

Dunking Distracted Sardines

Richard P. Gabriel

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January 1, 2015

In Small Parts

so many small towns
across the middle of the country
growing stuff / harvesting stuff
the people who live there are real
to each other and nearby
for me they are abstractions
people in quantity / but what do
they do every day / and how
do they find a beautiful way to live
in the evenings or early mornings
drinking coffee / drinking
women live there with the men
what do they need every day
every night / everyone has a story
that fades each day to nothing in the night
weep for them if you can
I do

January 2, 2015

By One

misty day the day
they buried her father
cool after record heat
fourth of July few days back
out in the open / the grave stark and bare
the casket on cloth beside it
men who spoke now gone
her mother now gone
she remained as the men with shovels waited
under a beech smoking
she knelt beside the casket
her hand resting on it near his head
she didn't cry because crying was not her vocabulary
the men waited a long time
nothing changed that they could see
the afternoon wore on but they knew
night was far away
each of them decided not to laugh
nor tell jokes nor even remark
they knew it would happen to them
one day one by one

January 3, 2015

Predictable

later that day she fed the chickens
they clucked as usual
she let the cows into the barn
fed them grain and later milked them
cooked a meal a simple one of kielbasa and potatoes
for her mother who preferred one old cup
filled by a jar from the woods
her brother left after not long
left her with nana to work the farm
to work in the factory
to be the man of the farm and all the farmers around who promised
broke them the next month
that night she nearly cried
after yelling at her mother and stepping out for a smoke
the grass laid flat where he lay on this way to dying
you know I grew up there too
why hide these shy facts from me
you knew I would make them a fiction
I'd read and read until they became facts
the next morning before driving to Haverhill
she fed the chickens

January 4, 2015

A Day Later

the next day she stopped at Linwood
she was driving his car
the one he fixed up from parts from his autobody job
the convertible
the grave's hole was not filled
filled three quarters up
the sod cut with sod cutters still sitting next to the felt blanket
around 7:00 but an hour or more before dark
she stood looking down into it
facing the direction the sun was going to set in
because the river was down that way
because she would one day buy her own grave up
on the hill directly behind her back
with her son standing confused next to her
because she would never share death with him
so now as he writes this he fears it so

January 5, 2015

Not At The Late Home

everyone knew that everything about the paper's report
of the funeral was wrong
there weren't a son and daughter
and also two daughters
being Ukrainian they used first and middle names
so Helen and Pauline were Helen Pauline
my mother and Paul and Concerta were Connie Paul
my uncle / the standing wreaths were still standing
off to the side of the almost filled grave
my mother wondered where to go
home to her mother to cook and feed
to the chickens to feed
to the cows to milk and feed
to the horses to brush and feed
to the turkeys to feed and comfort
to the apple trees to pick them
to the pear trees to pick them
to the grapevines to pick them
to the tomato plants to pick them
to the corn to pick and shuck them
to the cherries to pick them
to the hay to mow and rake to dry
or to the river by the green bridge
where she once kissed a boy by the boat ramp next to the hand tub house
where he stared gratefully at her ample bust
or stay here all night and talk to him
which to choose
which to love
which to hate

January 6, 2015

Pond and Cows

later she walked from the barn to the small pond
frogs bellowed and behind them in the mix
tree frogs and crickets / it was a warm night again
no one swam there anymore because the water was too tannic
the oaks and maples dropping leaves
twilight and the up the little hill the house was lit like Christmas eve
for her this was a different new and ugly world
she felt she was just starting and her will to go on had gone
the cows lowed in the barn / she returned to her home
and her bed

January 7, 2015

Who Is She?

she walked just ahead of me
in a light rain back from the tony restaurant
toward my hotel and her car
she stopped to reflect on the dark river
flowing in orange down to the ocean
under bridges alone steep cut stone river walls
she said nothing to me / I think she was content to let me walk on alone
I had stepped past her and came back to her side
her hands were on the uninspired metal railing
and my narrator thought perhaps she was misting
she said in a low voice I need the warmth
and she put my hand with hers into her coat pocket
I stopped thinking / twenty minutes later
we continued

January 8, 2015

As Real?

my plan for figuring her
she shares thousands of years with me
she raised me
every made up story has a chink hammered off her
she ran as a girl around the same farm I did
the buildings old when I was running
were old when she was running
what happened to the big barn my father told us to behold
what day were those pictures taken / wedding day
a man from Boston / a dandy really
there to take on the farm
he did and died after the try
she left it in disgust after I left
I wanted it and still do
I can build it again here on pages like this one

January 9, 2015

Laments

discovery is how I do everything
I have not much knowledge
at least not reliable knowledge
I need to worry less
I need to do less
move more
live more
be less responsible for other things
be me

January 10, 2015

One Photo

if I could go back and take one picture
of a time and place in my life
would it be the farm
one of my wives
a great sex scene
my mother and father young
me very young or the farm when I was young
when I looked the best
the first time in bed with Kathy
Kurkjian and me singing the classics
my big keynote
the prettiest day
do I need to name it or just describe what it should be
later later

January 11, 2015

Get Low

all the times I would run from my house
across the road
over one stone wall then along it
up on it again and around an old apple tree
back down / jump over the sewage drain or stream
then along an old cow path / up the little rise
to the edge of the foundation pit also a dumpsite
past the big lilac over to the two gravel rut driveway
to the barn / slide open the door and up into the hay loft
I wish I could do it again

January 12, 2015

Odd Things

the house was so big growing up
when I visited it 50 years later it was tiny
I judged it both times by my size and my parents'
when they tore it down a few years after that
I saw the fiberglass cloth and newspaper insulation
the rough framing and boards
later I heard an earlier house he built
had a rifle as part of the chimney
if I pile up the mysteries
they reach the second floor landing

January 13, 2015

Wet and Tears

as she drove away in the heavy mist
she wondered whether the casket would leak
and her father become soaked
others would have simply wept

January 14, 2015

Heavy Work

still confused over the senses of words
working it out in code
maybe more bugs to clean out

January 15, 2015

Dennis's Story

Dennis Clark you idiot
helicopter pilot in Vietnam
bully in school before that
home in the '70s' a drunk out with his bud
in a pickup his head out the window to puke
Dennis
his bud swerved toward a pole in Amesbury
went back to pick up the head
put it in the bed
drove to Anna Jaques
and left it all for someone there to find
the story I heard

January 16, 2015

Uppsala

cold city so the beds are warm
dark so the fire is bright
lonely so the women are making
at night all the colors are deep and sharp
piercing the ice are fenceposts and straw
where is the light coming from

January 17, 2015

Affairious

she thought it the ultimate sign
love for life lighting up after the sun was whisked away
she prepared herself each night
by dawn she was crying for luck
her children in her open thoughts
he thought it the ultimate trip
warmth for the evening and into the dark
he wrote before bed each night describing
in the morning he needed coffee and thoughtful talk
his wife getting ready to phone

January 18, 2015

Repeat One

some of the many roads
took me merely round and round
on them I'd think hard / drive slow
like reading a story over and over
watching the same movie again and again
the repetition soothes a mind
or makes for strong nightmares

January 19, 2015

Again

some problems are too randomly presented
unrepeatable
struggle to figure what it means
a puzzle maybe not solvable
and the night grows weary of seeing me
again

January 20, 2015

Titanicful

the captain has told us
time to disembark
some of us obey
the rest will drown

January 21, 2015

Sitting By The Graves

why do we wait
our mothers gone and the questions come to the fore
we go every day to wait by their graves
for a sign they are ready to answer
but coming before dawn
staying past midnight
as the woodchucks prowl and the owls hoot
there are no answers
but the ones we invent

January 22, 2015

Fire On The Mountain

up on the mountain one time in the past
I could go up and up
the air in haze and maybe the sounds of cars far down there
parts where stone was steep and hard
I'd wrench my fingers into cracks
and hope the fog didn't disguise
a flat hard ending below me
my father still young went ahead
and spread encouragement back to me
I heard in my mind the same song
just over and over

January 23, 2015

What Does It Mean?

I think my father's birthday was around now
we never celebrated it
never mentioned it
my mother's not much either but we noted it more or less
my nana's funeral - they didn't let me attend
nor the burial
my step grandfather
my father's mother
births and deaths off limits
beginnings and endings off the table
sometimes the smallest difference
makes the largest difference

January 24, 2015

Five Haiku

a lot of dust:
as if the world had cleared

a dog in the manger sips coffee,
it's important,
the style is assuming

a woman of the house drains the cup of heavy whipping cream,
it's fit,
the gall of the earth is waning

a stubborn trick—
by myself,
killing defenseless bitters

a lot of debris:
as if the web had evolved

January 25, 2015

Storm of the Century

far away it promises to snow hard
the day will become dark as white
snow drops in chunks not flakes to the pile
of snow already there
from the riverbank the black river will look diseased
I want to be on that bank in a light tent
hugged by a thick down sleeping bag
all through the blizzard
I was born for that sort
of thing

January 26, 2015

Dee Dee Dee

the brook that starts on our farm
doesn't freeze but flows somehow
snow comes right up to it
when I stumbled across it one year
I didn't walk along its bank
the snow was so soft and felt-smooth
the dark water moved slowly toward the river
I listened

chickadees

January 27, 2015

No Girls

the magazine's name is girls and corpses
something I don't want to crack
they featured a story on their website
about what happens after the crack
a fat ass was on the cover
I am thankful my libido is like those corpses

January 28, 2015

River Storm

the river came up pretty high
during the storm
ice flowed down too
almost to the top of the wooden pier
some familiar yellow on the surface of the snow on the ice
some brown too
the kind of day I wanted then
the sort of faith in change we crave

January 29, 2015

Stormy River

we were surprised by the snow
the amount
how light it was
where it piled up in the strangely strong wind
how the tide pushed the ice back upriver
how the birds hunkered down to reduce their furnaces
once when I was young I thought about racing across that
ice at the point of swiftest flow on the coldest day
just before it was too dark
I stare at photos now

January 30, 2015

See The Levels

we
each of us
have our levels
mine never included the
spectacular / the dark haired
beauties with long flanks and steel
stares / I was always second tier or third

January 31, 2015

Haverhill Where I Met Her

I found her while walking the promenade
down by the river in the old part of Haverhill
who am I kidding
every part is old
I've lived in California for forty years
near Haverhill for twenty-three
counting seven when I wasn't with it enough to know anything
but that's home / this is an ephemera
count the poems to get the stats

February 1, 2015

That Smell

my mother / shy about going out
not many friends but I'm sure she went driving
out the roads / to the river for example
she smoked I know
drank beer but not much
from the farm or social / who knows
her father had anger / she too later
how ugly the town smelled and the river
and Haverhill next door
this is me

