

Working Of The Eye To The Work

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January 1, 2019

Sad Looking

every year could be last
will I visit great places
write things to admire one day
get InkWell working well
write papers / speak
or just fade off the map
or make it to Shetland again
see my river again
see the ocean there another time

January 2, 2019

JGQ

what would it be like
to settle in Shetland
with a new life and all
that comes with it
going from comfortable
to a thinking life
a challenge every day
giving not getting
someone older
more distant
not to touch
not for warmth
a cold intelligence
rolling over me
like a rolling pin
over soft dough

January 3, 2019

Joppa Flats

cold days by the river
even downstream toward the ocean
seabirds like white smudges
up over the churning greenblue water
somewhere after Joppa Flats
Plum Island to the south
the pink house a planned annoyance
to a rough lady
now my choices are to sit
tight and to wander alone
like a white smudge
over whisked water
or fly through made-up memories
upstream to my spot

January 4, 2019

JGQ in Lisboa

unfolding kaleidoscope of perspectives
wide panorama of sea or rooftops
tiny slit of zen glimpse
suggested hidden entrances
twists down and up
the geometric variety of public
spaces and the percentage of positive
and negative spaces

I'd be interested in your impressions

the taste of the oyster requires time and luck
tourist stuff as tasteless as anywhere
sometimes you fall into a backwater
an unassuming ordinariness
old men in dark taverns smoking like
chimneys / old women shuffling along
from the market / straight food
grilled sardines and nondescript white wine in pitchers
nothing so prissy as counting by the glass
winter sun
I found a sort of sustenance
in the ordinariness
very unspanish / quiet subdued / again I'd be

interested in your impressions

January 5, 2019

In Case

a noost is a Shetland word
for a neuk o grund on the sauns
that a boat can be drawn oot
fae the watter tae rest on

January 6, 2019

Get Up

you write a lot of words
only a few are noticed
do you write more to direct them
or fewer to direct them
different one / or do you
just ignore them and let your words
wake those ready to awaken

January 7, 2019

Up Helly

the rain comes down all night
our roof is good and keeps us
the wind though would grab anything high
and all there is around here is homes
in the bed in the room next to mine
is a woman whose idea is to think
and talk / she builds the fire each night
it is night most of the time up here
not cold / rain and wind
no trees / no cities
she likes her tea and drinks it mornings
her hair down / this is the only time
she is a woman around here
after her bath she dresses
then she talks
then she thinks

January 8, 2019

Coat

a lot of ways to find
a lost place
not a place that has been lost
and you want to regain it
but a place where you will be lost
here's why
I was in the spotlight
but people wondered why
I believed because it is I
but now I know
there was no why
there is no why
like just about everyone
I am no one

January 9, 2019

Travel Fear

this fear of travel
where did it arise
I am going with a wife
and two friends and
I have the fear of a dreaded outcome
what's changed
do I have less of something
I once had more of
real tears
pulling up covers
what has happened

January 10, 2019

Morphology

beauty of sad things
sadness of beautiful things
thingness of sad beauty
sad beauty sparks joy

January 11, 2019

Unst

cold polar winds
moderated by warm
Gulf water / we shift
from our supper table
to chairs by the peat fire
in our little gesture
toward a gone past
even when we're cold
by each other's side
neither warms the other
it's out of spectrum
it is too late for that
it would make the word
appealing less appealing

January 12, 2019

Piles

store of books
we browse them
we read them
then toss them on the pile
dating women
we browse them
we read them
then toss them on the pile
but in both cases
there is a period when
the warmth comes along
like a blanket
like a warm drink
and to do it in bed

January 13, 2019

Up North

no one about
almost / a rainy night
again / there is the warm
part of the bed
and then there's mine

January 14, 2019

Lost Meanings

I kept a notebook
of what she did / she liked
what we ate and the times
when she woke
when she slept
later when I'd lost her
I put that notebook
in a side table by my bed
then even later into a box
in the basement
I sold the house
and left it there
to better honor
the meaning of lost

January 15, 2019

Hold It Right There

I arranged her books on my table
the ones she was reading not long ago
to understand the new things in her mind
and to visualize her in-most life if there be one
I must read them all to get her as of now
she'll move on / I'll move on
if only time were more patient

January 16, 2019

Shrine

she called
said come over
I have a new thing
to show you
when you get here
what I want to show you
will be on the floor
in my work study room
you will find it hard to resist
for long / I was staying
on the other side of her small
Holland town and nothing but
cobblestones stood between us
I dressed warm for it was winter
made sure my shoes had grippy soles
it would be in the room with the photos
taken by that man displayed behind glass
in frames with poems he wrote of their trip
together to the north / something she
wanted me to see would be on that floor
that night / I planned to knock quietly

January 17, 2019

Floor

I knocked but nothing happened
the last light gone
small lights in the small street
across from a tiny park
one street over from a canal
her little house really half
of a little house / a second
floor cramped in
her part of the street narrow bricks
this way or that / one way
or another / I knocked again
she opened the door and turned
back in before much of a hello
at least she was not on the floor

January 18, 2019

Slept Instead

that night I watched her lights
come on from the little park
across the alley
and the shrine well lit
I walked past her window
nothing was on the floor
her hair was down and she looked
welcoming / I dodged her
gaze and stepped down another alley
to the canal / went back to my flat
turned off my phone

January 19, 2019

For What

she spent five minutes
on her lips
five on the eyelashes
three on her hair
already in dress
then when it seemed
she was done
two on her pants cuffs
and one knee
yikes

January 20, 2019

Fuck Them

I learned again today
my professional life is over
so never say yes
to anything

January 21, 2019

January North

a low sun doesn't
warm us / it never rises
high and soon it will rain
I wander the streets until I climb
onto the ferry which I'll take
over and back / just in time
for the restaurant to open
and for me to have a lone
meal

January 22, 2019

Mean

I met her once twenty years ago
she said hello then went shopping
she brought me back some chocolates
tonight I ate with her and she
was old / her hands wrinkled
larger / less blonde
what would it mean
I mean
what would it mean

January 23, 2019

No Quality No Name

a woman so taken by
God / she thinks
that the beauty of living
is a hoax and the secret to life
is gratitude
she doesn't worry her husband
is wearing a heart monitor
and his hands shake all the time
she ignores art
says only this one is light
this one dark
out of focus so perhaps Impressionist
art is afraid

January 24, 2019

Porto

in Portugal women
are sturdy / beauty as hint
the species proceeds nevertheless
but something about them
works / teenage boys should learn
to see and lust with such
as his guide

January 25, 2019

Again?

with luck home
Porto in the past
Ademar a huge help
everything is steep
I'm tired
the trip scared me silly

January 26, 2019

Flying Low

tired / beat up
sick / cramping
the flights home torture
every smell made me sick
Lisbon to home
yuck

January 27, 2019

Killing Road

if a long road's ahead
I plan the shortcut
the time to travel far
is in short supply
I worry about the fawn
hidden in night leaves
waiting for headlights
to show the way to death

January 28, 2019

Masked Man

I got sick
from a bad person on the plane
I should have had a mask

January 29, 2019

Flames

watched Up Helly Aa via the Net
probably being there would make
it seem like more than it seemed
remotely / I thought the real fun
was people getting to fling their
torches onto the boat / flames

January 30, 2019

Polar

strange movie
real character development
for two / cartoons for the others
who are assassins on killing sprees
the story needs the killers killing
to make the two characters alive
the opposite of standard

January 31, 2019

My Mama Done Tol' Me

I never followed my talents
none of the three were super
ok photographer / lousy musician
decent writer / instead I did
what my mother instructed me
which was to get a technical degree
and try to make money / except
I was the worst employee ever
because I always played when
I should have worked

February 1, 2019

Sandness

a strong gust hitting the windows
caught our discussion up short
hours of penetration ended
by a block of air that started
out in the ocean that sits between
her and me on one side
and you on the other

February 2, 2019

Sandness

when I imagine her
she is young and opulent
when I see her
she is a tree of late autumn
at the verge of a deeper woods
and a blind and deaf winter

February 3, 2019

Bressay Winters

our small croft has thick stone walls
one faces down to the ocean
the other dug into the hillside
a boxy fireplace at one end
the small bed we use at the other
everything happens here in winter
the gales / the infrequent snow
we cook small meals when the winds break
we sit on the hillside in summer
and wonder about the birds

one winter one of us won't make it
we're old and these islands take
what they want / we did the same
in the past / now we only wait

February 4, 2019

Bye

everyone turns their backs
eventually / this is the fate of life
my stance pushes away
like a winter sunset in Unst
the darkness closes in

February 5, 2019

Bye

I will never hear from her again
a clever way to disappear
take a long trip and promise
to get in touch on return
whenever that is / contacting her
is out / contacting me is out

February 6, 2019

On An Isle

small things in the way of large
a hard look at self reveals the difference
her smarts are unavoidable
she loves no one / spends all her time in thought
feelings flee / because of these things
she teases by accident / the appeal
of a harsh landscape makes her hard edges
appeal

February 7, 2019

Yell

she stays away
she will from now on
it's best for all
it's what we deserve

February 8, 2019

Foolishly

across the room / she reads
the fire is quiet but insists
she directs herself at it or her book
outside the darkness triumphs
the rain is not quite level
the one-lane track is quiet tonight
while the winds work up
little swirls from the wind interrupting
through window-side cracks and door unders
the foolish think we'll warm each other
we warm only ourselves

February 9, 2019

Weesp

I think of her in black and white
not judgment / age
she believed my photos would work better that way
instead the colors caught her up
maybe she made a shrine of them
but she didn't think that way
I think she was wary
of a big man

February 10, 2019

That Way

the next time I sit by the river
I'll be alone / she will have never
gotten back in touch / it's my duty
to give her that / I suspect she'll
be surprised I gave up like this
I remember warming my hands in her cap

February 11, 2019

Cheap Sleeps

we booked a family room
save money / the world celebrates couples
except we were the wrong kind
too old to be just starting
the large beds were next to each other
one bathroom though
we will change in separate places
we will make our night noises like lovers
we might reach across the small expanse
to say our goodnights
we will be like / it turns out
an ordinary old couple
exactly as if we had never been one
at all

February 12, 2019

Dropping

she'll walk across the bridge
holding what's left
later when no one watches
she'll toss it over
I hope the river is moving toward
the sea

February 13, 2019

By The Voe

after walking down to the burn
she stopped to peek at the fish cages
she doesn't look for novel ideas
just ways of understanding
the mist and cold wind
she had moved far from me
so everything she said
if she said anything at all
blew fatelessly into the wind
and soon a fog consumed her

February 14, 2019

Tripping

she would invoke loneliness
she cannot see people
because they are not ideas
I've wondered about her
I've followed behind as she walked places
she fills notebooks with questions
other notebooks with answers
she is a pursuer
when I asked if I was pursued
she pursed her lips
and never answered

February 15, 2019

Pitcher Pump

one of our wells
had a good pitcher pump
fill up your cup or bucket and the extra
would run down a channel
into an old tub for the cows
it's all gone now
not mine any more
it was on a small rise
with a flat granite slab to stand on
and granite steps leading up
maybe so the channel to the tub
would work

February 16, 2019

Bath Fiction

she came out of the shower
wrapped in a towel
her hair in another
a smaller one
I was in her kitchen
just off the bathroom
making tea for her
when she stood behind me
she touched my arm
I turned and she put her head close
into my chest
I pulled back without thought
she said
is it because I am older

February 17, 2019

Barn

climbing the bales up to the rafters
sitting atop the stacks
the smell of dried hay
cows in their stalls just off to the other side
the midline of the barn is where the wagons come through
hay dust lifting up to the sunlight beams
leaking through holes and gaps in the old
old wood / what a place to write
that would be / old and old
words to words

February 18, 2019

Victoria Pier

nothing is happening
no one is out
lights on in houses and stores
are things left over
the cam is set to flit from view to view
water drops make a JJ Abrams mosaic
on one pier seabirds stand one-legged
waiting for something to happen
wind and rain / I think
I'll wait too

February 19, 2019

Blank

today I resumed working
on my memoir-novel / a long break
I'm going through Quux's comments
which are mostly technical
a good way to ease into it
after I will dig deeper
Jenny said my grandfather was a blank
I made him me / I am that blank

February 20, 2019

Kalyna

the way to make things
is one bit at a time
some things can be worked out
in pieces / others need the wholeness
I want the words to smoothly go down
I want them to fill you with life
I want you to see them / see him
see all the hers in the story
the tangle of it I want to be
like the life you have led
and are leading

February 21, 2019

Ferry

watching Northlink come in
7:15 or so every morning
quick up the harbor
slow into its berth
the front opens / cars emerge
clockwork / from afar

February 22, 2019

Water Fall

little signs
she hides them
so when I point them out
she shuffles aside
denies / the question becomes
to whom do we listen
our trickle of humanity
or the flood of reason

