,  
I speak the famous line, and so receive  
the fateful answer that taunts me more to cling  
a moment longer for a further fling.

*Although, what difference?—  
this long straight stretch of track I'm on just steady narrows into distance.*

\* \* \*

While we walk the empty streets  
I want to talk;—again, I want to speak;  
I want to share with her or someone anywhere  
some small conceit  
such as has cut me through, complete,  
the way a glint off metal cuts the eye by day;  
I want to say:

"Yesterday, soft as smoke in the gunmetal sky,  
one pink wisp flit and died  
as tall and taller buildings fingered  
steely clouds while evening lingered ...  
an atmosphere so purple, bleak, and grey  
one might have said, 'It's like Buffet.'

"And then this evening, how nice it was,  
the first snowfall  
casting the city in strange chiaroscuro,  
big, silent flakes —you know the type—  
and afterwards the sloosh of traffic  
whose tail lights ribboned red on pavements wet and black,  
and later still—  
the maple streets of yellow window light.

"And even now, as we walk this windswept street,  
a plum-rubescient bruise swells in the southwest sky,  
inflicted by  
a steel mill that lies along the river's edge;  
a twelve mile dragon who sleeps and fumes  
along the river's edge having first devoured  
a thousand dozen drudgers ... "

*And I,  
who know no why for our invention,*

*also keep keeping on by obscure intention;  
and wonder what use words at all,  
for how could I tell just how  
those bells,  
distant and out-of-tune,  
just now, prod  
some childhood bruise?—  
And I wonder why I try.  
And wonder, have I learned nothing along the way?*

\* \* \*

This forgotten edge of town  
—a labyrinth of shambled dwellings  
where dilapidated shades can't hide  
the naked bulbs within.  
Our footsteps echo; a gust of wind  
ransacks an alleyway, pirouettes, grins  
—flashing icicle teeth—  
and vanishes on down the street;  
something stirs in a sheltered corner;  
brown weeds in a vacant lot poke through  
an inch of newsprint snow, where shadow-like  
against a broken wall of brick,  
a coughing topcoat doubles, hacks, and spits;  
then, in an icy freight train rush of wind,  
a beer can rattles rattles rattles rattles along the street;  
this deserted street  
where streetlights sometimes aren't  
and partially burnt-out marquees mark  
establishments among the ruins  
in the dark  
between the signs of EAT and BAR & GRILL

a warehouse stands in one-light gloom,  
and as we pass at this late hour she reassures  
there'll be no problem with the room.

\* \* \*

Now, drawing the shades against the flashing  
of some neon claim, I turn  
and can't help note the question of it all;  
I watch all but her necklace fall.  
Then something said,  
a nod of head, a certain smile  
and for awhile  
at least a little while upon the sheets ...

*But even as I bend to meet  
the turns I take,  
I'm anxious to be on the straight again,  
preparing for another bend.*

A dim lamp lights the room  
and casts the image of a chair  
across the threadbare rug  
to where a brass rail bed fits snug  
against the further wall;  
an out-of-season spider crawls  
beneath a shelf;  
beyond the dirty yellow light  
a hunchbacked shadow fights itself.

Later, when all is sad and done,  
and one by one  
I pick my clothing from the floor,



she wants to know if there'll be more.  
"Probably," I say,  
not meaning it her way,  
and by the door  
she wants to know again  
and when.

I recall as I descend the stair  
her stare, level, over knees hugged white,  
and even more, the sight  
of naked toes that gripped a dingy mattress edge  
—I pause ... but no—  
And on the empty street again,  
amid a feathering of snow,  
I turn my collar against the cold.

*It was the same  
and always and all it was not my aim.*



# **THE TEMPERATURE OF LOVE**

a sequence



## The Temperature of Love

In a feathering of snow;

outside the apartment,  
whose yellow windows  
Scrabbled comfort;

in the cold shine  
of a streetlight  
through clicking branches—

the temperature of love!

• • •

Hot from the heat of her body,  
the key  
was more than I had ever hoped  
to hold  
of her warmth.

## **The Bruise**

with the bruise that clouds  
her white thigh showing

not Botticelli's  
but mine standing in a tub

with hands not delicately placed  
but calmly at the sides

with chestnut hair cut short  
and eyes cinnamon-to-ash

striking the saddest chord  
in a melancholy mode not Venus

Amy  
clouding my reason

## The Pearl

*The sickness of the oyster  
is the pearl. Durrell*

This nettling pang, this grain of sand,  
with which I must cohabit this shell  
till my luck runs out  
is just my luck and calling;  
a faith  
to which I must adhere as the barnacle adheres  
or this irritation and its fruit  
are for nothing,  
and I will have been wounded  
for all the tides of the ocean  
and to no avail.

## **The Compact**

The compact mirror gave a dim, distorted view  
of that which lay behind her  
as she fixed her make-up  
on the sidewalk of the wind-swept avenue.  
For a moment,  
I was not part of the geography overshadowed  
by that Botticelli face marred  
by the thin, white scar above one narrow eyebrow;  
  
how I hated her  
for her reflection.



## The Egg & The Pearl

When the egg, the bond, we had  
so painstakingly shaped  
—cracked— and ran mucus  
and pus through the fingers of my  
astonishment, it was as though she had died—

And I walked the unreal streets  
of midnight sun, rubbing  
dim the braille of my dime  
destiny in a pocket of indigo—

Till one morning, in the midst  
of mourning, it dawned, with Damascan  
brilliance, how I might minus  
to plus my fortune —simple—

pearl pearl a new belief  
around grief's insistent grit.

## **An Offering, Mean and Poor**

I am the flowering at the end of a long, bleak stem.

I am the flowering  
after the flickering flirtations  
of the neon, nylon nights,  
and the winter sidewalks  
past yellow window lights;

I am the flowering at the end  
of the ending nights of unending melancholy,  
nights of cigarettes and barroom folly;

I am the flowering  
after a certain pinprick dread  
tormented me down the narrow years,  
like a tiny bee about my head;

I am the flowering  
after the invalid shut the door  
on a room weary of an ever rearranged decor;

*(I would mend my mind)*

and after my brown-eyed mother's God frowned  
beyond belief —Jesus, was He ever friend—

and after the egg of one flesh cracked  
leaking mucus and pus  
through the fingers of my astonishment

\*\*

(though in a woman's love laugh,  
beyond an apartment wall,  
I found that one half of mankind was all  
the world to me)

after all this—

*(I go on trying trying to thread  
a needle by candlelight)*

after all this and much untold,  
I am the flowering at the end of a long, bleak stem,  
a posy offered to you, Kathleen,  
out of the effects of my days on this earth,  
an offering, mean and poor,  
offered for reasons obvious and obscure.

## **The Lesson**

Where she lives in a room with a few things  
I was a fool,  
fool to wish comprehension  
of an incomprehensible mathematics.

I should have accepted the calculus  
of uncalculated love,  
and the friendship of her body,  
unconditionally;

I should not have asked  
for the equations of time past,  
should not have asked.

## The Loft

There in the loft,  
    where we had two mattresses  
and between them  
    a hurricane lantern,

I watched you sleep—saw  
the grain of your hair flow  
    dark  
over the pillow and one white shoulder

laid bare by an errant quilt,  
    a spill  
of walnut over linen over almond;  
    and heard

the wild wind ransacking  
    the wastes of winter  
in the edgeless black around us;  
    heard it

rage around our parenthesis  
of lantern light and love,  
    our space capsule  
between yesterday and tomorrow,

    our bubble (oblong) in a level,  
I wished would never tilt.

## **After the End**

Perhaps I felt the way a woman feels  
who knows she is barren. I certainly felt  
as if I had watched the world through windows,  
as if I did not belong to the human race.

Slayed my dragon, though, by George.  
Took him in the soft of the underbelly,  
laid him out long as life.

But for all of that, the tail keeps sweeping  
the distance, keeps on twitching like a snake's  
that will switch till sundown.

What I want to know is, how long is this going  
to go on—till sundown . . . my sundown?

# **PEDAL POINT**

*from:*  
Unworldly Wind





This symbol \*\* is used where double-spaces fall on page breaks.

