

autumn air

GREG MARKEE

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burn, rose

October

Dry. And the metaphors change from something once colorful, living, to one referencing time. But

in metaphors I wish to forget time. Time assigns duty, there are things to attend and business to

favor, there is obligation in time. I will not be confined to the crutches of last summer's ambiance

now faded and crunchy. Time it is to pass along that season with a service, a funeral. That in

respecting death and history the future demonstrates its mighty presence. Like the wind that was yesterday

only cold, be now a sign of something new, a new force, powerful like the life the rose once was. Cold,

still cold, but I know better than yesterday, I have set aside yesterday with all of its colors, that life

exist in a new fashion today with its own thorns and aesthetics. And frame myself by the bony branches

and fall rains I will, these are the metaphors of the day, the images of displacement, and come springtime,

I will burn them too. I must. If I know life I must. If I pretend to know life, I must pass it along the wheel.

And the stops? This learning, natural as decomposition and recognizing there is a place for this, too. Outside.

Among the grasses and blackberries, outside and dormant and waiting for the next time around. Where there is

no need for funerals, where life continues one season to the next without my hand and without my poetry.

Answers

October

I died in November of my sixty-fifth year. Resting in
my easy chair with hot tea in hand falling to the brown

carpet. I heard it fall and clunk and then I drifted gone,
like last summer, consumed by the new season of

leaflessness and sticks and bowed heads. The last conscious
sense was my hearing, and as the body shuts down with

the awareness of a final exhale, there is no better place
to be than the easy chair. With the familiar nearby

and with everything accustomed for retirement, and
with order, everywhere order, I was ready, better now than

later, waiting one, two, three. Counting stuff, that is what
I would have been doing, counting, the curtains, the tiles,

the days, the people I had affected. And I am no wizard.
I can make no sense of order, I can recognize it and I can

create it, but to what end? No, if disorder were my calling
I would have lasted another five years. I had prepared for

retirement since my thirties, I had ordered my duties for
the day that order would no longer matter. For the day that

was supposed to be left open. For thirty years, preparing,
and all the while turning gray at the fun I will have. Oh!

What dreams! There is purpose to preparation and there
is purpose to order, I am sure, there can only be because I

am not distracted. There is no impatience and there is no
radio playing and there is no guessing. Forward, once

again, forward. It is all I have practiced, and in traveling
forward, history reconciles itself like last summer has.

Laureate

October

What have I become, a word? A symbol? Meant
for something other than what I am, in triplicate?

An office it be, everything which I have struggled
to avoid in this drunken life, an office with four

walls, four directions, only four directions. It is
so simple, too simple, in fact, that compensation

be for my acts until now, and I can do anything.
Anything! Except leave that is, until my tenure

is no more. Until I have left some footprint in
these marbled wings, I am contained in the interest

of society, its stomach, where I am expected to
reproduce its spirit. Hold society on high, give it

another ideal like the last one and the one before
that, each contained by the position of the office.

Disabled by definition, and understood as a footnote,
that if I did say something important, it would be

little more than rhetoric, little more than rhetoric.
A badge, abling access to a foreign universe, what I

have dreamed of! But one of a kind I be, and the
substance of my office guarantees that I will eat alone,

even in the company of others. Ordering disorder
in the interest of service, and what is this? Service?

Never have I served. And if this station be nothing
more than a regard to the push from which I came,

nor will I serve here. Unless, that is, my representation
is my presence, this is my only guarantee. My presence.

just rain

October

Littering water, and darkening the ground, looking
down, keeping a dry wit. Opening sky without

lightning salutes or booms, just water cascading
off the few remaining leaves, and rooftops dripping

dripping. Studio. With a front open and continuing
across the sky, darkness, that there be no difference

between dusk and cover. But the summer growth is
done this time around, and all the rain can do is

cloak, suggest a presence of something outside of my
own. Rain is good for that, suggesting a presence,

this time without threat, just a friend letting go. As
I do, let go. Shedding burdens and thoughts to the

thinking season. I was in love once, twice. Circles.
Over everything beneath, circles and puddles

reflecting carelessness and reflecting ambivalence
not my own, not now anyway. I cannot accept

responsibility, all I can do is stand in the rain, let
it come down upon me until it stops or either I

assume the sense to step indoors and listen at an
open window. Listen. That nature be apart from

my thoughts, they are not the same, they cannot be,
I am not responsible for this. This phenomenon.

Just a watcher I be, tempered with sympathy, and
hardened by the act of caring. I know better, it is

just a storm, one without gusts and lightning and
thunder. Just rain, one after another. Letting go.

With my thoughts

October

The animal of progress is a bitter friend, wanting things. Things. A floor lamp, the kind with stained

glass shade, new kitchen knives, new art for the walls, the things surrounding me. I am in a museum,

I say, one with a thesis of comfort, my comfort, I say. Recline. Drink tea. And I do not care for the

Joneses, I never have, in fact I probably would decline if they asked. There is some excuse, a handy one,

I am ready. I am always ready, prepared. And the only thing I can say for the past is that I was ready

then, too. I had just gotten that new garbage disposal and I had vacuumed. But they never came, and I was

eager to tell them the latest thing. My words, they represent my progress, I know this, I can demonstrate

my progress, exhibit it like my cadillac. That fashion be my badge of progress and intuition, laid out, like

a picnic blanket. Public. Like next weekend, public as the county fair with new tractors and baby cows

showing off. I never imagined myself as the curator of my carnival, public, but animals entertain me, they

always have, and they require so little. Animals are independent, just leave some food out, take them to

the yard. Just a little responsibility, the kind that I afford to myself, but stretch too thin on things, in the

interest of a score with the neighbors that I have never cared for and have prepared for not caring.

Mushroom

October

From undergrowth quiet as the stars and patient,
waiting for rain, and then stop. Night, pop out.

White caps through aspen leaves, natural heaves
parading a different form of life, one which

consumes decomposition. Litter. Ingesting litter.
Ugly, with slimy backs, or either speckled with

ants sucking their yellow combed undersides, ants
owning what no one else would own. And with

day break, they be knocked back down into the
forest floor, returning to litter with a final poof

of airborne spores for tonight's hurray of breezes
and condensation. There is life in the nighttime,

an ugly life of trolls and consumption and sucking
off the deadness of things where no thank you is

necessary, every regard is already claimed. Life
is symbiotic, and those naked and without form,

those without knowledge of their purpose, sucking
deadness if it be, are left to their thoughts, only

their thoughts as universal as they be, perhaps too
universal or either not universal enough, but

inadequate nevertheless. For death belongs to the
speedy, and by death, life, one night to the next

with caps unfolding in damp curiosity. And come
the ants, recognizing goodness among dead life,

growing on top of itself in clusters of fascination
brown or either speckled popping out of debris.

Unwelcome

October

This house is rare, its innards, all left as atoms
floating in somebody's meaning that I am not

a part of. Plastic tumbler in the sink and carpet
worn in a direction of travel, smell, garlic? I am

not a part of this creation, purple I call it, for
the once black drapes, dusty, behind the sofa,

plaid. What do I know? I stand in my sphere,
the ethnographer, white on the outside, and

eclectic like a first home not my own. I could
be comfortable, I could make it my own with

a paintbrush, because that is what I am doing,
painting judgment and value graffiti all over

the damn walls as if I had a right. I am not
welcome here, and this is my own regard to

protect some mention of life outside of my own.
I know this. This house, rare, and implies my

own dissatisfaction with my own, and I have
not even met the owner that I know so much

about like I know an author by their objects
and their neighborhood. By their voice, I know.

And purple, like a human heart, one of many
atoms in the body meant for every other atom

relying on every other. But I am no atom, not
here, I am just an ethnographer with a camera

for a mind snapping, snapping. Like a house,
white on the outside, with a driveway toward.

this body

October

Accounting for distractions bobbed off heads
and minds, vacant as the air above a lake, that

no purpose is solved without reconciliation of
some sort, sensed, first by the body waiting.

And taken somewhere bright and humid with
loud bangs and twangs, booms without interpretation,

just bangs. I cannot recollect such an instance,
I cannot recollect any form as dead in the brain

and not knowing why they walk and chatter
with cause and movement, celestial or either

just movement, without cause, rambling on sidewalks
foot over foot going someplace to forget with

the rest of me in tow. With extensions, metal
arms and laser eyes and hair of snake, serpent

hair sucking on wind, sometimes, and covered with
hat, sometimes, with response to places like only

here, where I do my forgetting all the way to
boredom or fascination or curiosity I cannot tell

since I was that child at some farm years ago
watching grain come of age for beer and other

things for drunks like crackers. Since then I could
not tell that drunk meant coming of age and

responsibility and labor and response to wicked
winters with wool, and response to summers, and

response to fall and spring, too. They require response
that cannot be questioned unless I want to be cold.

Worn

October

Worn like the weather and melting into my
soul which deserves no thought on a day that

a baby is being born for some satisfaction beside
sex. The truth is that there is a middle to things,

everything has its stone, I have one and so does
my neighbor I talk about but never invite to dinner

for reasons of sovereignty, for reasons of kingdom
and province, like the same reason as owning a

pet, for demonstration of a character outside of
my own which I have produced with every regard

to my own character, brown. Like autumn, brown
and bare, with every indication of life beneath my

feet but passed like a stranger acting like they know
me, and arm sticks, brown, trunks, brown, lifting

my head above never mind. Consolation is the
middle and I know it by its sympathy for my

bounded wit, framed as first grade fundamentals
balancing on two legs wishing for dodgeball and

lunch and little else nevertheless open to right and
wrong. But good and bad was suspended back then

when learning was everywhere, so they now tell
me, and if I only knew the important things like

patience and property that I do now I could have
made some difference that I am sure would appear

in my character today, because that is what the
past does, it reappears in the character of today.

Catalyst

October

Honesty is the solution to mental disfigurement,
this and removing oneself from an ugly place,

one of several I can think of. And the strong
return with aesthetics in mind, and prevention

below that, those do-gooders who believe that
everything is in reference to their own experience.

But I enjoy libraries like I enjoy conversations,
and the architects of each do a great service, this

being the bringing of thoughts to a patterned
agreement sustaining peace I am sure, that is

what I will say, I am sure. Because there is no
martial counter to the do-gooder other than 'no'

and you can only say that so many times and
still believe it. And if mental disfigurement by

whatever name could be stopped, I would just
believe it by reason, -rambling reason, implied

reason, demonstrative reason. I am easily convinced,
even moreso than yesterday, and if the walls

close in like they do, and if I cannot escape the
texture of the food, or people's jaws opening and

closing telling syllable after syllable of declared
reason without ever a handshake or a cup of holy

water coffee, well, I cannot speak for myself
then, I can only speak for something outside of

myself with a reference to my own experience
because that is all I really can be sure of.

over the soul

November

Beyond the imagination, that spirited domain
carrying the parcels of potency and desire, and

beyond cognitive thresholds, the favor of all
the water in the Atlantic, the tides of circumstance

and color and flags spinning in tornado whorls,
galactic. Etching canyons and riverbeds with

seeds and bloody fruit tasty like wine, sweet
like the memory of life itself, history and gone

as tomorrow is, gone with all the others lined up
like soldiers. To places sick with humanity stacked

upon itself and feeding itself, only itself, because
there is nobody else to care for, and if incest had

a cause, this be it, by the simple twist that this
which exists on this world must entertain itself

and recreate itself in its own image, the same one
of two thousand or either six thousand years,

and the same image framed like a masculine house
with corners all around. I was born for this world

like a bird with hollow bones and steel eyes picking
the pieces of savagery out of already dead meat,

because this is how life is lived, and because this
is the substance of living by one's memories that

are not one's own. Elegant, such a purpose with
social consideration that allows for a frame, a box

around oneself because if I must have a box around
my own at least let me select this foundation here.