February 23, 2019

The Road Forks

ok / you come to that god damned fork
one branch looks normal
the other intriguing
one that is smart / and everyone knows it
the other / everyone will shout in derision
but inside you know one of them only
is the righty one / reasonably right
emotionally right / morally right
and damn it
it's the normal one
turn that way and walk down it
maybe remember the look of the other
but doubt this time is wrong

February 24, 2019

The Winter of 1818

snow suddenly melted by violent rain
water rushed down the valley of the Merrimack
with the greatest fury / tearing up ice
two feet thick / the noise and convulsions of an earthquake
driven into immense dams the ice rolled and flew about
in every possible direction
the river raised twenty-one feet
above common high water mark
the country around inundated
buildings removed and destroyed cattle and sheep drowned
ruin spread on every side
the noble bridge across the Merrimack
at the Rocks Village became a total wreck
its fragments were soon lost
to sight in the angry
and resistless flood

February 25, 2019

Traditional Salvation

the work started
each word and syllable a chore
early chapters must go down easy
I read and read each sentence
looking for ways it goes wrong
in sense and music
rhythms need to flow or jerk to a stop just right
months more to do
the work started

February 26, 2019

Lerwick It Seems

on a wet street off Lerwick Harbor
just off the depths of a streetlight
everything is orange and gray
everything being streetlights and stone
it's a time when small waves beat
on a small patch of sand just below
she was waiting there just off from the streetlight
the rain was hard coming down on me
on her / we never talked that night
her long kiss was an ending I think
even though the cold pulled back that night
near that streetlight / lingered
as she walked away

February 27, 2019

Looking Toward Foula

guitars are still simple
each just strings with a way
to make the strings sound out
so when I sit alone in a field
of yellow straw above a clambering sea
on a day of wind and mist
you could wonder where the music goes
you could wonder which sounds I mean

February 28, 2019

Her, Here

watching / hard to know
she has a curiosity like old napkins
she calls me dearest and uses most
yet intimacy is too close
I've tried to teach her noticing
not the same as watching
it's the difference between
a sheep bring here and a sheep
about to be here

March 1, 2019

What A Body Learns

when you go to build your house
the land around you has a say
steep or rocky / muddy or dusty
you accommodate / you don't tools
too big for congeniality
some say adaptability is the ability
to force / more like the curves
of her body sliding into the crevices
of yours

March 2, 2019

Golden Light On The Lens

growing old
she's taken a vow of
no love / she believes
relationships take hold
she thinks sex might invade
but she's old and everyone
who might love her is old
leave it out is the way out

March 3, 2019

Just Your Facts

she pranced slowly
around the property
looking for any sign
of good ol' beauty
she covered it all
even though the brush
was thick and fallen
branches pokey
her arms behind her
back / her hands
joined like old lovers'
in the end she said
get rid of it

March 4, 2019

Attractions

stay at home / read
let the old thoughts
come back like small waves
following a lowering tide
rejection is on the menu
this year / last one and next
I presume / I am friends
with this keyboard
some way I'm the master
the keys though pull
my fingers to them
like my lovers used to

March 5, 2019

Again

when things are not perfect
now I go a little bonkers
now the waiting game
nothing has been lost
I feel lost
tomorrow I think

March 6, 2019

Memory

not working
but these are just photos
rarely accessed
I can learn to live
with them being offline a bit
not entirely
I need to keep working on a solution

March 7, 2019

Northlink

always fixing something
my role / I am less good
at it now / every night
I watch the Northlink come in
if there is time / I am distracted
from fixing through fixation

March 8, 2019

Philosophy On Land and Sea

there is a deep hole
in the cliff which drops
down to a sea not ready
to take it easy
not far from that cliff
is a croft that was situated
by a man using only his small
pick and shovel / the hole
proved attractive to strangers
who then wandered by his croft
to see the depth of that hole
what's so special about the accidents
of nature that make them hold
men more tightly than the accidents
of humanity that bind men to land

March 9, 2019

Gestures & Meaning

a man and a woman meet
on the street in Paris
in Amsterdam / they pretend kiss
a nice gesture / warmth / humanity
do you know to whom
this has never happened?
me

March 10, 2019

The Artist

Miss Catherine had her full share
of feminine vanity at the age
of thirty-five she was stout
dumpy / a coarse-looking woman
awkward in her movements
provincial in her accent and manner
but as her son was vain
of his personal appearance
especially of his hands
neck / ears / so she when other charms
had vanished clung to her pride in her
arms and hands

March 11, 2019

Regret in Spades

a unit of regret

I wish we were planning our trip
again to Shetland / longer
and slower this time
but I've shooed her off
and she's off / I can't think
of another companion

March 12, 2019

Wildness

the regret of it all
summons thoughts of
how to undo it all
I harbor a sadness
that is beyond melancholy
but not quite to fear
one day people will file
past a thing made to
represent me / I will
be long gone

March 13, 2019

Sheep

let go of the usual
and familiar / embrace surprises
even bad ones / don't worry
all the time / work hard
but watch for wind and moving water
trace the coast / the tree tops
be alive if you can

March 14, 2019

No Lightning, Though

it rains
hard every night
sometimes the drops look like snow
feel like snow
it rains
steadily sometimes and the water
flows down to the burn
then out to the North Sea
our roof is thatch
and we worry one day
it will fall to the rain
or one day it will rot to the core
for now the old woman and I
just sleep in wool blanket covered beds
with soft down
pillows but we don't
listen to rain because
with the thatch and the stone walls
and thick North Sea proof windows
there is nothing to hear
here

March 15, 2019

Ugh on Code

the details slow me down
sometimes planning might help
you'd think it'd be easy
but the code grows
the ideas are simple
but they need to be right
and precise
and timely

March 16, 2019

On a Road to the Sea

walking toward the sea
light mist and wispy clouds
a cool day but I was walking hard
away I thought
from a wreck of a time
she drove by / I think
it looked like her but
the window was covered in drops
from the rain / from her thoughts
I thought it was her
instead the road kept on
the sea kept on
up and down the scales
it all kept on

March 17, 2019

Every Step

turns out I'm too simple
for the likes of her
she says men are not interesting
at first I thought what
a bitch but you know
every time she speaks
true truth the correctness of it
by the time it comes around
she's on to the next

March 18, 2019

Big X Bugs

some things fixed
maybe more broken
we hate customer service

March 19, 2019

Unique & Stark

stark / unique
rain in the air
he lost her for being a lone
hunter on a path
he is fated to alone
but it's just a tv show
the writers cannot take happy
he deserved it

March 20, 2019

Looking at Maps

I wanted to explore more
be more in a few places
and less going everywhere
we got an overview but no closeups
low clouds and all that
cool and some wind
gulls and seabirds everywhere
what a place to disappear

March 21, 2019

Marriage Place

what is deplorable is forgiven
and who is is as well
a great power bulldozed the best place
and I miss it
as if a rain forest became a desert
one can love either
but you can miss just one
who will be forgiven
this time

March 22, 2019

Calming

breezy / nothing to do
it ruffles the wavetops
west to east / even the big
boat moored to the pier
rocks and sways
the woman who doesn't love me
loves all these / as the wind
takes over people slowly wake
women start making the world work
I just watch the wavetops ruffle

March 23, 2019

In An Odd Key

an accepted form
a ways of putting them
together / the style
structure / the syntax
while the content slurries out
the past has strangeness
the future will have strangeness
to us / we have the familiar
and the boring sameness

March 24, 2019

Jenny

how can she make such thoughts
strange connections / very
postmodern / as if a fast
bird were skimming an odd text
and grabbing words and phrase
like an osprey catches fish

March 25, 2019

Hidden Lovers

every day I scour a map
looking for places
for a place
I have this dream to disappear
with people looking but
not hard / for me
Shetland for example
who even knows where it is
even the BBC show doesn't tell us
enough to make every place
open / still places to hide

March 26, 2019

Farm

even as old as 15
I walked the small roads
and paths of our farm
to step out of the house
and still be within something
I owned can never be matched
again / not a small patch
but one large enough to take
time to cross / it meant
I could look at each spot
many times / each time
for a long time / there were places
to hide / to doze / to run
things to pick up / trees
to climb / fields to lie in
all but mine

March 27, 2019

Bad Poem

did I get better
stay bad / become worse
my way with words diminished
it's like that with men
who are fresh young poets
they become old ones of plain speech
so how to go back or get better
or become unique / stifle the loss
stop age / stop rot

March 28, 2019

My Barn

the barn gray from age
inside white from whitewash
no one knew then and around there
how old it was / framed in handhewn beams
wood dowels for joinery
the walls were not solid but gapped
and light would flicker on dust motes
from the yellow straw and hay
inside it smelled every way it could
from the dried hay and grains
the piss / the shit / chickens
cows / a pig sometimes and from the past
horses and leather harnesses and reins
the barn sat on a raised hillock
to make making a sort of basement easy
a wagon / rakes / a mower stored there
the barn gone / no one knew

March 29, 2019

Tale of Robbers

their appeal was robbing banks
unfaithful love / the running
and getting away / the killing of cops
when banks were thought evil
when were they not
and the depression put most out
of their homes and into
break lines / Hooverilles
when it was over they all
surrounded the car and stole
they all went to the services
it was a time when order
escaped

March 30, 2019

InkWell Writ Large

the only other noisiness is the brush
of elementary northwester and compressible flake
the woods are aesthetical glooming and heavy

the only other caroler is the difficulty
of condemnable levanter and traversable Appalachians
the forests are aesthetical necessitous and diabolic

the only other smarting is the case
of line draft and weak break
the woods are seamed garbed and galled

the only other trespass is the shank
of cagey squall and haired scrap
the bosks are thorny grim and icky

March 31, 2019

Eyes For Her

the only other bunce is the dink
of small-scale foehn and crustose clast
the bosks are staid drear and hale

this is how the web is formed
the way departures go at sundown
when we meet cinq à sept
in our lonely manner
a woman who needs only the man
who eyes her by glance
across what was once
a smokey room over whisky
then it's a bunce

April 1, 2019

On Death

death reveals our secrets
without energy to hide them
they wiggle out from under the rugs
the question will be who cares
will the secrets let loose
overshadow the feel of a cold hand
a cold cheek / a silence

April 2, 2019

Full Slant

when the ferry comes in at 7am
the webcam can take the scene as blue
does this mean that the atmosphere is dreaded
or that someone's mood is not good
does it mean the camera white balance is off
in this scene I see that whisked water
tingled by wind and distant waves
a slantful of rain / drops on the lens

April 3, 2019

A Ness

what happens when the mysteries
come up just enough to be known
as mysteries / I mean
when we didn't see them we didn't wonder
that means they weren't mysteries
only unknowns / how sad can it be
to not know and not know
to have something wonderful
on the other side of something
we can't look in back of

April 4, 2019

Homing

once I was clever
not an at last thing
but a memory
a once upon a time thing
now it's all a little harder
once my mind was speed of light
now light on the speed
I hope for a trip home soon
to redo my memories

April 5, 2019

Northlink

little boats going around the point
a big one coming in from the mainland
light sneaking under clouds just past dawn
and the idea of rain not far off
low tide is a such a thing to see
green fragments of netting and seaweed
mussels and seals by a shorebird pecking
they swim out / they swim away
pipes drain water into the sea
it's a sight to see / it's a dirty world
but real to me and to the passengers on the ferry
who will meet the town hard by dawn
and their rooms not yet ready for
their long delayed sleep

April 6, 2019

I Pray the Lord My Soul

I never slept alone
outside in the woods
even in a tent
never alone
I had fear and it was with me
I could never get over it
when my parents were away
and I was alone overnight
I kept the knife by my bed
lights on everywhere
I planned that one day I would
have a full scale defense system
with lights and sirens
I am still nervous

April 7, 2019

Sail Away

she of course is the hard won
nonlover / too old / too turned away
to admit to anything / a friend I suppose
she doesn't tantalize / she thinks hard
though and writes like she's mad
I wonder which of us will speak
at the other's last gathering

April 8, 2019

Victoria Pier

the pillars of light on the rough water
harborside between me and the roadway
a pilot boat between are yellow and blue
two yellow three blue and one can wonder
why / it's the lights that make them
sodium ones for yellow and the others
just incandescent / some say blue lights
reduce crime / make a safer alley
a place where lovers meet not victims
but I'm talking the small islands
where everyone knows everyone
and crime is a family thing
the lights though / I simply watch them
over the airwaves more or less
half our world away

April 9, 2019

Slowly Dawning

ideas come slowly sometimes
working on things you miss the later obvious
am I slow or is it the nature of the universe

April 10, 2019

Trumpville

every day I read cruelty
that I share this world with them
requires sadness / I crave the simplicity
of kindness

April 11, 2019

GC

when we figure what the rest of our lives brings
sometimes it brings culling of friends
who don't fit any more / I am about to become
one who was culled / it can be sad