## Pedal Point

The road winds  
                        down  
                                    and  
  down  
  through  
                        russet, wet and tattered woodland,  
Windshield wipers bow & scrape, bow & scrape,  
And serpentine the creek thrashes in its skintight gulch, having  
                swallowed a storm  
                        overnight  
                        overnight  
Grand schemes mostly tarnish, yet yesterday's Ys needs but a rub  
                and a holler—

"Hwæt!"

*Dim of afternoon and snowfall-gray,  
Where in shadow of buttressed wall she comes,  
Stands with me—mute—on the first stone step of three  
Above a path that passes through winter-drifted hush  
Of churchyard monuments, to cross a footbridge into  
Wooded-darkness of winter woods beyond—  
The small stream trickling under ice—  
The silent snowflakes*

*falling*

*falling . . .*

I woke!, sad of a wish for what there never was—

• • •

Down-shifting now, trav'ling fast over yellow leaves pasted to wet  
macadam (roller coaster stuff),

The rain-dripping woods on either hand,

The lasting lavender dusk of dream on my mind, and on  
the radi-♪ *o-o-o sweet baby* ♪—voice you'd love  
to sleep with,

And I am 3 decades back in Elyria, where evenings once settled on  
amber fields, like dusky lingerie still warm . . .

Where at the ragged edge of town waited Tate's Tavern and the almost nights of certain unlikelihooods, never ending . . .

• • •

The russet woods; Elyria; the dusk of dream; the lost city of Ys  
    ... amber, violet, rust motifs,  
And like a dark pedal point, the agonies my steadfast father  
    suffered, that for all my acquiescence, metaphysical,  
    I know not what to think,  
The mind adverts!

But *o-o-o* that radi-*o* voice, that curl of blue smoke, and the years  
    touch thumb and finger—  
And there's Syd, the very picture of a black face in negative, come  
    to front his band at Tate's that Halloween, laughed our  
    collective asses off—  
And what might my father have made of my nights at Tate's?, out  
    of his steady life and pasture ways (I am uneasy that the  
    dearly departed thumb our brains for lack of books),  
And his faith and my faith, being what they are, the same end  
    by means unreconcilably expressed

♪ ... *but o sweet baby* ... ♪

They don't mesh: his kingdom a hillside acre; my trek into  
    the orchid night . . .  
His last act, to match new stone work with old, and each old  
    stone hand selected from Penn's sylvan legacy—  
    I remember, was there,  
4 years old with a joy buzzer in my guts, knowing it to be  
    a borrowed truck that had got its differential hung up  
    on a mossy ledge . . .  
Then some 18 odd years later, me again,

*lone firefly pulsing through endless forest of unending night,  
    ceaseless odyssey, epic eternal . . .*

\*\*

And now, the bottom of Thompson Hill Road and the old  
palomino: pensive old guy; hammock-slung and yellowing  
like ivory; constant as any old friend;

♪ *ol' pal o' mio* ♪

With back, rain-stained; and tail, lank to his fetlocks; he grazes  
lightly, the green October grass.

. . .

Coming along the valley road, the radio now an irritant: I punch  
punch punch the station settings, give Frank the finger  
(‘that’s life’), and twist it off,

And looking up—see! that the Halloween flare of the great  
pasture maple has guttered out—last night’s winds, no  
doubt,

♪ *don't let Satan fff it out, this little light of mine* ♪

Devil be damned!

I sing of a siren and a sunken city—

. . . Ellingtonian tones, city by Hammett, with lone  
nocturnal saxophone, or Mr. Eliot’s violet hour  
transposed to Johnstown, Pennsylvania . . .

The black and purple emery of a certain evening gathers over level  
clean-edged roof lines (grainy like a newsprint photo, if  
you look intently)

And me a kid, aching for the imagined one night stands of an era  
gone, thinking the desolate streets I walk, a poetry, when  
over a café curtain—What?!

A barmaid intent on fixing a red red garter circling a round white  
thigh caught in a fishnet stocking, black; and me, a kid,  
taut and taunted, teased beyond reason . . .

That wonderful evening  
(barmaid, my ass)

That wonderful evening, so like that Ys-z city of perpetual purple  
twilight dreamed—but J'town, Steel Town, with its wine-  
stained sky . . .

. . .

After 45 years in the mills, after 45 years a machinist, without  
the qualifying loss of a finger, so not a machinist after all,  
but still a hero, what the surgery did.

17 hours they labored and for what?

What Lugosi did to Karloff in "The Raven," 1935—though,  
in fact, a heinous accident enacted slow-motion on  
the surgeon's sterile plank, 1990.

Now farther along the valley, I see, in pelting rain, a half-a-  
hundred Guernseys, munching as they mosey northward  
toward the wooded hillside, its reds and golds subdued in  
the pelting rain, and think, 'he would have smiled at such  
a sight.'

. . .

What the surgery did.

17 hours they labored, opened the head from behind the ear

forward, like a book cover, read the malaise and scraped  
the bone clean of the fatal thought; the censorship done,  
'a closed book,' 'all sewed up,' leaving the knowledge of  
pain, unspeakable.

Yes. Unspeakable.

For a closed book doesn't speak, can't swallow, has a broken eye,  
the twisted face of a movie monster; but the mind clear,  
cognizant of the happened horror, and lucid to spell out  
home concerns on a clip board alphabet,

The least, the last I could do, draw him an alphabet large enough.

Inside my chest a scum bubble foul of grief swells, till one great  
'SOB' bursts, having taken me unawares, as has so often  
happened this past year . . .

Can't afford to think on it.

Even a philosophy large enough to contain all the trees of an  
endless forest that holds in its whispery green-dusk all  
mysteries, cannot, or has not as yet, informed me what to  
think—

Branch after branch after branch as far as thought can reach, the  
Universe is as big as you think it is, and trying to think it  
1 or 2 trees more, I think—

What if, lost, you came to a shack in the forest—found in the half-  
light beneath the leafy vaults where shone a beam of  
sunlight, a hermitage . . .

Found there, a hermit-sage. One like those marvelous saints  
of Ys—say, Guénolé, in all his ascetic excess

(the brackish water; the few loaves twice  
a week, mixed with ashes; the praying right  
straight out for 7 hours, arms held level  
over gravity),

\*\*

Oh wondrous excess set against such wickedness as Dahut  
princess of the Mary-Morgan sort—

**"But Hey!**

I can sing of waters what washed a town away . . . "

. . .

JOHNSTOWN, MAY 31, 1889.

The approaching flood water was heard as a continuous  
thunder. My grandmother heard it.

Though only 5, remembered it.

Saw the second-story wall burst in as they clambered for the roof.

It was a 40 foot wave that came on the town, that day.  
A rolling brow with a 'death mist' hanging over it.  
And before it, by a split second, a force of air  
knocking small frame structures flat. Now there's the  
grit of an American epic, having that needful national  
character of a people. 'Snatchy grabs' on the  
playground. Remember? A greed that grabbed a town  
away, complete, as a hand that scoops up marbles at  
the recess bell, or dice ( after a bad throw for 'us' ).  
And no one called to make an account. Yes,

I've all that in my veins, and Ys I know.

Can I do it?—

*Sing*

(in long alliterative lines of longing)  
*steeple and spires into being,*

*Whoop the warp of watery bells into being,  
Call up towers and domes and castles,  
From emerald waters till high over all,  
Higher than the highest pinnacle of all,  
Cry the pewter castle of the pagan princess,  
Cry the Korrigans castle, grandeur against God  
By the pagan princess, wild unruly Dahut—*

Can I do it?

*Say the several sylvan saints of Quimper,  
Shout the sieges of Grandlon, and sorrows whisper,  
Bellow the grief and speak the grievance,  
Sing the polyphony of flaw and treachery  
To the last speck of the splendor lost . . . ?*

And still farther along the valley road, the all Summer summer-long baseball field in rain.

. . .

Last Spring, across this same faded field, a large smoke plume hooked and flowed up river, a river itself, turning quite blue as it thinned amid the hillside trees, of the winter rusted, rested woods . . .

