

SELECTED POEMS

2006 – 2020



John Xavier

Selected Poems 2006 – 2020

Primary Edition

John Xavier

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*Men were singing the praises of Justice.
“Not so loud,” said an angel; “if you wake
her she will put you all to death.”*

– Ambrose Bierce

CONTENTS

Preface

...

The Selected Poems

[from]

Aegis Noise

Acheron

Occult Forces

Dead Time

The Plague Covenant

...

Index

PREFACE

I discovered poetry late in life. Certainly not as late as some but I'd already dropped out of school by the time I read my first book of poetry. It took quite a while too before I dedicated myself to writing it and here another long interval passed before my enthusiasm managed to produce anything of worth.

Among the poetry I had to choose from, *Aegis Noise* represents the earliest published work and this also covers a much larger expanse of years than the other collections. From it, "They Will Be One" was the oldest poem included; a poem written under the direct influence of Dylan Thomas' "And Death Shall Have No Dominion." Stimulated by the sentiments that I perceived in this and my preoccupation with John Donne at the time, I tried to fuse an eschatological sense of final unity with the fatal feeling of romantic devotion and did so, I still believe, very successfully. Over the years though I've often experimented with different approaches, some involving little to no premeditation, and have also made a point of trying to develop original styles and modes of perception. Above all I've attempted to distill everything I've obtained from reading an eclectic range of poets and literary writers into a general understanding regarding the artistic power and potential of words. In short, I've endeavored to fully master the English language's creative faculties and I believe that the extent to which I've achieved anything in this regard can largely be discerned from an objective appraisal of the poems gathered in this book. Even my narrative abilities, more fully represented by my fiction, are still on good display here.

The poetry I write is naturally defined by the poetry I have most enjoyed reading. Because of this I have a tendency for shorter compositions that begin and end with distinctive emphases. I'm also more inclined towards having an overall conceptual focus or some thematic conceit present to provide unity to the work. With several poems this has come more organically than others; "Fruition" for example. There are also poems of mine which I myself, no longer possessed by the sudden inspirations that had animated their execution, struggle to entirely understand. Here "Putting Dolphin Children to Sleep" provides a notable instance since I believe I wrote it in a single draft dashed off in a few minutes. However I feel

confident in judging the merits of my own work even in these latter cases because my passion for developing a genuine talent and being faithful to literature has long been more than a match for my, admittedly not inconsiderable, ego. The desire to seem capable when not is obviously worse than simple vanity; it's a falsehood within oneself so deep that it allows self-delusion to persist even to the point of unconscious travesty. Maybe there was also a fear that preserved me then; a fear that I might become one of those people who, unbeknown to themselves, appears ridiculous in the eyes of others by virtue of an inflated sense of ability. That in itself would probably be enough to account for my self-ruthlessness. I am thankful too that my admiration for great poetry was sincere enough in its beginnings that it has so far preserved me from such unfortunate paths.

While there are several other equally-accomplished poems in my published collections, these have been narrowed down to the ones in this book so a decent range of my work could be appreciated all together in the aim of illustrating various themes and abilities. If anyone wishes to estimate my worth as a poet, this is where they should start. However, due to unfortunate circumstances, some of my best poems aren't contained in this volume. Theseus in the Factory, *Neon Graveyard*, and the psalm poems I wrote for a lost collection called "Dead Time" constitute just a few of those belonging to a now vanished work; one that was also probably my best. Over a hundred poems went missing from my personal effects during a period in prison and today I entertain little hope of getting any of them back.

What remains though is enough I think for a legacy. Fate has certainly been far more generous to me than it was to Keats. In truth, aside from a single epic poem I plan in the future, I have no further designs in poetry. I expect to still write poems when inspiration strikes but I'm resolved to focus on fiction from now on. Like the inverse of Thomas Hardy then. As an art form, fiction has already born fruit for me, so I'm not worried in this regard, but poetry may still prove my greater contribution. I wouldn't mind this at all though since there's no art more deserving of gratitude. Poetry in fact is the truest form of writing.

THE SELECTED POEMS

A LEAP

Deep in night the lake has leveled itself
to swallow all the heavens
in one silent meditation –
a mirror perfected in its darkness
and divorced from the rolling forested hills
that undulate away
towards the cowering horizon

It lends its eternity to the moon and the stars,
reminding them of their nocturnal dominion
lost long ago when they became
a mere ossuary for the gods

In this moment it is almost as if time is retreating
so that the lake can once more reclaim
itself as an unborn child –
that is, until a shadow erupts out of the
middle of its watery face like an unbound fantasy

As the shadow twists in the air it too catches some light,
revealing its silver skin, streaked
with gossamer cataracts
fleeing in all directions

Lingering, the fish bends like a bow
before falling, and disappears

ACTING COOL

Everyone is just as cool as me
I can't out cool them

I walk past them in silence
They walk past me in silence
I don't say hello
They don't say hello

We don't make eye contact
We don't even try

We're too cool to want anything
We're cool as soon as we step outside
We're cool even when we wish we weren't
Who's going to break the ice first?