April 12, 2019

Ness Bound

the nature of a short letter
written fast but therefore
with emotions unhidden
I would read each one thrice
to force those tears into the skin
covering the least protected part
of me

April 13, 2019

Ships in Summer

in Summer the lakes shimmies slowly
the motes and small bugs in the air
form a rhythm of flakes / the sounds
of bird and insects making their reports
in the humid midafternoon air fill me
with regret for the ways I've fallen
how I've fallen / when I've fallen
from where I sit the distance
is a comfort but I must wait
for some of it to pass

April 14, 2019

You're All I've Got

reckoning all that's gone before
I find little that flatters
the field / the big rock I'd doze behind
the dust from dried hay
these are my talismans
when I picture me in a warm cottage
in a cold but snowless landscape
with a woman old or young
all I picture is the big rock
all I feel is the humid summer air

April 15, 2019

Overload

here's a thought
are beauty and simplicity
unrelated / does the beautiful
require complexity
what else would make us stare
make us wonder

April 16, 2019

Rocked And Rolled Hair

looking out over Victoria Pier
what I thought was the Northlink
heading down harbor toward Kirkwall
really was an old woman pouring grits
into a pot of boiling water to go
with the flats of fish frying next
to it / and what I thought was the pilot
boat heading back dockside was actually
her hair slipping out of its crossed chopstick
holding pattern / and what I thought was the last taxi
on Victoria was her assurance food
was all she had

April 17, 2019

Special D

I'm sorry I loved you
oh / for forty years
and that we had those kids
I'm sorry you took the left
side of the bed when I really
wanted the middle
I'm sorry I left the peanut butter jar
open when the taxi came to take you to hospice
I forgot to rent that strange bed
where the feeding tubes and recliner
lever meet by your left elbow
I'm sorry love started all this
I can fix that now

April 18, 2019

Your Love Like A Taco

at noon the bells stopped ringing
though the special day was just starting
you Skyped me but I didn't know which phone
to choose / we looked forward to those bells
because everything else about us we decided
to hate / even when the water is cold
boats still head out to sea / to fish
I had never tasted Mexican food before
I became head chef to the best Mexican
place in La Jolla / you laughed about that
until the burritos were served

April 19, 2019

Going Out

huge boats offshore
ducking behind light fog
they are stationed to do something big
they carry loads that make women blush
I can follow their wakes through the harbor
check the cameras for ghosts
query fish if I could
you were on one once / you escaped

April 20, 2019

Joy of Computing

trying to figure the subsymmetries
using a genetic algorithm
to outsmart a smart guy
but years / no / decades later
not sure it will work
but it will take a long time

April 21, 2019

Easter We Played Cards

whist / kerosene which I think was casino
Boston Nana made eggs / the fancy ones
I'd pour beer for Mike until the foam
was an inch above the rim of the glass
somewhere I have a tape recording of our games
we'd pick them up at the Lithuanian Citizens Club
in Lawrence but perhaps it was just a bar
they took the train up from South Station
sometimes if the weather was good
we'd work in the woods / cutting lumber
clearing brush / kielbasi for most meals
now everyone's gone but me
everything's gone but my things
type type type

April 22, 2019

River Style

sitting there
in the car
cold but we did not touch
since then I have dreams of my mother
is this what she is / was
across the river lights came on outside
in a lawn and cars drove down the one way road
there was a woman there too
many across that river
instead I put my hands in her hat
those hands and hat on her leg
but we did not touch

April 23, 2019

Safety Factor

some don't understand flirting
for example / what it is
they say / let's do this together
in a far off place but they know
the official one will not come along
and make it safe / the safety comes with age
too old / too old

April 24, 2019

Little Hut

young / I built a small
hut / a pretend one for sure
it had cut branches to hint a roof
and princess pines for a decent bed
leading to it from the small road
in our woods was a path through brush
I made with an axe / my father
and grandfather worked at the end of that road
cutting hemlock for beams
imagine what they thought

April 25, 2019

Big Waitress

before pre-dawn the big waitress
is pouring coffee / the doughnuts just arrived
are passed out / the men in her diner
wear seed caps and baseball caps
they sit hunched and at best murmur
the cooks flips everything he cooks
he uses butter for lard and grease
it's an expensive cheap place off an interstate
in Kansas / not one of the major ones
farmers and truckers / men with reasons to be up
they work / the big waitress works
in a small rented room I think I'm working too
just writing this

April 26, 2019

Choose Grits

the coffee's bad
the bacon too soft / too fat
the eggs run like sad sunny days
I choose grits over hash browns
because North Carolina
I'm a writer with little truck experience
son of farmers I don't farm
a writer in a hybrid Avalon
in Western Kansas
two hours before dawn
where's my big waitress

April 27, 2019

Victoria Pier

2:20am / four people
at the end of Victoria Pier
sitting on cans
a calm night with just some breeze
suddenly they stand and walk slowly
toward the street / a car pulls up there
backs up / waiting
they don't hurry / one of them drops something
they all look down / at the car one of them talks to the driver
the webcam has panned so he's all I can see
the car moves off / he gets in his own car
the others apparently walk away
up Church Road / but
the webcam swings around / stopping every 30 degrees
when it gets back to the end of Victoria Pier
they are there again / this time behind a shed
they light cigs / what kind?

April 28, 2019

Vic Pier Glass

suddenly Lerwick Harbor is glassed over
calm as the sun
comes up / the Statsraad Lehmkuhl
at the end of Victoria Pier
a man walks along the dockside road
he is not alone / behind him his
shadow on a wall / in the water his reflection
three of him there / none of me there
except my eyes transmitted by packets
across the world / seabirds settle
they take it all in

April 29, 2019

Upriver

days lengthening / warming
soon I'll be awaiting the change of tides
I'll dine nicely / last time with her
we ate well but not often
she didn't like what she saw there
it had no substance she could see
I became nothing or at least not much
the river now heads downriver

April 30, 2019

Clever Light

light outside
4:30am Lerwick
this place pushes its strange
into you / through you
your head so different from before
it thinks newly
blue is the light now
the lenses are sparkling from dew or rain
looking toward the lighthouse
outside the harbor's calm
I think of her

May 1, 2019

CA

he worked all his life for a strange dream
where he knew how to fix the world and no one else did
he was always fired / because of that I think
he said things over and over
he wanted to see the sun at least once a day

May 2, 2019

What Is It About You

small streams turn to surging ones
pipes empty into large places
water from winter is on its way to the ocean
people need eyes to notice the profound
when you see it / others become blind
they become fools / water flows more slowly

May 3, 2019

Where?

sometimes I try to find
places on the map that correspond
to webcam placements / I sometimes do ok
some places are hard to pin down
like from Fjara south / those weird buildings
can't place them

May 4, 2019

My Number

23

they call my number and I grab
the burgers and Suzie Qs / large lemonade
not much ice
I load up on napkins and take the bag and drink
out to the picnic tables
I head to one under a tree
I take out the burgers and tear open the bag
eat the Suzie Qs first / watch clouds and sky
small birds and the big lawn
crows off in pine trees
when I listen with effort
I hear thunder off to the west
coming down my valley
though I live nowhere near here
then the burgers dressed in pickles and mayo
did I mention New England
like a mysterious poem I return every year
this is one of my stops
mayo on burgers / never had them when I lived here

May 5, 2019

Duende

sometimes I read my old work
I wonder who wrote it
so much better sentences than I can write now
it's as if I could think faster
had more words in my bucket
Jo says she'll rent me out to her
to help her with her bucket
perhaps one day the three of us will feed cats
on the shore of a northern island
after the gales winds die down
before dawn bursts with surprise

May 6, 2019

The Promise

I'd be there now
heading around the farm loop
after a good dinner in Merrimac Square
or perhaps a beach pizza from Merrimack Street in Haverhill
down to the river to watch bridge lights
I am filled with sadness that my life
lived up to no expectations
that what I made is small and flawed

May 7, 2019

All Weather

small town life / streams from farms
passing through town to the river
roads designed by cows and farmers
barns for hay and wintering
coal oil stoves and heaters
pot belly stoves for warming
oval carpets from woven rags
wooden chairs still in use from a century ago
I've got my rubber boots for the bad days
a straw cap for the good

May 8, 2019

Gale

long winter waiting for ships
supplies wearing down
the storms don't stop
slanting rain / hale
heavy snow / waves pound
boulders closer
we cling for warmth

May 9, 2019

eMiLy Told Me About TS

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

May is

A day of unmitigated beauty and
Beauty of the moon.

The moon has no place.

May 10, 2019

I Let It Slip Past

the room darkened as we talked
after enough time had passed
she was lit by the dimmest light
I was on the other side of the screen
on the other side of the world
she disappeared to get a beer
when she came back her hair was down
yes / it's old hair but it's white gray and some black
after enough time had passed
she was unlit / I mentioned it
she turned on the smallest light
then studiously put her hair
back up

May 11, 2019

Cams

I have collapsed into myself
fearful of most anything
I never expected this
so each night I watch the ferry come in
where it's early morning
I try to pick it up on the most cams
I am afraid of what would happen
if I didn't

May 12, 2019

Single Day

writing / trying to figure things out
trying to work well with her
she is a hard one
smarter / wiler
not sure what it is
I am cowed manifestly
I explain as best I can but it's not so musical
have I gone too far toward plain language

May 13, 2019

Itchy

I itch all over
the dry air around here
happens every year
I need lotion
the ferry comes in slow
it has traveled far last night
how many have dreams on it
how many with dry skin

May 14, 2019

Sigh

the beauty of the cams
looking over serene spots
water with a sky tint
what's the temperature
can't say so easily
she admits we miss it
but how does she know it
to court tomorrow for jury
sigh

May 15, 2019

Sigh Sigh

every juror's nightmare
on a panel to fill a high profile murder trial
three weeks / if seated I'd need to work nights
on my essay with Jenny
one way to think of it
half of me might be better than two
of anyone else on the jury
not seated yet / better not mention it

May 16, 2019

Banal

everything is banal
when they ask I'll tell them the nutty truth
my chops are as good as before
I would like to stop having so many responsibilities
I want the rainbow over the bridge
the hard girl in the back seat

May 17, 2019

OrLa La

two women dealing
with five children in a bath different temperaments
buzzing too noisy
on the edge losing patience
silly / foolish
cloudy dull / sad
golden bird well behaved
oiled slippery
the words describe the mood of the woman
on the left / the French phrase
oh là là

May 18, 2019

Windowing

almost a year
watching Lerwick cams
lots of boats birds and bikes
not a single person in a window
no shadows passing by windows
sunny / rainy / high winds / snow
no one warming in their homes
just me watching

May 19, 2019

Every Move

the more I work with her
the stranger she becomes
a combo of smarts and dumbs
she undoes her hair and twirls it
a white streak down the middle
black all around
in her pjs / wondering the simplest things
we miss similar things
but not ones that use the same words

May 20, 2019

You See

older things are stronger
the Tecla tied up and ready for Faroe
1917 / the Tecla is a fast sailor
built for the North Sea
her rigging is as traditional as tradition
a two mast Ketch with topsails
different sizes foresails
for light weather
heavy weather behind
more to come / like tides

May 21, 2019

UnSeated

still in the jury room
not called up yet
no one definitively seated
I go over in my head all the answers
I could give / none snarky
I hope / so far they are aimed
low / I must tell them how
I think / they won't like that

May 22, 2019

Very UnSeated

I made it out
never called into the jury box
everyone who spoke crisply
everyone with a serious education
was eliminated
I rehearsed my answers
which would have been complex
like how I would associate a strength of belief
and perhaps other measures
with each proposition
which they called facts
I vowed to explain that inferring intent
was abduction and hence guessing
I would have infuriated them

May 23, 2019

All Sierpinski On You

a grand view of small imaginations
as we step forward the landscape
repeats itself / goes inner
the lens makes for an odd shot
geometric and out of the nowhere
the next inner looping creates
long ago even though there was smoke
everywhere there could be smoke
there is smoke nowhere because
everywhere was overwhelming
so small / even now

May 24, 2019

TeXing

doing detail work doesn't work
well for me / I lose attention quick
I need to go over it and go over it
soon so shall she
then we'll be finished

May 25, 2019

Come As You Are

everything about the day is good
yellow and orange of the sun down low
about to rise / some heavy clouds about
but no wind / calm seas
a few new boats tied up
the cam swings its course
she said we're at the stage
where pjs are ok
such a busy calm day

May 26, 2019

Following

we beauty of a project
is that it ends
everyone involved turns away
time to read and write

May 27, 2019

Looking On The Harbor

when we talk on Skype
she looks everywhere but at me
because her camera is nowhere near the screen
I'm on / she is looking but seems not to
she's surprised how many Shetland poems I have
such obsession is not hers
what does she want is a good question
who am I another / she doesn't appreciate
I think the small sidelooks / the small
hand movements toward
or the color of a sky not long before dawn
though that dawn comes slowly from a strange angle
I can only write about it