amber leaf

November

Fallen lastly leaving only bones above now
ready for collecting snow in lines like telephone

wires branching outward to the sun retreating
south like last year. But the snow is not yet here

and though the green is gone, replaced by seasonal
amber now attractive but without real purpose

like shade or insect food, but no need for such
things because everything is in a new place now,

a woodshed, a watershed, a pile of decomposing
ecological waste. By the minute leaves are raked

out of conservancy because beauty says this is
what should be done, everything unintentional

must be gone including thoughts and lawns scattered
with doubt by winds and gravity and the sense

that I need control each of the twelve months, each
in their own manner. There is a way things should

look, kept or either sloppy and strewn, and the
smallests too have identities we overlook because

they most certainly cannot be controlled, immutable
atoms reflecting the time of year, presently vacant

as a winter canopy flattered over the ground,
whistling and good for kicking into jump piles

with hooded sweatshirts and sleeves pulled over
fingertips red with exposure but not quite cold

yet as the noon sun sparkles in twilight tease
twinkling at me if I look right at it. I can do this.

last bats

November

Away with winterization, the thoughts of batting cages, a new elective must be pursued, something

indoors and sheltered from the steady stream of seasonal continuity. There is a time for such things,

just watch foot traffic or advertisements, or look out the window, things change, they rotate with the world,

interests, like a banner interests reflect what time it is. And by last year, I am steady as a clock knowing

just when to put the bat into the closet along with game seven now pulling out the walking scarf, striped

red and white with the chocolate stain, but I dare not wash wool. I was born in the winter and I feel it my

calling to anticipate it come November with all of its aspects except real snow, everything is practice this

time of year, one sort or another, that readiness be entertained in the interest of the real thing waiting

behind a brick, ugly and waiting. And come springtime, I will have another reason for anticipating, then another,

and such a mind is one which speeds up life to the future, always one ordered step in front of where I am

in front of the closet saying my farewells to a metaphor of participation for another metaphor, one for another,

fair trade bound in utility if nothing else. Good bye. Recognizing that something is spent, something has lost

its purpose, is as good as recognizing oneself amid new forces black, but I know black in some way then.

errant dreams

November

Thought flashing desire then despair, want, in
succession, rapid as flickering fire movie without

plot or character, without set they come, that the
whole of me is torn open to interpretation what

on earth is it that wakes me at three o'clock sharp
long before intentions are coffeed. And so water

and full cigarette on the half moon lawn wondering
wondering wow. It is good to dream, that the

intellect still churns in sleep, and the thoughts
borrowed from my well of everyexperience, well

that they come at all, and signature restlessness
favors a curious day stranded in some far away

pit with barstools and lice and whores and money
all for the taking. But I am awake and function

properly with moral authority and reason, just
paralyzed, that is all, to see morbid outlines turn

into pretty women or trolls, I will them into form
I otherwise would only respect as family or tour

guide or something other than what I make of them
this time around, this night forcing me to wake up

tall if I wanted, if I wanted, to dance or sing in front
of people throwing stones and bones suggesting

something callous or immediately on some mark
of honesty that I remember now. There is meaning

in trees with snake branches and edible bugs walking
in cursive lines spelling something that is a part of me.

spellbound

November

Catch this world on intuition, in a big car house
with mahogany bookshelves sheltering all of

the important words like love and hate and man
and woman and war and peace opposite, that

if I know one I can know the other. Everything
has its opposition, this is how the social universe

operates, this is how kings are defined, by language
from tongues slit open slithering calling anything

else anything besides my preference, gentleman
to you bastard man. What I know is this: that

intuition is measured by experience which is
measured by identity, psychothis, psychothat,

psychosong, we think alike and are therefore
opposite, we must know each is an opposite

if we can know anything the likes of creation
myths or bird migrations or hunting. And if wealth

is measured by language and if wealth is the
product of social intercourse, I could say I am

a developing nation with a rich oral tradition,
eating canned soup for dinner because history is

history as far as wealth is concerned, and poetry
is poetry, if it is said twice. Poetry is poetry,

profound, puke into the ashtray and feel language
in the gut spilling out confessions and wealth

and intuition, for that meal was fit for a king
with a library with shelves needing ladders that roll.

the man who spoke in objects

November

This dialect reflects red murals and automobiles
parked with wheels pointed in and a fat bearded

man in leisure suit pulling out brown sunflowers
in the community garden, thirty-five dollars a month,

with hat. This dialect reflects enemies ugly by nature
caring little for wasting time with strangers, on way

to meetings and interviews and coffees with creams
six at a time, two dollars. This dialect reflects

waterfalls with rainbows that last the whole daytime,
invigorating naked bodies and the reason for the

national park with people in brown looking like UPS
drivers delivering aesthetics and folklore, with

patches. This dialect reflects isolation. I think
in words, and by such a consideration I am socially

contained, because words are for parties and
neighbors and being just exclusive enough, they

are not for me alone with my thoughts at the sides
of my eyeballs just before I fall asleep, or for

inventing and manipulating things like engines.
This dialect reflects movies and models with

breasts just large enough, matinees with fifteen
minute previews and fold down seats, it is the

experience as it ever was, what I have come to
expect from a box of junior mints sticking to my

fingers, three dollars, and forget about seeing it
all like it was intended, that will never happen.

passage

November

Broken windows on streets reflecting destruction
in the spirit of tribal ritual, fathering in new

generations of omnipotence, that earth and street
be recreated in the latest generation, whining

with masks on and paint and beer made here,
the finest since 1901. I will inherit this, this bucket

filled with pity and purity and all things not easy
like I was told they will be, I will inherit this, and

when I do I will change the youth with more schools
and habits like social engineering for the poor

because there is a reason there are poor, there will
always be a reason that I will inherit. And the

muscles of conformity will find a new resident
Jesus token to crucify in the spirit of some emerging

ideal threatening real conformity, this to jobs with
weekends off and bakeries with marble rye and every

other hard working profession requiring a bachelor's
degree because that is the fence, the divide between

respect for some educational electivity and the none
hammering nails with some other kind of fence

borrowing levels of elderhood and apprenticeship.
And after destruction we return to the arms of

parents, now old playing cards with old friends,
smiling because they did the same thing, returned

to their parents for advice just for the sake of advice,
pulling up a chair to the card table for the lost time.

divinity

November

Religious experience is summoned in spite of
science and order and knowledge because it

is not these things, it stands apart unexplained
leaving notions of insufficiency or either faith

in something larger than a social construct and
soundbyte humor calling itself God of media

and circulation. There is no need for voting and
there is no need for public office and there is no

need for money letting us believe that the divine
is contained like a lake behind a dam stocked

with striped bass for water skiers and electricity
and letting us believe that the elements of this

world are prepared for, there is nothing we have
not seen and life would go on in spite of earth

and in spite of war. Now, just crowd around the
campfire of citydom and leave the thinking to

those assigned the task, it is not my office, not
this time, and the peek at the clouds crossing

between the skyscrapers, they may say different,
that something else does exist apart from humanity's

current form huddled in square buildings getting
out from time to time to cut open apples with peanut

butter at chessparks bumping into old friends and
people that mattered by coincidence, that is it,

coincidence that we have shared some experience
that is not socially contained because it cannot be.

educational research

November

What I know is this, nature is without me, fire
and ice, mountains and meadows sloppy with

flowers months ago, bending down in death
I know because I imagine. I have been there and

I assume that every forest is the same, every
desert and storm, and every species programmed

for some life warranted by one environment, and
if I be one of those species, then I be, waddling

and respirating and doing something scientific
to somebody larger than I. Nature is without me,

this I know and walk carefully to not disturb
with hands open and swinging with my arms

rubbing khakis stupid smile alone as I remember
drifting. But there is purpose, there can only be

this, that a day is so long exactly, and a season,
I was made for this place, I am a species drumming

character, blowing character against the wind, I
am not contained, even if you know my brother,

and even if you know my past, and my genetics
and my parents and my first job, and even if you

know the park I played in as a child, you cannot
know me unless you release me, that I be allowed

to defend myself, only by this will you know what
I protect and you will know where I go to lay and you

will know that nature is without me, here it is civilized
and structured and you are but a careful stranger.

evidence

November

I am little as history, some story titled with song
at the end, gravesong, snakesong, earthsong, and

appropriate like food in new company in wooden
bowls and paper goblets, because things should

be named, representations that do not pass on
like life does. There are marks meant for remembering,

poles with ribbons and statues polished reflecting
some act of power or indulgence or intelligence,

or some ideal, that a river be named constance and
its title defended because what it means is a lesson

for those who live on its catfish but moreso live on
its reliability. History is a human composition

but who can care with what has no effect, today
is not always marked by victims, and by the open

send regards to the future lonely because there is
nothing left to mark, so they forget the past that

the present be renamed like I did with yesterday.
What legacy? I was only born yesterday with a

birthmark and scar on my ankle, dark hair receding
since noon, and hungry like somebody in the middle

of their life, I know meanings, I interpret and I act
in reference, and this be a legacy, there was some

cause at some time. Now little and forgotten but
rename I will in modernity, this, that a cause cannot

be entirely forgotten, only its name and its statue,
but real meaning returns without regard to legacy.

Grace

November

Tired and hungry I can tell by your eyes bent down
overcast, something you cling to has emptied your

devotion to this world. A woman should not be in
your position, cast like a stone sitting on doorsteps

smart looking to the next soup of the day or either
the next one way conversation listening listening

for that sympathetic word matching meaning to
mine. I am not alone, I have a friend in this weather,

a sister, and I can tell by your cheeks that you know
more than I, simply, one of those pretenders mocking

hardship that those truly hardened find their path
like some person of the cloth, one of them anchored

to justice and community and anchored to the notion
of being the most committed on the street. But then

commitment comes in many forms, self imposed
and other, and what is it that brought you here?

Your own enlittlement or a social push, because it
makes every difference to someone like me, you see,

one way suggests I offer pocket change and a hello
and the other? It suggests a defense tugging the

corners of my wool coat tight and raising the shoulders
around my ears as if it were as cold as I pretended.

I am no stranger, everything I do is for your own good
like your actions are my lesson, we are of the same

order, the same parents, and this experience is our
regard to their philosophy of generosity and family.

seventy-eight degree house

November

Chilled inside my bones this day, by the incessant rains and mindless November chatter that all

that remains of my soul is some desire for sweatshirt, wool socks, and quilt with eyes half open baking

in front of the fireplace with thermostat at seventy-eight degrees. At least until I wake up in hot sweats

kicking off clothing and dumb worries with satisfied grin stepping me outside of myself and labor and

duty and spiteful news of suicide bombers and school reform and car wrecks and space dogs and

other blow-your-mindisms. I engaged with the world today, and so I lasted four temperate hours

mixed with solutions and tables and penmanships that the rain of thought, this day sleet, find no

hold in me, I was glass separating social substance from private needs weary. Tropical heat is good

for perspective, for retreat, it is good for removing oneself from the streams of nonconcludables circling

and spattering circles. This home, retreat it be, and this thermostat, a perscription like hot wine and

book with focus outside of the day, that I return in hours, only hours, reddened by artificial thoughts.

I am protected in retreat, and by such security, by the recognition of primary needs, I can tend to them,

and let the rain come down, and circle, and let the obligations circle as they do damp with demand.