Not me
Not them

ALL THAT REMAINS

Fog oozes around the bones
Heaped over centuries;
It touches the blackened scraps of leather
Overgrown with fungus,
It crawls across the shattered antlers
And hooves of deer

Here too are the mussel shells
And worn pebble tools that opened them,
Fragments of the mystery
Where creeping snails linger warily
With tentative eye stalks

The midden is as tall as a man;
Spilling out to the edges of the forest,
A gathering of abandoned
Relics that say more than the speechless gods
Once worshiped in this country,
Powers called to by generations of people
Watching over the land and sea;
They say more
But still not enough

Each one of their villages is gone,
Less now than the last smoke of dead fires
Where primal myths were born;
Passions long ago faded into the air

This is all they found,
These starved children of another continent;
With rifles raised in fear
They patrolled the unholy site,
Saying their prayers
In unusual honesty and alarm while
Wondering at the profound immensity of it,

That such a thing could ever exist
Even in a haunted world

In the captain's journal entry that evening
No mention of it was made

AMPHIBIAN

No one suspected
But if you looked into his eyes
The secret was there

Deep in primeval oceans
Swarming with bizarre tribulations,
His pale hairless skin
Seeking communion with the air

Still he went to his office job underwater
And shook everyone's hand;
Smiling day in, day out

He gave corporate presentations
To sea urchins and sponges

If it was an existence, it was
His daily existence –
And he bore the weight of the dark fathoms
Towering over him and he did all the
Work that he was assigned

The one thing anyone really cared about

Only on rare vacations
Did he venture out into the unknown
New world that was his alone

Above the waters, in the
Realm of death
Named this by those imprisoned in
Subaqueous being,
He surfaced and inhaled

Here was solitude
And the strange glory of the stars

ANSWERS FROM THE DELUGE

water swallowing memories like slow thunder,
an opaque brown cauldron of seeping debris
gathering up the family mementos left behind
in the abandoned homes of picturesque lives

a whole horizon of relentless destruction
with frantic terror churning at its fringes,
judgement from the pseudonymous sky
restoring the palimpsest of the earth

a cipher of shattered communities
alludes to human moments in its wreckage,
encrypted in the chaos of the present,
the perfect reconstruction of everything now lost

and the dead live inside our ultimate mystery,
inside our unfathomable darkness,
as they speak to us in broken dreams
veiled in our own shadows

time is a fragile thing, irreparable,
existing only in its ruin,
leaving at last a legacy of undoing,
of all things, swept away

ARBEIT MACHT FREI

Wisps of bone and taut flesh
Arc the body –
Arms bent like wings looming,
Waiting while her legs
Flex and stretch across an
Apparition of design

Footfalls of chalk feet
Keep a thudding rhythm going,
Feet shining with coarse lacerations

Down the stairs
Of the empty auditorium
Blood, in wide red channels, seeps
To the bottom, swelling
In the rising tide of a calm opaque pool
Spreading out
And swallowing everything

The grinding tank treads of black machinery
Move unopposed over obliterated landscapes,
Crushing abandoned items that
Allude to a dream time before the madness –
A kettle, a cane, a glass bottle of milk,
Broken among the broken,
Wreckage spilling out of blasted streets
While the sun is still gleaming through the
Abundant clouds above –
A white veil beaming with radiance
As artillery drums the horizon

Stage light centered on the soloist,
A prima ballerina
Lain atop an anvil in her youth –
Forged through years of trial

To become a spontaneous creature of grace;
Frail only in illusion, the origami
Of her silhouette hides well agony
And sacrifice born from
Daemons in the music
Making a temple out of her body

Look at her pale skin

Look at the hands reaching out to you
Through barbed wire fences,
Hands attached to starving naked bodies
Piloted by sunken eyes in skeletal faces
Hinting at a speechlessness within –
Any secrets their gaunt mouths could betray
Have already died inside them

Cattle they moo for their masters
With worn out sadness,
Beaten by hunger and exertion and cruelty,
Herded wherever
Secretariats of genocide deem fit –
They exist merely
As a logistical problem now,
One that passes through the communal showers