February 2, 2015

Gone Girl

the river is that way
snow fog and wind-flung flakes
the clouds are uniform but heavy and dark
the wind drops my eyes to the ground snow
if not careful you could walk into the river
and like me you'd be gone for good
gone from good

February 3, 2015

One Fall's

you know there's a bug I've been hunting for weeks
puzzling it in and out of existence
to find exactly the cause
many possibilities of course
and involving huge computations
many times I thought I found it
figuring around it don't work either
puzzled desire indeed

February 4, 2015

Sometimes a Great Haiku

some great words are strung together
surrealistic to be sure
interesting combinations that can irk
put them together yourself
try not to worry

February 5, 2015

After Seeing Snow Storm Photos

I work hard for no real purpose
being arty not sciency
I wonder about duration
my program progresses
I want it to live but the edges are peeling
I want to spend time elsewhere
doing other things
spending a little time on the program
but not all the time
I wish

February 6, 2015

Tonight As Always

too many random things to do
and work on top of that
I long for a long rest
time to recover from all that work
but it piles and piles up

February 7, 2015

Slowly Dawning Insights

slowly improving the program
one big test to try tomorrow
with getting original words and not the downcased ones
this will be tricky
a major revision
it will take all day and I should make careful copies of things

February 8, 2015

American South

the American South beckons
warm moist air
soft gentle forests
slow life in breezes
I would walk long roads
down abandoned tracks
I think maybe there are women there
who would open their doors
their coverlets
who would not expect cold to hit their hearts
I warm to the idea of spoken liquids

February 9, 2015

My Annual Review

the snow has gone crazy
I am not there
this would have been a perfect time to photograph
instead I am here in front of the computer
working on writing a writer
I would instead be holed up in a potbelly warmed room
writing the life of myself and like that
driving as best I could to the bridge
maybe staying with my Rocks Village people
with them / writing about them
a dream and not a thought leader

February 10, 2015

One Like This

when we sit to remember
the past we remember only
the pretty things / the soft things
Kurkjian's story about getting up to change
the tv channel ends likes this / wrt his father
then he'd tell me to get up, go (all the way!)
to the kitchen and
bring back two nice red apples

February 11, 2015

Spread

what surprises me
are the small things
the small words in a simple rhythm
that make us all more human
stuff like this reminds me
of dozing under the pines in our close woods
not fancy but it was ours
a thing I once had I wish I had again
a spread

February 12, 2015

Home Snow

back home all the tall straw is covered in snow
low fences and bushes
bird baths and what's left of corn
in graveyards maybe only
the tops of headstones can be seen
and if they are slate
it's a black crescent on white
if I were there there would not be
places to park so on
I'd drive from place to place then back to an uncertain driveway
or lot / I'd be up to here in snow

February 13, 2015

Writer At Heart

thinking of how I write
it seems so fitting
launching from place to place
hoping something will fall out
or apart
as I work on my writing program
it is slowly revealed to me
how to do this fitting
there

February 14, 2015

Simple Scene

I know how it will end
me dreaming as the brightness dims
of walking up the road past Scherbons'
to our farm from deep in the past
it will be like those sentimental
scenes of the dead walking to their loved ones in a rural heaven
I will believe it's happening but my dying imagination
will be simply hanging on
then it will be

February 15, 2015

Violin Studies

the suffering is idiomatic
rates of change calculated and measured
show it's random not designed
but the measure assumes design is smart
or designers
what if they're stupid
or their own reckoning of improvement is flawed
design then is random

February 16, 2015

Republicans

I would like to take the crazies
and shake their brains out
replace them with real ones
I would make them reject workforce preparation
to favor search for truth
I am not a consumer or a passenger
I resent being thought of as one
I would stare at them for hours
then laugh for hours
they aren't crazy
they are stupid

February 17, 2015

Multi-Ku Four

the gray's tears
have gotten over
the first snow

a patch of grasses
its change
the back decking mouse

of watches
a storm is shining
but shitworks kill

yellow-orange
but somehow the orange
is changing

February 18, 2015

Me Away

early results
the best winter ever is passing by
I was caught in a warm place
being snowed in would have been perfect
if I need it I will need a different place
not a familiar one
there is eight feet of snow there now
and a river barely able to handle the runoff

February 19, 2015

Best

to sleep and not wake
like a break in a dream
just your memory will know it
something has changed it will process
someth

February 20, 2015

Bad Thumb

when something bad happens
my brain flinches and I cannot avoid thoughts
I writhe and wring
I will get over it because I was luck and outwitted
I learned and will grow cautious

February 21, 2015

Forget He Said

what is there to fathom
first a big thought
then a small regret
in panic we act like dopes
I know how it feels now
I will be more sympathetic

February 22, 2015

What I Mean

ups and downs
silly things we do when our thinking stops
I want it all paved over by time
and new memories
fix what I can
move on

February 23, 2015

Tour Nike

through time we find what turns us
we fight for pleasure but pain sometimes
finally I found a pleasure and finding more would be
I will seek

February 24, 2015

In All Its Glory

eventually people make what we seek
then we seek more
how long till we disregard
I wonder why it's taken decades
the fetish / the interest
no explanation for why
why not
why not till now
just the thing itself

February 25, 2015

Last Love

so we weep when weeping time is here
we face the last door then tenderly open it
the other side is nowhere
the road here went wide then narrow
the last bit lonely
I wish someone who cares
would watch me walk the last part
watch the door open
then close

February 26, 2015

Bad Thinking

writing programs slowly and testing them
because the computations are long and I need them to be right
this time / earlier it was more experiment
learning how to write business letters
is not learning how to write
learning how to program simple algorithms
is not learning how to program

February 27, 2015

Dawning Bugs

slowly dawning insights
playing with the code
see what works
no strong plan
like design thinking I suspect
always I find bugs that should have broken everything
but they don't
don't understand this

February 28, 2015

Am I Blue?

simple fact or not
salt water can freeze
waves of half frozen sea breaking
on a shore will fill
your mind alien
we don't expect some things
with no words for them
they seem gold
when they are really black
or white when blue

March 1, 2015

My Computer Is Hot

the program runs
16 way parallel
still days to come to finish this stage
maybe a week
then testing and verification
feels like a lot of effort for how little payoff

March 2, 2015

Ha!

today I spoke with Dr Zilch
know what he said
nothing

March 3, 2015

Failing to Delete

running out of space
race against time to move files
so I can delete them
I won't make it
(I didn't)

March 4, 2015

Twilight Calls

this is twilight
come to call in its chips
demand stories of explanation and recall
the light though won't admit truth
so stories count
you will suffer
or maybe twilight will stroke you head as you drift to sleep
indistinct / swirls around the trunks and down roads
twilight has a special place in its heart for dark back roads
for dense colored cities
for stories that unfold unplanned

March 5, 2015

Massachusetts Dreaming

days are gaining length
warmth coming
I pray to make it to my home turf again
eat the junk food there and buy a book
drive over the roads and over them again
I want to sleep by the river
feel and smell the moist air
fall in love with me the boy as I wished I might have been

March 6, 2015

Making a Bed

tomorrow a lot of hacking

and checking files

till take all day

I think

I am exhausted from all the work on this ngram project

I could hack now and make my computer work all night

but I just want to sleep

March 7, 2015

Haying

we worked hard to get the hay in
before the rainstorms predicted for the next week
a small family of mother son father nana
none good at it
a spit together mufflerless tractor
flat old hay wagon
with slats for sides
old fashioned sickle-bar mower
side delivery
we worked with the Red Sox game on a battery radio
1962
they lost

March 8, 2015

Bare Metaphor

there was a last day
I was on the farm
when it was ours
I can't remember that day
or the last day I was in the barn
but there were such days
last times for many things
forgotten
first times remembered
now think about this
birth and death

March 9, 2015

Avoidance

we want it to be quiet
calm / simple
fitting to be that way
while the fires still
burn

March 10, 2015

Falling Away

the program rolls on
reading and pruning
big dirty data
they don't talk about that much
the program doesn't care but works hard all day
all night
until it's done
how it acts cannot be predicted
so what looks like errors are just business as usual
I need to revise something

March 11, 2015

Old Maps

an old map
teaches old things
like what was once
here and over there
if I can find my old farm
from before it was a farm
I could plot the course of my life
and beyond

March 12, 2015

Why Tonight

wow I'm tired
like a tree about to fall
rain about to stop
wind about to be turned back
I have strong
fatigue / so strong
it weakens the soul

March 13, 2015

Pi Day Tomorrow

confused by food and drink
string of words portraying sense
loud rhymes cracking their knuckles
some say there needs to be a point
I say no point is the point

March 14, 2015

Finally

finally the program is done
still some polishing to do
but it completed its tasks
and the ngrams are being tested
all the data being backed up
so tired of all the screwups
making things restartable
doing things in parallel
I've waited a long time for this

March 15, 2015

Design Thinking

the basic design
attacks its dominant feature
the hostile defense
leads its problematic rear
a bug appears to be five killers
this pattern / no one finds it
doomsday interruption

March 16, 2015

Alone at the Keyboard

I've worked hard always
never got far but tried a bit
aimed to play more than work
managed to do it for a while
till I became passé
we all will
now I fester
I wish I could stop
before

March 17, 2015

Good Night

staring at spring
water except for drought
warm except for the cold shards of winter's breezes
hanging on / leaves still on trees chipping off
streams carrying things to rivers
rivers to seas
how many are left
rage or gentle

March 18, 2015

Insane Paris

along the Seine
walking alone of a warm very warm night
lights of boats and dinner boats
glimpsed in the strong current and wakes
ahead of me the French woman I crave
walks with no purpose away faster than me
her skirt shakes no but my hopes are above us both
water or woman / which charm is greater
which way closer to a wet passing

March 19, 2015

They Are Now Dead

some nights I walk alone down yellowed streets
dogs look up
if anyone passes by I look down
I want no one
no thing
sometimes I stop by a stucco wall white
and rest my hand on it until the cool and wet
are dry and warm
my thinking is fragmented and poor
some believe I am frail but they don't see my eyes
the yellow is the lights placed to push away
a fear of death
those whose homes are here sleep here
those with none just sleep
no one begs of me
they give

March 20, 2015

In the Homeless Grove

the homeless gather around themselves
in a grove none expected
they cook meals from discards
their lives are subtle with slight movements and small sounds
they eat near big meals
they hope for them to scatter
when they fall for each other it's small
quick / instant
fat is worshipped

March 21, 2015

Nothing Yet

something important to know
when a woman walks away from you
meaning is revealed
study it
I did and do
what I learn is about me

March 22, 2015

Haikuiana

you have found birds attacking—
get to this book
read the present conditions

winning mother—
an original worker
working my rear

watch!
a white sound
the thunderstorm

March 23, 2015

Take a Haiku to Work Day

dumb tombola goof—
just enough to make the right
grave cryptophyte

moments of liquorices—
piece attachment, is it the US?
Yaltopya?