May 28, 2019

QWAN

imagine a story
now write it down
is it literature
a story alone is not
it needs that thing Christopher Alexander called
the quality without a name
shall we name it

May 29, 2019

Craziness Happens

the club's chill-out area
by the entrance
under the stadium
some hot ones / gender not so known
world's best techno club
the woman with the green hat
and flowered fan / in a lowcut
a metal choker / I would give it up
for her / for me doing drag is a political decision
against the patriarchal masculine system
he said

May 30, 2019

Cliff Cam

the sun's rising
or better said
lowering down the cliff
to seabirds rousing
and jumping to the wind to fish
to soar / warm or cold
winter or summer
they are perched and nesting
pairs rattle bills against each other
it's the time of love
in middle spring

May 31, 2019

Pair Length

simple logic
not doing well with it
worry / maybe

June 1, 2019

Grass

wind hardly up
the wind turbine just only turning
early but the sun's above the light low clouds
by this harbor is a special medicine
that makes hyphenated words
like wind-voices and summer-burned
take the medicine then laugh
or cry or sit by the harbor

June 2, 2019

Hey Baby

the Fivla's tied up
an industrial looking ferry
not usually seen in Lerwick harbor
well she and I are just sitting
at the end of Victoria Pier
3am / time for bed / I turn to kiss her
I meet her on her cheek
like this for years
and the rest

June 3, 2019

Cleats

it's a sad song
not a dirge
but the wind's low
the tide's low
we are low by the pier
watching the rain wince down
to the sailboat's railings
there's a tarp over the spar
keeping them dry
we're not / we're hatless
we choose the words that sound
best not the ones that mean best

June 4, 2019

Best Shot

a problem of tense
past or present
future? / we don't have one
the words are just splats of thought
and pictures in our heads
we weave new ones when the old
don't work / the lights will never
go out

June 5, 2019

Puffin Cam

birds coming out of their burrows
before 5am to air their feathers
get ready to fly out to sea to fish
like little footballs with orange feet
the puffins seem wrong / lots wrong
it takes a while to get it
then the words are wrong

June 6, 2019

Luck

I went to dances
washed my hair before in the sink
my mother would drive
we'd pick up Kurkjian sometimes
cafeteria at Pentucket and sometimes
a band from Haverhill
I'd dance the slow ones with Miriam Briscoe
blond / where is she now
most of the girls I loved then
are wrecks now / dead or not there
what I thought was bad luck
was good

June 7, 2019

Notation

times goes on and she
seems less each time
we work together and it
becomes ordinary / like seeing the sunset
for days forever
she gets older
less appealing / allure is like that
the scope of interest
declines

June 8, 2019

Rocks Village Bridge

the bridge back then
I'd cross it every day on my bike
the planks had gaps
the asphalt stuck onto the middles of each
the gray oily water below
the smell of shit
dead fish / I was scared each time across
how many years of nightmares
dozens

June 9, 2019

Fetlar

is it an obsession
the desire of the faraway cold place
with a strange old woman who can never
be anything / are the projects real
made up for the adventure
I'll have to confess it all soon
not to assuage blame
but to explain insanity

June 10, 2019

Skip

tonight is one of the those nights
when there is too much work really
to write a decent poem / life is like
that

June 11, 2019

Heat Wave

sweating / a tough day
power on / off
the copyeditor going a little crazy
editing F. Scott Fitzgerald
hard to know what to make of it
I hope it will all work out
it is so hot

June 12, 2019

Bye

she finally admitted
what I knew
she doesn't and never has
trusted me / feels uncomfortable
colleagues only seems the thing
but maybe not even that
if you know me you know
I hide from people
who don't like me
I think no Shetland
ever again

June 13, 2019

More Than

I am alone now
all work away
I want to never speak
to be a comfort for myself
I will flop into the sea
never return
a poem like this one
that's what I'll be

June 14, 2019

The Right Thing

still not done with this stupid essay
because the publication cannot deal with anything
one step away / how to cope
well should anyone care

June 15, 2019

De-

rain dumped last night
all the drains reamed
I think the wind was up too
water down runnels on the edges
of steep streets
I'm warmed by a warm body
dawn was up hours ago
but still in the night
now that it's over
the quiet is pressing

June 16, 2019

Bought Normally

with the family of bookmark's kindergarten friends
I had a barbecue in the garden
put on father's day / wedding anniversary / various reasons
super good meat in the air!
a level of meat that will never be bought
normally lol

thanks to the matured meat steak
and the red wine marriage
it was too nice

the weather is just as good as it is
kids are very happy to play
my parents eat delicious
and they are very happy

it was a good saturday

June 17, 2019

Let Them Know

I stand in shame
and won't forgive the humiliation that led to it
she could have been more kind
instead she got back
decide what to do

June 18, 2019

My Bench

nice view out to sea
I would sit by that bay
but expense and friend lack
prevents it
I am stubbornly kept in my own box
I don't speak
I hardly move
lots of reasons to look
out to sea

June 19, 2019

With Somebody

the sky smeared and striated by clouds
4:25am / off to the left / to the west
the sun has already looped around the pole
throws a pink light to the right where everything
is blue / except the bright flat fronts of buildings
on the harbor / no one is moving it seems
a woman wishing for more turns from side to side
at first toward a love but in the end away

June 20, 2019

Shetland Hire Cars

the small cars make the strongest stops
pedals too close together make large feet
stop it quick when the brake's too close
to the clutch / those Brits
and in Shetland too / not many larger cars
she rented one and thought she could drive it
what she did those twenty minutes
was too funny / I won't go back

June 21, 2019

Poetry

we speak of it now like jokes
fifty years after
how JK lusted for CS
and also NH / how he had yearned for kisses
but had no nerve / now these years later
NH is ok / CS not so much and they all laugh
like puppy love and oh our youth
I still feel the sting / what Sappho might call
sweetbitter / at first sweet as a promise
at last bitter / a dry death

June 22, 2019

Never There

a sharp morning
red and orange light making the small harbor town
crisp and alert
it's old / the water is almost a mirror
flat you'd think but the curve is somewhere
no one is up / the sun where it is now
is not far from where it set
we're above 60 degrees / the mark of stubborn north
when I look at the old photos the beauty is there
and I missed it then I think / all more
to miss it now

June 23, 2019

Without You

every evening I report the news
what I think / what I thought
I don't report what she's done
because she's severed what little we had
her moment to speak true / my moment too
next I'll return to my safety place
to wander and more / I'll visit some
but just look mostly
sit in my spots / she was there once
found it a big nothing

June 24, 2019

Neverland

when I go there imagining
the views are blocked and everything's too tightly
close by / rain greens and blocks
the sheep are on their bellies waiting
I'm waiting too / I'll never go there again with her
but without her is unimaginable / but it's me
made it so / my bad traits too tightly close by
too wet

June 25, 2019

Fivla

it's MV Fivla for now
Leirna out of service for some reason
Summer so the passenger load is high
she'll stay there / me here
we'll meet every week somewhere
she reminded me of the poly on the barbwire
the symbol of our love
for Shetland and the smell of sheep
the cold fish / the smell of the Rayburn
maybe the ferry is saying something

June 26, 2019

Farewell

the bridge / the suzies / the burgers
the lobster / the frappes / the tonic
the beach pizza / the jabberwocky
Haverhill / Merrimac / Amesbury / Newburyport
West Newbury / Groveland / Tamworth
but the bridge and my evenings there
what I need is a strong dose of forgotten
with you at the center / the center
becoming a healed over hole

June 27, 2019

Fish and a Walk

the river was soft today
I sat by it for a couple hours
not hot / not cold
birds jumping in it to fish
a man walking to Amesbury asked me the way
he was happy with my answer

June 28, 2019

Sigh

on my nerves
and it's hot
my favorite places on vacation now
wrong time / had to unfollow a friend

June 29, 2019

Song Bird

fog coming up
from swampy fields
and the edges of roads
humid I suppose
with a change to cold
Kurkjian said don't renew
her contract / she drains
returns nothing / she says
it's about trust and if
she doesn't have it
why should I

June 30, 2019

Ma

the hat
delaney's
martha's
places to eat on 110
ice cream and clams
my mother might go there
cahill's toward Haverhill
don't forget the tracks in the road
she would find the world hard against her
fog behind a gauze curtain

July 1, 2019

Cobbler's Beavers

beaver pond with tannic acid
on the far side bullfrogs warping
it seems calm and natural
but beaver-made / is it different
from man-made / two dams
well engineered / lasting for decades
with regular maintenance

July 2, 2019

After Dinner

she was walking down River Street
gauze pants with the sun behind her
walking toward me / I could see
it all made sense then but now
I need to imagine the photos
that could have been had

July 3, 2019

Shakers

they invented ways
to save time
to make time
to worship and reflect
but never do they mingle
the men with the women
they reproduce by acquisition

July 4, 2019

Shaker Urge

only at the top of the hill
does the setting sun invade the dwelling
all those windows otherwise useless
then / the woman yet streaming lust
can't find the key to unlock that door
there is no key / no door
instead she waits for a passerby
to stop / to think / to make her child
a sister and then the lust becomes mother
and the hens all cluck a lock step mutter

July 5, 2019

Shake It Up

a day off from the drive
sad all day and anxious for the waste
if I lived at Canterbury
I'd be eating in silence now
with the same sadness and anxiety
no one to share with
the sunsets provoke me to anger
there always the wayback fence
and pond beyond where once we dipped
in skinny and drive was under water

July 6, 2019

Downpour Undoing

so when the cloud bursts
as no poet would ever say
it's fast duck under a tree mode
and you hope it's summer
leaves you see
if you're near a river
the river rising is a dosage of pretty
and the sounds of heavy drips
and river sliding past bank
never a better sound
normally I'd want her with me
but that's all done
she likes it dry now

July 7, 2019

Brown Sugar in Newburyport

a waitress with dreads in blonde
she's older but not
she walks loose
she served sweet
her pink long skirt not from around here
I wondered about her

July 8, 2019

Skip's

so many to love
no choice / no chance
her hair tightens to a tight bun
but long on her when she is she
she loves to see me
the first time
then she loves
to ignore

July 9, 2019

If Not A Girl

the pretty ones go first
in various ways they go first
if you're looking for something to last
look to the written word
never stop

July 10, 2019

Desire I Suppose

a man's desire is like a meteor
long burn through female sky
then a quick stop and deep sleep
a woman's desire is like a tornado
spinning to high fever / lifting
everything it meets

July 11, 2019

Hard Shell or Fur

how to move ahead
with a woman who teases
but mistrusts
she digs like a gopher
but is hard as slate
she seems to wonder how places make people
but doesn't know much about people

July 12, 2019

Downstream

the river rushed upstream
those few days I sat by it
it made the sounds of lovemaking
little vortexes in a flimsy row
how does such a tide end upstream
I haven't seen it
I suppose it's not a wall
when I approach her it's like that
the tide stops / the river once
again flows

July 13, 2019

Unloved

no one said old age
would make you unloved
I think I knew that when young
but maturity said no that
doesn't make sense
well / it does

July 14, 2019

Shit To Do

the last time I was there
I forgot to walk every woods road
I didn't visit the barn
I didn't lie down in the big field
I didn't walk back to where Snooks was buried
I didn't visit the princess pines
I didn't look into the stupid crude shack I built in the special clearing
I didn't check out the blueberry patches
I didn't do shit

July 15, 2019

Weesp Woman

she knows sitting
near the bank of the Vecht
the things that made her life live
are gone / dying
she trusts no one to tell
she whispers little tickles of her hurt
listening hard you can hear not
the words falling from her mouth
the tears falling from everywhere else

July 16, 2019

Riding Low

she asks and asks
I listen only halfly
her time is draining
I can't stop making mistakes
I want high wind
horizontal rain

July 17, 2019

Underish

the bridge doesn't care
the life near it not dear
wind from somewhere else

July 18, 2019

Late Afternoon

5am full light
don't spend winter with her
like a cold highschool date
a dry hump / the birds huddled into hollows
there could be warmth / it's the opposite
now / sight and smell

July 19, 2019

My No Story

what can it mean
the roads now paved well
before just oil on sand
humped in the middle
I once thought symbolism
was key / fix it first
then write the story
how wrong was that

July 20, 2019

Heroic

who writes the spec
must stare into the turning heart
of the most mindless reader
someone whose raw skin
has been scratched by the breath
wrong makers / the words back up
erase / swap as gravity erases space

July 21, 2019

Nobody

vernacular wins
think locally
act locally
when we tour Oswego
it's an issue for reality
making little sense
the skirt and shorts
so short
the tattoos so covering
the skin canvas stretched
something wrong is something