The company behind the curtain
Gathered together in hushed excitement,
Nervous for their members
Still before the audience, watching,
Waiting, compliments and
Self-deprecation ensuing in brief asides

Finally it concludes and the applause
Rushes out of the darkness to greet them –
Smiling they link arms and stand together in a row,
Bending to the darkness, full of joy, relief

Emaciated corpses, they are shoveled into piles,
Left to rot in the open air until
They can be hauled away to the furnaces,
Smoke stacks gushing ceaselessly,
Expelling a last gray exodus into the sky

They sang songs of course,
Even in the depths of their misery

And they told jokes

Moments no mortal power can retrieve

The ghosts of these dancers,
Twirling in the fire,
Scattering the ember light,
Have mysteries
They will never share

ARTEMISIA AT MORNING

Wormwood on your lips, and the green viper of absinthe
Whispering its secrets

Never was your mind so free, so terrifyingly unfettered with
Thoughts, lost in mutation, emerging from the
Unspoken chrysalis

Illumined with lunar clairvoyance, the
Terrain transforms itself, giving up its monstrosity

Even the willow trees, pendulous amid the fog soothing its way in,
Radiate a certain sable allure that owes its lineage to
Sacrificial innocents
And the murderous coterie they appeased

Beside a dying fire you look around again,
Examining the tranquil gypsy camp in the spectral early light

At a distance a piano rots in the autumn-drenched forest,
Derelict who knows how long ago
But you suspect it still has one sonata in it, and so you rise

The last of the fire turns to smoke

Everyone is asleep, harvestmen scattering at your feet

ASHTORETH'S LABYRINTH

A water wheel of rotting timbers
Warped with the age of quiet decades,
Turned with the speechless power of
A black stream littered with the last offerings
Of the fading autumn;
And the cabin attached to it is caving in,
The grim unpainted door out front
Stained with the dozen starlings nailed there

Blood trickles around the rusted door knob,
An inversion of the sinister trees
Twisting in all directions as they form a phalanx
To ensnare the broken tatters
Of a pale evening sky

The dark forest is hovering on an incantation
Older than all apostles, something
Dreadful fallen from the stars;
Millennia had expired after its descent
Before it began to awaken,
A pulsing red heart in the shadows;
And with this the countryside eerily faded into
The ravaged land it has become

There was a family living in the cabin
At the time; a hunter, his wife, and two daughters
Surviving off whatever pittance
That they could gather from dawn to dusk

Wings of emerald, gold, and sable
Limply curling from their impaled feathered bodies;
Even as late as that
Last summer, the birds had swarmed the
Branches with their prattle;
Stunned they were felled by miasmas though,

Where cowered figures reaped them

The children were the first to
Notice the strange unease that had crept
Into their isolated valley;
They tried to warn their parents and were soon
Unwilling to even go outside alone

Night now conferred only sulphurous dreams,
Each sunset the cruel harbinger
Of intensifying nocturnal ordeals where
Visions of divine terrors and
Incomprehensible realms of abomination
Haunted the sore eyed mornings that followed;
With diminishing sleep there also came
A diminishing strength of mind

Even the parents were convinced,
And the figures seen prowling
Around the edge of the clearing where their
Cabin sat exposed
Were watched with helpless dismay

Slender totems with crude grimacing faces
Soon appeared like protrusions
From the underworld;
Decorating them were scraps of flesh
And garlands of small bones;
One daughter had touched one when they were
First found and a delirium overtook her

The family was trapped,
Besieged by the horror spreading around them

Shut in their house
They listened as a queen spoke from her throne
In the phantasmagorias of sleep that

Afflicted them;
She spoke to them of lust,
And blood

Her insatiable thirst nesting in
A labyrinth made from a shroud of thorns
And withered branches wreathed in tortured shapes;
Its tunnels formed by the paths of
Vanished creatures
Metamorphosed into chimeras

The thudding of the nails driven into the door
And their long tinged shafts penetrating
To the anguish of those inside

The mother had done the only thing she could
To protect those she loved, resorting to
A folklore defense
Against the influence of evil spirits;
With shaking hands she reached into her urn of flour
And strew this in an unbroken powdered circle
Around all the members of her family;
She added too, four glyphs
Evenly spaced apart, expressing
The same desperation as the prayers she spoke;
Her husband meanwhile sat silent,
Fearful, as he clung powerlessly to his axe

A howling inhuman throng had
Gathered around the cabin
But because of the woman's precautions
They could not instantly breach it