a short distance—
by myself,
free-basing cryptological honey

aggressive,
but somehow the orange
is colorizing

a bitch,
this year in death
just not a man

March 24, 2015

A Thing Called Evening

there is a thing called evening
it's where people go to cry
for warmth and for the end of the day
it's where lights men have made fill voids
it's where orange and yellow are calm
once in a city away from my home
I opened a door and in stepped the end of the world

March 25, 2015

Remembering

who's at the door
my hotel has many floors
in it new things happen
we are strange hot tenuous
cumbrous but we sleep all night all day
a world formed for two days
then popped off its stack
memories persist in us
nowhere in the world

March 26, 2015

On a Stay

we stayed from early evening
to late afternoon
huddled and warm
curtains drawn on a high floor
evening coming early again
it was obsessive
was it real
a story
everything

March 27, 2015

Guess What's Next?

the thing I can't see
them looking at me with love
happened many times they tell me
I recognized not a one of them
can't see the look
the eyes / the gaze / body making
then there're the words
my ears close
they follow my eyes

March 28, 2015

Like This?

a Red Cross
nurse takes down
the last words
of a British soldier
in 1917
he speaks quietly
looking up at heaven
she listens delicately
looking down at him

March 29, 2015

Romantic Ku

when I watch a movie
with a stunning woman in it
I curl until I disappear

March 30, 2015

Cold Far

off the plane and I'm dead
friends meet me and it's a buzz
the drive is long
sleep is there I hope
maybe more
I write and read
I sleep 20 hours
here is what I once wrote about a place and time like this

she was here she was just up there she could have easily
turned to her window opened it and spoken down to me
instead those around me kept walking without speaking
heading for a place well defined but unknown and unknowable
soon the woman was left behind she is still typing

March 31, 2015

Truth Under A Dress

words are all I have left
pain has pushed all away
my mother had a secret
and I found it out long after she died
forever is one now after another
Emily told us
we can only believe
she hid everything else from us

April 1, 2015

Don't Read This

she told me once
to stay together overnight
would be too dangerous
it passed over my head
wonder / I still do
there was never any hint
I am too afraid to ask
what she meant

April 2, 2015

Big Project Arrived at in Small Parts

menard project
how do we put together
a paragraph of complex prose
linked to topics
linked to each other
the stray thoughts
is it small bits coalescing
or abstract bits put together
then expressed

April 3, 2015

Simple Nothings

year drags on
I sleep a lot sometimes
I don't look forward much
fatigue rules
I wonder how to make a complex paragraph
I dream about words

April 4, 2015

Kurkjian

when I talk to old old friends
they gush over my abilities
I pay them no mind
I mean
I don't hear them
I see what their texts are about to say
and I don't read them
I cannot
my attention is not much
paid to these
I don't suggest changing anything

April 5, 2015

Alone With You

as you can guess
I like walking down slightly wet streets
in Northern European cities
at night in Winter
I like to look up at lit windows
and see the curtains closing
I like shadows and silhouettes
I like echoes of high heels just around the next corner
the swish of a dress or the thump of an umbrella opening
I like to see which windows shield readers
which tv watchers
which lovers
which diners
which cooks
because I like loneliness
but not lonely loneliness

April 6, 2015

Ma

in front of me
a wide black and white photo
of my mother's high school classmates
in 1933 and some are handsome
some pretty / some ugly
most bright faced / many in home-made clothes
my mother could never imagine
me looking at her face tonight
more than 80 years later
zooming in on just her

April 7, 2015

In Merrimac, 1964

most evenings nothing would happen
we'd sit in front of the tv after supper
I'd practice the piano a little
to change channels someone had to stand up and walk over to it
in the winter the wind outside
would rattle the house
my father would make warm milk
ovaltine really
the three of us
my mother smoking in her rocker
my father standing behind a counter
me lying on the couch
time didn't matter as much then

April 8, 2015

Absolution

sometimes the work
goes late
puzzles on puzzles
tomorrow more of it

April 9, 2015

Rled Rzepin

when we visited Poland it was just to the second
exit in from the German border
we stopped to take photos
and grab a coffee
it was Rzepin
the waitress was a killer
years from now people reading this could wonder
how did I know she was a killer
it was her blonde hair a tricky gait

April 10, 2015

Call Still

people are out
I sit at home programming
my life is this computer
computers always at the center
for some years I biked hours a day
that seemed like a good life
can I get back to it
will the wind be there for me
will the downhill slopes
still call

April 11, 2015

Lost Track

progress today
yesterday too
it responds better to trigger words
and there's a new session manager
that varies how much it pays attention
there are some easter eggs too
and a new favicon for now
I want things to get better

April 12, 2015

If I Could

I look forward to too
many trips / my fear rises
I will need help somehow
I would rather walk from the center of my small home town
to my old farm
find it there waiting for me
as it was 50 years ago
I would live there alone and write of my family's tragic lives
I would walk the woods
the little roads in them
pick princess pines in late fall
for Christmas
toboggan down hills I don't own
until one day they find me
and everything I've written

April 13, 2015

Let Me Go

I have the right to be forgotten
not for dignity
because dignity is for things getting better
but for sanity
because me in the past is not me now
I want old versions gone
I want to be forgotten
let me go

April 14, 2015

Projecting

I won't beg
they can stop my project
but I can stop too
I don't want to stop the paycheck
but I will if needed
I just won't spend after that
until it's safe

April 15, 2015

Rabbits I Thought

forgotten

I've craved it and got it in small amounts

don't ask me anything

I want long sleep nights

I would like to hear my dog again

barking out through her dog door

and into the woods that were mine

barking after something she never caught

April 16, 2015

Anguished

I need a way to stop
stress and work less
I want to write and photograph
I want to play like a kid
ride my bike again
be outside
be more of me
but it doesn't work that way
now / but soon?

April 17, 2015

Forget Me; Remember Me

sentimental story in front of me
so sad but still a comedy
about being who you are
about passion
I want an ending that excludes the me
everyone (mostly) has come to know
forget that person
let me be the lonely kid
lying in our field
looking up
as the cold air keeps the clouds
moving quickly past

April 18, 2015

With Luck A Story

there was a crook between two trunks
of a small tree at the top of some stairs
I knew nothing of and a third truck
much smaller / the two trunks formed a seat somehow
and the small one a gearshift and I would pretend
to drive / what bothers me is I never wondered
why the stone stairs went up there
what was that little highspot
and why the pump at one end and why was it flat all the way
to the barn door
later I learned a building was there
and this was its entrance
deduction / investigation / luck

April 19, 2015

NH

in the north pines are tall and straight
wind near their tops whistles
the trees sway
near the ground / calm / warm even
a place to think of the future
then in the future to remember
the past

April 20, 2015

Coop

I tried to make one of the old coops
a clubhouse
cleaning out the chicken poop
scraping off the whitewash
removing the roost boxes
never really worked
I got sick breathing the bad stuff
it would have been a great clubhouse
big and watertight
far from our house
behind the main barn
never worked
and I was lazy

April 21, 2015

Like Buffalo

some days we walk down
old streets that once were important
now bordered by debris
on a warm day there will be odors from the past
there are lots of places to nap
far away from here

April 22, 2015

Riveredge

what separates the beautiful
from the slim and pretty
ideas and how to think
I want to walk along the river's edge
on an old sidewalk with a woman
who knows the river well
who can bring a laugh into her sadness
be more than slim and
more than pretty

April 23, 2015

Paul Hudak

so everyone dies
and now they all are
the brilliant and not so
pleasant lives and spectacular
for some they report deaths early
though I love reading I can't read that

April 24, 2015

It Will

we read the good stories
about a man about to die
but what about what
he hid away in his
head and heart those years
his secret secrets
what will become unknowable
when the uneverything happens

April 25, 2015

Street in Haverhill

there's a street where sad people live
they aren't sad per se
I call them sad
because he has lost his mind
and she takes care of him
for reasons we can't determine

April 26, 2015

American Dream

I am ready to pack it in
I spent the weekend sleeping
and I was finally relaxed
the roads pull me as usual
I regret it will be light travel back home
maybe I don't last the year

April 27, 2015

Of A Flirty Season

tomboyish Spring
the sea and the calyx fields
all one coloration
first womanizer
falling
on the half-rounded scanner
a blue
has moved without a zero blueberry
season flood

April 28, 2015

Bette Davis Eyes

dawn
frosts the constrictor's receptors
and the hooters start reasoning

starting June—
thread and garlic starts
all one start

starting cotton—
a starting escherichia
starting in my ear

a young,
this time in fall
just not a man

that time squark—
without nag's back
my timed timing

leaded liquid—
a regular deathwatch
leading my leg

as regularity liquidizes,
the control of the kingwoods leads—
noon leg

not this economic fulfillment,
king of the herring,
but your best beat

dying slaughterers,
being killed—
death in Boston

immortality death
a world pussyfoots always
into the crownbeard

April 29, 2015

EK et al

there they were
all those I knew and who knew me
knew them all too well
one of them spoke with ease
we all were old
the speeches put us to sleep
the food was otherwise
how silly was I

April 30, 2015

Macadam

we are on the road
whistling through towns
by them
off the road there are barns and sheds winking small lights
main houses with strong lights outside
gravel driveways filled with pickups and vans
if I open the window and ignore the hot wind zooming past
I might hear crickets or cicadas
on the road
not dead yet

May 1, 2015

Can I Say It?

a supporter moved on today
my project in jeopardy
I am wondering about the scene
I like mechanisms
my fears are piling up
against the fence that separates
us from the future

May 2, 2015

Really Really

I watch videos and place myself beside them
far away it seems
I can tell it's bad when what I dream of is long ago
my dreams are the colors of faded color film
and I wonder
will I be able to string enough words together
to make an impression on the sad passing
of the eternal world

May 3, 2015

Grand Exit

the sand driveway from the road to the barn entrance
grass in the middle / two ruts
made from decades of wear
trucks / tractors / wagons / wheelbarrows
up a slight rise
seems so ancient
seems like a warm place to live
I don't want the attention any more
let me go

May 4, 2015

Secrets Evolved

the western field
sharp thin black branches webbing the sunset sky
stalks of old straw and a rock
woodchuck holes around it
an old apple tree
a back field
how did it all come to this
beginnings never spoken of but they weren't secrets then
they are now

May 5, 2015

What Partners Do

tell her
a man said
the other man paused then said it's a long story
he told she
she granted redemption
his job was to love her

May 6, 2015

On Top Of All That

I sometimes have a hard time
believing how far we would bike
in Illinois when we lived there
then spend the day playing
then ride back
long summer day
but many miles each way
we were something
and she would strip
too

May 7, 2015

First Nights

I met her outside my studio
rented for trips / better than hotels
snowing which was rare for the city
we never spoke
at first the language barrier
then the seductiveness
finally the lust
every first winter night we spent under covers
until 4pm the next day
just touching
this time we sat by the window
watched streaks in the yellow light
then she released herself and the night began
all that mattered was the smell of her hair

May 8, 2015

Day Two Away

then we'd eat a light dinner
in a dark place
she would order for us
in her husky accent
I would rarely look at her
nor she me
our rules were to look askance
indirect / hidden passion
at night only the lights from outside the windows
orange and yellow
touch not speech
taste not sight
her fingernails were soft on my head
my back

May 9, 2015

Not Magnificent

our spot's by
the river / a bench where we watch
the fast current and the boats that push up against it
behind us the cathedral
I warm my hands in winter between her thighs
she watches women walk by across the river
in their Frenchness and zest
all I can do on Paris streets is walk just behind
and watch with awed eyes

May 10, 2015

What Does Not Beautiful Mean?