I will go down

November

Naked I will be, wandering hallways and libraries
and institutions separated amongst themselves for

reasons of order, west wing, fifth floor, that a
walking line etched in a marble floor connect the

areas drifting up to the clouds without realizing
that it has set itself sailing in some ideology

disconnected from me, at least I know this, at
least I know this, this fact. We are at odds, and so

it be that I have no ideology of my own apart from
this naked torso giggling at some assemblage of

civil disobedience, what civil though, and there
will be no army from me, perhaps an infantry of

reason launched to those clouds, or a cannon of
inconsistence, or a canon. But let me finish and

I will explain the sense in all this linedrawing and
pigtrack business wandering from cell to cell, from

atom to atom, -the thing about it is, though, that
I cannot connect physically with the ideals above

my head, there is no elevator, and even if there
were, there would be nothing to cross if I ever

returned. And there my reason dissolves, and
that is why I must be naked, that the elements at

least entertain my reason, it is reason, I am certain,
this institution of my own attempting some grand

unification by footsteps trying to pull down clouds
of ideology with only a regard to my appearance.

boxes full of air

November

Stone boxes filled with air, stacked in squares
upward and next to others consuming warehouses

in dated patterns, fifteenth century, sixteenth...,
to the twenty-first century, one for every day,

nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, filling cubes in some
form of remembrance. And if a box represent an

epoch, here it is, related to every other, and if a
warehouse represent time and substance, here it

is, mapped for cataloguers with forklifts breathing
stuff meant for tombs as if it had no meaning

between the hours of nine and five, because this
is the time for shutting down such obscure notions.

Pick up where you left off, this be the only continuity
for laborers, even those handling treasures of the

troposphere day by day, to what ends I say?
The past must be marked for reference, for access

with the widest degree of interpretation, without
offense and without favor, but one day I will sneak

into that warehouse and open that box of Wednesday,
May 30, 1431 and breathe the air of Joan of Arc's

last breath, and as an entree, February 15, 1564, the
day Galileo was born. There are a thousand boxes

I would like to breathe, and when I am done I will
replace the cover as if no one had ever been there,

inhaling experience, or either I might leave the top
off of a very good day that it reinforce the present.

spitting on ants

November

The game is this, spitting on ants, a far more
civil approach to childhood hunting than the

magnifying glass, and it is a fine complement
to cigarette smoking, sitting on seven eleven

stoops with microwaved chimichanga and
slushy in hand, blue spit, or either red, pick

your poison. Or if copenhagen be your fancy,
dark and grainy be your weapon, loose and

easy off the tongue, good for aiming, and watch
those little devils swim and wobble, and yes,

it is more civil than the magnifying glass, and
I suppose it only offers the lesser consideration

of torture rather than death and whether ants
have souls or not. Do ants have souls? I say

yes, they are just not aware of them. We are
all called to offices of living and the world needs

ants. Lucky I am to be aware of my soul and
lucky I am to be the first to think of spitting

on ants rather than burning them, a humanitarian
I am, with burrito in hand. And if there be a

greater soul than I wondering if I have a soul
I can only hope they have some degree of respect

for my office and my activities running in uneven
lines across pavement, carrying sticks and other

dead critters to holes in the ground, dodging
blue saliva bombs wondering if it is I with a soul.

walls

November

If walls could contain life there would be no
doors. Only fantastic parcels of experience

exist in this hollow shape, framing like a portrait
the dailies and the afterlives beyond adventure.

Here is meant for rest and honor, reconciliation
by the trophies, the books, the words and warrants

drawn in from the great elsewhere, outside. This
place is not meant for exploitation or inflammation,

only the relevant past is censored into some
contained shape chewable and allowing for

indulgence, that if there be a moral it is parted
from application, like the difference between a

religious person and one who studies religion, this
place is a house of study, and if this be a religion

then it be, a seminary filled with experience and
lessons lingering for the mind, propped on shelves

and suspended by wires, plugged in. I was here,
the walls will tell you so, them straight silent

barriers of protection and discretion, what discretion?
I have license in solitude, or be it freedom I cannot

decide, to do and to entertain consequence and
romance, all of the separated parts of humanity

that now appear as a force fathering other forces
like one new idea sucking in all of the other ideas

because it is so comprehensive, that nothing be
left alone within these walls filled with lesser forces.

no walls here

November

And no walls here, this factory of creation, this
house of poetry and mind recreation, the slabs

covered in paint have no providence over the
clouds I mention, the canyons and bowls, their

expression and temptation, their representation
resting one step beyond my imagination. I have

spent days in the forest, the canopy of my thoughts
listening to experience slathered in mud like a

native, for transcendence, I am aware, or either
constance like a plum perfectly soft, and this

room has no walls, only a bed and a desk in some
field of poppies red and orange, this time with

a solar eclipse as I waste into my delinquency.
Save the day for interesting things like turtles

and manatees and dinosaur bones, and continental
drift, -and eclipse? What is this thing turning me

inward like a cat, a pet cat, feminine as any
creature I know bounding off of art in practice

attacks, for something profound I am sure, any
defense is profound if it is genuine. War is

profound. That boundaries quarrel over the
boundless and profane, the right to use particular

words and sentences, the liberty to use particular
words and sentences. There is no paint here, no

plaster, no foundation, and the light is natural
like noon. Things grow here in the daytime.

things that hold things

November

Libraries hold books and museums hold objects
and universities hold professors and congress

holds meetings and houses hold families and
stores hold merchandise. Ideas all, for time and

destinies and futures bounding off of one another
making something larger, and still I be, wrapped

in a blanket, confounded, perplexed by the enormity
of being in a restless world that, itself, holds such

holders of substance, all contained in states of
chaos, native, that when laid out there is some

principle like goodness puzzling and nuzzling up
against each. And what do I contain? Am I a

vessel for reference and order? Yes, but I am not
public, I do not contaminate my own intuition with

deliberation, the seeds of lakes and stars are as
they appear, cold and hungry, and dim, as they

were constructed for faculties I have not formed
an opinion of yet and may never. Better that way,

there are some catalogues that exist for input only,
they save themselves and may never be opened

to criticism, they cannot because they are incomplete
as this lifetime marked by social security number

if nothing more besides a birthdate and deathdate,
aha! A larger catalogue of nations, leatherbound

at someone's foot scribbling to keep up with changes
forgetting that only few things hold entirely still.

starlight, no moon

November

Points contradicting people, their inclination to believe in only the daytime whizzes. But nighttime

exists, by rooftop and porch here autumn cold shaking like the last leaf forgetting to change color

trembling by Canadian winds strong in character affecting. I am many things, cold and separated,

distant as tomorrow, ever tomorrow, even when it arrives in spring all at once green and melting

from the gutters. Two hundred and fifty thousand ideas, there must be, scattered across visible

infinity, I am still framed by my senses, no longer weary because the air is so fresh heading into

the long season in bundles of down and wool and leather. Contradicted. I was wrong to assume

a social identity before I knew what the order required, I was wrong to submit when I knew that

I was previously obligated, obliged to satisfy something that I believed was larger, I was wrong to wear

a coat to dampen my senses Canadian red. All the while lucky I think to have been a part of it

in some fantastic way I cannot forget, even if I am the one to melt into the sky burning in blackness

and curved around me this time, selfish, selfist. Nighttime does exist for reasons only I know,

qualifying me as something other than a contradiction, qualifying me as something other than a contradiction.

orphan wind

November

I spin in the orphan wind like a blade on a string, debating purpose, calling, as if I had

a choice to be other than what I am. And if I could be elsewhere I would, away from needful

things, because I can have no affect, not one that will endure beyond my presence. And no,

I am not satisfied with this, but defeat is loud as the machines of nature laughing out instructions,

bellowing purpose, I am an automaton, there is no place for independent thought in this, this

house. Strings prevent me. And escape? What is this? To leave the place which feeds me, to

walk away from the winds which are something other than my enemy in any other season? My

conscience is my goat, because there is a larger picture, a larger consideration which beats me

into submission, there is always something larger that I can fall back on and not worry about

tests or advancement or groceries, those things waiting in the wind, time. And I grow to love

this which hates me, it is the only way to cast off uncertainty and doubt, that in some way

I am satisfied. Or either pass it on knowing the future is uncertain and some things are not

worth engaging, that submission comes in many forms, and a friend is a title reserved for such.

the lessons of water

November

Tributaries like fractal confluence rolling together
bringing earth and sediment from east and west

southward slowing for still waters, depositing,
and continuing quickly down steep grades. But

time has no meaning, not really, not with imminent
progress, forward is all I can say, like life and its

own sediment of experience. The lessons of water
are many, and to each their own metaphor, but

undeniable its force now contained in the faucets
of modernity, dammed in the interest of civic

protection and harness, it is an animal that works
for me. A highway and the substance of wandering

away anywhere on wooden floating things of the
mind with cane pole in hand and pipe blowing

clouds. It will freeze over soon looking dead
and white and still but this is when the metaphors

come to life, that in rest the seasons are recollected
and catalogued because the cycle will return in

some form. And I will be there, one year older,
adapting metaphors for tavern talk and bait shop

bander come the first melt declaring open season.
And much can happen in a year, in a season away

from water people get old and experience turns
into itself, but the lessons are not forgotten, especially

those from childhood yesterday, newly remembered
or newly learned it makes no difference how I know.

staring at November

November

The air is reborn in November, filled with oxygen
and organization emptying into my lungs. I consume

November, inevitably. With the roads clear and the
spectacles of nature in retreat, my list for living is

easy and I turn to the foundations of things, the
order and health of lifestyle, preparation for nasty

days to come. Like leaves. Like the tools of winter
ready. Like patience, I am now ready for patience

when it comes any day now. And with the meantimes,
reading with book open on my chest and eyes closed

walking solid dirt paths littered with the spirit of
trees in my sleep. And I am not alone with my

thoughts, there are others cleaning garages and
winterizing winterizing, like I do with my thoughts,

winterize, and count down things: days till official
winter, days till Christmas, days till mid-February

pseudo-springtime, days till spring, hours till sunset
this day compared to the next and the next. It is

cozy, winterizing, in flannel and wool with leather
boots, with mind focused on completion, declared

ends followed by coffee and soup by the chattering
screen door now with window installed without

conversation and without mention. There can be
no mention of preparation because time has not

yet certified my efforts. But I anticipate something
and I stare at it blindly whatever force it becomes.

some philosophy

November

I am distilled by progress, the lesser parts of me
are turned around facing outward, learning at

new solutions to old riddles. Learning at something
as if it were a weapon, this learning, that I be

newly composed by pointing my back at what I
was. A person can be understood by recognizing

what they protect, and if this be so, what is it that
I protect? Family? My home? Friendships. Ideas.

And with some honest soul-searching I can define
myself, I can complete myself with intuition assigned

to purpose, that in knowing myself I can assume
the higher identity of my own progress. Forget the

elsewheres, experience is a matter of fact, but it
cannot happen without me, this I know. And if

progress be a philosophy then it is contained by
the word, by everything I understand of the word

'philosophy.' No, there must be something greater
to progress, personal or other, something which

transcends pointing inward or outward, and
something which transcends defense, some things,

even the most valuable, can be left to their own
protection. Not everything, but some things can

be responsible for themselves, I can be responsible
for myself. And back to square one I go, defending

everything I am composed of, but in a new fashion
with progress as liberty rather than another word.

passing by in theory *November*
Walk without ends, continue in force with the
surface of solutions and open spirit underfeet.

Without trail and without direction, empty
into nature, that reason supporting reasons.

Invigorating, connections, release with the
air and exposure and the little lessons of slug

tracks and squirrels burying things and collecting
ribbons and cotton, human things as if they

belonged. Without ends, circles marrying wind
and water and idea, the substance of change,

that looking out is easy in such an environment
that says it is ok to look inward. Perhaps these

be the ends, balance, and the disregard for
this which cannot be solved, because there are

such things in this world away from here. Foot
over foot, purpose, away, with nowhere to be

but the place in front of me, and the next,
to the bony trees and to the rocks, the marbles

of creation, looking on. Squirrels looking on
at something foreign. This animal is not of this

place, with headdress and wild legs upright
counting things, looking ahead thinking of

something important. Passing by in theory,
always in theory welcoming, inciting my engagement

for which I have not the strength to expel it
completely or the curiosity to attend to it rightly.

4:30 am fog

November

Clouds suspended at the level of my eyes,
blue gray, lamplit in halos getting smaller.