July 22, 2019

Hat To Go

I'm as tired as anyone
can be while not
moving a muscle
back not in gear
a new hat from Ireland or Scotland
maybe and
the way it's made
is a long way from home

July 23, 2019

News To Go

my daughter engaged
she told me today
I was driving out of Portland OR
she was surprised I wasn't

July 24, 2019

Wasting A Way

tears as time wears
I want to stop the irrelevancy
I am unlike the ones who make history
my life was done wrong
from start to finish
I need to warn

July 25, 2019

Fade

as my end approaches
I note how shallowly I've lived
how what ordinary people love
I avoid / how joys for others are nothing
for me / my job is to lay this all out
with the time left
the time left

July 26, 2019

Detailed Energy

even though
she's more human/istic
she's less attuned to the one over there
she's dazzled by French wording making commonplace statements
she sees the theory not details
she doesn't know what invitations mean
she turns her back and says rub

sometimes I blur my eyes to better see
the world things / the malformed things
she gets strong glasses to see every detail
she misses the standing up world / she sees
a different eternity / I see the big flatlands
spread before me yellows / a tangerine
greens / stilted reds among reeds and fallen leaves
she says rub

July 27, 2019

Of Love Life

here's what love of life is
ceilings caved in / floors caved in
without the destroyed no one can bear
the heaviness of new life
when the rain slants down slanted streets
into shallow gutters made lovingly by
the now dead to a catchbasin shunting
to the harbor a shout goes up
a drinking song but where's the pub
where's the party / maybe just the gulls
or a rusty wheel / wait
is she up there on the hill
waiting to wail

July 28, 2019

Banked Fog

the fog thick around the docks
and masted boats tied up
the strait is clogged too
the ferry needs technological means
to come to port / birds used to seeing
where to fly and where to dive for food
are locked onto the docks
on rocks above waterline / they wait
we wait for the sun to burn it away
or wind to blow it away
or God to smirk it away
anyway we put more wood on the fire
more coal in the firebox
more peat by the backstone
everything is waiting except for the practitioners
of technology and followers of schedule

July 29, 2019

Their There

a place I never knew
I'd heard of it
but where was it
what did it mean
to me / now I can't dream
of anywhere else
the high bald hills
the stone houses
islands everywhere
cool all year
neither hot nor cold
I would live there and write
but other choices went awry

July 30, 2019

Her Reflection Teases

she appeared before me
frumpy / she said her natural elegance
fought against it / later
she said she was in her pajamas
au naturel / I supposed her hair
white on top she said
dark toward the back
toward the nape of her neck
she didn't try to absolve me
or soften her critique
she looked away many times
I felt something but pushed it aside
now her last husband dead
practicalities surface hard
I go back to the usual

July 31, 2019

Makers

the story is old
told at the hearth
where men and women are finally equal
men make the walls
women make the world within walls
her stuff ephemeral so archaeologists
are stumped / walls especially of stone
tell stories for centuries
hence men
it's not a matter of equality
but sense

August 1, 2019

My Turquoise Luck

the street curves up a narrow canyon
little changed in a century
way up there the sky's still blue
here the yellow lights reflect off
the wet street / there's a girl
walking uphill / carrying a small woven bag
her broad brim hat connects to her long
dark back-draping hair
her knit skirt is tight
her bikini top is small covering everything there
she walked past me and I tried to ask her
she said shuddup

August 2, 2019

Light Shining Through

the north is nervous
autumn approaches
the women who came and went
have gone again / finally the air
cools / up north
for some time stops
people slow / the loop is complete
plans are made
peat is cut and dried
no rivulets falling downhill
dawn is breaking

August 3, 2019

Neve McIntosh

she is quite the beauty
she turns her accent up to hide her girl self
her heavy brows makes her form serious
she strides across peat as if
there are many ways to love her
all distant / her arms bend back
when I approach

August 4, 2019

Shetland Writing

lots of pretty green to see today
but the fog is not far behind
cold weather and winter / all that
the time for writing is here
I am a slave to all sorts of words
sentences come and go
how to put them together
in the green grass
under the white fog
in the cold

August 5, 2019

Wake and Cry

the rain / the fog / the people waking
lights coming on / it takes time to live
even in a world where everything can be had
coming across on little boats is another way to do it
come on over and get what you need
fish on the way / some shellfish too
there is one light not yet on
a woman behind it still in bed
has the heavy blankets pulled up
she doesn't know why it's tears for her
maybe / it's because I'm here / she's there
the loneliness of distance

August 6, 2019

Mojave

the train slows through Mojave
I like the corner seat in Mama Coco's Mexican Grill and Bar
not a real name / hers / but the green chile
enchiladas bite hard around the palate
cerveza / they say there's only American junk
food here / Mama knows better / she serves everyone
even God when He's in town / He likes
the planes they dismantle / He wonders
if the spaceport will work out / mostly
he likes the rust

August 7, 2019

Learn People

I look for ways to program
what I want / people have documented
things badly / my recourse is to
hack around and try things
like wiggling the rope
to untie the knot

August 8, 2019

The Appeal

who doesn't love a rusty hulk
a brokeback barn / an old ditch
half filled with stenchy water
the best of all is a ware-
house with windows busted so long
ago there is glass dust under them
and the wavy parking is seen behind
walls drooling / we all crave death

August 9, 2019

Iconic Oak

some music so strange
so soft and filled with small notes
like a man walking up a slight hill
to find his remaining days
many slips on wet stones and laid-down branches
later he sits / back to a stonewall
a hard lesson to learn
the creaking insects hush the leaves already fallen
under the iconic oak / a man will find
the box holding back his future

August 10, 2019

Long Journey

a bit of a storm

I put on a record a wife once gave me
folk songs of Maine sung during rain
she left me many years ago
anyhow you don't want to know about her
the songs go well with our evening storm
I once wondered whether you would replace her
the storms are reward enough

August 11, 2019

Text Editors??

she's so helpless
with computers
trying to explain
text editors
what / implement a language / means
talking to her over artifacts
I'd rather spend the Winter
on Muckle Flugga

August 12, 2019

Swampy Paths

I needed more time to recover
perhaps I'm slipping away
one more trip east
maybe one to Shetland
I still can write and think I think
I still dream of the small paths through the woods
and how me alone there is central
all the trees / all the dull and soft land
mostly swamp / it was ours / it was mine
now I have nothing and it feels like it

August 13, 2019

That Smell

we try to learn what people mean
to read gestures / to savvy looks
some figure simple rules
I take a holistic approach
and use my nose
not figuratively / like
I sniff them deeply

August 14, 2019

Unst

they gather around the billiards table
many topics / none of them simple
some hard and irritable
just before voices rise
the table gets loud with sharp shots
duating off rails / clacking into pockets
voices stay low / business

August 15, 2019

Artful Sentences

facts and thoughts pile into a playground
called consciousness / some just outside
we pull on little tabs and the slithering
result is a train of thought
we believed it was all rational
but ha ha it's just a dada clump
suppose we say it without prune
perhaps we're mad / perhaps brilliant

August 16, 2019

Scott Miller

no one wanted to say
how he did it
how he killed himself
once locally obscure
later nationally obscure
he wrote songs / I was his boss for years
I gave him permission to tour and record
gave him permission / funny way to put it
he was the artist and I
a mere merchant

August 17, 2019

Take It, Louis

I picture myself in the background
having done the work
getting no credit
hidden / shy
this is my thing
she is the better presenter
the more interesting writer
I the deeper noticer
the less shallow or
more appropriately shallow
thinker / that's me

August 18, 2019

The Tips of Lovers

the deep rain piles up in the streets
places people made to push away the hardened world
the light piles up under sodium lights
and nearby a wave folds over then another
the woman who is not beautiful kisses
the name who is not beautiful in this scene
but we love them / who can make things like this
shipyard far away in the back of the embrace
lights on in the stone rimmed windows hint
life is acting out tonight / a story is acted
out tonight

August 19, 2019

One Such

can you imagine the lovers at the top of the world
in winter when there's no light / the rain and gales
keep them in / in all the universe nothing is as important
as what they do in just one of those nights / I had nights
like that once / just once / then a train rushing past
put me out of them / they say people get what they deserve

August 20, 2019

Winter Day

she wants to look younger
the small tip away from life
why fight / she says now her elegance
is timeless / that her young elegance
is an old elegance / she offers her mind
as proof / she nods as I nod

August 21, 2019

All Helly Up

is this house spiritual
not do spiritual things happen here
but the house itself / the house
alone aside from all eyes all senses
away from people / I'll leave that question
to photoshop / the photographer / photoeditor
makes those decisions with color balance
and targeted lighting

August 22, 2019

Leaving

what you want
if it isn't what she wants
it might as well not exist
she was thinking it over as they talked
on the rock shelf by the North Sea lapping at its creases
she pretended every answer
finally the last one that came to her
she said to him / after she left
he smiled some / the wind I suppose was chill

August 23, 2019

Finding

trying to find shooting locations
I'm good at it but I need maps
good ones and photos
deduction doesn't work well
always / but I've found places
I need this for the mood
Capote walking and looking
listening / I need that too
or make it up / rain doesn't help

August 24, 2019

Dating / Dying

we went on a date
I didn't know she was dying
I was thinking it could be a beginning
but she was working on an ending
why though
when we were done I wanted to take her home
instead she went for a walk / alone
by the harbor / later she told me
she thought about me / and what kind
of flowers she wanted me to bring

August 25, 2019

Quick

the fog came in quick
sunny then cold mist
birds flying high dove low
just barely missing the water
a big harbor full of boats
suddenly needing radar
the woman waiting down the pier
has been sitting for an hour
she has a small thermos / tea
I suppose / a tin of cookies
her hair's not shiny but it gleams
everything came in quick

August 26, 2019

Heartness

the crofts on Unst / more
humanity / the earth pulls them down
into her peat heart
right now fog covers everything
I've noticed my life
all seventy years of it
has been as well
the earth refuses to pull

August 27, 2019

Check

find my place and return to it
fanatically / like the last possible rub
one by one each thing will happen
one last time

August 28, 2019

Water Thoughts

at the bridge I will lament
what seemed like an intellectual connection
that turned out to be just a glitch
don't know what she would call it
I would say something like a structure
fallen into disuse and plenty of it

August 29, 2019

Bad Trip

something like heavy seas
sets our shared ship bed to swaying
through the long cold North Sea night
from a place just a place to a place
we love / she and I
once on land the world will explode
we'll talk with cease / for now we
hunker and hold like two old lovers

August 30, 2019

Thule Bar

the bars are open but not
interesting / this time of night
when the cute ones are already paired
or so the bucks think
the beer doesn't run out
pretzels and fried food
game on the screen
bartender's a job requiring
patience and curiosity
tolerance for boredom
hunger for novelty
the women all talk to you

August 31, 2019

Crap

as I get older things worry
me more / I panic easily
tonight the sewer again
we're in a hotel now
it could be a bad week
always on a holiday weekend

September 1, 2019

Crap, Crap, and Away

if you read crap
you're aware of the problem
solved quickly because
the city starts responsibility
right over our back fence
and it's free
crap away

September 2, 2019

CA Mistakes

still working to figure out
how to explain how Alexander went wrong
by writing code and checking it hard
for the mistakes of noticing
he made

September 3, 2019

What Was It All For?