Last Spring, on an apple bough, a fat-backed bird turned sideways—revealing his identity—and the next day two more of his kind eyed me from a crocus lawn. ‘An infestation of robins!’ I thought, and thought,

‘He always saw the year’s first robin’ (though allowed as how that February robin had likely wintered over).  
He could look down, anytime-anywhere, and find a four-leafed clover, it didn’t take him long, and then it came to me as it comes to me now, that I will always see the first



Spring robin first, find the four-leafed clovers . . .  
And now ahead of me, the town of Colrain nestled at the base  
of the mountain, with its old brick church: blue-roofed,  
white steeple aslant . . .

. . .

Was it just two years ago, Christmas, that we came early through  
the valley, the air clear and cold, and there at  
the mountain's base the little town of Colrain?  
How still we saw thee, in the morning light,  
With a kinked plume of smoke moveless over each and every red  
brick chimney (a greeting card picture if there ever was  
one),  
And in the house beneath each smoke-?ed roof, Christmas, about  
to happen to each excited boy and girl, always anew since  
the advent of this unique event—  
Then up the mountain we went on our way to a Boston Christmas,  
that winter morning, yes, two years ago—

. . .

Today, down-shifting to take the mountain (the windshield wipers  
bowing & scraping),  
The subdued reds and golds of the mountain trees up and ahead,  
My thoughts in shades of amber dusk, and dusk of dream;  
in shades of Ys, and lone nocturnal saxophones . . . amber,  
violet, bronze, or rouge motifs—  
And underneath it all . . .

**The grim incessant drone of a grave insistent tone**



# **PART TWO**



*from:*

# **Adrift**

*selections from:* Blue Night



this moonless night  
this hush  
of falling snow  
by lamplight  
your five haiku

*for Yasuko Fukumi*

I stick with the  
weather

the erotic jive  
in her eyes

shuts  
down

selling flowers,  
she wears  
nothing but  
the briefest briefs  
beneath her dress

lovely to see,

but her snippy way  
withers  
my fine bouquet  
of notions

in his tree house,  
red as the rose  
that newly sprung  
this June,  
he blooms with shame

having blurted out  
his secret



picking up the dime  
from the sidewalk  
she shows the bird nest  
between her breasts  
– and then her beard

along the winter streets,  
the lifeless streets  
of yellow window lights  
and leafless trees, I pass  
– a click of cleats

her skirt brightens  
in the sunlight at the door  
quick! quick!  
her scissor shadow  
cuts me through

on the terrace

under the stars  
we talk

the rub of wind  
my velvet

along  
the narrow sidewalk  
as two lovers pass me  
the snag  
of a privet on my sleeve

*“okay! okay! he's everything a woman wants.  
now what's for supper?”*

the petals  
of yesterday's rose lie around the vase

*"He never meant a thing to me,  
honest."*

across the inlet  
a row  
of shingled houses

the dishwater slosh of the sea

*"... and don't expect me back"*

morning now  
smoke from a neighbor's chimney

saw grass  
showing  
the wind's way

we all have our secret selves,  
but to hear it  
on the twisted sheets of love –  
my whole body  
a stubbed finger

the chickadee  
sits  
on a phone line  
its talons  
like  
two spiders  
dancing on  
its belly

frost-stars on  
the windshield

at the bus stop,  
two friends  
speak clouds

icy roads  
controlling the car with prayer & rectum

home at last

the cat sniffs and sniffs  
the damage

the car  
more hurt  
than was the bear

*from a 19th century Yankee diary*

Killed my hog.  
Broke my heart.  
Went to work.

beyond the window, a boney dump\*

each classroom  
heated by a wood furnace

in summer  
from the mine's maw  
cool scary air

\*slag heap

### **Where a Flower Should Be**

A thought dwelt on  
can only grow –

and a weed is a bad thought  
where a flower should be.

A thought dwelt on  
is a thought given water,

but a weed deprived of water  
withers away.



## **Learning to Float on Your Back**

You believe  
it can be done, yes,

that the water  
will support you, certainly,

but  
there is a moment

when you must finally relax  
and let it happen –

this is called  
Knowing.

reality  
is what you think it is  
and facts are faceted

pick a glint pleasing  
to your eye

think what you want

thinking  
about Rodin's *The Thinker* –  
thinking,

mind  
over  
matter matters

or nothing matters

tomorrow  
is the best day yet,

giving us hope  
and other  
unusable tools

for today's  
jury-rigged work

the fountain nude  
forever bent  
to pluck a bronze flower  
think of it  
and revel in uncertainty

nice to be  
a museum piece –  
bronze knockers  
and crotch, both  
burnished by secret hands

also on display that day  
at The Museum of Modern Art  
an anonymous print:  
medium;  
lipstick on tissue

the radiators bang

cod liver oil washed down  
by fresh squeezed orange juice

he sits by the oven  
warm on one side  
shivering on the left

Saturday morning

*“you kids stop bouncing around,  
you’ll make the dough fall”*

button button  
who’s got  
the button

somehow

on the way  
to Aunt Alice's

the center  
of the cherry pie  
disappeared

biting the head off

the gingerbread man first,  
I tell my 5 yr. old

that it's more humane  
and  
part of our oral tradition

Thanksgiving Day

candles and wine  
a 3 lb. turkey

snow falling  
through maple branches  
a man and a woman . . .

carolers

a cloud before  
each oval mouth

and toes so cold  
the rum can't  
rouse them

raspberry picking

as she turns to me  
a swift cloud shadows her face

like  
forgotten  
sorrow

family barbecue

burnt offerings  
the '*chock*' of  
croquet balls

old,  
her eyesight gone  
she sits apart

faintly smiling



his clothes to charity

unpacking the suitcases  
of the vacation no longer awaited

finding  
the Valentine meant  
for today

a few friends gather

mulled wine  
the sweets of sophistry

after the last guest leaves  
standing under  
the starry sky

in a pool of lamplight    my pensive art

under a gunmetal sky  
the goldenrod's strong yellow

mystique is where you make it so

a door  
waits  
to be opened

Midnight and the mind meanders ... memory  
and imagination – nation enough for odyssey . . .

Up above this world of care,  
Han-Shan, old hand at solitaire.

## Clay Tablets

all these years  
dropping pebbles into a well  
the small splash  
of a poem's acceptance  
then silence

yes, yes  
it's the work that matters  
not fame  
still  
I don't write for a wastebasket

for posterity  
I suggest publishing  
on clay tablets  
your local landfill  
as good a depository as any

the stir of curtains  
on a clover scented evening . . .

in my fingers  
the feel of his logic –  
Johann Sebastian Bach

roses  
and wrought iron fences

the novel long deferred  
memory  
without meaning

only grass  
where the homestead stood

even here  
I am far  
from home

overnight a winter wonderland

chickadees flit from branch to earth –  
feed, squabble, and return to branch

only  
to be  
reborn

don't care much

for rasping dogmas  
or chiseled tenets

my way  
more like the wind  
in the willows

the 10,000 things

a hidden path  
leads into the mountains

in a hut  
the old poet lives  
alone      alone

wineshop girls

quarreling  
as they pretty and prepare

and did you find,  
Tzu Yeh,  
your gold orchid friend

Atlantic crossing

three days without sight of land  
yet looking up tonight

a nugget  
of  
real estate

*"hast du Feuer?"*

shying away  
she leaves her sly smile  
but not her name

where she stood  
a twist of blue smoke

Piazza San Marco

a pigeon rides my head  
for several steps

I feel  
– how shall I say –  
blessed



museum tour

appearing and reappearing  
braless in t-shirt

valued at more  
than all the naked  
statues

you're gone

the rain rivulets down  
our café window

how to say it?  
Venus de Milo handcuffed  
to a museum mind

a streetlamp

casting a path over snow-melt  
where five pines stand

that's all it takes  
one moment an insomniac  
the next a tourist in Færy

newly anointed

a shadowy figure in thin muslin  
her braceleted arms raised

of man's first dawn  
bison on cave walls  
shards & dust

in the market place

dust and dung  
a fly riding the piper's finger

threading the crowd  
a woman in white  
magical as a unicorn

urban midnight

in a pool of yellow lamplight  
his craft or sullen art\*

after long illness  
an el Greco  
in the garret window

\*Dylan Thomas – paraphrased

a room  
and a means of livelihood

beholden to no one  
and  
the boarding house lady  
I'll never forget

hitch-hiking a coal truck stops

six miles farther on  
an invite for coffee

in the kitchen  
chickens and a fridge full  
of Schlitz

mission house rules

in by nine, sober & a shower  
— come morning,

coffee & oatmeal  
never tasted  
so good

the bike clocked at 135 mph

midnight and flatland in all directions  
one stone and it's over

Lorain to Oberlin  
15 miles 7 minutes  
me & Cyd

rainy night outside Ray's

blue neon gleams  
on the wet parking lot

it happens  
and he's down and dead  
justlikethat

miles davis & blue lights

at this hour  
some of the girls dance topless

at this hour  
a spider slowly  
yo-yos

spring breezes open nightgowns

somewhere  
in the kiss of dawn  
a ruby explosion  
loud  
to no man's eye

an impossible math this  
but over the years  
inch by inch  
how many miles  
of sex?