Wet ground without rain, condensation so
it appears, shiny as ice on grass and street,

alone. I am alone. Suspended in a quiet full
of dripping echoes from rooftops and skeleton

limbs amazingly visible, outlined as shadows
as wizards as animated treecreatures, a forest

of treecreatures in a fog ocean. It is too perfect.
Rarely do I see such weather, it is weather

and not just some fairy room I woke up in, it
is a gentle force of creation, a lullaby drifting

by, passing regards, thinking regards, wondering
if civilization has been sucked away or I am

being enveloped by nuclear fallout from some
disturbed source. No. Just weather. Sticky

to concentrate at, if anything punctuating my
solitude, alone but not lonely, the same all around

hum out loud drifting without wind changing
shape that a hole open and close like smoke

clean and healthy. A science, by which it arrived
I am sure, but its experience is anything but,

I would not want to reduce this to science, some
phenomena caused by temperature and condition,

better to know it for what it is, a cloud that I am
in the center of, content and moving arms about.

seniority

November

I hold the chair among peers, the elder in this
environment of productivity and ends with

mechanical pencil in hand, desk straight, yes,
I have gone corporate. Such promise in trainees

nowadays, ironic that most of them enter older
than I am, this fifth-year student of the company

wearing red sometimes with wool driving cap
on weekends that no one knows of but makes

me feel like someone scholastic and learned.
I am the first to vote, the one to make coffee,

the one who defers and manages conversation,
the one qualified to freely discuss the boss,

because she trusts me. And management? No
such thing for me, I tried it one long lifetime of

a summer, stretched among some governing
flow chart making order out of responsibility.

I prefer being the top among bottom dwellers
with a sense for the large picture, you know, the

one related to budgets, because there is purpose
in fiscalism, or even that larger picture, this being

a valued station within society, now this is job
security, meeting ends and deadlines and all,

and I realize it would go on without my intuition
and wingbuilding, my ethics. My ethics? Those

ideals and rules, in the broadest possible sense,
would continue in some form without seniority.

learning curve

November

People reach confusion before they recognize the reason of this place. It is a matter of the human

condition that one establishes a defense, a cloud of alternatives, a secure place, before engaging.

And the breadth of the imagination in the early stages of learning becomes the well of experience,

that there be an answer for every every in time. That the undefined early days be returned to as

some blank stare for a neophyte who just may have some reasonable alternative to this way of living.

The blank stare is the readiness for new intuition and this can be learned as any profession, but

interest undermines false blank slatism, interest cannot be governed as action can, caring cannot

be manufactured, only the curiosities and spectacles can draw one from an original position to one

of interest consistent with the remainders of their experience. And if we learned ones call that

original position confused or undefined, perhaps it be we that need be drawn out, arrogant, we

idolists agreeing amongst ourselves in some exclusive path disregarding this which has occurred before

our assessment meeting, the one sizing you and your age and your speech patterns in some relation

to mine which has been here long enough to know when I need to breathe and begin asking questions.

cannot stop the game

November

The day believes in many things, and those
atoms calling on progress and supporting

advancement in adolescence are not turned
around in maturity. And the remains be left

to white ideals, traces of experience never
accessed because logic had its charter, the

one proving and justifying itself at the expense
of possibilities. Outside, the day is, not a

part of this charade turning tricks and favors,
coffee for tea for poison, for wicked trends

declaring affiliation, the one I am on top of,
that is why I deny the day, because it is the

ball all to reasonable and if those rules were
the apex of the human condition, how small

we would be. Sheltered in trust, that a certain
cause would elicit a certain reaction, trust,

that in knowing the human condition of one
would be knowing the condition of all, suspending

the spirit of love and spontaneity, and I cannot
have this, this social collapse. And the day

marked only in efficiency, it is still a day, but
one indiscernible from any other, and I wish

to remember. By the trades, by that other human
condition, folly, by the spirit of those laws

advancing the notion of a day as imaginable
and recollectible, I wish to remember that notion.

the limits of poetry

November

The social poet, the natural poet, the philosopher
poet, the poet with ends in mind, lessons, the

poet observing without value, the camera poet,
I have eyes and intuition I am drawn to subjects.

The stars in the womb of the universe, those eggs,
with some life different than mine I imagine, by

the day I imagine, and sometimes late into the
night. But still I sleep, with the bears and owls

and sailboats and friends turning to black, the
conversations and politics and sex put away

with the night, shelved. The poet who interprets
another's experience, the art poet, the science poet,

the poet who makes a career out of rhyming, out
of stunning people, out of pointing to little and

big things, not realizing they point to themselves
in some song of words. They are a reflection, I

am a reflection, a poem is no reflection, it is the
subject and I am the naked object stretching on

the floor in the afternoon, I represent the words,
the boundless ones and the atoms. Arriving freely,

volunteering like the imagination, the poet for a
woman, the animal poet, the disgusted poet who,

remarkably, has no trouble finding an audience,
the child poet eating graham crackers and filling

pages with crayon just now realizing that not every
poem belongs on the fridge framed by magnets.

borderline

November

The threshold of sanity is recognized as quantifiable
by heads of this and that, by governors and

diplomats and teachers, moral authorities with
esteem, as well as the public with an ear to social

interpretation, that cause be made by some
influence related to God or other, in any case

outside the clap of these hands. That a mile be
given to the disheartened and feeble and talkative,

a mile that be enough to enter a program of
personal regard of humanity, defense of oneself

if nothing more, one anxious mile on a stage for
the demonstration of peaceful intent and social

worth. A qualitative mile holding out a hand
among wicked numbers and diagrams and names,

oh the names, that something be off, indeed,
something abstract turning heads in Denny's and

theaters. But interpretations change, that a new
name give life, because people are what they are

called, hurtful and protective and other, people,
in defense of some threshold of certainty where

a collective domain exists, and a tethered domain
of individualism, them artists with leashes and

cowboys and dragons sucking on the thoughts
of invention now in brick apartments set apart

from universities, with food and proper treatment
they may live to be eighty old years old, governed.

double feature matinee

November

Junior mints for the first, popcorn for the second,
with comeback cup filled with somewhat fizzy

cola and too much ice, perfect. Seat middle of
the row, halfway back, propping up knees on the

seat in front of me, finishing the junior mints before
the coming attractions, those demonstrating the

latest computer wizardry and funniness outside
of what I usually think is funny. Will the movie

be as enlightened as the preview? And all the
lights go dark, volume up, and with a flash sucking

me and my brain into imagination, that place, I
go willingly into fantasy for two hours of ups and

downs and plots and resolutions, I would never
have figured. With bathroom break, leaving the

sweater on the seat, refill and popcorn, and once
again volume, flash this time maddening to yet

another place directed and differently fantastic,
those artists, and the first is already forgotten

until later, put away for a report. Now sailing,
now flying, now walking, now kissing, oh what

I would have missed, the troubles perfectly timed
to end at the one hour fifty mark, and popcorn,

unlike the junior mints it can last a whole show
on the lap crunch crunch. End. And up with

the seat, leaving trash behind, filing out into bright
light real with villains I do not think twice about.

restoration

November

Objects require attention, as do relationships
like old stained glass windows representing

God and stories and myth, two hundred year
old pane loosening contents. Disrepair that

interferes with the message of love and transcendence
and handshakes, pity it is, that something so

beautiful be clouded by dusty modernity
imprinting itself on educational vessels and

everything that kept us together. I am not the
keeper I thought I was for this object no longer

represents as it once had with fire and lightning
and rivers and majesty, it is just an object, a

toy with some historical regard, an object of
art fascinating only by its age. But I have a

place for it nevertheless, the southeast corner,
a gentle part of the room for retirement and

where I go to think, because I know in my age
I can still think, of 1803, of life and liberty, of

prosperity and the real objects of imagination
and trust, cleaning them off in front of a

lightbulb, seeing through them, turning them,
and stacking them one on top of another in

a design reflecting humanity, that it was before
now and it is again, reframed in some hardwood

and lead, secure as our friendship, only as secure
as our friendship resting in some southeast corner.

swimming through the day *November*
Responsibility is the water, some days just over
my head on tiptoes, green like a pond or either

crystal showing spring sediment all the way
through, clean and bordered with watercress

watching aquatic insects and papertrails and
strangers swimming by not realizing they are

beneath some surface. The world is this, wet
and sustaining with demands and tides, action

and defense, more complex and reliant on me
waking in alerts, stepping among algae and

pushing it gently behind that I find a stone
unaffected by the currents and crawl beneath

it. I cannot live beneath the water indefinitely,
I have seen free will and conversation and politics

unaffected by social floods, islands they be, but
then not all were meant for evolution, and insight

into the knowledge of ease and efficiency does
not qualify one as a mammal any more than being

self aware qualifies one as human. There is something
greater in responsibility that defies an environment

and the meaning of self, this learning, indeed, and
air is for cowards. The sun still sets underwater

and there are treasures underwater, life is natural
underwater, at least since I recognized there is no

alternative to responsibility lest I lose my mind altogether
and by doing so devote myself to some other life.

some piece of divine

November

Worried that the tiles of space are only separate,
that there is no whole greater than my present

composition, universal within its own limits and
content and free as necessary knowing segments

are contained. I have been divided in the natural
course of living, by myself out of necessity, in the

interest of social protection, and were there no
end to my fallible parts I would list them all as

negotiables, and die. Because all is not one, only
the hearty sustain the essence of character riding

an avalanche to self awareness, and burden has
become such that parts are shed, I am no longer

the adolescent and no longer the caretaker, those
have passed, I am no longer free in the sense of

freedom I first conceived. Day breaks on any
form justifying my presence, and the words be

cries, nothing more, my memory is the same, true,
I am not the adolescent, I am that and this, some

range of continuity understanding the marriage
of social composition. Parts, indeed, satisfying

a current condition, a current exercise in learning
calling out attitudes and emotions because they

all cannot go recklessly and dusty drunk with
rusty weapons, not into nature where bears live

and not into tornadoes or desert storms. There
is a piece of me which survives the rest again.

advent

November

Becoming once again, risen from the leaves burning
November, this air, this spectacle, clouds and

storm windows and days turning to night at four
in the afternoon gray but not miserable, just gray.

Winter, first invisible with a presence belittling
animals and patience, step aside, those, and step

aside weakness I will protect you huddled around
security and quilts and names. I give everything a

name, everything in remission anyway, like light
and faith, gone with the birds, outside of me

knowing they will return as they do every year
with the melt at first anxious. But melt? No such

thing waiting on recession before the inevitable
actual, and no such thing as the soul, that molecule

of character and certainty I pass along freely to
family and mentors spending and spinning long

evenings into recreation like game show hosts
qualifying recreation. Come the first frost and

come the snow and biting cold and bright winter
light, I will be gone then, into psychological hibernation,

fat now with thoughts and prepared for mental
slumber, I will be hungry come spring, for color and

outdoor recreation. Just beginning this time around
and I know what to expect, I know what is necessary

because of history written into me, and tradition
and some sense for nature, it has been written into me.

late night traffic

November

Speeding by in intervals, sleepy, heading for
bed with radio off leaning forward with both

hands on the wheel. It was a fine day, typical
with many errands accomplished, enough for

two days, tomorrow at rest, tomorrow. Overcast
night and streetlights in rows all the way home

leading me there like a path that has been walked
before. I live on the west end of town, a new

community with its own shops that close at six,
now dark, a dentist, a grocer, coffee, gas, videos,

enough to satisfy a definition of community, a
school. Enough to satisfy a dimming imagination

late at night when the urges quarrel between hot
apple cider and hot chocolate or neither, just their

thought associated with rest and ease. I will make
something of my time, a poem of transportation

and a tired wandering mind not yet cleared of
duty and obligation. Just going the speed limit,

too thoughtful to go any other speed, I am transparent
as the law, but then no one is speeding, this late

night cast of drivers is a trickle of lights, red in front
of me and white behind, at intervals and stanzas,

metres traveling the same ground over and over
again. There is a message in routine travel I am

sure, there is a message in everything, but I am
just not inclined to answer that question tonight.