I've been there
done some things
I was not good at much
but better than beginners
at many things
photos music writing
hacking research thinking
noticing riding bikes
driving some say making love
not great not even good
better than a beginner

September 4, 2019

She Sways

sometimes the work goes slowly
I wonder if it's deterioration
or just the work is hard
I notice I worry harder about small things
soon I will want someone to take charge
I am not feeling so in control
as when I knew less

September 5, 2019

ARG Passes

we were strange buds
making pizza / helping with mutts
we shared a skepticism of our field
we played music / badly / together
but well enough to be paid and sometimes
loved / I have tapes of him
he was maddening / so why now
why leave without a word
without a definitive hey man
as the notice remarked
very unexpected

September 6, 2019

Ron And Mary

who was Mary
why did she trouble him those ways
what did he owe her
what did she deserve
was it his obsession
did he have obsessions
she tolerated no one
allergic to everything
what was happening
how can I know

September 7, 2019

Last Skip

I will have just two days
to satisfy my burger needs
in Merrimac this time around
beach pizza otherwise and the Thai
and Rainbow crowd / I suppose
I'll take it all easier
perhaps a drive up to NH
I will relax more / take in less
be in the place not zooming
past it

September 8, 2019

Down

I feel decay coming on
I must step away from obligations
focus on writing my ending
the agony is unbearable

September 9, 2019

Tamworth

rain outside on the tin roof
not a tropical rain
I have the wood stove going
I'm reading / under a blanket in my soft chair
I want someone to warm by me
no one is here
I hear the piece of a puzzle
click into place / no one here

September 10, 2019

Hard September

even though early September
stormy seas / skies unhappy
birds under cover
the ferry approaches but drives forward hard / quick
urging itself into the harbor
where everything awaits

September 11, 2019

Ron

every time I move forward
on this Ron thing I come down limping
because something about it isn't fair
younger and maybe better suited to it
I'll watch his ashes

September 12, 2019

Wonderful

I'm looping on something not important
I should move on
then there's the Ron thing
and going to the lab for tests
wonderful

September 13, 2019

Ron

someone called him super overweight
someone else described him hunched over at his interview
someone referred to him as big blue for his constant attire
someone told me he'd been laid off again and couldn't find a job
I thought him invincible when it came to jobs
I thought him ever slim or at least fit
his friend seemed to me to be a witch who hated him
he became a recluse as life evaporated

September 14, 2019

Red Sunset Bologna Sandwich

how much we love stories
that start with one scene
and end with the same one
different in story ways
I'd watch the red skies to the west
dream of what I'd do once older
now I watch the red skies to the west
from the west of my youthful west
dream of what I'd hoped to do

September 15, 2019

Fourth of July

I met with his brothers
he had distanced himself from his mother
for the damage he said she did
a therapist was involved it seemed
and zoloft for depression
he paid her rent in Los Altos
paid to store his stuff at the Glass Slipper
lived at the Extended Stay
had fifteen storage lockers to pay for
no wonder no wonder
he found living too hard
we all cried all night
and all day

September 16, 2019

Bye Ron

Dave and Andy decided to start without Mary
so we all spoke and I read my things
the fogbank had vanished
Dave and Andy paddled their kayak slowly
but apace out around Johnson Pier
to the near breakwater to the north
Mary / Jo / I walked to the end of the pier
and soon they disappeared
a gull got Ron's Izzy's bagel
but he was ok with that
and we suppose his ashes blended well with the harbor water
they came back and we all ate
Rod picked up the tab
we came home and I sat there
still am

September 17, 2019

r6 vs r4(6)

the fog and funny clouds
passwords in the simplest code
the little clue from the clueless woman
the dog that didn't sit right away
the nebbish geek no one would fathom
the wind over seas in the cold of late summer
where'd you go

September 18, 2019

In The Bay

he decided I heard someone say
that having feelings was too risky
I was in a band they said he said
they had feelings / look what it got them
I was in that band / I had feelings
they said he sounded like he wanted to be Spock
the Star Trek one / for those of you reading
this in a hundred years / whop celebrated
having no feelings / now look at him

September 19, 2019

Tourist Iba

the first Portugal Lisbon couldn't go
to the most tourist place
the street where I stay
the colorful wall is standing toward the sky
as it is a narrow road to the narrow path
this thin road / car and tram fly
so time doesn't stop and moves
I don't feel the danger of being
in a security sense
but I feel like I'm in a good mood
cute but dirty / it was a very strange place
it might have been like this
when I was an image of my childhood

September 20, 2019

Porto

the linked buildings along the narrow street
shades of dulled pastel
chunks and blemishes abound
originally rough stones worn down
street numbers in cheesy plastic
or 1960s metal numerals
women here are not the prettiest
but they can work and love
they will make everything needed
the buildings are narrow to keep down taxes
the smell of sausage is faint / bright

September 21, 2019

Champaign Ill

the small park / the big house
we lived like nothing else for a year there
she was not a home builder but liked exotics
I was a timid student hoping for a life
no such thing as computers at home then
so I read and worked problems on paper
at the large table / the living room
sunk just in front / a double restaurant fridge
we lived a long cold year there and played
then away to the land of warm dreams

September 22, 2019

Iba LoLs

when I say lost metal
I haven't been able to take
a 1-bit metal in the Dora walk
I'm not walking too much lol
you guys are walking around
10 million steps lol

September 23, 2019

Truck Tires Line the Docks

heavy rain / high tide
the ferry comes in anyway
making big waves
they slap the truck tires lining the docks
big winds and autumn is here
the peerie shop / Thule bar
no one in the windows no matter the time of day
no matter the day of the year
a man walks down the main street
turns up an ally / someone waiting

September 24, 2019

When We Say Our Last Ones

when I arrive it will be the last days
I picture a story like this
a guitar man loses his bass player in North Dakota
the gig trail links ahead across the northern tier
tonight will be in Wolf Point just like last year
the new bass will fly in from LA
he learns fast / the guitar man is in his motel room
restringing his Strat / new strings every night
snow flurries and he wonders if the gig'll go on
North of there the tiny but chubby dyed blonde
hurries through her laundry / she idols the man
from last year / that evening she plans to wait around back
the stage area waiting for him to stop playing
but this time he won't / he will play for his lost bass player
who is flying out to LA to be sprinkled off
Ventura while the guitar player and lady singer
drink beers all day

September 25, 2019

Wolf Point Montana

in a stinky room in the Tip Top Motel
the guitar man is changing out his strings
Blue Steel 10s / he's put them through
the back of his Strat and is winding them up
with his tuning wrench / outside the light
rain has turned to heavy snow / he doesn't know
whether the replacement bass player will make
it today or if the gig's still on / he's been
dozing all day so far / next door the singer's
wondering why she has her own room
on the North Line she shares with him
they lost their bass player two days ago
in Stanley ND / flew him back out to LA
on runway 27 / aortic dissection the MD remarked
done tuning he plays the bassman's favorite licks
the singer dozes / up North just a bit
the wife who's waited a year is finishing the laundry
and is about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer

September 26, 2019

Scobey Montana

about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer
Scobey Montana / a little chubby since she married
she likes to horse around outside her home
she saw them down in Wolf Point last year
a warm year with a warm light west wind
sliding through Scobey then / through Wolf Point
she liked how he stood still behind the band
but held it together with springy rhythm strokes
and finger-pick-like textures / she was no music critic
she liked his white streaked flowing hair
his odd wah tone on leads / she liked how obvious
the singer's passion for him was / how she knew/guessed the singer's
husband was unaware / she wanted to see him play tonight
the heavy snow though starting up and the timid bar owner
maybe she'd miss them / just one night / the next day Havre
just too far / she reached inside her waistband
her husband out at Brendis's barn cleaning stalls
that upward chord move still lingering a full year later

September 27, 2019

Pillows

that upward chord move still lingering a full year later
she has the tape she made and plays it over and over
most days / she never clutched the truth of the singer's passion
thought it only part of the play the group made around the choice
of songs they played / the story they told to fit the songs
together aside from their flaws and mistakes / they were a party band
not a concert band / in the room next door the singer wondered
how hard the death would hit the band / hit the guitar player
she loved him sometimes / years ago on a tour / a decade later
on another / now the North Tier and here in the Missouri Breaks
she held a pillow between her legs she thought because of the cold
that came with the heavy snow and the wind from the West that wrestled
the light into dusk / she wished his arm over her side and cupping her
he did most nights and most mornings / instead if she listened hard
she could hear the plain song of the strings through the door between them
not fully closed / she knew it was closed / the guitar man had tears
the band was his and the bassman's / the new guy would be better
he knew because that's how agents worked / he needed to know the songs
right now / the bass the only guy who never stopped playing
he waited for the phone and soon it rang / he let it / then the phone
next door / she would get it and fate would follow on / up North she took hope
over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive

September 28, 2019

How True / So Tough

over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive
to the Wolf Point venue / like a cliché in her pickup / empty rifle mount
on the rear window / he bends the strings hard so they settle into their tuners
the under-window heater pops and flits out dust smoke from an idle season
he thinks he's been in this room before / he connects to the weak wifi
finds Living on a Prayer from the 12.12.12 concert and looks for the bass player
whose role is a simple bottom / Jon Bon Jovi gets the early words wrong
Tommy used to work on the docks, Mini's been on strike / he's down on his luck
how true / so tough / the grumbling interplay of Sambora's heavy rhythm intro
the bass's constant low line the drummer's dear downbeat shade over the mistakes
the women in the front row love it more / the guitar man remembers from Wolf Point the woman
who stood off stage right eyeing his fingers / a player he thought but it looked wrong
she didn't sway the way women do who lust for guitar men / she studied his fingers
what the left hand did quietly on the fretboard / what the right hand did for rhythm
the bassman would be to his left in front by a little / the bassman sang so stood forward
the singer would wander her knees deeply forward and back cranking her hips / he listened
for the sounds of his vibrato / how deep / how wide / how like the same kind of smear
passion makes in the right bed / how he knew all these things well forgotten / how true
the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside

September 29, 2019

Preparations

the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside
from the next room it's on we'll leave in two hours / the answer the phone gave
their rituals begin / hair body fingers stretching planning the meal / no bassman tonight
the replacement will meet them at the gig / he knows it won't be the same / he props his suitcase
lid open / does what he does / up North the woman prepares her story / the snow worries
the details so she invents different ones / her husband is cleaning his boot treads on the boot brush
nailed to the porch / after hearing her story he loads four bags of cement in the truck bed
he works his boots with a hoof pick / they live on the res / the singer strips and washes
everything / none of her is faked / she wears close black stretch pants and a loose black
long-sleeve tunic / she begins her warmups slow and low / the darkness coming on wakes her up
fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready

September 30, 2019

Quiet & Still

fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready
for what matters / up North she breaks free of the ranch / heads into the flaking future
she doesn't let herself think it but she loves the guitar man / has read all the online
articles blogs tweets and the grocery store checkout-line rags / she's read the reports of trysts
with the singer but the singer is too extravagant for him / she can hear that in his playing
her singing / the guitar player and bassman have been together every band and she can hear
the bassman in the guitar man's twisting licks / they are the couple / she's read that too
they rouse the drummer / he likes it late / their manager loads them all up minus one / they head
into town / when they play multiple nights in a town they mark down the best places / tonight
it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold

October 1, 2019

Care Crystal

it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold
her mind safely on the ground / this time she'll talk to him / ask him to take her / wherever
he goes / she will wait until the last reverberation of his last note is gone / she has packed
small things / they will buy her more later / she'll say she can sing / the guitar player sits
on a fixed seat too close to a fixed table / the burgers are dressed with mayo and options / the fries
cut into spirals / the bassman hated all of these fixings / he called them fixtures / he pronounced
interesting words wrong / when he read the words didn't sound in his ears / when leads went on he counted
measures / when you mentioned a song the bass note names came to mind or the relative note distances
aphantasia he called it / the singer was sullen / she's not been noticed since she found the bassman in his
bath / I thought he was alive but I touched him cold / five gigs canceled / the snow outside
can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down

October 2, 2019

Last Tumbleweed

can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down
on the road South to Wolfe Point / the woman grips the wheel like the reins on a bull / he is not
a mistake she thinks over and over then says over and over / the cement bags thump / at the café it's
sundaes for all / the drummer arrives late / waffles his thing / they jot down a set list / the guitar
player wonders what the new bass will be able to do / the singer lingers her hand on his wrist
outside the last tumbleweed bounds past / a snowplow scrapes by / the guitar player wonders whether they
will too tonight / the bassman's back in LA heading for hunoz where / he is dead to the world / nervous
for nothing / snow has made it to six inches / the chill to 24 degrees / won't snow much colder
up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony

October 3, 2019

Warm Air

up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony
a sundae each on the cold night / they stand for leaving and the singer clutches the guitar player
outside they walk and slide to the manager's van and hope the cold's not torqued the guitars too much
he idles the van till the heater blasts warm / the van makes it slowly toward the venue
the snow's been crushed into wet ruts whose sides are splashed onto parked cars as they drive past
up North the roads are worse / no plows yet so the pickup is hub deep in snow / she is used to it
she pictures clutching him / the heater blasts warm / they could make it to the coast
in two days / set up a home / listen to tunes all day / wrap all night / it's better
than it's ever been for her / at least her dream is hers / the world near her is good at
changing the rules / good at burying her upward glances / in the distance she notes the flickering
home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up

October 4, 2019

Just Fear

the fear of travel kicks in
hard time to even figure out the gate
boarding pass isn't obviously for the right terminal
small plane / then returning an issue
fear just fear / afraid

October 5, 2019

Made It

last of the drives for many months
good day sunny day rushed day
a hasty meal at the cemetery
but I visited all / crossed the bridge
didn't go past the farm / it's so different
only the shape of the land is relevant
I am in Ottawa

October 6, 2019

Radio Time

the shape of the marriage place
is slowly restoring / I find my memories
a little off putting / I recall the nights
when we played out and Amy would sing her sad song
then walk off stage when I took over
stepping to the back beat / what is it about
improvised music that each one knows what to do
to make the music not static

October 7, 2019

Hillside

today I was sore and ugly
I made some points but wish
I hadn't / my stomach ok
some things are hard to hear
not much / my friend didn't believe
my sense of direction / we looped
only once though / my back

October 8, 2019

North Gower

in rural Canada
watching game
the fall is on us
cool and great sky
barn-like place
not sure who I am
I have been passed by