**always**

it may be  
the shadow of  
a hedge  
or the dusk of  
a tool shed  
or the darkness  
surrounding  
a party  
but whatever else  
it may be  
it is always  
touch and go  
for lovers

after the nights

of pills  
and  
prayers  
and  
sad songs – you,

my Androcles

after  
the many sunsets  
viewed

through an ashen blur  
of migraine

only the sunsets now,

as if there'd been  
no blur



## **The Room Behind**

Always conscious  
of the room behind,

and its too familiar  
furniture, and

the weary  
rearrangements of

its too familiar  
furniture,

I have watched the world  
through windows.



# Epilogue



## **This Life Without Sub-titles**

fall colors    eyeglasses  
on an eyeless styrofoam head  
– all this behind glass,  
    and something antique  
    about the gilt leaves of the locust

rated R for ‘brief nudity’  
one lousy unclothed mannikin  
I kid you not  
    my first inflatable girlfriend,  
    remembering her seamy side

always on the outside  
looking in  
    this life without sub-titles  
    no better than  
    a peeping Tom’s

a band of gold or handcuffs,  
what difference?  
‘I’ve seen it all’ says Tom  
    clearly  
    there’s more here than meets the eye

vacant store front  
graven in dust  
a two-word audacity  
    the blurting finger having writ  
    rubs grit on a denimed thigh

when two raindrop rivulets  
mmeeeett  
one drinks the other –  
    never knowing which side you're on,  
    the trouble with windows

the Waterford vase  
on display  
a spray of blue asters  
    after the shock of eyes that cease to see  
    – wildflowers in profusion

a calico curled  
in the bookshop window  
    between two snowflakes  
    '*a spill of apples*'  
    the surprise of seeing the book we made

*from:*

# **THIS HUNGER, TISSUE-THIN**

new & selected tanka 1995 - 2005





again tonight  
along the color-ribboned river  
I feel its frail insistence –  
this hunger, tissue-thin  
behind my breastbone

hearing your fame on the radio,  
I go walking streets of leaves –  
longing to see you,  
I ache,  
having no success to speak of

looking down  
on that distant page  
of meadow –

a railroad train straight as a sentence  
and I too mountain high to read its noise

along the river  
where trees are glad with leaflets,  
she had to tell me –  
later, pitched across the hotel bed,  
I wept

a drizzly day,  
with yellow leaves pasted  
to wet black pavement -  
returning the library books  
she left behind . . .

the girl  
could have done better  
in White River Junction  
than run into my arms  
and the set-

ting

sun

Rorschach treescape  
and moon fleeced clouds . . .  
how unlikely,  
against a yellow windowshade,  
this perfect female profile

when I think  
that we may never  
meet again . . .  
this hillside of aspens  
endlessly fluttering

I've come again  
to this oak-gripped bank,  
who knows why? –  
recalling our last time here,  
I watch a red leaf drift out of sight

standing in the green-dusk  
of the woods looking out –  
how bright the meadow . . .  
how odd this reluctance  
to step into brilliance

in maple shade,  
trying  
to match mind  
to pond, thoughts  
to trout

at twilight the flame  
in the bush is candlelight  
caught by the window –  
nothing more, nothing less  
– is what you make of it

frost-stars on the window,  
hills in the purple distance . . .  
if I thought  
it'd do some good I'd rave  
of things invisible to see

a thistledown floats  
over grass and Queen Anne's lace  
this yellow afternoon . . .  
and what have I to do  
with tumultuous times?

around the campfire  
singing with the others,  
I flick an unworthy thought  
from my mind –  
a spark from my sleeve

streetlights  
illuminate the maples  
from within . . .  
was it so much, my love,  
to expect the truth?

the tilt  
of her head to undo  
an earring –  
fortresses crumble into  
winter moonlight

“I couldn’t help myself”  
that’s what she said,  
and all this long day’s journey into night  
    imagination  
    an intolerable jingle

at the window,  
after our long night, raindrops dripping  
through copper leaves –  
say what you like,  
there's no one truth in such matters

sweet scent of lilacs  
I watch a bee question cluster  
after cluster –  
this endless ache for intimacy  
what good is it?

the dawn's gray effusion grieves  
for lack of color,  
lack of warmth –  
all I know of love  
wouldn't fill a sonnet

this long sidewalk  
with its clatter of penny-brown  
oak leaves –  
    all my good days  
    faded to illegibility

embroidering & embroidering –  
over the years  
the best of her creativity  
spent  
on an old affair

in the night-fog  
a yellow bruise  
where the streetlight was –  
any truth is better  
than indefinite doubt



still angry,  
I hear an acorn  
bouncing down  
the branches of the oak –  
my fist flowers to catch it

looking up, I gaze  
at the faded reds and golds  
of an autumn hillside –  
the story in the old tapestry  
not at all what I remembered

at the chapel window  
the wind-stirred bittersweet . . .  
lately,  
and I don't know why,  
great age seems unnecessary

in eternity  
how can it matter much  
but still  
that dim December afternoon  
I might have been there

these first cool nights  
a neighbor burns apple wood . . .  
it's not so much memory  
that comes wafting back  
as a trace of legend

just walking sidewalks,  
a stranger  
in a strange town,  
when a child from his lawn  
says "hello"

lonely  
in my haste to nowhere  
in particular  
a sidewalk robin  
gives me the eye

I'm just saying  
how good it is to see her  
when suddenly  
she sticks out her tongue –  
catches a snowflake

on the station platform  
in a feathering of snow  
I see her first –  
in my chest  
a stop-motion rose . o p e n i n g

having run out  
of propane  
we go to bed early –  
her warmth the length of me  
this winter night

geraniums in a windowbox,  
a young wife leaning out  
to tend them –  
    when did my heart  
    become a fist?

here where the river  
is wide and smooth  
and red leaves drift by slowly –  
here ... remembering when  
the dream was clear

touch ... touch ...  
the skipping stone hits  
the farther bank . . .  
suddenly I am old  
and understand nothing

the river snakes  
across the plain into  
the blue distance –  
it's not so much a fear of what's to come  
as of nothing left to do

on the kitchen table  
daisies  
in a green bottle  
all I need  
everything I want

since morning  
3 pears on a green plate are 2 –  
alone  
I craft these wintry lines,  
the afternoon silent as granite

a dozen  
roses are a dozen  
roses,  
but one rose  
is a friend

lined with locust trees  
a small street I love  
its main event a pastry shop  
and the sparrows  
the small quick sparrows

in the light  
of the hurricane lantern,  
the walking stick  
by the cabin door –  
friend enough this winter night

back home  
walking with a favorite uncle  
toward the stream's source –  
no longer a common alphabet  
to spell our affection

the war ended,  
he brought home from the Isle of Capri  
a 'real' cameo  
imagine its enchantment  
there on the oil cloth table top

heads or tails?  
well if it's heads, there you have her  
Mrs. Wallace Stevens  
in bas-relief  
and still only a dime

the blue,  
the piercing blue of Sirius.  
more you will never share  
the nuances are mute  
– art's first hard lesson

using the wind,  
by allowing the wind  
full play –  
this butterfly, not much more  
than a folded piece of paper



red as sunrise  
tOmatOes alOng the windOwsill  
    too many shadows  
    too much reflection  
time for something plump in the hand

first light  
and again I'm brewing coffee –  
like an ant  
on a moebius strip  
this dailiness

for fifty years  
through all the weathers  
of the mind,  
I have loved the world with my eye  
. . . if nothing else, that

ever a pebble  
in my shoe  
since that one false step  
on the beach  
at Marblehead

walking  
the railroad tracks  
alone –  
more and more we live  
our parallel lives

what delighted me most  
now leaving me  
    petal  
    by  
    petal

---

tanka sequences

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## **SOMETHING TO REALIZE**

I look up from her letter,  
my worst fear realized,  
just in time to see  
a goldfinch leave  
the thistle's purple bloom

it's something  
to realize you're nothing  
to somebody else –  
    blue smoke rising  
    from a farther hill . . .