Paris is not beautiful
French women are not beautiful
their strength is allure
human scale loveliness
take the streets
cobble and rough most places
smelling of piss
the buildings are drab for being a northern city
the sky is pale
used to be dog shit everywhere
against this the strong colors of markets
reds and greens and yellows of produce
blacks and silvers and whites of fish
pinks and whites and whites of shellfish
reds of meat
off-whites of chickens unless they are feathered
many colors of bottles of oils and jars of spices
see what I mean about allure
human scale allure

May 11, 2015

Not Time Tonight

I've found bugs galore and strive
to fix them or patch around them
to not much avail
I have to call Scotland tomorrow
for our trip
this is just a progress report

May 12, 2015

Woman Next Door

today I met a crazy woman
I tried to calm her down
her husband agreed to everything that was done
he backed down
I would too
she is super crazy
I am still flustered

May 13, 2015

Is It Too Much

I suppose I am in the midwest now
I haven't left yet but I avoid stress
I'm full on in despair
it will be warm there and I hope not crazy
I want to chill
I need rest and nothing to think about

May 14, 2015

Pi Zza

tonight a good pizza
Nancy couldn't stop talking
I didn't recognize her at first
we ate good pizza but not overate
cabs both ways
a long walk to and from the Arch today
a warm day not humid
I hope we make it home

May 15, 2015

Gradual Difference

ceremonies over
hot day then some rain
a good meal and conflicting conversations
I felt alone little
didn't feel alone at all
felt a little healthier
felt like the story is unwinding

May 16, 2015

Finally Near The End

going back to the small womb
forgetting the special things
cancel my history
let my dreams live as if they never were passed by
I think it's going to be a long long time

May 17, 2015

Ass Symptotics

when she walks away
the sadness saved up in the world
pours into a hole
never seen before
inside you

May 18, 2015

Valuation

too many days spent
doing other people's business
I won't be a slave much longer
I've worked hard to achieve a strong result
few see the value
value
it's about science
not value

May 19, 2015

Slave to Love

looking back is all
there really is
at this stage / I am a memory
loser / finding my way toward
a woman of fantasy
I was taught the strange
finishing moves and gestures
there are many I would love
many I did

May 20, 2015

Long For

when will I be home
too much travel starting last week
lasting all summer
almost / the world back in black and white
I want just to write

May 21, 2015

Slave To The End

how terrible
to work to the day you die
for someone else
your life is here and it's yours
not the man who pays you
be grateful and hateful

May 22, 2015

Being Explained

the beauty of casual wording
things slowing down
ready to stop
the usual place
at this time
casually explained

May 23, 2015

Eva

forty one years too early
the one zipped by
she shone
she owned
she drew us all
out / she was regal and funny
beauty of time
I fell for her
it is too late for me
I was her last choice anyway

May 24, 2015

Fingering

suppose love
suppose a lit day
on the street corner
eating codfish and buttered bash
suppose a the one passed by
would you dare

May 25, 2015

Old Enemies

they say hate is a potion
rubbed on the ego
sandpaper on the eyes
I could see it
but

May 26, 2015

Rui Paula

her face dour
hypnotic as she grabs you in her eyes
she smiles to others
not you
I am as one lost
as her gaze heads
for the restaurant door

May 27, 2015

Out

I have lost the urge
to join and work
it is a hard place to find comfort
it is something I can drop

May 28, 2015

Bye Bye

I am done with my contributions
to this group
I worked hard for not much
no thanks eg
I hope to make it home
I will eventually

May 29, 2015

On Plan

sugar girl soured on me
an old train instead of the hipster one
and where'd she sit
by the window as the old track
rusted alongside the green river
let's go

May 30, 2015

Why Always Sleep

to airport early and still half asleep
last night my buddy couldn't get it done
today it's a long haul
no one in Spain so far likes to help
so I didn't cooperate much
but I wasn't rude
just not a pal
I want to sleep

May 31, 2015

When I'm Too Tired

poets are dopes
don't live in our world
make livings by hobbling
when they write it's all about frogs and leaves
sometimes / I know I know / cats in windows
and classical music
yuckoente / as they say

June 1, 2015

On To Summer

so it was a nice week
aside from the working and crazy folk
I spent time wondering about writing
how it gets in the way of writing
yes I meant that
now you need to figure out what I meant I meant

June 2, 2015

Sim Ann

working for the poet
making schedules
sigh
what torture because it distracts
me from real work
but for Hass
why not

June 3, 2015

As Best He Can

progress on the scheduler
but I notice I'm missing New England
the code is delicate
but when Hass asks
Gabriel answers

June 4, 2015

Female Form

woman is a platform
I mean this positively
the worlds are built on that platform
life and love / the experience of passing on and
passing it on
without a woman to watch
there is no reason to cry

June 5, 2015

Truth All Over The Place

the beauty of coincident deaths
an illusion of storytelling theory
an equilibrium they tell me
their real story was of interruption
and sporadic intensity
I cried at the ending

June 6, 2015

At Once I Knew I Was Not Magnificent

while we were there planting
several women stood by nearby / graveside
one came over to talk
she said how beautiful were the irises
how much she enjoyed seeing them
as she was visiting her mother's gravesite
were we the gardeners of the family?

we explained that our very good friend (you)
carefully tended to the plantings every year
but you lived in CA and had been unavoidably kept
from coming out this spring so we were planting
the geraniums this year for you
she said her mother died just a couple years before
and that just one day ago her mother's dearest and best friend
had also died / she teared up a bit

we exchanged another pleasantry or so
then she departed
and we finished planting

June 7, 2015

Sometimes Losing is a Habit

feels so far down
feels like bad luck
what will it cost to fix our house
will be be forced to the laundromat
first time in 40 years
what a comedown

June 8, 2015

Tonight As It Cools

today two problems solved
hot as all get out
making plans but I want to stop that
I wanted to like some of those things
but the cost swelled and I wilted
nowhere but alone here

June 9, 2015

Speak With Her

the paths people take
outlined in an odd blue
where people pushed themselves with small efforts
I can see my road
as if at night / the routes I'd drive
wandering to find someone
I think myself
are like these others have taken
but mine repeat as if traversed
by a maniac
was that me
I stopped places but those there then
are now gone and their memories too
mine of them / theirs of me

June 10, 2015

In A Death Garden

if the poets call
groundhogs will lumber from den to den
in cemeteries all over the country
other countries too
poets are getting ready to call
they hate technology
though

June 11, 2015

Gently Wondering

in a town now downed beneath
someone's like the man who through
two generations made me was made
a man I can never know
the place I can never go
women I can't quiz
only while I live will this be a puzzle
I will solve it with my stories
and why not

June 12, 2015

InkWell Awake

my program is relentless
in its creativity
it doesn't tire
doesn't get distracted
(much)
it surprises me with its clever connections
surprises me with its dumb mistakes
build in learning / that might help
only how

June 13, 2015

Argentina Upscale

somewhere on the other side of the world
someone built a city
in that city an old hotel
has been remodeled time after time
because everyone loved the view
of the streets at night
and in a room there now on a mid-upper floor
a woman beyond what I can imagine
is spreading her legs
and waiting for the end of the song
before taking off into the Southern sky
in foreign air

June 14, 2015

Down a Road Opposed

I have made many bad choices
written too many bad things
loved too many bad women
I want something to calm me in these lingering days
I wish my memory had kept up
now I patch with makeup
travel in time / travel by person
I limit myself to expand limits

June 15, 2015

Funny CS Joke

I found a way to make a new world
it's called programming
in it I'm a stranger
who magics mistakes
I like the feel of parentheses
others crave types
I'm not that type

June 16, 2015

Summer Canal

what do you think it would mean if a woman wrote this

it isn't like his erection
they bone—
our Summer canal

if a man wrote it
if a computer
I would answer

many lives in the screw
and not bastardized yet—
the death of death

June 17, 2015

Off Track

not on today
words not coming right or well
things not working well
but I am catching up a little
sometimes I wonder if I write too simply

June 18, 2015

Cool Grass Dream

last night my dream was of time travel
to the old house and the most vivid
part was lying down in a cool bed of clover
by the kitchen door
the walkway from the front of the house to the back
and gazing at the grass / at the house / at the garden
at the oak tree
then the woman who would sell the house stripped down
and we held each other until I told her my age
prevented everything
it was beautiful / sad / disarming

June 19, 2015

Like Missy P

she was beautiful
when I saw her sitting at the Moustache café in Porto
her friend was a beautiful man
they were paired
his life was on its way
to being beautiful
with her
when they stood up to leave she turned away
and I watched the backs of her legs
propel her away from me
as from all like me
they were ordinary
her legs
a little fat

June 20, 2015

Heading to Scotland

my program is a surprise
even when I find bugs
they are friendly ones
I poke through ideas
code blankets the world with drunken sardines
and the control room of the banquet

June 21, 2015

Information Hiding

how to frame an argument as fiction
how to find pretty words to make it vivid
details to make it real
information hidden in writing
writing is not information

June 22, 2015

This Is The End

lots of ways to look at those passed on
just a chance meet up
just a lifelong friendship
I wonder why I am a pusher away
why no one speaks to me
some day the end will find its
way to me

June 23, 2015

Sundown Art

every night growing up I'd
watch the after sunset sky
I'd hope for a dark stain on porcelain
I'd settle for porcelain alone
or a bluster / maybe a poof of snow
through the night I'd make a mental painting
of a day that could end with those colors
that temperament / in the morning
I'd wake fully forgotten of the meaning of the canvas
the end of yesterday made

June 24, 2015

On Bath Street

occasionally one would be stunning
tight short skirt
over leggings
so sudden would one be
that the mind could not keep up
you'd hear yourself say
what?