We cannot keep you forever *November*
Passing through, I can tell by the way you speak
with some affinity for other places and memories

shielding you from this place with its own
character and resolve naked as a candle unlit.

And be well amid the dragons and cloudcities
and people dressed in purple mocking other

conditions not quite ready for truth and honesty
like we are here, open and sheltered without

walls. It is true, virtue is not everywhere, and for
that matter, neither am I, everywhere, asking

questions in the hope of saving somewhere new,
questions I already know the answer to. I say

I am no globalist, but there are methods and
philosophies which are universal as matter and

life; everyone should agree on a calendar and the
need for three hearty meals, just like they do in

Alaska, and everyone should agree on a fair and
open market, just like they do in Alaska, with

a handshake and Tennessee whiskey and pizza.
Life comes from many directions, and it is no

bother to hear your affiliation, I am an ethnographer
you see, learning my own bias by every meeting,

and if salmon be better, ok, just ok, that is all the
emotion I can afford. But the sun rests here as

any place, of this I am confident, science has told
me, and Tennessee whiskey tastes good here too.

what is your experience?

November

Do you want to trade cigarettes and tell me your rationale for choosing the way you do? There is

an association in choice which defies health and the aesthetics of this place, there is an element

of consequence and learning which undermines existential reason. Something latent turns your

day like someone realizing they are an adult for the first time, the past has affect. Innocence is

lost to the circles of history, and if we can both give some regards to this notion, you will believe

my flattery and attention is genuine. Is there such a thing as change? Is philosophy a description

of some condition or is it a catalyst for change? My interpretation? Yes. There is change, I am not

the person I was, I am evidence of change. And philosophy? Yes. It is a description of some condition,

but the realization of a condition is cause to step outside of that condition, who will be contained?

Organic tobacco is my favorite, I like the idea of additive free tobacco, watching it burn and puffing

on it like a cigar, the smell, white smoke carrying across the room. There is so much to think about

in smoking a cigarette, and perhaps my questions are as loaded as my interpretations, with defined

ends, or either they are a front exposed to reason outside of my own, experience outside of my own.

I wear a badge

November

I see many things. A social push, a smile and a gift, security, the things that are meant for friendship

and those that are meant for expanding distance between two people, two groups both excluding

in the interest of pure ideals. And be there enough room in this world for two or more, perhaps, perhaps

two. That the skin of somebody mark an affiliation or that the geographic position of living, the method

of worship, an automobile, a wife, that these be the badge of interest in first association, perhaps, but

the badge of longevity is measured in secret, by the spoils of honesty and affection, by the return of

company and continuance. And this is the badge I prefer given a choice, the badge of familiarity and

contempt recognized and set aside for higher orders like intuition and song, even by strangers this order

is possible, strangers familiar with the nature of difference and the nature of social concern. But I

am guilty like color, I am known and transparent even by assumption of interest, by what regard do

I reflect something, and by what reflection am I proud, by what am I known? First and last. And is it pride

that sustains a disregard for other's regards, those beams of light deconstructing in some fashion guided

by the notion of eventual union eye to eye. We both stand eye to eye, and this a start if something else.

lost in translation

November

Experience dictates meaning and those closest to one another share a likeness in discovery,

interpretation penetrating personality, defining shared value. And those at opposite ends of the

earth, and those among different socioeconomic classes, and those nurtured in different environs

find similar lessons and similar values by alternative forces. People are unique in several regards, but

an expanded mention of truth finds unlikely friends apart from one's own. Translation, it be, that a

consequence of one sort in India be taught by an entirely different experience in Australia, and who

is the lesser? The one not dignifying separate means is the lesser. And lessons from this place, transferred

without ever understanding the separate dignity and language of the target is a lesson in assimilation and

slavery, it is a lesson of one's own that cannot sustain itself without reintroduction and reintroduction.

Because the lessons of one place cannot be denied, because culture cannot be denied, not in another's

sweeping poetry and not in another's historiography. Translation is more than words, more than an English

testament of something Greek, translation is found in the spirit of living and respect for something outside

of one's own like old men with lines on their faces and pregnant indigenous women with their hair in buns.

*computer chess**November*

I have never beaten the computer at chess. I
have tried a hundred times and I feel like I am

learning, but the truth is, I have a difficult time
calculating more than two moves in advance.

And the computer, that machine, it has an answer
for every pattern. By playing I can assume a

given response, I can anticipate what the computer
will do next, and you would think, by a natural

selection and deletion of my errors I would have
won by now. No chance. In fact, my games are

not even getting any longer. I wish I could sit down
with that programmer and take a lesson, I wish

I could watch someone, anyone, beat that machine.
It is the damndest thing, being outsmarted by

some processor and system of electrical veins.
But I cannot quit, not now, humanity is at stake,

bragging rights. But who would care in any case?
The story of some guy winning a computer chess

game at two in the morning? No, there is no friendly
audience, humanity would politely nod and return

to its museum, that is all. I have tried the queen
pawn opening, bringing out the knights, I have targeted

pawns, I have played defensively and offensively,
I have copied the computer, I have even utilized the

'go-back' command to redo moves, and still I fall to
some smart programmer not realizing his victory.

it has rained for three days straight *November*

It has rained for three spirited days, and it
continues to come down in spells of hard

rain, then light showers, then mist, overcasting
the sun, and on into the night, overcasting the

moon. With rain dripping from rooftops and
bare trees and me on my way for coffee, dripping

like I have just taken a shower in my wool coat,
then me on my way to see the dogs at the humane

society, dripping like a wet dog. Life continues
amid weather, it is a conversation piece, who

cannot complain and who cannot wish for
something other than this, this gift? And the

grass turns green again, and the sandals are
officially put away. And this is no time for

rainbows either, there is no spectacle in all of
this, just wonder at whether the winter will hold

the same precipitous regards, hurrying me to
appointments and whittling my errands to the

necessaries. But there is joy in this consecration,
in the lack of thunder and lightning, in the constance

and simplicity, the simplicity containing me
outright, and I must flatter that creator for keeping

me to my senses and duties, for keeping my head
down, listening. You can hear a lot in a three day

storm washing away grievances and inconsistencies
of character. You can hear a lot in a three day storm.

retirement

November

Alas! The fields are open! To the mind I say
since the body was given over to the days of

service. And recapture the drama of living and
intuition, the books that have long been on the

shelves as objects with names, and the projects
of ordering things. To effieience, that upon its

arrival the true retirement will become, seated in
leather and wrapped in sweatshirt of my alma

mater dizzy with the possibilities, so dizzy in
fact, a nap is in order, yes. And chuckle at the

commotion of duty, the buzz of construction and
schooling of society. I was never told it would be

this, this displacement, where the only hegemony
now is the void of responsibility outside of myself,

drawing everything outside of my soul, emptying
it onto the fold of senior activism, that final bastion

of self representation before being left truly alone
to die holding hands with someone anyone. And

what would I change? I would have been a fireman,
that is all. But it was good the way it was, it has

to be, for my rests depend upon the satisfaction of
excellence in some office, my calling was in the service

of people, and for that I am content. The glamour was
local, the rewards were local, and the work was as

secure as government was, and I cannot remember an
instance of intolerance, and by this I have no bitterness.

never having been born *November*
Never having been born I could not begin to
understand the complexities of this place, the

divisions and science of it, the meaning of art,
temptation. Nor the wind, how it blows from

northwest in the fall, the rainclouds building
to importance filling the sky with daylight darkness

and ebony, the sound of water on cement heavy
with metaphors. I could not begin to understand

friendship and contract, the spirit of giving, and,
more importantly, the spirit of receiving, gratitude,

never having been born. Success? How could I
know? The acquisition of wealth, possession and

empire and honor, struggles for something good,
good? What is this? And the roads to all the mighty

towns crossing farmlands and rivers, speeding by
country churches and animals and fenceless meadows

with tall grass; and reunions and picnics and family
travel. And pain. How could I know this, this

emotion? Along with all of the others: joy, love,
anger, and humanity itself, aging, learning, and

knowing the middle of something so intimately
that it be an extension of intention. No, I cannot

know humanity, I cannot know experience,
I cannot know these laws of nature governing

divinity, I cannot know divinity, and I cannot
know a home, a place, never having been born.

What place is this?

November

What place is this? With wheelchair and white
curtains and strangers mopping, with television

on all the day, music television and black entertainment
television and CNN headline news broadcasting

some civilization. With food from cans on plastic
plates and juice in cartons and decaffeinated

coffee in styrofoam cups with powder for cream,
hot, I will give it that, I know hot. What place is

this with windows facing a brick courtyard, windows
that do not open, without dead insects in the tracks?

With tape lines marking a place to stop on tile floors
polished white mirroring fluorescent lights. What I

know is this, I have what I need, I have fear. I know
the date posted on the dry erase board: November

19, 2003, Wednesday, nearly thanksgiving, I know
this. No matter, I have been trained for getting out

of difficult situations, I am a scrapper and one to
recognize a circumstance of containment, one requiring

wit and direct questions. And answers? I am not
sure about those. If I could just locate the person in

charge but everyone seems to be mopping or giving
out food, and the others? Those dressed like me in

hospital flannels, it looks as if they have stopped
asking questions, even the one staring at me wondering

when I will join her on the red reception area type
couch without cushions, just padded boards.

elsewhere

November

Events have once again surrendered me to
elsewhere, that place of openness where I would

rather be spoken to, where I would rather observe
before reaching out, where I am universally

affirmative rather than risk offense. Outside, I
am, because in some brush with honesty, the

wiry strands of custom have me unsettled, or
either the virtues of progress have demonstrated

another truth seeking reconciliation with all of
the others, testing them, prying them off of one

another as inconsistent. And elsewhere I am,
sitting in a square back chair, upright, waiting

for that new intuition to kick in, providing some
center to defend, because the old is unreliable, so

I have been logically programmed as of recent.
But I am patient. The last bout of elsewhere-ness

hit me the day after I planned an oversea trip, -it
must have been the global sense of it all suggesting

my local awareness mattered little. This time, a
new boss sucking me outside of myself, leaving

me at the kitchen table of mind for a connection
granting my confirmation that I am not on the

early black list, the one defining those who must
mark their professional presence in quiet allegiance

to a new ideal. Elsewhere, I wait, until reason
assumes me once again and I continue better for it.

seven men

November

Sitting on stage, fielding questions about family
and philosophy, some with hands folded, others

with arms crossed, legs crossed, in suits. They
are representatives, fathers wearing medals and

badges not seen by cameras, cleanshaven, no
beards here, not for another fifty years when

humanity will then allow for looking different than
constituents. Objects? In every sense, objects of

progress and national pride, this nation previously
proud of winning anything other than a footrace,

a spacerace, a science fair. Representatives come
in many forms, they always have depending on

need, need brings about positions that frame solutions
and people dressed for the occasion, need brings

about reverence and social faith, and it brings
about a spirit with a regard to truth as large and

galactic as necessary for the circumstance. These
are people, obviously not everyone, there are no

women and no blacks, no latinos, they are a model
of a power that existed fifty years before this is

written, but then, that was a time when representatives
represented power, they represented establishment,

opposed to now, now representatives represent
the smallest, they begin with small ideals and prove

their worth by knowing and defending one thing
before consuming a larger sphere, a larger sphere.

vanity man

November

Aware of the leading edge of thought represented
by the way one looks, a message alive in silk and

wool, checkerboard tweed and black leather boots
made for impressions, first impressions, good for

one wear and then old as history. Conscious of
seasons and conscious of the clan sustaining

an interest in the expulsions of the one, that a
scarf be a scarf, a cape a cape, and even on those

fridays, the jeans, the loafers, calculated with
tie in mind, with purpose in mind. And forget

that the house be the same, for measured entertainment,
the car, dark, the food proudly organic, the dog

groomed proper, the bed proper, the neighborhood
proper, the thoughts proper. Proper property

it all be with a given personality often drunk with
itself standing upright facing power. Into the wind

for a hint of the newness, a breath of something
fresh, ironically from those without ever meaning

to influence fashion, those who do not try, those
who dress with utility in mind, those with bookshelves

in their living room because they like to read, and
those with art on the wall with no obligation to

meaning, today I will be one of them with every
benefit therein implied, like acceptance among

coffee drinkers and newsstanders, like a place
with the office lunchers. Today I will be one of them.

breakfast cereal and yogurt *November*
Rising with the thought of honeycomb on my
mind, and Yoplait, strawberry and banana, a

decidedly even start to a day of chasing the
pleasures. An hour at the bookstore with a

large coffee with an extra shot of espresso, a
victory lap at the mall with a stop at the arcade,

feeding the new Star Wars game, a visit to the
art center, one hundred million dollars in the

making, with a gallery for those incubator artists
sheltered outside of the N.E.A. I could go on

to the park and the batting cages and a matinee,
but time wears me thin, places wear me thin,

experience is work, outlined like a day at the
office with checkmarks and responsibility and

some report, the mighty poem, to suggest that
it was indeed responsible. The day was this,

and this is how it will be remembered, in
some metaphor stripping away the notion of

spontaneity. Now if the poem were already
written as a map, it would have been a treasure

hunt, if the poem were already written as a
guidebook to emotion, I could have parceled

it out as a shopping list, if the poem were already
written as a path to enlightenment, I would have

dressed in kind. But the poem has not been written
and it is a shame that this experience is obliged.