a drizzly day,  
with yellow leaves pasted  
to wet black pavement –  
returning the library books  
she left behind

bittersweet in such plenty,  
an orange-and-yellow mist  
that wants telling . . .  
if she will not answer my letters,  
if she *will* not

along the winter streets,  
the lifeless streets  
of yellow window lights  
and leafless trees, I pass  
— a click of cleats

\* \* \*

## **HIDDEN IN BRUSH**

hidden in brush  
not noticed till now,  
the doe –  
eyes meet eyes till neck folds  
and body vanishes

the cat  
sniffs and sniffs  
the damage –  
the car more hurt  
than was the bear

in the face  
of the approaching pedestrian  
I see something,  
something to wince about –  
then hear the crash behind me

only five years,  
and she's lost her face  
to flesh! –  
the mystique gutters,  
infatuation dies

the dawn's gray effusion grieves  
for lack of color,  
lack of warmth –  
all I know of love  
wouldn't fill a sonnet

\* \* \*



## LEAFLESS IT STANDS

leafless it stands,  
wrought iron against a washed-out sky –  
over the gnar  
of the chainsaw I shout  
*“that one stays, it’s sculpture now”*

in a muslin of rain  
the October leaves subdued  
the pumpkins shiny  
a gunshot in the woods  
shatters the quiet

waking to a certain hush  
I know what to expect  
yesterday's world  
reduced to the mere suggestion  
of a charcoal sketch

ditched car  
the crunch of snow underfoot  
all that last mile home  
bleak branches  
strung with constellations

udders full  
the cows turn westward  
in the gathering dusk  
a radio in the barn  
issues the news

the old cow  
hikes her pump handle  
and lets splash –  
I smile, remembering  
my grandfather's laugh

\* \* \*

## TWO FOR LI PO

bleak branches  
strung with constellations  
– Colrain and now –  
imagine - the same geography  
once extolled by Li Po

that Li Po, drunk,  
leaned over the boat's side  
to embrace the moon  
and drowned . . . ?  
sure, I believe it

\* \* \*

## MY HELPLESSNESS

in the park  
a mockingbird holds forth  
feeling fetal again  
only skirt fever  
keeps me erect

magnolia petals  
cluttered around the ruins  
of a sundial –  
my helplessness  
before a woman in tears

discussing plans  
for the annual fund raiser –  
painfully aware  
that beneath the white dress  
there's a woman

so foxy  
the new clerk at the gift shop –  
watching now  
the river slip beneath the bridge  
I'm in no hurry to go home

trying to look her in  
the eye as she explains  
the Egyptian mummy –  
her nipple-ring outlined beneath  
the museum t-shirt

level clean-edged roof lines  
against an evening sky  
the tune of an era gone  
my long-legged, lean and lovely,  
where are you now?

\* \* \*

## ORDINARY MOMENTS

night of heavy snow.  
back from the barn by flashlight  
footsteps already blurred –  
in the window  
the red-tipped electric candle

*Auld Lang Syne*  
under a starry sky  
sparks from a hilltop bonfire  
what's done is done  
and some things best forgotten

first light  
and again I'm brewing coffee –  
like an ant  
on a moebius strip  
this dailiness

out of a pearly sky  
a few snowflakes fall  
through black branches –  
utter silence . . .  
but for a woodpecker at work

\* \* \*

## NEW TERRITORY

while I slept  
it snowed  
and a tree fell  
old age  
uncertain as a winter road

some things  
are never going to happen again  
others  
never again, that way,  
and still others, never

having entered new territory  
– a tundra at dusk –  
I await,  
anxious and somewhat fearful,  
the undefined adventure

\* \* \*



## THE WAY OF THINGS

in the grey distance  
the line between sky and hillscape,  
barely discernible –  
without faulting the facts  
memoir becomes legend

standing among stately pines  
disgraced and alone in my outcast state  
yet always,  
always an integral part  
of the universe

to pick up the beach  
grain by grain, how long?  
in eternity  
no time at all, I think –  
the endless hour glass trickles trickles

first light  
morphing into shadowless dawn  
perfect stillness  
what I am I am  
right here right now

\* \* \*

*from:*

# **OUTER EDGES**

a collection of tanka



on my back  
on a bed  
in a bed & breakfast –  
my dime destiny  
mapped on a cracked ceiling

trying trying  
to get hold of – not the hat,  
wind-tumbled down the street,  
but  
my last earthly desire

to sculpt a destiny  
or simply squeeze  
the clay  
and take what comes  
?

at the gallery entrance  
she pauses  
all hip & lipstick –  
a nail driven through  
a calendar date

the sound of the siren  
is as red  
as your lips closing over  
the blind white  
of the hard boiled egg

in the streetlight  
the red of her paisley dress purples  
as do her lips –  
lips that are saying  
something that makes me blue

the mannequin's skirt flaps open  
& open & o' how  
this spring breeze taunts  
recalling the quick nuptials  
of amber afternoons & neon nights



in my mind's eye  
I can see her in a thong &—& nothing . . .  
my god!  
so this is the life of the mind  
who'd have thought

at the checkout  
reading all  
the tabloid headlines –  
the curse  
of literacy

talking with three guys  
the co-ed shields herself  
with a book –                    imagine,  
Shelley guarding her chastity

inside the grape arbor,  
shadowed-patterns where her blouse  
lies open –  
the purple fruit  
wants tasted

his hand  
at the moment of birth  
a leaflet  
his fate, his character  
a decisive ideogram

hands that held  
this family Bible held reins,  
spun wool, penned,  
on yellowed fly-leaves,  
these brown and faded names

no one left  
to tell again the family stories,  
the farm stories,  
and how the great poet came to sit  
in the chair I sit in now

gas flames rise  
from fake logs,

the tribe's  
story teller,

a Kindle

while I wait  
to be served, I devise a story  
in the willowware –  
we've each of us our beliefs  
and our own supporting evidence

that we can live on finer  
& finer energy fields –  
sure, why not?  
if you can believe this world  
you can believe any world

*Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>*

falling snow  
past streetlights holiday  
the parking lot –  
at Starbucks an answer  
from tomorrow's Toyko

wide snow,  
all else perpendicular – the tall trees,  
the icicles off the porch eave –  
    and I, too, am upright  
    in my solitude

by lantern light  
stacking pennies  
five deep  
& five deep –  
waiting out the storm

Nefertiti –  
was there ever such a woman?  
what I wouldn't give  
to stand in her aura,  
know what she thought of her world

in wet sand  
the chain  
of her elegant footsteps  
end  
midway to nowhere



always fascinated by  
that last half-inch in the long crawl  
of evolution  
where mankind straightens  
to step out of the picture

eons ago  
an Eocene fish got buried in mud –  
now framed  
on my stairway wall  
its fossiled fame

the sizzle  
of crickets  
tightens –  
something about this mountain night  
remembers ancient seas

glint  
of braceleted arms, body  
maddered by firelight –  
I wake! to a trace  
of goat and sandalwood

this past August,  
all at once, the abuse of a decade  
condensed into a bullet –  
there's a house for sale  
in our neighborhood

dusk  
and the day lily all but done  
no one  
a statistic  
but once

I conjure our river bank  
but it morphs,  
it jungles  
and the Rousseau-animals emerge –  
those eyes! our sudden nakedness!

the sea-green pool  
in the woodland river –  
after 30 years and all  
the great capitals of the world,  
the sea-green pool

lying  
under stars  
becoming  
a wide slow  
river

**monologues**  
**with tome-tombed men**

1  
hang it all Browning,  
it could almost be mine,  
your *Andrea del Sarto*.<sup>1</sup>  
his impossible love  
and the greats known by him