June 25, 2015

To From Edinburgh

today it was rain
and a long walk
and so-so food
a long train ride
two of them
now muscle pain
and a need to sleep

June 26, 2015

Health and Marriage

sadly for many
what's written needs to be read
studied / interpreted
when it's their pet thinking it's great
when it's not reading is imperialism
ha ha ha
I say

June 27, 2015

Scottish Genius

in the botanic garden
the women of Glasgow spread
themselves like cheap laundry
on the lawns and read or text
few of them are electric
but they are all
the men of Glasgow have
aye

June 28, 2015

Rain Again

here rain is everywhere
we soak while walking
more rain than the Amazon
women hide umbrellas
but they have them
they have everything

June 29, 2015

Obviousnecessity

we live in a time
when hatred is king
where the rich want slaves
and create the conditions
that make them so
it doesn't take long
to figure out how to hate them

June 30, 2015

Just Me Baby

maybe I should bail
bad room and too much heat
or find a hotel and drive each day
I don't like being a pauper
when I don't need to be
I want something calm and lovely
I am too old for anything less

July 1, 2015

Captain of My Heart

if only I had a list of questions to ask
if only the desperation of my parents were something I could correct
I would be on the farm now hiding from everyone
not worrying about my overlords
or maybe it's time to take the ultimate seriously
this is all I ever dream of

July 2, 2015

Portland

too unfriendly a place maybe
need to find out a little more
need to decide
maybe it's not worth it
maybe too much to do otherwise

July 3, 2015

Stop Fixing My Typos

she can't escape her brand
speaking of things as grammar
it was cute fifty years ago
she's maybe too old to see it
the space between the moon and its noun
who cares about the space
I care about moons
I care about nouns

July 4, 2015

Fireworks Above

something like this
twenty hours in bed
sick and nauseous
in bed so long my back went out
will this be like the end
the fireworks seemed on top of the house

July 5, 2015

Ink Well Blues

my program writes great
but revises poorly
too many not great words and phrases
I've tried to beef it up
how long do I need to hang on

July 6, 2015

Our Ethel

we recover slowly from memory
the dark evening we campaigned
and met Ethel
Ethel Cullinane class of '67
she invited us that next weekend
to a game at Haverhill High
we went / when she saw us in the light
she was convinced
it wasn't us
no not us

July 7, 2015

Ethel Too

the night was rainy
we campaigned without passion
school assignment after all
November / it was dark
no one was interested in our candidate
later we went to part headquarters
we met Ethel there
we talked a long time
we were from the small-town school
she from Haverhill
she asked us to the football game
we said yes thinking something was meant by it
nothing was

July 8, 2015

Just Air and Sweet Barbecue Pit

he gives his tack signaling devices a buck
to communicate if there's some deed.
the only other telephone message is the sex
of libidinous weather and persuadable bank

July 9, 2015

River Dream

I am not back yet
not back home
the river is likely slipping downstream
as it does / the rocks are exposed
slowly polished
birds find what they need by it or nearby
I would be ready for a week or two there to remake myself
how many more times can I make it
I can almost hear the flow

July 10, 2015

Ouch

too much work this week
the simple breezes need to take charge
I have two more hard days
then a trip / will it all work
hard eye work maybe one more day
pain not friends

July 11, 2015

Quick Wrong

tomorrow I pack
final preparations
why does it take me days to get ready
soon I want to get back to writing real poems

July 12, 2015

Asbestos

I've read a lot of poems
that celebrate butterflies
stuff like that
sure it's all pretty
pretty butterflies
pretty poems
but serious
or boring
go home and eat somewhere sweet
like all typos
the worst are best

July 13, 2015

Dog Cemetery

there's a path through the woods
leading to where dogs have been buried
I never go there
it's a small field growing smaller
saplings leaning in
sky closing
those dogs were my dogs
my friends buried them for me
and said some words I wrote
I was just practicing

July 14, 2015

Road to the Observatory Site

when I was a kid
I wanted my lines to be lines from books
how long to cut the road to the observatory site
I'll have it done in one week
it took a day
because there was already a road
and only small bushes blocked the way
my father thought I was lazy
instead I was being dramatic
he never changed his mind

July 15, 2015

Passion as Imagination

there is an imaginary sun that when
it sets sets the edge of town on fire
and in that fire women flame their passions
and the men around them burn in their loins
from where I sit the town's all orange
and the women red and weeping
join me as I join this scene
as a lone looker

July 16, 2015

In a Wood

somewhere north of my home
a mountain rises that I could climb
and my parents could and we'd listen
to the music while watching the movies
of then

the way I am now
all options are gone
the green dark woods are lonely for me
they weep while it rains

July 17, 2015

Body Wills

today a long drive and the bodybuilders
smelled of liquid tan
I reeled and left
the cut girls scared me
they all looked old
no matter how old their asses looked

July 18, 2015

Find Out Less

today a long drive and the hotel is welcome
tomorrow I return home
and more work to be done begins
to be done
my interest grows weak and seeks
the death penalty

July 19, 2015

Royal Mile

mother and daughter
different noses
same mouths and chins
sweet / pretty / aligned alongside
it was raining of course in Edinburgh
the rings they told me what for

July 20, 2015

What You Want To Be

at the end we may just slump
and be gone
we enter nothing but white
nothing written on us
we depart scribbled upon and confused
confused at both ends
many branches scratch
many nails dig
the gaps covered with soft kisses and touches
are few / are none
what we find from the past of others
would kill them in their surprise
my mother stares at me from her class picture

July 21, 2015

On A Partway Up

I am sitting halfway up the tough mountain
at the point where easy turns to hard
on a rock that would be grand comfort higher up
I can climb no higher
a boy reaches a point not far below me and sits his rock
he shouts up
you are wonderful / you were my dream
one of us weeps

July 22, 2015

Alone Naturally

every now and then I find the tracks of people I once knew
they sweat happiness after a long string of average luck
their patina is a rust
they've traveled long ways
they cluster by each other
I stand alone with only one or two
the choices

July 23, 2015

Who Told You?

chickens are great
I once had a glass of hens
they represented terse condensations
in the silly-season Moon
hot initially
then suffering

July 24, 2015

Merrimac Dreaming

I read about Merrimac
small and unpleasant
I lived there for 23 years
ages 1—23
haven't been there for a year now
I want something warm to happen

July 25, 2015

Oblong Reminder

many have left
both the earth and my memory
they all seem so important
I hunt them down and write them down
I search for my past in the present

July 26, 2015

Stop I Say Write

a lovely woman lives in northern Europe
she cannot say a word to me
she drinks / eats superbly
dresses in long scarves and nonlinear skirts
her thoughts are formed in ways surreal to me
my impression is a jumble
cold is all I recall
I never met her
I've read we'd be perfect
but I think I wrote that
her name doesn't match her red hair
I think it's artificial
I spent hours fiddling with that color
and the spelling of her name
I was not coordinated enough to do both so each drifted
I watched her walk away down a dark street in northern Europe
one cold night when the snow was the thing
that was the closest I came to punctuation that year

July 27, 2015

Wally

the old ladies are clucking their poems
they sound like they were written 100 years ago
all the old ladies love all the poems

July 28, 2015

Wally Silly

tonight I learned about the bermuda triangle
the cat thing in the lap
an old woman writing of someone just like her
and some doctors of this and that
I spoke of the attraction of possums dead on the road

July 29, 2015

I Am No

I can't swallow who I am
I need even more backgrounding

July 30, 2015

Bad Turing Test

what is wrong with me
why can't I be normal

July 31, 2015

Oswego

the heat followed me to my car
I pushed it out after I closed the windows
on the way home
the sun pressed its revenge

August 1, 2015

Redhead

a stupendous woman walked by my café table
I was drinking strong coffee with heavy milk
I held the coffee cup near my mouth
until she passed around the corner
my life passed in front of my eyes

August 2, 2015

Feet Don't Fail Me Now

I landed on this planet
expecting my feet to work
but they failed
because feet and water only mix

August 3, 2015

Farm Attitude

as I fade out
I dream of having stayed on the farm
with my world circumscribed by its boundarird
only what comes in
no socializing but in the fields or woods
instead the tears of distance and strange
instead the bad hope of fame
the silly hope of fortune
no hope of happiness

August 4, 2015

Catherine in Berlin

there was a downpour
and we had ice cream sundaes in the eastern part of Berlin
my student and his gf
she was severe but kind
both grew up in the former east
surprising how many friends of mine did
sometimes I visualize her scowling
sometimes smiling as she helps me
an old man / find a toilet

August 5, 2015

And We'll Talk

roads don't quit
often / even ones unused for decades
keep their ruts going strong
under cover of overhanging trees
the midlines fill with grass and brush
but the tamped down tire ruts persist
through writing / through maps
I follow them and walk them
perhaps someone I know will
one day pop up on one
of them

August 6, 2015

Build Me One Too

some of the days are weapons
piercing and bashing into us
the ground / shaking leaves and bending branches
a bright flash of light near the horizon
a steeply angled wind into trees and rattling shutters
we spent millennia fabricating how to build shelters
now to work on our brains

August 7, 2015

Below

down below the narrow ridge
dried farmland growing nothing
quonsets broiling everything inside
hardy trees not ready to give up their green
the air up here is warm not quite hot
the conversation is irrelevant
my poetry sees the dire farmland below

August 8, 2015

Nagasaki

the whole discussion of the effects
of the atomic bomb will be phrased
in terms of three kinds of energy / no other more mysterious
or immeasurable forces acted
these were all these were enough

August 9, 2015

Aki Akahori, Writer of Mysteries

along a beach some young woman walks
Japanese I'll bet in a teardrop shaped hat
it's after sunset but before dark
fog and clouds strangle contrast
when she walks her slow walk her hips
thrust a bit and a song like an untuned piano
delves the grey blue sea and sky
she stops / she stares down
later in her hotel room miles away
the lights are all an orange yellow
like a noire movie made on the cheap
the curve of her hip makes a bed impression
and staring up with her rounded eyes
she imagines a lover hidden in the fog
waiting for her tears to be wiped away
waiting for a landmark when the contrast returns

August 10, 2015

Writer of Me Writing This

she draws a bath as the old way of writing goes
her hair tied back as if she plans to step out
her straight razor / a throwback / is very sharp
she tests it on her wrists and a sound above her
reminds her of drips / later instead she downs a cosmo
having read about them in an airline magazine
a man who wants to love her forever buys her drink
but can only smell her fragrance drift away
watching her we imagine what hides below her floor
she wrote of me writing this of her / and in her work
I was like a dripping fog hugging the heavy coast

August 11, 2015

Holcomb I Suppose

on Kansas there is a long driveway
that years ago figured in a famous crime
Chinese elms lined it both sides
almost exactly East-West the West
end where the crime exploded
once lined with shade now a dozen remain
fifty years and no water with the river run dry
I stopped at El Rancho and grabbed a Kalbac Yes
back when it was Hartman's I grabbed pancakes
I might have bought the house had I had more
my wife would look on / she would have visited twice a year