I used to believe

November

I used to believe that my words made a difference,
that the exhibition of my knowledge was received

in the spirit in which it was sent. Because my
words were reinforced I believed in them. Only

I could have known the genuine place from which
they came, and knowing they were from the heart,

and knowing the reaction of listeners I had a direct
social bearing of my intent. But something happened,

there was some cause and some drift whereby my
words were not my own. Maturity, or either a

deferral of opinion, a recognition of another authority,
that the bounding of ideas off others for reaction,

for internal measure, was a realization that no
longer was a reaction to my own a measure of myself,

it was a reaction to the regards I carried. I used to
believe that words were my own, I used to believe

in the purity of dialogue, but people carry things
with them, they carry their own ideas and their

own allegiances, their own struggles, I carry my own
struggles, I carry this and that. And I am no longer

simple. I now believe that we are all vessels of
knowledge, everyone with a day, and the meetings

and the handshakes are all a matter of the day, that
the eventual commune represent all. Complex we

be, now with several to think about, and each of
those with several to think about spreading out.

there are artists

November

There are artists among us who would like to
make music of everything, that rhyme and

measure and tempo be law, that everything
social have a common denominator in sound.

But I am deaf. There are artists among us who
would like to make engines of everything, that

physics be law grounded in structures and ease
of transportation, that nature is extended by

the intuition of man. But I have no hands.
There are artists among us who would like

to make helping other people the foundation
of society, that a gift will return in some form,

that pleasure is derived in the success of others.
But I have no emotion. There are artists among

us who would make a picture of everything,
that life be still in its essence, that the laws

of living are directed by recollection. But I
have no eyes. There are artists among us who

would like to make words out of everything,
that representation and metaphor define the

human condition, that the words come together
to illustrate law and goodness. But I have no

imagination. There are artists among us who
would like there to be nature everywhere, that the

birds again fly, that a hunt be primitive as we
remember, a matter of worship. But I have no faith.

south for the winter

November

To the pelicans, the soft sand and palm trees,
to a climate humid and warm with breezes

gentle as the sun, balmy and eighty. A decade
in the back of my mind, set amid the volumes

of Dickens and try this and that, it has been
on my list, to settle away from snow shovels

and salt and high collar frowns, wicked like that
old wind up there. Where the cheeks are red by

the sun and where clothes are meant for getting
salt water wet, where fish is the entree, and key

lime pie and rum, where you can eak a life out
of selling toe rings, where you can be an artist

without a medium, just an artist, to there! A
world settled in upon itself, native because there

is no other way, some things cannot be denied,
like the tropical fruit and the way I talk after a

week, I am drawn to this which I call a city because
it is what every other should be, liberated by

sounds other than cars and a hardness other than
concrete, familiar. And the business is one of

leisure, and the responsibility is one of recreation.
Strange that winter is celebrated in such a place,

where cold is a hurricane, where cold is the dash
from day to night, but then I am not the only traveler

from elsewhere north, and regardless, a season is a
season in spite of itself. I will take a sweater.

silence

November

That everything audible has been expelled, the
raindrops, the fan, the footsteps, and the sounds

of the mind gone back to their cerebral cozies, in
chair resting, purely resting. And time, forgotten

as nature, civilized in a primitive sense for the
years passing in strobe, a year, a second, a second,

a lifetime, gone to the depths of recapture that
I passively resist association with the seasons

and the storms flying by, gone as memory. To
think is to scream at one's own fluttering self,

to think is to abandon trust in anything, to
think is to accept the principles governing

everything, they say they govern everything.
Not in this house. Built with thick doors,

forgotten, built with solid windows, forgotten,
with carpet and tile and shades, forgotten as

friendship. There is nothing here, no words
and no tantrums and no regards for anything,

neither war nor civility nor love, just a quiet
ready to explode in one big bang, that is the

association of time, if there be one. Waiting
on creation. And even this be without volume

and without attention hammering out some
relentless imagination without I this second

epoch history shaping itself around my solid
being resting. I will call it that, resting.

I do not know broccoli

November

What is this I eat? Green with tiny balls, little trees with branches. You call broccoli and so

shall I in the interest of some common denominator between us. Let us talk about broccoli then. So,

this is steamed you say. It gives me gas, green gas, but to be fair, the taste is not unpleasant, nor is

the yellow goo on top of it. I rather enjoy broccoli, broccoli is good at this hour, how does it taste at

nine in the morning? With coffee? What else is it good for? Where does it grow? In a garden?

What a simple answer for this, this flower you say. It grows in a garden next to tomatoes. Yes,

I know tomatoes, but thank you for providing some reference I can understand, some geography. I

thought I knew everything, I have traveled quite extensively you see and usually I am the one answering

questions. Like the circumference of the world, and how babies are born, and epistemology, I know

these things. But broccoli escapes me, it is like a gift of experience, a remedy for my ego, yum.

Have you tried starfruit? Hmm, how about kelp? You are not missing much. But I wander, I drift,

I shall focus on the broccoli at hand, giving me gas. Is this normal? Perhaps I did not begin eating

broccoli at a young enough age to develop the enzymes necessary for its digestion. No, really, it is good.

go fetch

November

What I need is this, an anchor for my boat. Go
fetch medicine man. Make this problem your own.

And a new watch band, brown shiny leather. Go
fetch medicine man. Make this problem your own.

Surely you could not have believed that philosophy
was without objects, that philosophy was without

service, surely you could not have thought that
philosophy was without me. I am published in

the annals of this community, when I think, I think
of the universe, when I act, I act with respect to

time and efficiency, and occasionally pleasure, and
with you in mind, your solid self good for so many

reasons but dry of compassion. Go fetch that.
And stand ready as you do, prepared for the

moment I stop talking, ready to engage in finality,
in last worded footnoted sayings meaning what

you meant to say, but not exactly your own, and
not exactly of this dialect here, medicine man.

And by the ivy canopy, settle in this place, never
to touch the earth, never to belittle and never to

be belittled, safe for another round of fetching
stones, fetching bones of alumni one year older

mentors that means something everywhere I suppose,
even here. Go fetch the clouds and the meadow,

Go fetch the spirit of civilization and put it in a
tin, shelved, to make that problem your own.

she solved me

November

Like a puzzle, I was known. In manners spilled
from conversation, all the tastes manufactured

from environment, the qualities of character by
education and family, I was known. And shelved

for new riddles, I can see she graduated to more
complex fascinations. And it is I, I am the one

figuring figuring, prodding my way through souls
and identities, laying fingers on the natures of

individuals, I am order. But now it is I, one of them,
left to the channels of type, framed as easy, practice

person, and now she must marry me or let me go
awkwardly away. To change. My identity was

written in art, it was written for the day, it was
written for her and she is thus aware, and thus

revealed in the same sense, that the one spilling
identities upon others is shaped the same. To

reveal is to be revealed, and to solve me is to
declare something important about yourself, and

I can accept this, as a lover I listen. But words
are diagrams and maps, nothing more, and you

have a deeper solution, one written into your
eyes and etched on your attention, that you know

things I have not told you, good things and bad
things. And what can I do but ask the secret to

mystery, and ask the secret to kindness because
I want to know these things especially from you.

knowledge is not wasted on me *November*

And if I be a well, if I be a body of thought
apparently vacant as the sky, if I be an afternoon

of consciousness, a history, knowledge is not
wasted on me. And if I be a dusty attic or a library,

a conversation melting away time, a rose, if I
be this, knowledge is not wasted on me. And if I be

trust or either confidence, a river southbound
winding and flooding and flooding, if I be a story,

knowledge is not wasted on me. And if I be an
instrument of peace, if I be rest, health, kindness,

if I be all of these, if I be sense and reason, if I
be autumn falling from the short day, if I be the

stars twinkling cold, the moon, knowledge is not
wasted on me. If I be the kind of education that

is without walls and without answers, and if I be
an answer, red with emotion, if I be study and

scholarship, if I be experience, knowledge is not
wasted on me. If I be a poem, if I be a word, a

kiss, if I be holding hands in the forest with gold
leaves underfoot and bare branches overhead,

if I be a storm, if I be a man, knowledge is not
wasted on me. If I be a pattern, if I provide a

will, if I reproduce, if I am new life without speech
with closed eyes with arms and legs curled into

the body, if I believe in a force greater than what
I be, and if I be, knowledge is not wasted on me.

affirmation

November

What is the substance of affirmation? Deliverance
and honesty granting a sense of correctness in a

farm of doubt? Can affirmation be offered from
a position of knowing less, a position of isolation,

or is affirmation the substance of authority otherwise
naked as the wind, cleansing but without value?

Some things cannot be denied, like your love, like
the beauty of thought and the beauty of knowing,

error and free will, these cannot be denied lest one
believes in the truth of slavery, a commitment to

the disposition of the learning space surrounding
each. I know better. Learning is by affirmation,

by the seeds of the environment, and if people they
be, then I be a seed, a teacher with an obligation

to enlist truth, to enlist the atoms of this place in
a frenzy of positive regard, because I have such

power. But there are limits to an environment, and
the mind drifts to grander considerations without

right and without wrong, at least without a proof,
and affirmation is by the trust in aspects outside

of nature, the gift of oneself, that it all return in
force, every time. There is no authority here, no

one passing ribbons, no merit lists and no grades,
right is as I believe, wanting the favor of experience

in some sense that turns art and intuition into
science and reproducibility, the fantasy of goodness.

the day burns

November

Whiling away the path which presents itself,
dirt underfoot, scattered with thoughts from

the rain last eve, that substance of tomorrow,
now here and wet letting down the crystals of

conformity, the crystals of interrogation, the
crystals of the past, all wiped like slate. And

the present presents itself, radiating from certain
points of certainty clear and crisp as the shadows

of nature, of the will, like talk from squirrels
rummaging, like talk from oaks and talk from

the sky blue as summer, if the sky were all I knew
it would be summer. But glad for pockets, I,

for measuring the day, for treasuring the day
and shelving the day, yes, it was as I remember

and I have proof lest I forget the geese trumpeting
southward or the first decoration of puddled ice,

pond ice at the corners. A feather and an acorn,
a cattail, a whip, and red hands burning out of

pocket, they will be chapped again and burn in
warm water, burn with arthritis smothering mug,

cheeks will burn. The day burns onto me like a
brand of late Autumn, a breath and warning

of time, that it come again, it will come again
reliably in first flakes, white and few, whorling

in little tornados on paths. It will come again
I know because I have lived this life before.

bookends

November

Experience is bound by nature, science and
social knowledge, art, bound by nature, debate,

bound by nature. What comes to me is a gift,
and as I interpret its foaming will, as I resolve

its aesthetics, I live since the day I was born
framed by the last three decades. There was

no time before my first day of cheshire freedom
and I cannot account for history, I do not know

of treaties and moonwalks and plagues, lest I
trust the day to others, to the days of others,

red with footnotes and questions. For if I lived
only by my own accord I would be simple as

one could experience, with language in my head
without ends, with song without ends, and

favor only to mine own sense, strung between
a shelter and a tree, convenience. But I am not

alone, not in this decade of social compliance
and a priori induction, bound, yes by the stars

and yes by the valleys and oceans, bound, but
through the will of others I interpret such, that

they be given a meaning with some social utility
like beauty for recreation and beauty for sport.