<sup>1</sup> a paraphrase from A Draft of XXX Cantos; II,  
by Ezra Pound

2

Langland,<sup>2</sup>

when writing your great Vision  
in Chaucer's London  
you could not have envisioned this –  
your words on my monitor tonight

— 2a

though six centuries sundered,  
I find us fused by a common guilt  
    verse  
    vs.  
    wage-work

— 2b

quoting, you wrote  
    *“the laborer is worth his hire”*  
tell me about it! –  
    still, my needs are met  
    and my wants somewhat

<sup>2</sup> William Langland, 14<sup>th</sup> century author of  
The Vision of Piers Plowman

3

and you, the sage of Concord <sup>3</sup>  
sane, credible, astute –  
a common man  
wild  
in your own quiet way

— 3a

mornings you wrote  
afternoons hoed  
took late walks to the Pond –yes,  
but those lamplit conversations . . . o,  
to have been a fly on your wall

— 3b

*trust thyself* – your message  
or as Campbell phrased it,  
*follow your bliss* –  
well I have,  
guilt and lies not withstanding

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson



4

Han Shan,<sup>4</sup> like you,  
I never thought it'd end this way –  
    you 'neath your pine  
    me, my sumac,  
our red dust days gone with the wind

5

Issa,<sup>5</sup>  
where have I gone wrong? –  
    indifferent to housework  
    kindly to insects,  
but revered –? not at all

*postscript:*

not surprising, is it?, that more  
and more, as each old friend ends  
his or her grave march,  
I hold endless monologues  
with tome-tombed men

<sup>4</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> century Chinese Taoist poet, aka 'Cold Mountain'

<sup>5</sup> Kobayashi Issa, one of the four Japanese haiku masters



# IN AN UPSTAIRS ROOM

*60 cherita*

\*

selected and sequenced by ai li



spring breeze

a mannequin's skirt  
flapping

that's all  
it  
takes

out of the blue

and without a word  
she packed and left –

the locusts were buzzing  
and the old dog lay  
in the dusty drive

whiskey

and the Saturday night streets  
of walking

touch-  
me-  
nots

in morning sunlight

strict as a sapling ash  
she pours

a bucket of water  
over  
her nakedness

back & forth

we mirror one another  
in the doorway

can it be?  
a permanent  
relationship . . .

sunset after sunset

these solitary walks  
this ache to tell

the fiery furnace  
closes and leaves me  
to my dusk

against the white wall

her once full shadow now  
a brushstroke

I focus on her voice  
to remember  
who she is

on a balcony

with a green bench  
and an icon above it,

an old man smoking –  
a fig  
of his former self



after twenty years, again the room

the room my son  
has rented unbeknownst

the room where I woke  
to a carpet of spiders  
that weren't

hoarfrost

10,000 apple drops  
lie in the untended orchard

in the kitchen  
a floor board  
chirps

power outage

no candles  
can't find the flashlight

the copper tea kettle  
lit  
by a ring of blue flame

the others have gone to town

my buddy's wife  
dressed only in her loveliness

and no one need know  
says  
her smile

midnight

you phone from another hemisphere  
to say you're through with him –

a black widow  
stands  
on the ceiling

wind & owls

and night like a shawl  
drawn round my shoulders

if dawn  
never came  
I wouldn't mind

from my window

stitching past a row of trees  
she is walking to town

down the stairs  
two at a time  
we meet ! by accident

beneath that smile

fingers  
toying a button

the typo  
on the tip  
of my tongue

we went back in the woods

to where the old trolley tracks  
went through

and that's were  
we found him,  
the crows had got his nose

you leaned

against me  
and neither of us

moved  
for the longest  
time

for a moment

the bloom and the bee were one,  
what happened next

let's  
just call it  
youth

working the grill

you should have seen his face  
when the cops walked in

drugs  
and underage videos  
in an upstairs room

tangled sheets

tainting the walls  
a neon's pulse

by the window  
the glow  
of a cigarette

cruel words

viewing the moon together  
though 500 miles apart

the inadequacy  
of long-stemmed  
roses

the moon path laps her toes

across the lake   faint lights  
bits and pieces of party noise

on the beach behind her  
the shredded  
letter

so that was that

now, breaking a dry stem  
into bits

watching  
the river  
flow



October sunlight

hearing her love-laugh  
from another room

staring at a knot-hole  
in the red oak  
flooring

death and distant thunder

the question  
I dare not ask

a spring breeze fingers  
a  
hemline

flies, chickens & dog

while 3 drunk buddies fix the car,  
she stands at the screendoor

bare breasted  
diet coke in hand  
watching

summer heat

on the porchsteps  
9 red toenails, 1 to paint

young though she is  
she's already a few  
good secrets

it's her wedding tomorrow

she comes to me in the night  
saying

*"this  
will have to last  
for a long time"*

after seeing you off

taking the path along  
the canal

a rustle of  
leaves  
underfoot

if I'd the money

I'd move to the city  
do drugs & fast women

&  
squander  
the rest

*"light?"*

in the casino where she stood  
a twist of blue smoke

sleuthing her through  
the sun-bleached streets  
! seeing her nowhere

the door blows open

and the candles gutter  
– the Ouija board

has just  
spelt  
d e a t h   h u r t s

all night with closed eyes

the ventriloquist's dummy lies  
in its velvet box

for the first time  
the muted many  
dream their voices

so

tired  
today

I could  
take  
root

will I outlive

this  
economy size bottle

of vitamins?  
*that*  
is the question

henge

under a blue sky  
buttercups slope away to the sea

a long way from here  
the headstone  
awaiting me

the eternal flame

blow it out  
and the universe quits

who's to say there isn't  
an eternal  
match

granite

the  
spacious

sound  
of  
nothing

on a sunlit rock

a passive pet  
a corpse

the butterfly  
whose wings in death are fixed  
for flight



threading her way

through the crowd, the missing piece  
to my jig-saw destiny

gone  
as soon as  
seen

following the path

out of the woods to a sudden  
meadow, ravine and

wall of red autumn  
right up  
to heaven

apples float

and  
muddy water clears

if  
left  
alone

seeing you again

and so much of you  
in your string bikini

evening's wild colors  
flung  
on sky and water

alone at home

and nothing  
needs doing

at the window  
rain  
a gust of leaves

overnight

a dusting of snow . . .  
the many tracks of many creatures,

a Rosetta stone  
of rural  
nightlife

lightning whitens the room,

naked  
at the window

your afterimage  
a ghostly  
daguerreotype

silently in a snapshot

you are saying something  
and look wonderful saying it

the fall leaves are gray  
and your smile  
is forever

mid-afternoon

the heat packaged smell of asphalt  
weeds and grass –

too straight,  
too narrow,  
this heartland road

for rent  
a cliffside cottage

sumacs jungle the property

here I could be  
a Ryōkan or  
a Han Shan

teasing the mirror, she strips

not wanting to waste  
the few good years she sees

in the study below  
her scholar husband  
living a life of braille

she knew

but didn't know quite  
why the many eyes caressed her

in a white skirt  
with  
the sun behind her

at dusk

through sparse  
& snow laden pines

boot tracks  
enter  
the woods

trapped

in the patina  
of a 60-watt parlor

sipping tea and  
smiling politely – the hypnotic  
drone of decay

sudden downpour

in a church portal we wait  
talking of Egyptology - me,

trying not to notice  
the sodden cling  
of her dress

she turns from the moonlit window

her breasts  
cradled in her arms

and how I ask  
are we to be  
just friends?