August 12, 2015

In a Mood

everyone finds their way to grief
sadness at the start
at the end
many ends
you would think there's a reason for all of it
I watched many men digging and covering
putting the sod back over
waiting till the last of the family leaves
waiting until dark rises

August 13, 2015

Rising on Rails

sometimes the trains are acting funny
slowing down to pick up folks but not
at stations / along the rails / forlorn
people wondering where they will sleep
not catching out but catching up
catching on caught like a catfish
banged on the head

August 14, 2015

Be Do

a bad poem grabs you
while it's first being written
forces bad words into your fingers
phrases with deep ruts
when it's over you cry
out for your mama because
that's what gunshot men do

August 15, 2015

Sadness

suppose you are close friends with a family
been to many of their weddings for forty years
then you never even hear of the most recent one
do you wonder about close

August 16, 2015

In a Haze

what if you could find out real answers
who you are / why you are
what is behind it all
sometimes when I visit the quiet places
where groundhogs roam
and the wind is noticeable
I almost hear the answers being whispered

August 17, 2015

Hot or Not

when the heat is like fog
we dream of frozen nights
when the lights shine blue
and the path under our boots crunch
we make our own fog under heavy quilts
with close friends of a persuasion we adore
crickets? / stiff wind in bare branches
part of the life of love
in a world made fog

August 18, 2015

Sad Girl

there's a syrup bogging in my head
I am sweating from overwork and underachievement
I hope my cough doesn't undercut my keynote tomorrow
I need to keep talking to overwhelm it
then I'm done for a while

August 19, 2015

All Dead For Sure

this is the sad girl
she swings my neck like hawthorn
I am ringed by undesire
I want a group of children
in an old picture to have one of them alive
82 years later
such a small number

August 20, 2015

Rest Over

lots of little problems
I want them to hole up while
I recover / I want to wander
New England roads and paths
see where things are
just rest over and over

August 21, 2015

Fly Fish

some days people fish from jets of rock
flaming in from the river shore
they arrange themselves so that any photograph
taken of them will produce a classic Rockwell print
I snap them anyway
I've never seen them catch a fish
maybe they did
I've never touched the water in that river
I fear the strong current
even when the river is still
can I ever understand this
the river flows

August 22, 2015

RVB

one day on the bridge someone pointed
out the pier that a century ago was abandoned
it was outlined clear in green growth under clear
shallow water this one day
looking at this river right here for 40 years
I never saw it
I photographed it
all who saw it wept with delight
at the surprise so far hidden and light

August 23, 2015

Cousin

today I spoke to someone long lost
she was so excited to find me
she made little sense
her life I think
is simple
I need to go to her and tell her what I know
if her heart is able to take it

August 24, 2015

Reving

I sit on the banks of breakdown
I rev my engine too high to achieve what I do
rev too high too long and I break
I will break soon if I can't reverse
everything I try to do is very hard

August 25, 2015

Gorgeous Tonight

if god sees us naked and not as people
but as souls do he and we exist somewhere else
too or instead
is our world a thing he made but ignores
like the bits struggling in our software
written high up and clear but in fact
nutty and chaotic / approximate
is our surely his maybe / his surely our wtf
if so
if all so
how can road I start on end in his garage

August 26, 2015

Form

careless / a fib
there's been no change
a reasonable interpretation
they are careless too

August 27, 2015

God's Lunch

God bought a burrito
carne asada with pintos
guac and a pesto style sauce
a beer and folded legs on a side street sidewalk
He watched homeless pick for food
watch big cars go by
His memory's good
I'll see you all one day
just wait

August 28, 2015

We Notice

when it's time to be creative
it's time to start watching
noticing and marking things for later
the hard part is taking off the leash
the collar / opening the barred door

August 29, 2015

Oh Shit

the qb rang out and the ball was hiked
hike-en-em / bike-en-em
as Jimmy used to shout
the left-side pass rusher came hard and tight
a pair of stacked blitzers came through the A gap
the qb threw high and deep to hit a spot
the right-side slot receiver ran to that spot
caught it over his shoulder
scampered for a td
the qb raised his head and pointed two fingers
to the sky and thanked the lord
above
the lord was talking to his buds watching games and such
He said
the falsely righteous believe I am fair to all equally
that I love without conditions
hell no
I take sides
do the wrong thing and you're fucked
I hate Seattle and that qb knows it
I nudged that ball
and I accept his thanks

August 30, 2015

Short Essay

there is something I always do wrong
it turns people off
makes them turn away
hate me
I'm not sure what it is
I try to do nothing instead
that makes it worse

August 31, 2015

This Is Our Home

lilacs by the old foundation
not empty but an old dumpsite
and the lilac bush tall and full
never lacking good panicles
never lacking good smells
I ran past it every day
on errands to tell ma or daddy
my memories sparse
it was part of world
my world
a world gone and now just stories

September 1, 2015

Home Home

soon I will do my wandering and unwind
even if the leaves don't cooperate
even if it's cold and rains
even if friends turn their backs
I need the rest and the rest need to back
off

September 2, 2015

Soon Trip

there is a caution upwind
the night rains are swarming in
I feel a danger somewhere
I'm badly stressed / I must stress this
I think a wind will wind up in my wheelhouse
where will things be

September 3, 2015

Why So Old

I could hear it now
the soft brush of river past bank
night whisp of wind down the river's path
behind closed doors and shuttered windows
something special has just completed
now it's the time for books and new music
in the dull part of town
they listen to old old old old music

September 4, 2015

This Was My Home

the last time I saw my old house
it was dripping bad insulation
fiberglass cloth and newspapers
we were that poor I suppose
I believed my father dug quality
but he dug getting it done
the shingles were off
the walls were skeletons
the yard overgrown with unpleasant weeds
not the type photographers pat
keeping it what it was was too
much for the builder who bulldozed
then built something of no character

September 5, 2015

In Short

slowly the world undresses
as if the future depends on it
we read what's revealed and all it
brings is sadness
we can only write it all down in case someone lives to read it
the short lines matter

September 6, 2015

She Is Here

it starts when a woman steps into you
looking up at you
she is in control always
to push yourself is criminal
with luck she will lie close with you tonight
you can never forget her / her smell
her yielding skin
many other things could happen
these are the ones to remember

September 7, 2015

Suppose

we aren't who we are supposed to be
we should have stayed close to home
taken simpler roads as mistaken Frost readers would say
maybe it's time to simplify and slow
be more who we are supposed to be
the seed that falls too far finds itself alone
in the end / its roots creep back

September 8, 2015

Some Poems

I saw a picture of a family
today / the comments were
this is so wonderful
beautiful family!
some emoticons celebrating the sentiment
enjoy your family!!!
they were ugly
except one woman
who was ok only
really / I wondered
about life for a while
then went back to writing poetry

September 9, 2015

Lucky Child

I will sit by the river tomorrow
eat food that's bad for me
photograph what I always photograph
drive where I always drive
be good to myself best I can
read by the river
sit by some graves
talk to some people
wonder about the past
the future / try to be in the present
live like a lucky child for a day or two

September 10, 2015

Dev Null

all went ok
report tomorrow
tired as can be
I wonder where randomness comes from

September 11, 2015

Good Vibrations

somewhere alive today
a woman is learning everything she
needs though doesn't know it
doesn't suspect
in her mind and heart
with her hands and eyes and hair
to finally find me
help me die
and the spend the last of her days
watching her tears grow small
and dry up

September 12, 2015

At Graveside

after the hot sun
in the open air
and the burial service
for her ashes
after I read my small poem
poorly but slowly
at her house they praised the work
and thanked me
all I could think of was my old
buried and cold tonight

September 13, 2015

Not a Typo

what I learned today
the intrigue / the interest
makes everyone less a hero
and more a character
I am filled withun

September 14, 2015

Nuts

the past is a snake pit
everything broken and bad when you look close
I am afraid of each turn
the world just stops and laughs
I try to figure it out

September 15, 2015

Not Here

the perfect late summer day
I spent it talking not driving
not sitting by the river
not enjoying the place of my home
I am wasting

September 16, 2015

Just News

I'm too tired to puzzle it out
details of deeds and mortgages
I'll ask Aunt Leeann later

September 17, 2015

Home Finally

finally away from the craziness
I hope to hear from them rarely
I didn't relax or enjoy my spots
it was all talking and confrontation
why oh why

September 18, 2015

They Are Coming

sometimes the craziness creeps up to your door
except the door is your head
and really it's your eyes and ears
you read the craziness and it's like a potion
you must answer but sense says you must not
it's a pretty color / a warm melody
soon / you're crazy
ha ha

September 19, 2015

Somewhere I Make It

somewhere a fine woman walks home
each evening / she has no idea
she had been waiting for a one
who never arrived / her perfect match
she doesn't know she is lonely
doesn't know something is missing
it is / only a spirit would know
I see her always / walking away

September 20, 2015

Yet Yikes

I am found craziness
and no way
yet
to stop it
keep it away
find a better result
from all sides
like crazy clowns
who love me too much
and why?

September 21, 2015

In 2015

the effect makes things look old
like a Civil War photo
it's just a background glow
through blur and screening
someone might see it in 50 years
remark on how old-fashioned things
were in 2015

September 22, 2015

Not Far

the puzzle of difficult research
it's not the form of what I'm doing
but the hardness of the thinking
I'm not stumped yet
but not far

September 23, 2015

Telephone Tag

some believe righteousness needs hate
love some needs hate some
they seem better at one or the other
when someone tells you God doesn't love you
maybe it's just a message being passed on

September 24, 2015

Find Your Beach

day of talks and sadness
I am now not good with my feeling
I didn't get my vacation
back home and now my head a buzz
I want to stop everything

September 25, 2015

In Camera

so what is there to say
in a Midwest city hot with the heat
of a pennant run
with a team playing right now
five blocks away
where old buildings sweat staying up
where good food is a hidden fortune
my camera waits for a great shot
to walk up to it

September 26, 2015

In Town

the beauty standing there in tight skirts
why do they do it
I couldn't watch
I went home and cried

September 27, 2015

South of Philo

does she still live there?
farm south of Philo
no prospects we could see 40 years ago
all that time alone
even after we took her to the porn theater
showed her a movie even I still remember
a cloudy day and I stopped to photograph her place
I thought of knocking
but then how do I explain?