And if I be the tree, dependent, and if I be the
bear, dependent, and if I be the person, dependent,

on the qualities of this environment holding me
upright and to myself, collected, dependent.

with my friends

November

I have been to the place you describe, where
what once was great and now appears small,

like a memory I imagine. I have laid my skin
on the desk as I write, now naked with bones

and penis, death and sex. And I have cared
for tomorrow, the state of nature shifting to

buildings and dead lakes, I have cared for this
too much uncle, I have cared for this too much.

I sometimes imagine that everything that can
be done is being done, and sometimes I imagine

that being smart is a form of disregard, who can
pass on caring. I am not smart. And the love

of women, and the love of snowstorms, and the
love of plums? Them? Yes, I grow old by them

and the rest is a matter of faith. And I have
been to the last day of the world, when a baby

was born and when the guitarist did not stop
playing, and it all ended with a curtain. I have

been many places in my living room, I have been
injured and I have healed, I have walked barefooted

on lava stones and I have tasted blood and I
would return if you asked me, like a student I

would return to pick you a souvenir. A bowl for
oatmeal, a knife for opening letters, a stone box

for pennies, or a poem. Like a student I would
return to pick you a souvenir, a memory.

this house is not a museum

November

The sacred objects in this place are not ancient,
they are younger than me, and the telescope, it

represents something outside of myself, that is
all, an other. The fireplace, comfort by some

intestine of nature in spite of that thermostat,
the one in the hall. The art, filling the space

with respect to color and hardness, it is meant
for wandering, it is meant for the reproduction

of its spirit, the one I give it. This house is no
museum, wear your shoes if you like, or borrow

socks for the tile, a sweater with a snowflake,
a cardigan, and settle in with tea in the maze

mug with milk, in the overstuffed couch. And
let us interpret things, let us ease into conversation

mixed with the day, talk of talk keeping pace
with experience and chess without clock and

tears and surprise and affection, these objects,
let them pause and be gone, they are welcome.

With strong windows and doors, portals, and
hardwood scattered about like the Sunday news,

and with train stations and airports, undergrounds,
the corners I escape to, escape from, large enough

to hide inside with a bed pillow. Living is easy
in this environment graduating to wonder at the end

of every day upon mattress with down quilt, with
the confidence that its pith will be there upon upon.

welfare state

November

Where the tasks of existence are without purpose
beyond the tokens which they allow, that there

be no difference between sitting and study, between
contemplation and rest, between efficiency and

art. Where experience is not for the mind or body,
rather for custom or either for discretionary boredom,

filling pages of vitae for some access to greater
days of thinking, really thinking. If there be a purpose

it is in the vitae of mental capital, the challenge
of recognizing it for what it is, a system of service

and handing out regards piece by piece with intentions
attached, that they be returned in kind. And where

is the cowboy, the one recognizing it as open as a
range, the one with ideas, no, that was a hundred

years ago, a hundred years ago and the only cowboys
now see a need for fences, to designate property.

There are rules attached when populations butt
up against one another, impositions favoring exchange

and favoring breakthroughs. Let us all be cowboys
now that they be contained, in the interest of industry

let us all be cowboys! With open mind knowing north
and the reason for knowing north, and knowing the

reason for boots, and knowing the reason for hats,
and knowing the reason for service, that it be

contained, indeed, but reason is not public, and
knowledge is not public. Destiny is not public.

stand up

November

Finally ready, circumstance is such that lessons
of individualism are underscored by the imposing

character of a negative freedom, a concept assumed
by shapeshifters of value. Yes, there was a purpose

to education, and yes, there was a purpose to
restraint, but that was then, when corners were not

painted and nature was inclusive and reliant on
difference, when one hundred people could be

told apart. But purpose shifts with conditions,
and as I speculate on modern curriculum, I know

the need for advantage and I know the need for
collaboration, like the kind of poetry that connects

and heartens in honesty, the kind demonstrating
a force larger than opposite, larger than a mirror.

And I know calling, it is not hard to see the painters
and the namecallers, it is not difficult to see the

boxes of designation with numbers, but I am not
meant for a warehouse, I am not an image. What

I am is this: spoken and visible, contained but
not by you, rather by the same force which contains

you, brother, the same air and the same water,
the same system, and if I be a number, if I be given

a designation, you will know it as primacy, you
will see it in the forest, the clouds, the colors of

November. You will know me by instinct, that
everything be a matter of instinct this time, brother.

there is something to being infinite *November*

Infinity is careless. What is an atom among the
rest? What is a moment when time carries all

of the moments? And color? And size? No
matter the flashing rainbow, no matter the school,

no matter. No matter change because there is no
such thing. No matter hell, disregard it away

like anyone who says 'no' with closed eyes on a
dead beach. Disregard objects and matter,

disregard thought and disregard questions, there
is no answer, there never was an answer. And life?

What it be mixed among some grander passage
and if infinity were contained it would be in

life I am sure. Bound by years and bound by
body, if infinity had bounds it would be in life,

in experience. But infinity has no bounds, it
is nature in the most profound sense, something

outside of me, me as the anti-infinite giving
birth to sounds and grunts thinking as largely

as possible, I try to think as largely as possible
but all I know is the day, the dawn and food,

and death, I know that too, by patience separating
me I know death dissolving into the parts from

which they came. And into the fold, as an idea
two thousand years old in an instant marked

without eyes and touch, marked without sense
where getting old has never been about years.

medicine song

November

There is a song that heals, it goes like this:
wickey wickey pata pata, wickey wickey pata.

It helps if you shake a rattle at it and it helps
if you look upward as you sing it. You can

sit in a straight backed chair or stand, it really
makes no difference. I have used it for colds

and for the flu, I have used it for mania and
for depression, I have used it for sunburn. It

is a solid antidote for many things, a panacea
for what ails you. The only problem is that it

cannot be prescribed, a condition must be
assessed by the person and the medicine song

sung by one's own free will. Do this every
hour. I should say that this is no placebo, it

is a remedy which accounts for a person's
need to engage in some sense stimuli and a

person's need to assume responsibility for
their own healing. The medicine song is not

a social song, it is not intended for social
corrections, it is not voo doo, it is not ritual.

It has, however, been used in clearing one's
mind of errant thoughts, as in the event of

being lost in a forest, and prior to public speaking,
and before and after painting. There is a song

that heals as certainly as time and happiness.
Wickey wickey pata pata, wickey wickey pata.

simple

November

Six sides make for understanding, six walls
of glass, the cover of self with dimension, that

access must pass through fields of certainty
before it is turned around, before it becomes

simple facing outward and protected as the
rest. Before I am governed I will defend what I

be, by the chords of existence, by the walls of
determination, there will be no reconciliation,

not yet, not until reduction. That the middle
be retained, that reason be retained by exclusive

rights to experience, there is no allowance for
any old news, there is no allowance for time,

order is what it is, open to regards through these
gates, these walls covering me, they are questions.

And what is reason? What is the stuff of
certainty and the stuff defining my edges? What

are these questions defending me? I have not
spoken and yet I am known by my defense, I

know by my defense, by the reaction to a cause
I am known. But walls are glass and I am no

hero, I am not fixed in belief, and war reveals
weakness if anything, holes to grow old by.

One can spend a lifetime fixing things, fixing
containers, patching holes and souls, I have spent

a lifetime fixing a container riddled with experience
not my own but it still holds what is important.

this type of intelligence

November

There are two types of intelligence, there is the type meant for carrying out the operations

of general living and there is the type meant for folly. There are two types of intelligence, there

is the type acquired through others and there is the type acquired through experience. There

are two types of intelligence, there is the type which is exhibited and the type which is kept

for maintaining a personal core. There are two types of intelligence, there is the type which

is willing to suffer in the interest of its own integrity and the type which will throw itself

into social flames. There are two types of intelligence, there is the type which can be

proven by math and logic and there is the type which requires faith. There are two types

of intelligence, there is the type which grows and adapts and there is the type which remains

the same from birth to death. There are two types of intelligence, there is the type which

is limitless and there is the type which is accustomed to letting itself be surrounded

with other thoughts. There are two types of intelligence, there is the type which helps

other people and there is the type which is meant for satisfying its own ends.

about myself

November

Favor the day I say, for it will be gone with
the next, it will be history in every sense of

the word. And what it brings, colors and
conversation, beauty like a red sky attached

to a full moon, beauty like morning fog still
as wonder. And pass on tomorrow, the cares

of civilization, they have no place amid my
composition, be it wretched and small, be it

weary from staring at socialisms, be it lucky
to recognize the wave of a wand and witness

cause and effect. There are ugly things in this
place, like arrogance, there are simple things,

like peace, there are things which are negotiable,
like language, and they all carry the same

brand of emotion in me, I am a stone, except
for love I am a stone ready to deny deny. But

love is enough to live by, even for the miseducateds
like myself recapturing and redirecting exactly

what went wrong so many years ago. So many
years and so many seasons ago passing like

wind, passing like governors filling some hole
in the meantime waiting for a solution. And if

there be a solution as genuine as love in government
I would be an officer or either a criminal, in

either case I would know the substance of
feeling more than a midnight storm like yesterday.

shine

December

The month is not mine, the strategies multiplying
and dividing, expanding, are not aware of

the little events in gestation, the embryos of
accord among the peeps not quite people but

neither dolls. The month is not mine, I cannot
defend the ideas of people as blocks fitting

amongst one another, it is too cold and too
dark to make a difference, the sky is too cold

and I am an insect. Better to let the course of
giving remain in its imperfect state, ninety

percent salvation is tolerable in all the good
books, ninety percent salvation is well beyond

quorum, and the remaining ten? Leave them
to another book well into some other future,

leave them to their higher regard. Perfect is
ready, acceptable perfection, perfect knowledge,

perfect admissions, the right balance of sevens,
if it were a sound it would be the roar of a

waterfall, if it were a taste it would be lemon
off the peel, if it were it would be recognizable

in some fashion. For if the month were my
own, it would be recognizable and written in

simple calligraphy, the words as photons written
for expression and not just because I hold an

instrument. There are greater reasons for
expression than a pocket full of instruments.

freedom is a word

December

I have never met a diplomat. I have never seen
time from one day carried to the next nor have

I been a part of something profound. But I am
not limited in my box of rain, my box of spells.