festival lights

holding hands with a stranger  
along the red-ribboned river

somewhere the faint bells  
of a sunken city  
under sea-green waves

crossing the churchyard in winter

on a headstone  
her name   yet not her name

the electric instant  
before  
I hurry on

o, to watch

her cross the river's  
pebbly stones again

again  
to hear  
her naked laugh

a table set for two – a roast in the oven

the phone rings  
in a white dress she goes out

whether by choice  
or chance – she steps  
into traffic

*from:*

# **THE COLORS OF ASH**

new and selected tanka & cherita



my life  
at the violet edge of day

no second draft

fears of  
the dark walk  
with me

at first light

before the crack  
of dawn

the crack  
of an egg  
on the skillet's rim

a grey

half-lidded  
morning

the toast jumps  
and I  
jump

in  
the sugar bowl

the ants  
are having the time  
of their life

– let them

putting out  
kibble  
for the feral cat  
snow  
on every branch

pigeons in a park

I feed them  
and feed them

old humiliations  
bob and coo  
around me

so much  
depends

on the busker

singing  
a give away  
interval

the song writer  
with little melody  
before him

dreaming  
of silent pianos

in dim & dusty rooms



November sunlight  
slants  
through the window

a chess board waits

with only  
a few moves left

old men

rake  
leaves

winter it out  
in  
narrow beds

while I was ill

blossoms  
came out

fields  
were  
plowed

thinking what  
the surgeon does  
when he opens up a chest –  
thinking what  
a timid life I've led

e x t e n d i n g his lifeline with a scalpel

we arrived

and there were his ashes  
in an urn

after the service  
we shopped  
for cheese & wine

sharing  
fruit cocktail  
and table

we give  
each other space

the yellow-jacket  
and I

there's little to do here  
but sip espresso  
and watch the afternoon

I read much of the night

don't forget  
to water the coleus

dawn comes

with its egg yolk insistence  
mourning doves & duty . . .

the ceaseless monologue  
kicks in  
my unrecorded long-song

countless syllables

and still  
and still

I've not  
explained  
myself

this creek

torrential in spring  
a trickle now

all the things  
in me  
that wanted voice

long winter night

the scurry of  
a squirrel in the walls

if I could capture just  
one hour of my hectic mind  
in a book . . .

all eight legs  
of me

still  
trying, trying  
to get out

of the sink

skirting

the wrenched  
geometry

cast

by the cabin's  
yellow  
window-light

a fox passes  
on silent paws

a squeal

in  
the orchard

life  
feeds on  
life



“to bring in  
another cat

to sleep  
on her couch  
so soon

it'd be adultery”

caught kissing

her dog  
on the lips she laughs

pasture roses bloom  
along the path  
above the beach

a gust of yellow leaves  
cross the porch  
the kitten's head turns  
every which way  
trying to see them all

tumbling  
out of nowhere

a bronze leaf  
lands  
at my feet

the puzzle of omens

at the check-out,

her bewitching scent  
woody-dark and pagan

some mother's son  
tries to join  
a coven

every bonfire  
ceremony and ritual

ghost stories & marshmallows

as night owls  
haunt  
the woods

the river, autumnal & slow

we share with two strangers  
the wide-winged heron's flight

later,  
coffee & crumb cake  
just you and me

white cup

lipstick stained  
& empty

coins  
strewn on a café table

Sapphic fragments  
taunt my mind

our fingers  
touch

the small  
arithmetic  
of

coins

coffee  
&  
conversation

always  
my back

to the wall

this time, she tells me,

she's telling the truth –  
between us

I watch the struggle  
of a wasp drowning  
in peach juice

she leaves in haste

she has to meet a *'friend'*  
alone now,  
I take up palette and brush

for that inexplicable  
second caress

like  
foreplay

photo

shopping  
your  
pics

four panes of darkness

the old house shifts  
and creaks in the winter cold

on the table  
a still life ready-made  
for brush and oil

family in bed

and term papers graded  
he steps, without hope,

into the snowy night  
to see her  
bedroom window lit

with twisted sheets  
wet between her legs,  
she wakes  
from a dream by Bosch –  
the angst of half-remembered pleasures



amid the shards of a nightmare i stand  
empty handed      mute

scandal, disaster,  
rumors of war . . .

a fly

wrings its hands,  
eats cake,  
wrings its hands

it's the little things

that tip me over  
the edge

the spilled milk  
the damaged flower  
the lost kitten

a dusting

of snow tramped  
into lace  
by tiny talons

the taste  
of woodsmoke

in the black of night

in my mind's ear  
the galloping thump of paw pads

the ghost  
of a dog  
sorely missed

*“give it up, Tansy,*

*it’s not going to fall off the limb  
just because your canines are showing”*

well,  
the chipmunk  
did fall

your town-raised  
Sheltie took in

our donkeys  
and our llama  
with equanimity,

but the cows –

the cows  
were a suspension  
of reality

a shallow swale  
of old leaves  
undulating

no –

hundreds of robins  
just arrived

herbal tea & Chaurasia

how they arc & dip & dart  
in little bursts

the chickadees  
that feed  
in the drive

trying to coax  
the renegades home  
with a bucket of oats –  
daft on fermented windfalls  
the cows, having none of it

one bite  
of sugar pie

and I'm back

in that  
oilcloth  
kitchen

coal and steel  
and the grit  
that goes with them –  
dandelion  
was not a delicacy

somewhere  
between Dickens  
and Pynchon  
the Rockwell days  
of my dad

in the old photo  
beside  
his pretty wife  
  
he looks so happy  
in black & white  
  
the colors of ash





*from:*

**THE HORIZON  
WAITS**

selected tanka, cherita, haiku  
& short free form



first light

and again  
I'm brewing coffee

like an ant  
on a moebius strip  
this dailiness

on my way  
to tell sad news

I pause

where a freshet  
floods  
a patch of violets

we did what we could

read their letters,  
figured their taxes  
good neighbors they

now just a cellar hole  
and the lilacs in spring

home

just as the first raindrops  
stain the sidewalk

tiger-lilies  
by  
the doorstep

stargazing

I know  
how

stop-signs  
get  
peppered

it nags, but

damn it, all I want  
is to stand on the porch

and watch  
the red leaves  
fall

he was  
a quiet man  
so a few

heartfelt  
words

spoke volumes

tearoom chatter  
&  
late night thoughts

little by little  
the old poet

leaking into eternity

those garret trysts

now coffee  
and conversation suffice

reading lips  
across  
the clattering café

a perfect female profile

and my body sobs  
as slowly

slowly  
I fade into  
spirit

the night is for the young  
and for the solitaires  
and I have been both –

soon, I will step into  
the midnight forest,

become owl

fossilized

in the library book,  
a mosquito

that ruddy stain  
some reader's  
DNA



the envelope  
contained

a card, a photo,  
a request for an autograph  
and one

long blond hair

as the water skier lets go  
    slows &  
            sinks, so  
this epilogue  
to a bookman's long career

inch by inch  
the inch-worm goes  
by the book

the coreid bug,  
antique, slow & mechanical –  
a thought escaped  
from the mind of Jules Verne  
still walking

clutching violets

a woman in stilettos  
picks her way

from grave  
to  
grave

crossing

marbled  
linoleum

stepping  
on  
cherubs

two women

walking in sync,  
one with a chocolate lab,  
the other, a violin case

the faint clatter  
of penny-brown oak leaves

there are voices

in the wind tonight  
I can't make them out

did you get the URL  
I sent  
for the wildflower seeds ?

a cup  
of  
gossip

and you're gone

motes in a slant  
of sunlight

after  
one glass  
of wine

the spill

of a decade's  
discontent

the red  
tinge

of tail lights  
on  
the snow

of your leaving

the moon is cloud-fleeced  
and wolves worry the forest

it's time

for dark chocolate  
and  
warm saké

*for Joy*

if some starless night  
you appear beside my bed

in black

I'm sure  
you'll take my breath  
away

*for ai li*

a tapestry of dark forest

deer and owls stare out  
with Rousseau eyes

how I'd love  
to take you with me  
into the warp & woof

the suck of mud and then we're across



this rainy a.m.

a splash  
of forsythia

holds me  
at my  
study window

tree cathedral  
& me ...