September 28, 2015

Quick Tonight

we find the range too far
the words are all silly
I have trouble explaining things
my words lack working

September 29, 2015

Original Pancake House

at the pancake house
two women caught my eye
both larger than models
both young and vital
friendly but professional
would I have stayed if offered
hard to know now
road not taken and all that

September 30, 2015

Jane Keeler

her barn is not a New England barn
patterned on English models
but German or Swiss
no drivethroughs to make unloading hay easy
hay wasn't the point
you kept hogs not cows
they didn't roam and you fed them close to the barn
the expanses were wide
she lives there still I think
she must be old now
like me
her poems are long gone
mine just get worse

October 1, 2015

Central Illinois

you know it's flat there
small rolling hills though
mostly flat
see how far you can see
a row of trees
some barns and silos
grain elevators
must be a town over there
and over there
when the wind blows
many people fall in love

October 2, 2015

Glory Jo

when I look at the old movies
so clear the love she showed
the smiles / the bright eyes
that's all gone now
long gone
I need to wonder even harder
what do I do that makes that happen

October 3, 2015

Witch Cramp

we cleaned out the basement today
tomorrow for a while we'll work on the rest of the house
the debris box is likely too small
we might order a second one
we'll see tomorrow
my hand cramped into shapes distorted like a witch's hand
no pain / just a crazy shape
nothing else improved

October 4, 2015

Like the Wind

I wonder sometimes
how much of my mother is part of me
the sometimes quick anger
the vindictive strain
the sharp wording
just a fool trying to be my father instead

October 5, 2015

That Day

someone/she will play a sad song on a tin whistle
by the bridge of my dreams when it's over
women will gather / some will weep / others watch
perhaps a word will be spoken
I will be so far away my memory will be white
and encased in granite

October 6, 2015

Instead

instead of a wise word a dumb trail
instead of a bowl of cereal a little reptile
instead of singing a short stool
instead of a fantastic story a word to the wise

October 7, 2015

Truth vs Beauty

when you look at the true beauties
notice that their faces are literally painted on
it will make you wonder about truth

October 8, 2015

Critical Voice

I try only twice to understand what someone has written
at most
when they fail I just walk on past
I like to be critical because it's fun
lots of people don't get that
I should probably stop

October 9, 2015

Bike Home

sitting on their porch
the west beyond a garden and low trees
a gap it looks like
where a river sits
her father has told her to talk to me
she at least
sits there still and cute
she seems eager for something
something from me?
I have singing in her parlor
then the ring
two short / a pause / two short
she leaps to answer
she now is alive

October 10, 2015

Never Cold

the cold comes up on you
when the dark folds around you
I'm sitting on a bench at the edge of a foreign park
the tops of the trees are flirted by flakes
across a brown expenditure of dead-seeming grass
a woman in a long coat down to her heels
and a squaring hat and scarf
walks with high dispatch toward a domestic night
will she cook / will she smoke outside her flat
will she invite some
one in
I'm chilling / I might nod
then what will dawn mean

October 11, 2015

Bel Ami

she's a woman now
and can decide like a woman whom she loves
and how
but when she was a girl
say sixteen
many flocked to her and she had to decide then too
then she was innocent allure
now she is a peg in the shape of a bell

October 12, 2015

In A Word

my pillow is always with me
some people look cross-eyed at it
it connects me to my old couch
the big gap when I ignored it
middle years
I was ashamed of my childishness
no more
I feel comfortable

October 13, 2015

Worse is Worse

after months the bathroom repairs are done
worse than my old man's paranoid guess
the lesson / no matter how bad it could be
it can be worse

October 14, 2015

Hi Lo

places / the future stopped
time clawed away everything else
dust and papers blowing down main
paint peeling revealing pink beneath
leaning against a broken wall
God in jeans and low-pulled Stetson
He's waiting for the wind to stop
He's used to breaking things
down the street only one bar's open
He heads there for beer / the Hi Lo
for His whisky / it's Comeau's

October 15, 2015

Like This

I like glossy-coated seizure-alert dogs
I like untuneful Newfoundlands
I like congratulatory tarantulas
I like semiconductive Tibetan mastiffs
I like reconstructive crab-eating foxes
I like unprintable Brittany spaniels
I like glossy-coated straw-colored seizure-alert dogs

October 16, 2015

For Cover

reading the great stories
I wonder what it has to do with me
I lift my mind back to when I could
pull the covers over my head
and worry about nothing
no one loved me then
nor now
but then it seemed like good treatment
I was running from everyone

October 17, 2015

Who Will Write This If I Don't

in a town wet with night and dark with rain
the little band in the corner of the pub
brings it down and cooks
their repeated refrain drains to melancholy
and maybe even sad
I'm sitting in my car outside the pub
watching night lights flicker and dim
go off
something might be happening in those rooms
in my car I flip open my black moleskine
click on my pen

October 18, 2015

A Meadow in Edinburgh

something about the dark
photos taken in the dark
long exposures in b&w
a low sun in winter
the far north especially
women walking quickly from place to place
they don't like the melancholy
the long shadows / the odd grip
of the place on her grief which will last long
or her love which will last longer

October 19, 2015

Green Bus in the Background

black soot buildings shine in the rain
in an old city that doesn't like to be clean
famous thinkers once thought here
I found a narrow passage
worn slick from many
so narrow its sides were worn slick
I wanted a woman nearby to make the poem slick
I know which one too
blonde on the bottom
dark growing back halfway
her clothes are heavy
she is not special

October 20, 2015

October Lightness

trees gone all branches
some yellow leaves hang on
the streams gone all black blue
the wind whipped to near white foam
fall now and my favorite times in the past
when thoughts of passing passed through me
with joy

October 21, 2015

Amazing and Common

they walked up
one by one up to the polished box beside the altar
the priest was watching and holding his candle
in the loft a girl was singing soft
she was nothing to do with this all
the women as we expected let tears
drip down their dresses and those tears
were pushed into the stone floor
as tears have been for generations
the men as we didn't let their tears
drip down their jackets and so the life
on the church joined the death in the church
the priest lit each candle with delicacy
and the muscles of music wore deep
into those gathered

October 22, 2015

Do Don't

I wrote once
a poem that I found last night
and I cried over it
the beauty was so out there
how did I do it
why am I now so much less
is it what Dean Young said
don't practice
do

October 23, 2015

On A Plane

I watch people behind me congratulated
and adored / my time is over
climbing hard mountains can't be done
pushing hard is hard
I don't want to be relied on
I need to find out how to write again
before it's too old

October 24, 2015

Cool Your Jets

I need to learn my opinion
no longer matters
so just shut up

October 25, 2015

Melancholyish

walking into downtown Pittsburgh
twilight or later
a wet mist hangs around
a yellow streetlight is trying to stay lit
a woman in a long coat and wide pants
walks away slowly into the mist
into the dark
I lean against the brick side

October 26, 2015

Pittsburgh Today

today the mist rose toward the overly
rich sunrise
the clouds and hidden parts of buildings
sometimes shone through the mist
the low clouds
the mist was rising from a barely
flowing river

October 27, 2015

Birthday Girl

99 years old today
my mother was not one
to shy from an argument
this might sound valiant
most say she was a pain

October 28, 2015

Fully

we are the ends of the earth
the filled are full of blues
I am hot with the percentage

October 29, 2015

Did I Love Her?

tonight I saw a woman
with lavender highlights in her mouse blonde hair
she designed in it piled layers
I followed her through the gallery
I wanted to watch her every minute
not a good idea

October 30, 2015

Monongahela

the river out there
seems not to flow
the wind blows ripples
every which way
trains go each way beside it
boats too
it's a cold hard fact
that this city is under fire

October 31, 2015

The Rest

my age is one I never thought to achieve
or get to
today is a day of darkness always
coloring my life
leaves gone off
the roads covered in pine needles
I sometimes believe I was special
my fate was luck and collaboration with the brilliant
I need to study my best writing
to regain it
for now I rest

November 1, 2015

Romance After The Fact

down a dusty lane
leaves shuffle toward
a barn whose doors are rotting
from the bottom up
inside hay has fermented into mud
timbers older than the country
are shrinking into sheets
leather harnesses into parchment
in that barn I touched a girl
we wanted to know
it's not what you think / we were children / see?
she touched me
we wanted to know
my theories were wrong
hers less so
mine too abstract really
hers maybe a warning
we built a house from a cardboard
refrigerator box
came home from work to a phony meal
and two touches

November 2, 2015

The Same Bad

bad wind all night
imagine the animals
clouds hurrying along
no one sees them except in town
you'd think a storm is approaching
but nothing will happen
you'd think a warm bed friend is approaching
but nothing will happen
I sit reading by the window
branches flail between me and the neighbor's house
she sits reading by the window
we are reading the same book

November 3, 2015

Vapor

in a big park in a big city
they still run sodium vapor lights
many men and women have embraced under them
on warm nights and cold nights
the color is the color of romance
now they want to replace them with LEDs
brighter / whiter / cheaper
one wonders how'll we'll be made
when all but profit is extinct

November 4, 2015

Analytical Model

she is more than I can imagine
she looked at me without turning away
too many have wandered
I will dedicate my next program to her

November 5, 2015

Sharp Wind

when you look down you see the silhouette
of an old pier under the speedy water
beneath the bridge / someone built all that
it was hard to miss the green outline under clear but brown water
flowing steadily to the ocean
an older woman pointed all this out
to me / her hair scattered in unexpected ways

November 6, 2015

Small D

a small decision follows you
it balls up into large
it fools you into lying
until lying is truth
a cliché but worth it
her last thought
was of that night
when she didn't help

November 7, 2015

Names Change

there is a large brownstone
in South Boston where
my father turned into
John Gabriel

November 8, 2015

Watching Her

I watched
until the end
I could watch
forever

November 9, 2015

Not Tonight

I am too angry to write
sometimes this happens

November 10, 2015

Nowhere a Rhyme

the little patch beside the bridge
is filling with snow tonight
night is a shallow time
the day is wandering off
a car will skid on new ice
it shall fall by the edge

November 11, 2015

Mystery of the Desert

the desert is vast this time of year
among the forgotten birds are birds that can't fly
many have built theories of mathematics based on this question
birds that can't fly
they forget all about the vast desert
how empty it is without them
for they scratch on their blackboards

November 12, 2015

Brandy Brow

I was driving that night
Brandy Brow Road
warm so my window was open
I heard dogs barking
then there they
were / two old women in a car
parked in a driveway
drinking from cups
cupping cats in their laps
I heard they were afraid of the house
lived there but slept in the car
the dogs knew it too
barked to keep away spirits
from the up road
up where I lived

November 13, 2015

Reinterpret

after my father died
I spent time in his garage
staring at his projects
taking his tubes out of their boxes
and packing them for the trip West
I took his transistors too
but I hated them
every night after he died
I heard the cricket behind the car
every time it started after I turned on the light
I'd stop / trying to find it
it cricked less loud every night
eventually it was gone
I studied that