October 9, 2019

Over

this is my last conference
where I work on things
I'm past my sell date
I have decided it's over

October 10, 2019

Fatso

lady bugs trapped on the windowsill inside
dropping down on people
the ladys are ready for fate
I look at the photos and turn
hard away / what shall I do

October 11, 2019

Foo on You

I can't tell you well
how little I like myself
I am a toad / I am death
what have I done / I thought
I was doing better / guess
not

October 12, 2019

Back & Scared

long views across fields
lady bugs looking for solace
warm days with Canadian nights
I am back home now but fear
for her eyesight / I cannot persuade
her it's serious / I can hardly stand
my anxiety

October 13, 2019

Simply Complex

when we write we have order in mind
but to convey we need chaos
we worship simplicity but nothing
we believe beautiful is simple
beauty requires return of attention
simplicity bars such returns
the purpose of beauty
in continual noticing

October 14, 2019

Tens

home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up
her windblown window / if she recalled the stories she read in plains books / if she paid
attention to the movies made up in men's minds / the bassman didn't talk much / played
too much like himself / no one else you see / he saw feelings in the others and rejected
them / the overlays and ambiguity suited him / he knew words he couldn't pronounce
so involved in his own mind he was / he dropped suddenly and it seemed like he could get
up if he wanted / he didn't want / he never played with his back to the band / with his back
to the dancers / shut up and dance he told them once / the woman up North knew
he was tied to only the guitar player / not the black-leggings singer / she dodged
a curve in the road her dream covered over / she missed what she never had / she would grab
that all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel 10s

October 15, 2019

Shhh

beside me a rock from one of our stone walls
I return there every year / every day really
I revisit / re-drive the roads the places the river
my spots change over time / every time
this summer I sat many times bridge downriver
the river shading either up or downriver
I dozed / the wind warm flowed
from one open window to the other

October 16, 2019

Dead Can Dance

Locust Street Cemetery is brilliant
spring summer fall
the colors / the contours
shades of colors / tall oaks
it calms me to sit there
among the dead / I especially relish
Huldah E. Oikle / died 1903
young / I hope someone missed him
terribly

October 17, 2019

Sunset Room

cormorants flying low then diving
a green bridge over a dark river
I visit to assert I came further
than reasonably could be expected
I did good for a feeble-minded local
this makes up for my not getting
as far as my colleagues / I am
sort of a nothing you see

October 18, 2019

Crap

I am gnashing my teeth
angry
it will prevent this
from being a poem

October 19, 2019

Anger

I guess it's the pile-up of insults
and disrespects / capped by not caring
about my stuff / not caring that I might
lose it / how many of the things I enjoy
are less than nothing for her

October 20, 2019

Still

I am not over it
I need to find a way to make peace with the insults
I suppose every woman I've been with eventually
feels as she does now
I am in my shell and will stay there
convenience I suppose

October 21, 2019

Pierhead Restaurant and Bar

we stopped at Pierhead for a quick bite
nothing to eat there but up the street
a meat pie bakery / with accompaniment
we bought some pies and then back to the bar
for drinks and a heat-up / a green-haired barmaid
did it all / we should have gone when the kitchen
was working / the pies sucked / worst meal in Shetland
the reviewers saw it differently / maybe some other time

October 22, 2019

Overlays and Ambiguities

all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel tense
the song's new end / bass and guitar always together / they learned together
their musical strangeness was the power of the band / the singer was just a warm thing
on lost nights / tell me of the towns he once said / the towns are worn out
the flash flood of money out of them / the great photos of plains America display rusted
tractors / caved in roofs / peeled off paint / tilted silos / old men / old women
hey baby it's the fourth of July he sang / last slow song of the set / she cries in the dark
lies and greed he always said / the band's feelings / see how that messed them up
the new bassman arrives motel-side / unloads luggage / tells his ride take me to the venue
he will use his own bass but the old bassman's rig / he's a pro / he rides slouched
snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad

October 23, 2019

Wrong Then Right

snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad
she pulls over upstreet from the dance hall / snow's risen on the parked cars / she
the other one/ wonders if the last time he pulled her down onto the bed was the last time ever
the singer always waited patiently undressed under the covers while the guitar
player hunched out the motel door to tell his kids goodnight / sometimes tell them a story
he's memorized or makes up about the flat expanses of old railroad land stretching
toward the foothills / the long miles of dirt road disappearing into twilight fog
the mist / he tells his wife he loves her / and he does / he also likes densely written books
the singer's a light read / they are destined only for sweat and expulsion / she feels
his leads are for her / the words to the songs he picks or writes are for her / she
this one / is a romantic / the new bassman arrives / the van he's in slides stopped
he's dressed in boots jeans T-shirt and a leather barn coat/ he owns two cowboy hats
but didn't wear one for this trip / the woman frozen in her own North world steps
to the side of the venue / peeks to the parking lot / sees the wrong bassman / news
of minor deaths doesn't travel / it's not them her head drops / she sees his bass case
it's not a Fender / a half mile away slipping slow the singer and her temporary man
are a tangled pair / the North woman slips back to her truck / she will make it to the coast
in a day or two / she will find the sea as blue as a good thing / hope was what she imagined

October 24, 2019

Fall Ahead

when the leaves get full soon the year
passes them up and down they fall
after their month of full glory
which is really nothing but death
when everything has fallen
the nice woods and riverbanks
no longer sing loud but whisper
harshly all winter long

October 25, 2019

Cleaning Program

sometimes the simplest tasks
require the most attention
the big ideas are easy
the fill-ins not

October 26, 2019

Lonely Out

the grid of a town
predictability and order
laid out by a planner
but trees and odd houses
make the cement roads
seem lonely / out of place
walking our dog each night
we'd watch people watching
TV / blue light on them
the walls a kind of yellow
or light amber / in autumn
the grass faded past yellow
to brown / leaves left
we adapted to the strangeness
of too much human order

October 27, 2019

Only She Admitted

we sat in the car by the river
old late afternoon / November / Merrimack River
the sun was low and the tide was high
ten miles upriver from the sea
she asked and I answered / it grew colder
I put my hand in her cap which she has placed
on her thigh / knit from New Mexico
after it had been dark a while I wondered
how long she would stay
was something near romance here / instead
I said we should eat and we went to the only place
she admitted on this trip / was real

October 28, 2019

Like Nowhere

I'd like to find a place where trees relax
leaves fallen are made fast into soil
where people used to tan their own leather
where red squirrels still hop from branch to ground
where one old woman would make me think
and another would run lotion onto my back
a place just like nowhere

October 29, 2019

Snooze Looze

sometimes things pile up
we can't figure out a way out
right now I am sop tired
I can't focus my eyes
I can't find words

October 30, 2019

Makes Me Tired

I took her to all my places
everything revealed to her
revealed her to me / differences matter
in all I was made fun of
another day she said her trust was low
perhaps the walks on peatish hills
meant nothing / our emotional lives
so different / one harder / one harsher
love is a dim light

October 31, 2019

70

after a while I noticed
that my excuse for not doing something new
was / 70-year-olds don't do that
this means turning 70 is how I define defunct
but I hold on to Jenny / not literally
but she is older and still doing
even though we're nothing much to each other
she can still be a beacon
I can think of her as a plan
I will follow it

November 1, 2019

Scared

well hm / another package delivery problem
what worries me is how such things worry me
I believe I'm growing more fragile as I age
simple things through me for a loop / I need
to relax more / accept mistakes better / I want
to be a regular person as I near the end

November 2, 2019

Why I Gave Up

be at the center or
be far away / no need for
a current deep knowledge
of the times and the facts
people at the center have fallen
to insanity / there are no facts
just me-centric ideology and self-interest
when I was young the place I lived
seemed open and possibilities vast
now the best tv shows are about
the walking dead

November 3, 2019

Good Road

West on 50 in Kansas
the sun's down is perforating my eyes
it's dusty in this mid-Summer
wheat and milo all around
as I near Holcomb old fears penetrate
innocence shot dead point blank
did this make way for lies as facts
did Nancy die for nothing
good

November 4, 2019

A Thin Cup

in a day or two / he will find the sea as blue as a good thing / hope was what she imagined
his brothers / who knew? / will get in their kayaks by Ventura Pier near sundown
the moon a thin cup above / the pier marching piles / if you were on shore watching
the sky would start black above / turn yellow green under the pier / fade through red to black
one will carry a box by his feet / the other a bag of bagels / pelicans will linger by just
above the slight curls / once far enough they will stop and say something people brought up
by religion would say but mean it something else / then the ashes will slip to the sea
and a bagel last meal / the brothers will not cry because they have forgotten everything
the guitar man will turn away from the singer in the Hi-Line Motel after Box Clubs at Boxcars
the North woman / her bags of cement her only grip on Earth / will be parked on a beach
in La Push / another res / a different song / a puzzled man behind her / ahead / the same ocean

November 5, 2019

Speak

I spent the day alone
as if on a pinnacle / a woman I know
spent months hunting down death
spiking it with life / how eager
she wants to forget the thin line
I am eager for the lonely days
I will write every word of it

November 6, 2019

No Mystery

when she emerges undressed
from the bathroom / next room / other room
the stakes are set / I can see what the night holds
if she's upped the heat it's a display
not / it's quilts and blankets
a woman I knew declared one day that that night
would be a new sort of night but a unique one
I went to pick her up by the river
wait she said and I sat on the settee watching the current
from her large soft bedroom / she emerged undressed

November 7, 2019

Jan

when you see someone absent for years
nothing good can come from it
either they will be better than they should be
or worse / same for you / in this case a small insult
and too much sadness / I stayed the whole time
though

November 8, 2019

A Short Walk

sometimes the envelope is too big
for instance hiring someone in 1985
then seeing them once more in 2019
lotsa yeas there / I wish I could
have loved it better or at least more
instead it was the awkward and silly
her life nothing like what someone
anyone would love to live

November 9, 2019

Ships Lined

ships lined up in the Channel
like cars in LA / North on the right
South on the left / really it's like this
all over the ocean / I think people believe
it's a free for all / there are many boats
cargo / passenger / fishing / we seek

November 10, 2019

Minneota Lutheran Church

the church that was built out in the open
far from town / perhaps on a small rise
to look down on the village now is in the town's
web and streets filled with cars are all around it
all the writer's comments about the lonely
place / less lonely some argue / more others
maybe are more true / less true

November 11, 2019

In Mistrust We Trust

loss of trust can't be recovered
not even if I sit with her for hours
as twilight comes and goes
and the cold drifts onto us
and I place my hands in her wool cap
and it seems like she forgives me
I know she cannot / I cannot either

November 12, 2019

Hey Baby

she has a lover now
what a way to put it
even though it means nothing to me
it means everything to me
I thought I occupied whatever part of her
could still entertain lovers
neither rabbit nor pseudo lover
there is no place for me
and then there's also that trust fiasco

November 13, 2019

Nine

I met her at Woodstock
1969
a line of its own
but after all the people left
returning to the world
we were picking up trash
the smell of dirt and excrement
vermin dead in their burrows and dens
beneath the hardened mud
she focused on organics
I on paper / she was blond cendré
and besides doing it literally
I fell for her / later we washed in the pond
I followed her to Paris then Amsterdam
she found a Dutch man in 1979
I stopped loving her in 2019

November 14, 2019

Shetland Is Out

I had her figured wrong
I assumed I filled a void
but she didn't have that one
that means I did very wrong things
not criminal / not moral / stupid
now I need to figure what
to do next

November 15, 2019

Someone Like No One

nothing that means something
to me means anything to her
I am not interesting it seems
on the other hand / the time
years ago I met her / that meeting
did not register on me at all

November 16, 2019

Living On

after hours by the river
warm wind blowing in from the West
slight misting murmur of the water flowing
song birds lighting on branches / other types
diving into water / splash of fish
jumping for bugs / I drove off and
that's the lesson / now matter how warm
and sweet the day seems / it always ends
with someone driving away

November 17, 2019

Down the Aisle

in the bookstore I tell her
there are just three books I want to look for
the shelves carry used and new
side by side / two are old and one new
she doesn't care what I read
so she goes that way and I this
the set of aisles she visits
and the set of aisles I do
are disjoint / she drinks tea
I coffee / she has decided
I am not worth loving
but hey

November 18, 2019

Whitewash

I thought this was a good idea
clean out an old chicken coop
and use it as a clubhouse
first / no chickens in it for decades
so it's full of dirt and dust
second / it is large so the chicken
is most of the dust
third / the way you paint
something like this is with whitewash
that is / calsumine or lime paint
a type of paint made from slaked lime
(calcium hydroxide / $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$)
or chalk calcium carbonate (CaCO_3)
sometimes known as whiting
kind of yucky / but I tried to clean it out
fourth / I'm lucky I survived
but what a nice location
what a great clubhouse it would have been