a church  
of  
one

all the beliefs

of east and west  
at finger tip and tongue

and yet  
the hundred acre wood of Pooh  
is world enough

a hang glider  
of sticks and newspaper

I knew  
it wouldn't carry me  
over field and woods

but still I drew the plans

lifeless

from  
the asphalt's  
heat

and  
swept aside  
by traffic

thousands  
of monarchs  
litter

the roadside

the river,

all  
trickle  
&  
bone

the leaves  
pant

each grape  
a raisin

under a migraine  
of clouds

her saffron umbrella  
*pops*  
into bloom

lilacs stir in the churchyard

at the sidewalk café  
some 3 or 4 sparrows  
gather at my feet –  
*you have crumbs*  
*we have nooo crumbs*

after wafers  
and raspberry sherbet  
we part under  
pink blossomed crabapples  
to go our separate ways

moonlight on the river  
trolleys rattling in the distance

a night made for whispering

sweet nothings  
in  
*italics*

for a moment  
under moon and  
milky way

parallel worlds touch

the impossible heat  
of her beach-tanned body

she rises

out of her warm scent  
and in a single step

is clothed  
in stained-glass  
light

candied yams

the clatter of silverware  
on bone china

the lingerie  
her husband  
will never see

a cottage, a stream  
some cows  
a boy and his dog

that's where I want to be

inside  
the willowware



biting into an apple  
warmed through by the sun

kicking a tin can

down  
the  
road

*“come on you kids ...*

*wash between your fingers  
don't forget your thumbs”*

sand in her shoes  
and the heat of the day  
in her jeans

in his canvas swing

the baby's  
infectious laughter –

my face ached  
from so much  
ear to ear

and I  
only eleven years old,

so soon  
so young to ache

fever broken,

the child  
faintly smiles

fireflies  
in  
a mason jar

at dusk

the feral cat  
leaping  
at insects

brings  
my boyhood

she tosses the stick  
and tosses the stick

her bodice is loose & low

the dog and I  
are easily made  
glad

topless in jeans  
she moves about the kitchen  
beyond the window  
a tree of yellow apples  
bright in the late November fog

another scorcher

and the house  
all to herself

a few  
daring selfies –  
why not ?

a dragonfly  
hovers

then darts away

you surface among  
the lily-pads  
wet and smiling

how quiet the apples

and the trees  
they live in

a small bird  
dips  
and disappears

standing

on the porch  
listening

to the silence  
of woods  
and snow

the winter trees  
are stuffed with fog

only the crunch  
of my boots

in the cotton silence

fresh fallen snow

trying to match  
the stride

of one  
who went before

while

the world  
falls apart

I coax the feral cat  
to eat  
from my hand

awake

we lie side by side  
in the dark

pretending  
to  
sleep



at first light

the feral cat  
is waiting for me  
to fill his bowl

and what if I didn't wake  
one morning ?

the horizon  
that with me

always took  
a step  
ahead

now waits

let the day lily  
be  
my metaphor

let  
the long day end

just so

dusk tightens

fruit bats take  
to the air

holding hands  
we lean our backs

against the warmth  
of  
the stone façade

at day's end

my world shrinks  
to an infinite space

desklamp  
paper  
pen

no wine no moon

still  
I make my song

from this pool  
of lamplight and the void  
around me



# **epilogue**

**funk & fugue**

*a tanka sequence*

fen, fern & dusky forest  
thinly layered sunlight . . .  
gold-questing Norsemen  
stomp  
across my vision

what if?  
in a jungle of jewelweed,  
a patch-sized village  
of tiny folk  
brigadoons at my feet

look!  
chalked on the rock face  
a stickman & woman –  
holding hands they spirit-float  
over bracken

cool air  
from a crevice in the rock –  
I could squeeze through, but ...  
but they'd be waiting,  
funk & fugue

oily sunlight  
through tendrils of jungly woods –  
what if I stumble upon  
an ancient temple,  
a fearful prophecy?







# **THUNDER AND APPLE BLOSSOMS**

selected haiku

\*

selected and edited by  
Stanford M. Forrester / sekiro



dusk  
and the daylily all but done

yellow leaves  
at year's end

small griefs  
haunt  
my footsteps

on the cheek  
of the brass  
teapot

the embers'  
cherry rouge

snow falling falling  
through a claw of apple boughs  
– my failing mother

over glazed snow a spider crawling toward the end  
of February

again today

I worked  
on the *big* poem –

soon  
there will be  
crocuses

maternity ward –  
mine  
the only home-picked  
wildflower bouquet

under a sky  
by Monet,  
the girl  
in the strawberry dress

where the small lake  
leaks away . . .  
a tea-dark gurgle

midnight  
say the prayer  
take the pill

midnight  
a whistler and his footsteps

if not  
for the dripping  
faucet —  
alone  
tonight

her number  
not in my brain  
but my finger

at the VFW  
same scar  
different story

in the brass  
door knob  
a distorted face

I grip  
and twist

photo gallery  
I've never seen eggs  
look so nude

first the model gets naked  
then nude



crossing the lawn barefoot  
arriving  
in dew time

weeping  
she  
embraces me

the brook's  
small babble

cicada afternoon –

in  
the sanctuary's  
coolness

stained-glass  
parables

a screen door  
bangs –

all past summers  
summarized

in one brief  
report

Maple Street    my shady past

thunder and apple blossoms  
her naked presence in the orchard grass

a bare midriff – that's all it takes

stuck  
for an answer

I lower  
my eyes –

her ten  
red  
toenails

evening settles  
on the patio  
a dusky lingerie  
still warm

the restlessness of leaf shadows on a crimson couch

her diary –  
if only I hadn't forced its tiny lock . . .

she's been here  
and gone . . . the gift  
of her perfume

turning  
from the window

her blouse  
full of sunshine  
and shadow

back home  
willing to fix the argument  
for sex

lust  
over the kitchen table  
a 60 watt bulb

pussywillows  
behind  
the Court House

the smart click  
of high heels

shaking  
the stone from  
her shoe

a white opal  
swings

from between  
brown breasts

she loiters  
smelling a spray of violets  
– the nape of her neck

this inch-sized frog traveling a foot each leap

stuck

on the blond curl  
of the flypaper

a buzzing triad

in the sprinkler's rainbow  
a wasp loses  
altitude



a snake released –  
the feel of it  
stays in my hand . . .

first cicada  
one long sizzling syllable says it's summer

watching the loggers work  
I rub my paper cut

a dusting of snow  
the chickadees's cluttered cuneiform

our fingers  
touch  
the small  
arithmetic  
of coins

clasping my dad's hand  
as once he gripped his father's hand  
whose hand had once . . .

after his stroke  
a safety razor –

the strop still hangs  
by the door

the  
little  
bird  
rides  
the  
tall  
weed  
down

late sunlight  
    climbs the hotel wall  
        cigarette by cigarette

dear fly  
we can't go on like this

cruel words  
the inadequacy of long-stemmed roses

a sudden  
flush from peach  
to rose

every branch  
agliter  
with ice

on my palm  
    this snowflake  
            swiftly becoming . . .

## Sidewalk Café

sidewalk café  
I tell the dog  
'don't even think about it'

crumbs crumbs crumbs  
is there anything  
not crumbs

having refused the dog  
I feed the sparrow  
– why?

a yellow jacket  
circles my coffee mug  
– I wait

crumpled napkin  
the sparrow's slight crouch  
before take-off

\* \* \*

## **Cat & I**

cat pushes glass figurine  
a little . . . & a little . . . & . . .  
ok, I get up

cat & I pretend she's hidden

cat comes  
to an accordion stop  
it's raining

it's raining  
cat tries the back door

cat & I watch rain at open door

kitten runs up my jeans  
& over my shoulder  
I spill some water

\* \* \*





## **About the Author**

Larry Kimmel was born in Johnstown, PA. He holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and Pittsburgh University, and has worked at everything from steel mills to libraries. He lives quietly in the hills of western Massachusetts.

To learn more about the work  
of Larry Kimmel see:  
<https://larry-kimmel.com/>

## **Other Books by Larry Kimmel**

in an upstairs room

this hunger, tissue-thin

outer edges

the colors of ash

the horizon waits

Adrift: selections from Blue Night

thunder and apple blossoms: selected haiku

Collected Haiku: 1997 – 2017

Collected Poems and Prose 1968 - 2008

selected poems 1968 - 2022

a river years from here

Unworldly Wind

Whip-poor-will Hollow (novella)

## **( Collaborative Books )**

Side by Side (tanka with Joy McCall)

Blue Smoke (cherita with sheila windsor)

sun-bourne rain (cherita with sheila windsor)

**( Out-of-Print Books )**

a spill of apples (with Carol Purington) (out-of-print)

Betrayal On Maple Street (out-of-print)

As Far As Thought Can Reach (out-of-print)

alone tonight (out-of-print)

Blue Night (out-of-print)

The Piercing Blue of Sirius: selected poems

1968 - 2008 (out-of-print)