November 14, 2015

Reminder

I used to watch the western sky
after the sun had set
in Winter there was a tangle of branches
and puffs of pines
it seemed like my future
looming out of the low clouds
no longer visible
people who knew me then didn't talk much about it
I left the place
the cold reminds me of it

November 15, 2015

To I

what happens when you live somewhere
your whole life
the narrow views so familiar
they are gone
they vanish
your friends vanish
your family does
and you
only one letter to change

November 16, 2015

Under

imagine lying in bed
for a day or two
with a new one
seeing and learning
touching and all that
cold outside
but the blankets
the warm air under them
under

November 17, 2015

Like That

I watched her paddle toward me
standing on what looked
like a surfboard
on the Merrimack
in her bikini
against the tide which was coming in
yellow hair / thin / shaped
years ago I sat in my car
at the same spot
in Winter when the ice was confused
and bubbling brown ice into prayer hands
I never could get near
anything like that

November 18, 2015

I Cried That Night and Still Do

down a perfect Paris street
trying to find a good espresso
I found / she wore a leather jacket with zippered pockets
over a long-sleeved sweater / no gloves
a brown scarf knotted twice
around her neck holding down and back her dark brown hair
a wool-white skull cap hat in the form of lace
one hand held over the other
not much makeup but reddened cheeks
on the cold day
later someone said her name was Eva
over her shoulder her long strapped bag hung
she was perfect
I snapped her even though she looked
like she wanted to talk
she never smiled but she was open
I could see something was in one
of her zippered chest pockets
she could have been the other
half of me

November 19, 2015

Poof

if we could travel back
and tell ourselves little snippets
of our later lives
I imagine the look on my face
when I show me photos of the women I married
the children I had
and the citations on my awards
then disappear

November 20, 2015

East Berlin Formerly

some of them must be dead
people in my photos
taken in foreign cities
people who don't speak like me
women with new washed panties
and the skirts that show outlines
men in flip flops staring at them
at me / cobble stones because foreign right
and always the strange dog that stares
up at me even as he sits awkwardly
on his haunches

November 21, 2015

Writerish

up on the hill I programmed day and night
I was not good at it
but better than a lot of the others
I rarely had a clear plan
today it's really about the same
but with enough experience I can seem fast and accurate
I have a fear of programming poorly
I need instead to write
write write

November 22, 2015

Raw Desire

every day new evidence comes in
showing how little I've done
how poor I've been at most things
how other talent is more talent
I really am just the best
of my small town / the bigger the world
the smaller I am / let me hunker here forever

November 23, 2015

Knowing

she said
did you miss me or
are you just aroused
then I watched film of us 20 years ago
how happy she was to play with me
and now it's a chore she doesn't consider
like the chore of listening to

I can't write it
because one day she'll read all these
and know

November 24, 2015

Having Fun

into the piano room to practice
used to be part of Nana's apartment
but it was down a few steps
in Winter it'd be cold & cold
I started the little furnace
then sit and play / I was never great
but some liked how I played after a while
parlor grand is what my father called it
it had a deep bass sound / I mic-ed it
to jam with bands / I was always
a decent rhythm player

November 25, 2015

A Story

kids grown up from my schools
even now they don't like talking to me
what what what is it that is wrong
I am so fear instilling
so smart / so stupid
that uninteresting
why do most of the places I've tried to work
never even call me back
why do women always come to hate
if I find out I'll warn you

November 26, 2015

Home Gone

someday there will be a way
to remember things without grudges
the good talks / the little touches
like hiking a tough mountain
many have made it beyond me
I am sitting on an outcropping
looking down at the way I'm from
a long hike to here
be happy about that
tonight in a cold room
with family gone home

November 27, 2015

Or a Festschrift

some celebrate the 65th year
of great researchers
I'm 66 now
therefore like dogs that run and hide
I'm under with it

November 28, 2015

I Will Not

they hovered around me
almost like friends
but soon they felt me shrink
the culture has learned
so have the palm readers
who close my hand
and say no

November 29, 2015

Shed on a Hill

a shed on a hill
just some granite small boulders
and short pines
from there all I can see is the long path
back to the rained on day I was born
a dark day I imagine in the rain
warm last day of October
my job to line that path
with a string of words no one can believe
I wrote

November 30, 2015

Orchard and Fences

our orchard was never used
while I lived there
the yellow jackets—the small ones
ate holes in the small pears
the grass never grew tall there
branches were part of the pathways
around it a barbed wire fence
maybe sixteen trees and the sewage stream
forming the start of Cobbler's Creek
green

December 1, 2015

By a Bed

he balanced poor skill with patience
perseverance / he nearly sliced off his hand
he planed off part of a finger
I lived more in my head than in the world
do I do differently now
he died I think praying by his bed
alone and unable or unwilling to call out to her
I hope his prayers made a difference
that night or after
my family is a family of loners

December 2, 2015

Donovan's

tonight a woman walked past our table
in a restaurant on the beach in Melbourne
whose walk away from me taught
the purpose of thongs under a silky light brown skirt
you should picture smooth elongated curves
with everything around it moving slow and deliberate
if you can't you are already faded

December 3, 2015

Cross the Line

we saw them all
they wandered past
we had trouble keeping our balance
there was a cold wind then a warm one
strange hair color

December 4, 2015

BeaChristmas

some days I can't make it happen
like today but I had good friends for once
I'm tired and will reflect later
it's a warm sunny day and instead of the beach
around Christmas it in the salon
talking

December 5, 2015

Those Asses

well no need to write about
on another topic why is Brisbane
around Christmas time like Miami
at spring break

December 6, 2015

Little Guy

I touched a kangaroo today
a small one
I chose it because even if it reacted
poorly to my touch
it couldn't kick the crap out of me

December 7, 2015

Time Is A Snowplow

many people I know are happy
I am sad and pass it on when I can
tonight I am a one-liner
I want more sleep than time can provide

December 8, 2015

Sydney Asleep

some nights I'm too tired to write
I struggle to open the file
to find some words
like tonight when sweat and more exertion
than I am used to takes over

December 9, 2015

Falling

it's sad to be fading away
but it's nature's way
need to step aside
I've modified myself to be smaller
soon nothing
I will work in my own little shop

December 10, 2015

A Day

we walked a long way today
it was hot and I didn't do well
too hot / not enough exercise
I need to change back
I want to go home

December 11, 2015

Last Talk

today was better
a good last talk if that's what it is
I am content with going anonymous
people asked questions
made suggestions
I felt like the old me
for a last time perhaps

December 12, 2015

Out Croak

last day and the beauty of Sydney
old and dusty like my friend Kurkjian
they both are old and seem cast aside
women's skirts are too tight
funny how the specially adapted
fit better somewhere else

December 13, 2015

Rest of the Year

I will spend the rest of the year
writing the story of the InkWell Turing test
and maybe an essay
I plan to rest
for the rest
of the year

December 14, 2015

Last to First

the long trip is over
the last time in Australia
a warm place as far as my experience
almost like here but less somehow
maybe more modest / maybe less addictive
in some cities stupendous beauties
in others americanlike fat
the teachings there were otherwise down
my career is oddly running backward

December 15, 2015

In A Small Country

she held out her hand
as of the way to the train were strange
she pulled out an iPod and played me a song
which if I interpreted it as her speaking
said she would take me to the end
the train didn't go there but we stopped
along the way and spent some nights
we slept some days / we ate poor
in the end she showed me and I showed her
she went north I went west
we never speak / we linger

December 16, 2015

Hm

odd fact
sad music soothes
makes happy
we listen to be at home
not the silly
hm

December 17, 2015

To Merrimac

it's a big stretch
to make the trip East to see snow
when snow's not on any agenda
to be in the cold watching people
eat in warm steamed-window eateries
walk down slippery sidewalks toward the river
that doesn't care / never has
close to old friends I hope
to never see them nor them me
as I walk through their towns
past their homes
ignoring their lives

December 18, 2015

Land Land

land land
going to the land
all the day

Emily didn't write this
my barn has collapsed into forgotten memory
it was once a place I walked through
front to back
up in the lofts
hay bales made into cubbies
smell of hay and hay dust
only the little tree outside now huge
opposite of my memory

December 19, 2015

Lone Haiku / Cold Night

frosted winter,
bridge black,
ice white

December 20, 2015

Running Out of Time

on my screen
a photo of my mother in high school
a group photo of all the kids
all of them I think
are dead or nearly
their kids or their kid's kids
knew me when I lived there
maybe they would or did
believe I did good
now I have faded even from the small peak I once had
when I young I dreamed of being far and forgotten
dreams come true

December 21, 2015

Wintertime Merrimack River

it's like that now I hope
partly iced over river
cold / best shot B&W
low dark clouds
fast moving
hard to see warmth in the scene
whoever made the world
never expected this

December 22, 2015

For Christmas

I want to get in a dignified backdrop
I want to get in a tensional chateau
I want to get in a dissolvable cryptograph
I want to get in a Salvadorean ballpoint
I want to get in a dignified fur coat
I want to come back a prime pruner
I want to come out a masterly bra
I want to reach a Dominican seventy-eight
I want to reach a case-by-case charnel
I want to reach a fucking snare

December 23, 2015

Wedding Day

I cry for the life I had
for the mysteries I couldn't solve
for the difficulties my work placed in front of me
for those I couldn't love
for my mother who lived a life of death
for my father whose loneliness drove him
I cry for the place I want to be
to be alone there
when the darkness encompasses

December 24, 2015

And Free

far / the women walk quickly away
and also to
when they do
their panties slide to the surface
of their sweaty skirts
yet they wear them thin
wool and all
instead of that I watch the red light
at the top of a far away building
warning off planes
and me

December 25, 2015

Miles and Miles

when Christmas on the farm
we'd have a tree up we cut in the town forest
not legal but my mother
hated that town
most everyone in it
they liked that fine and showed how much
snow and a homemade toboggan run
I learned how to live
with no one loving us

December 26, 2015

Photo Found

today I found her photo
I thought it lost for many years
I fedexed it to myself in 2003
I found it while sorting through stuff to throw out
I never would have thought to look where I found it
along with other photos
I no longer loathe

December 27, 2015

Home To Be

alone / far from voices
far from comments
by the bridge maybe
or the river near the ocean
close to the old place
maybe then I could remember better

December 28, 2015

Finders Keepers

how to be what you desire
without the effort required
a great wish
a wanton leap

December 29, 2015

Open Carry

how long can it take to learn
right to carry is not a right to life

December 30, 2015

Cousin William

amazing how wedged the situation can get
when the untrusting bump up against
the poorly equipped

December 31, 2015

Hang On Loosely

did Pavel have it with Mrs Scherbon
is that why the kick was to the plumbing
was the fight about cheating
not just the drinking
is this why mother didn't save him
did her mother drive her mad
to make him her hero to me
did she believe her mother deserved less punishment
did she realize it takes four to cheat
four not two