November 19, 2019

Night Look

the old man parked his car
off the least known road
in Merrimac / to the West
the sky was death orange
and laced with black branches
he walked across the stubbled brown
field toward the stonewall
in that West direction
stopping he knelt before the stones
some smooth some harsh
laid his head on one / it was a cold
twilight in November / he was gone

November 20, 2019

Mystery or Puzzle

a woman finds a bench in a park
she once had a good lover
now that he is out of her life
she is mourning herself
in this story it's a rainish day
some rain some just clouds
it's Autumn in a foreign country
they speak a pretty language there
even through the cold in Winter
I never mentioned foreign to where
so all you can assume is some other
I never told why he is out of her life
when you answer these questions
we can begin

November 21, 2019

Out Of Every Way

is it really about death
or is it about the passing to nothing
not the killing but the ending
death is loss and loss is beginning to forget
forgetting is the same as nonexistence
what remains can be only stories
stories are words / they will disappear too
who is the more cruel / existence or God

November 22, 2019

JFK

JFK died this day decades ago
I was in the Pentucket auditorium
when I heard of it
the color day skits before the Masconomet game
that afternoon at home
I drew a picture of a sniper on a piece of cardboard
leaned it against the brick fireplace hearth
then shot at it from ten feet away with my BB gun
my mother did not stop me'
she loved JFK so

November 23, 2019

Ship Or You?

rain is a harsh way to disappear
perhaps just the strong gust would do
if you found your way to my door
which key would you use or would
you rely on me to answer / I look
at older women now / the harbor
has good size boats tied up
the weather tilts them this what then that
I perhaps'd prefer sleeping in one of them
I'd know what the slender movements mean

November 24, 2019

Nest Of A House

my dreams are of the parts
of my house we don't use
often we live in a few rooms
with several large / sometimes dozens
of other rooms closed up and on
upper floors / sometimes other
people use them / some are strange
like abandoned chicken coops others
are part of the Art Farm Amusement Company
we thought was our backdoor neighbor
my dreams of such rooms is to spend hours
exploring them and the peculiar and particular
people I meet there / sometimes a lot

November 25, 2019

Forget All About

I pulled into the lot
behind Brown Sugar and Mechanica
I intended to visit Jabberwocky
the local bookstore / instead
the dwindling light on a little lighthouse
slowed me down / then the cold took over
next a light rain turned snow and I relaxed
hours later I went inside for Thai
just before closing / a beautiful hostess sat me
I asked her about beauty / she said it was complex

November 26, 2019

The Clutter of Fragments

a ruin is a fragment
an unfinished work is a fragment
we perceive directly only fragments
which are pieced into wholes
a whole leaves out more than a fragment
and so is more limiting

November 27, 2019

Hay Walking

smell of cut hay
sweet and lingering
midday sun pushing out the wet
the sweetness is moist
no one minds me
walking across the field
just mown
the lure of concord grapes
on vines up an old apple tree
in this century there are no such things
but once

November 28, 2019

Fragments of Beauty

a ruin is a fragment
a fragment admits revisits
this so the mind can complete
or re-complete it
can it be that the least beautiful
moment for anything built
is the instant of completion

November 29, 2019

Princess Pine

late November in Merrimac
I'd gather some peach baskets
head for the woods across the street
and toward the Bicks
the pines stood alone there
for some reason it was the best
place for princess pine
I never knew that name until fifty
years later when it occurred to me to wonder
they came up with their rhizomes
easy from the ground
sometimes good mushrooms grew nearby
I'd fill two or three peach baskets
about a bushel each
I'd take them home and my mother and I
would bend coat hangers into a circle
and layer the princess pines around
gathering their tap roots with twine
with red ribbons and pine cones
these were the best wreathes
for princess pine would stay green
for many weeks / such love

November 30, 2019

Far Into Cold

it's simple to want a quiet night
in a stone house with the wind
making things up outside
the bed piled with blankets and quilts
down in some of them / she beside
she is like new old stock
prepared long ago for the cold night tonight
able to keep up for the long night tonight
she loves the sound of wind under the eaves
of branches churning / she loves warm skin
with luck no tomorrow will open

December 1, 2019

Snow Extremities

it's snowing back home tonight
I say back home but I mean Merrimac
their Santa parade was today
when I was a kid Santa would drive by
on the back of a flatbed and wave at me
even though I stayed inside with the curtain
pulled aside / snow this early is rare
like soundproofing snow pulls you in
to wherever you're centered / like you

December 2, 2019

Champaign Ill

in Illinois I learned
the ways to be part of a pair
I thought us naïve but maybe she wasn't
we made many things on our own
I was more of a maker then
I remember the leaves blowing down our street
in Autumn / when we huddled after supper
out back our dog safe in his little house
the sky huge hanging above / the funny
experiments with did with our bodies
some said there was an agenda
I never saw it / still don't
we had friends

December 3, 2019

Gave Up Trying

I've seen them sit in pews
certain God sits on their altar
I have sat with them
I've held their hand in my hands
what they believe they're doing
is not the same as what I do
but we both believe the same
results will follow on

December 4, 2019

Small to Big

what we care about in beauty
seems to evaporate as we become
more ourselves / people move
from the special to the profitable
the buildings once loved collapse
the scents once cherished defuse
the road to the river carries fewer
each day until the only thing
remaining is the big box

December 5, 2019

Shetland Winter

sky colors are muted
the sun is too low to fill
the sky with light
too far north / on too small an island
one strong gust comes from the sea
flattens Winter grass
whistles the tune of window and door
leaves us ready

December 6, 2019

Grief

I waited for everything to settle
I even stopping looking through second story
windows at night hoping to see
the one whom I missed though I searched
everywhere for her / God gave us two gifts
grief to suffer so we knew we need others
tears to wash away grief despite its depth
I didn't know / looking through her window
whether it was tears or a few drops of rain

December 7, 2019

Weather

gusts of wind / heavy rain
boats banging against each other
6am still dark / time to get up
milk the cows / feed the pigs
open the news from around the globe
the weather report too
today is the earliest sunset

December 8, 2019

Tamworth in Winter 1960s

in the tiny cabin
a toilet some bunks a small kitchen
potbelly stove on Sunday morning
I'd pretend to sleep late on the top bunk
as heat pooled just above me
I remember needing to pee urgently
but holding on holding in
their voices and soon the smells
of breakfast I'd turn back the cheap sleeping bag
I used for a blanket get down get ready
there just was nothing to do

December 9, 2019

Woman In A Storm

the most beautiful woman
ever doesn't look like it
she is what's risen to the top
we can't see inside her head
she is the big wave that skips off
the sea wall and drenches your bedroom window
as a storm or as a signal of the warm Summer ahead
later she is the whitecap alone along the far shore
what you dream

December 10, 2019

The Man Who Left

the man who supported every move
every mistake / my slow burn of learning
the one I could turn to whatever
he disappeared before the next time
I might need him / he crossed
a wide harbor separating my island
from his / last time I saw him
he was waving / goodbye or calling
for help / it was the fourth of July

December 11, 2019

Three Or So

the three things I notice
from my spot on the dock at night
boats shifting as waves from faraway
gale force winds agitate gracefully
the water by the pier
a stubby car coming down to the high street
from the heights behind more exposed to the wind
leaving rain ruts behind like glimpses of dry
flashing Christmas lights reflected on a tall
wide window in one of the new buildings behind old
one last thing / a woman I knew twenty years ago
who just as she fell asleep I laid down beside her
when she woke / I entered

December 12, 2019

Pentucket

the school
new when I was five
now too old to sustain
will be replaced
wait / what about me

December 13, 2019

One Day

the tide came up almost to the street
boats tied up stayed tied up
gale force winds / waves driving
hard to drive from one end to the other
ferries taking the day off
at Market Cross a couple stopped
by the tree in the determined wind
she reached up and he bent down to kiss her
then off toward Victoria Pier
where the tide was up almost to the street

December 14, 2019

Market Cross / Midnightish

one minute the pavement's dry
two later it's soaked
the woman dressed for Christmas
shakes it off / she tumbles toward
the upstreet / men in yellow vests
greet her with song and cheer

December 15, 2019

Tree Fixers

at 6pm they set up their ladder
and messed with the Market Cross Christmas tree
raining as usual / Christmas not far off
the electricity's been on and off
wind like a dream you wished not have
I wish I lived there with all the hell
happening here / cold and wet
but not everyone insane

December 16, 2019

Market Cross

a woman with a white dog
stopped by the tourist office window
after dark / she looked in / bent over
to see something / the dog explored up
an alley then pulled her away
for just a few seconds I think
I fell in love with her

December 17, 2019

By The Time

all the songs written
of striving toward love
or leaving love behind
because it wasn't right
or it wasn't in balance
the theme of running away
of leaving and the discovery
by the time I get there
you will know I really meant it

December 18, 2019

Loved Me So Hard

like the past the tubes in my amp
make better music even if the solid-state stuff
helps out front and the digital amp
helps the sub-bass / clean or musical

if only the past sounded as sultry
I remember sitting on the brick hearth
my father built and kept clean with special
cleaning fluids / red
pretending I would one day be a special
scientist or writer / not
happening so much / the cheap radio
playing as I went over the roads
over and over the roads

December 19, 2019

They Always Work

the winter dance
of late rise early set
add rain add wind
ask the tide to rise
as high as it ever has
wait for the clouds to cover
wrap your fingers around hers
use these to guide your sleep

December 20, 2019

Kathryn Cantrill

West Fork Arkansas
my friend's former wife
I always think about how each of us
will be remembered
like this perhaps

Kathryn was born on November 3 1949
and passed away on Monday November 11 2019

I wish only that they would have said
it was a Thursday

December 21, 2019

Stays With Me

she's just at the top of the spiral staircase
she said I was welcome
to sleep there alone / instead I took the floor
downstairs / in the morning I wake
to her standing over me drinking tea
her always-up hair down until after showers
and rituals / she had no idea of me

December 22, 2019

Past Stealing

one by one the past dies
before each does its past fades quick
near the end / for one thing
the stone walls were bright and sudden
since then their parts've been stolen
for fireplaces and firepits
even though the granite stones
are covered in lichen and green moss
the walls are gray and mark important work
I was smart / I stole one years back

December 23, 2019

Wedding Night

once I walked down the road
by the farm away to the west
then more west / slow at the start
I went as far as I could on land
from a covering place to more
open then on to the sweet smell
coast of eucalyptus and tarweed
of dry grass and live oaks
I made it there with one woman
starting 46 years ago today
but then a twist that made me
famous / a little / blew it apart
away / like a bad movie made of car crashes
the road does not go both ways

December 24, 2019

Helpless

the little boy
nothing special about him
he grew up and an accident
made him famous
a little bit
he broke
he thought there's
something special about me
wrong it turned out

December 25, 2019

Lerwick

today I started at 11:30am
on the tourist office webcam
and sprinkled observations
until dark / three hours later
not a single man / nor woman
no children / no cars
no bicycles / no animals
no birds / just rain
dark windows / dark sky
Christmas kept at home
turf fires perhaps at work

December 26, 2019

Birch Meadow

into a birch meadow
a stream cut quick into the downslope
I notice it / the water running fast
some snow on its little banks
I sit down / then lie back
turn on my side / the water makes a sound
in the Winter we all pray
where does this water go

December 27, 2019

Slow Place Like Home

how little I paid attention
back then
something grabbed it away from facts
I was proud of my small world
nothing better than alone with me
how can I have been so out of it
so no place

December 28, 2019

Surprise Hike

a sweet and beautiful little cabin
our two lives walked slowly
toward it up a river valley
on our backs what we'd need
for a week of light love
we didn't know the little cabin
how its chairs were situated
whether fireplace or wood stove
how elaborate the kitchen
we knew no electricity / but
indoor plumbing using a tank
up the valley slope filled by a rivulet
we didn't know about the bed
not its size nor its softness
we knew blankets and quilts abound
we didn't know each other
not a little / not even at all
the silly circumstance of revised lives

December 29, 2019

The Day I Bought It

I decided one day
to buy my own funeral
made possible by inflation
I opted for simple
I'll leave that to you to decode
this way a call and she's done with it
done with me
and I with everything

December 30, 2019

Big Field

a large field stretching
from road to stone wall
timothy and sometimes rye
corn ever now and then
pears / apples / grapes / raspberries
a large stone / very large
in its middle / a place to hide behind
a little / sometimes
I loved that field / it's gone
bought by someone / sold to someone
the orange sky behind tree silhouettes
to the west at sunset / that too

December 31, 2019

Shetland New Year

the big celebrations
who cares about them
the small group around Market Cross
a more than cool night
a scrawny Christmas tree with blue lights
at 11:40 no one is there
at 11:50 they start
a few seconds before they count down
then yell and run to each other
hugs / maybe kisses
boats sound their horns
more short skirts than you'd think
no more than a hundred
they are not part of the world
they are their own