And perhaps it is such that I know no better,
and perhaps it is such that secrets are kept from

me because my freedom is comprehensive, that
every dot be connected to the boundless when

some dots are meant only for the moment I light
a cigarette, an instance of enlightenment. But

that is good, I am content as some marker, some
representation of person not knowing their cage,

some representation of person understanding
that freedom is a word, and a box contains us

all. And if I be fit for containment I will hang
pictures on the wall, I will light a fire and lay

on the same earth as you, I will thank you for
the shelter and I will thank you for the good

intentions, and I will lock the door as I leave,
because it is my own. And if there be higher

orders, those which protect me without my knowledge,
and if there be another dimension to living, I

am just as well not knowing it, or either I have
never met a moment which did not permit me

to ask itself the nature of civilization and the
nature of giving and compare it with my own.

indigenous perspective

December

What Sunday? What sabbath holds its nature
above the other days? And what president

was not born in blood, empty of experience
and empty of lines and empty of decrees? There

are wonders outside of experience, we are all
infants, casting ourselves to higher sciences by

every passing. There is no love in knowing all,
I know because I once knew everything and I was

filled with something lesser with head bowed
to the earth saying 'yes, yes' to everyone. Not

everything is yes, if age has taught me anything
it has taught me discrimination, retirement has

taught me the things of separation and preference
and I have returned with a ritual meant for

demonstrating such a thought to careless youth.
Them. Trying on hats like older brothers and

walking like older brothers. And what cycle is
this dawn of adolescence proving that man has

seasons like this island, and suggesting that you
will pass for love one day in forty years pass

for love because that is what happens, nature.
And after? I can only speculate, but I believe

in infancy and I am as prepared as the next and
prepared as you will be in forty years boy, passing

for love on some carpet thinking of something
like having a body to match my newborn spirit.

it is enough

December

It is enough to locate the cave in which passion
is housed, with painted fights by candlelight

and cold dry earth rising into the soul. It is enough
to live life as a metaphor, a stake with a message

on its eastern side ready for sunrise and ready
for meaning something, a direction, purpose

for passers. There are tales of lovers passing
in thought, connected by the twine of the moment

and connected by an emotion spent by greater
forces, and there are tales of enemies wishing

the same animosity on one another, mirrors
connected by similar exclusions, -this is for my

people. Love is an interest, a sign with mention
to the intellect of others, a hole in the earth for

tales, for remembering because soon we forget.
And if the love you send is never returned, look

to the stars, to the wind bending the brown
grass, to the winter ice choppy this year, and to

the dead forest, there I will be waiting, in this
interest of remembrance. It is enough, that I

be implied, and it is enough, that your hand is
extended to a glass which divides our types

because there is nothing except remembrance
and there is nothing except the note of passion

I know when I close my eyes and close my ears
and lie ready to accept you in this place.

the parade

December

Suddenly it came to sense, the passing socials
and the passing colors, all rising as if reaching

from the same civil perch. They were once
sheltered as I, looking from balconies in loud

laughter of the simplicity of self celebration,
such exposure and determination, such confidence

in the universe. And if I be meant for the next
agitated ascension then I be one of several with

big fruity eyes, and reluctant like an immigrant
leaving history for a promise accelerated by

sundry expositions and whorls. There is hope
in a parade, there is a mention that time will

stop to flatter itself and to relieve itself. To
relive itself as affirmative spectacle, that there

is something to living, something outside of
social inversion and anxiety and setting oneself

atop another, and there is a place where such
ideals be clustered, in the downtown, the center.

But this parade is not my own, it is bent
on the notion that such ideals belong to one

day, and that tomorrow is a return to the negative,
that a mark of society is not first gilded before

the camera makes its appearance. But ride
I will today, that an ideal is ever an ideal,

however limited, and a celebration is ever a
celebration marking some spirit walking on.

*the economy of living**December*

Some people do not realize that when they repeat another's words they make those words

their own, they defer responsibility to the person they heard the words from. Skaters, riding the

creative intuition of others to their end without regard to context. And the masters of mimicry

regard themselves as social unions, collections of the settlements of despair and joy and every

other emotion. And if I cannot tell a lie, I am a subject. And if I cannot tell the truth, I be

accountable. But who is to care for those thieves of thought? Not I, shut down in spirit

from that circle winding its way through the world, I withdraw my own to those interests genuine

and speaking from their own experience and acting from their own little corners. And better

yet, to the economy of living which requires no verbal participation, not really, and no reinforcement

outside of the poetry of digital commerce beeps. The 'good afternoons' and the 'how do you dos,'

they are but trickery and have no part in experience. Oh! Abandon! The societies, so easy to forget

this which never happened, they have no part in experience. Only the temptations, now ready for

food and sex and creation, only these, nestled into an intuition which I can be sure is my own.

humanity still transmitting *December*
Planet far away, like a red star nestled into
the moon. I have never wanted to go, the

moon is far enough for me, just an outpost
to observe home like a hilltop, a place for

reflecting upon the whole of society, this which
affects. And the moon I do not love, no more

than a backyard, no more than any place, and
likewise Mars I do not love, no more than

any place. But a hilltop is good for something,
it is good for the spirit, I only worry that a

social decision be one which will enslave the
majority of the population. One can climb a

mountain without aid and one can witness
a winter without a tether and one can fall

without concern in this place, but the baggage
of space is collective. The experience of one

is framed in the experience of all, and discontent
is lockout, that the symbols of mankind, if

not representative, be a matter of distaste,
like the body of the last astronaut six thousand

years ago, that liar, lying in state, still transmitting
humanity in anything other than english with

an audience I interpreting. What went wrong
the last go around? The records were destroyed

as humanity receded back to its default of homes
next to hilltops for exploration and independence.

cathedral of stones

December

Scattered, six thousand stones, in rows like
soldiers, tall and too heavy to lift. Children

climb upon them. There is a presence among
the dead, a quiet sophistication that settles

the trivials. There is nothing so important as
the wind in this place, talking like age in a

language I anyone can discern, and there is
nothing so important as snow in this place,

and grass paths, there is nothing so important.
And if there were such a thing as philosophy

and if there were such a thing as an answer
and if there were such a thing as reconciliation

here is where it will be found, here is where it
is found as a marker of a life, of an effort

crystalized sole for the purpose of art. A
cathedral of poetry wandering around myself

stationary and fixed, I am unmoved and life
weaves a fabric. I am a pillar and life spins

in blank verse. And if I be one of six thousand,
that is that, for a community is defined by

some number, and defined by its welcome, its
color, its texture one day to the next in spite

of rain. A community is defined, a cathedral
is defined with rows for attendance and the

business of worship, but there is no message
explicit here, and worship assumes higher meaning.

a place for poets

December

There is no satisfaction in denial, there is no
satisfaction in refusing the reason of a place.

To what ends is 'no' justified, and to what ends
is peace and bravery and beauty held at arms

length. But I can grant that the negative of trust
turns one inward, and the commingled opinions

of everyone outside forces one to believe in their
own secondary worth, that such a history does

return one to something other than this place,
this place spotted with cabins with decks, this

place with well worded people wandering
about barefoot and principled. And all of the

history in the world cannot tell me something
about this lake and pier that I cannot discover

on my own in some time. This place is just a
matter of time, an eden, existing until someone

does something wrong in it and leaves it dry
of its virtue. I hope that day never comes, the

one when a somebody poet who has never had
an interest in a collection outside of his own

uses words in a way like refuse, scattering trash
into this. I hope that day never comes even

though I would defend such liberties in any other
place. But here I am naked, I left my slam armor

at home and I left my pen at home, here I use a
mechanical pencil because here I make mistakes.

art among science

December

Even among engines, even among mathematical objects there is a certain beauty. Perfect beauty

it must be, at least as perfect as the utilitarian present with mixed lines and purpose and mixed

motivations. For love of note, for love of money, all that it will bring, or either for love of creation

that man be God in some small sense, God in miniature with a force to reckon and adapt and

institute. But in a larger sense creation is constant betterment, and science is always an infant,

learning and cataloguing, and the day is creation pocked by genius allowing and disallowing

favor. There are now museums for engines and there are now chevrolets wrapped in plastic

to remember the nineteen fifties, somebody has finally realized that the representation of science

is an art in itself, not only the object of engineers and not only the subject of engineers, but a domain

fit for coffee table books. But if an engine be made for travel then this be its demonstration, and if a

house be made for living, then this be its demonstration, not a curated existence, as a learning object. What

is this? Mechanics in concert with the laws of nature, how else could it be? And mechanics in concert

with the conditions of life, how else should it be? Wrapped in some form relative to living, indeed.

supposing

December

Supposing the snow flying never touching the
earth, a forest of evergreens with quiet needles

underfoot whistling in the wind. To lie on it
all bundled and staring at light and dark clouds

passing, supposing clouds passing because
they need to be somewhere, we all need to be

somewhere, I suppose that. Tomorrow I need
to be somewhere important, I have a doctor

appointment, but I will suppose until then. Here
a while and then into the living room where

I will suppose with a good book and coffee,
and then to state street for some more supposing

of people wrapped in scarves and leather, -they
are easy to suppose. There never has been an

instant in which I was not somehow responsible,
there never has been an instant in which supposing

did not matter, the buildings, the thoughts, the
colors, the steel, I suppose them all and give them

over to purpose, I suppose purpose and give it
over to civilization, I suppose civilization and

give it over to the animals. Supposing sound,
footsteps, rhythm like time wandering around

my body, supposing sleep. It is a dream, it can
only be, batted in quilt supposing the snow never

stop for responsibility, because there must be
something which does not stop for responsibility.

chained to refrain

December

Once and again, once and again, the music of
living is a single song, a syllable repeated

pronouncing what is important as if I do
not know the seasons, as if I do not believe

the sun as it falls to the west, as if I do not
believe it truly gone. Once and again, once and

again, falling out of sleep to a sandwich and
milk with eyes fixed to the back of my mind

staring at the dream fading to gray, I believe
that, things fade to gray in metered measures

sick with hope that they were authentic, that
a second coming of a dream makes the curiosity

authentic in the least. Once and again, once
and again, force is used to say that I am not

forgotten, and my words, arbitrary, be not
forgotten, their origin, because when thunder

strikes it is intended and when a face of a
glacier falls into the ocean it is intended and

when a great tree falls it is intended, words,
arbitrary. Once and again, once and again,

by the instinct that everything important will
repeat itself I am ready as a clown I am ready

as a captain with a painted face interrogating
someone anyone lesser, a dog, they are lesser,

an animal is lesser, anything small is lesser
because they be subjects to force, twice.

deep green

December

Tucked into mountains and tucked into oceans
and tucked into space, tucked into rivers

rolling down growing, and forests met with
fantasies of kings and monks, and in the fog

damp with life, life. Bubbling truth, nature
and volcanoes, inspiration for doubling the

character of service, inspiration for doubling
myself. I will hold this up to you, this flowered

wand, I will hold this up to you, this chrysalis
emerald, I will hold this up to you, this meal

of good meat and sweet fruit, wine and water
enough to drip off the chin making grunting

sounds followed by bath followed by sleep.
A cave is filled with imagination and the air

is filled with imagination, a box of people
is filled with imagination masquerading as

science, education call it because it is most
certainly not art. And tucked into a wall of

dirt, earth moved in the interest of sustainability,
a banner stating that all people are created

equal, all life is equal, all experience is equal
and all thought is equal and governed by a

single plow, a single blade pushing the substance
of creation back into itself. There is enough

equality in this world already and there is
enough equality in imagination, education.

the last country

December

There was one more place to be called simple,
the place with two oceans and a blanket of

heaven, eternity with no wish beyond its own
preservation. Meant for horses. I was there

once and left without saying a word, never to
return for fear of spoiling it. There must be

such a place which represents the spirit of
trust in evolution or either creation, no matter,

the spirit of time without tether and without
my smallness surrounding it with bricks. And

if I be the first to return to other places saying
the world is truly flat, without reason, then

I be the first religious man in history with a
sin under my belt in the interest of divinity

I am certain. For the horizon be all I know,
one east and one west, one there and one

there, science is heresy, pluralism is heresy,
without reason. And nature, what it be to

this place I cannot protect because I am one
of many like minded people with the satisfaction

of self governance and an interest in the market
and an interest in the socialisms of the day

but prepared for truth unspoken nevertheless.
Because I am a witness, if only a witness with

a secret because not every truth need be spoken
and there is a reason to living without reason.