Yet the slaves of darkness
Are profound with malevolent ingenuities;
A chant arose in a chthonic tongue
And a towering ram-headed being stepped forward

With a cage of fidgeting starlings;
Art against art was going to decide things

So the birds were slaughtered
And the foul spell spoken
And a whirlwind
Was summoned within the house,
Scattering everything that could be lifted inside

The ward protecting their cabin broken,
The family was pulled screaming
From their home

In the center of the maze the beast conceals herself;
Her scorched and mangled wings
Covered in supernatural unblinking eyes,
Forming a dome around her

Ravenous she waits for her stealth servants
To return to her
Each evening with new sacrifices

AT ONE WITH DARKNESS

A skeletal infant
Dead from starvation;
Hundreds of thousands more like her
Waiting to die
In a city of tents and mass graves

This is the world you live in;
Not the fantasy you've created for yourself

Every day you pretend it doesn't exist,
It still exists;
Every hour you pretend it doesn't exist,
It still exists;
Every second you pretend it doesn't exist,
It still exists

You are always surrounded by suffering
However happy you are;
The walls of your paradise
Merely dampening the screams of the damned
To an acceptable level

(Allowing you to forget the truth)

The dead girl can see you though;
Through the shroud of her unbeing
She is watching, remembering

Let us join hands against her friend;
Like you, I too do nothing

AUGUST WAS LOVELY

The leaves as they dance across sundering trees,
A fever of the wind descending

And what secrets are they sharing?

Female earth, fertile and young in summer
Stays summer forever,
Lives on in the light between the stars
Where joy doesn't
Perish in the darkness

The dead have no love in them
But you will not die –
Only the flesh is unveiled

Passion is the flower of creation, a harmony
Spreading in the choirs of animals
Until even the stones themselves awake
And the voices of mountains
Rejoice, echoing

Tender woman, I close your eyes
With my whispers;
Watching from another time
As you pass away, briefly,
Tears gleaming along my weary eyelids;
Trembling while
The air escapes your lips

This the dream of an old cat, purring as it sleeps

Although the world has lost its beauty
It will all be regained in eternity

BA SINH

They met on the blue bridge,
Far from the surrounding mountains
Shrouded in clouds and rain

A pair of strangers
Feigning interest in the river below

I think I saw a fish
He said at last,
The herons are watching too
She replied

Other meetings followed,
Passion bloomed
But then tragedy

When the young man saw her next
He was blunt,
Our country is now at war
And they say I must be a soldier

Will you come back to me?
She implored

A sad smile crossed his face

Yes, if not after the war,
Within three life times

Months later, she wept at his funeral

...

It was spawning season

The river's currents glistened with the
Silver bodies of darting fish

Nothing withheld, they
Pushed upstream,
Teeming for position and mate
While a mountain's worth of water
Fought to wash them away

Of these, two came close to
Fulfilling each other
When a rush of debris parted them

...

Aloft the tallest tree, a heron couple
Sharing a nest

BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES

A winter night among the mountains;
Those dark and peaceful fathers of earth
Lifting a flawless ceiling of stars

Snow lay along the trails and around the trees
Like dreams accumulated in the afterlife,
And the silence knew it was exquisite

While the others slept we slipped away
Ascending to the shadow forest
Where our footprints were soon alone

The two of us spoke little as we sought a place
Beyond the reach of time and civilization;
Eager for freedom, however brief

So, as our breath graced the cold air with its
Ephemeral ghosts, we worked quickly
To put on our unnatural gear

The encumbrance of the cross country skis though
Vanished swiftly as we built up speed
And, single file, the nocturnal wild amazed us

Yet the path we followed had its islands of light;
Solitary lamp posts in the gloom,
Alien structures humming with electricity

Under which we discovered perfect ski tracks
So we went on like that for hours;
Gliding as I never had, before or since

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The anarchist gestures at the chaos
Lying under it all
But is too civilized to do anything
Other than caricature this

Maybe they'll rant or throw a Molotov cocktail
At someone, but so what?

The system shrugs it off
Easier than a dog can rid itself
Of a single flea

Freedom is like the air between your fingers
Slipping away when you grasp at it

Real liberty means
Being perfectly ready to die and the
Exercise of actual liberty then
Must entail all of the actual dying;
The living are merely marionettes
Too wooden eyed to ever see their own strings

Think about this
The next time someone
Pats you on the back

It's the fraud complimenting itself
Through fraud

BLUE ASYLUM

In the madness there is a garden, and here
Let the sweet circling vines of bliss ensnare me
With the perfume of abundant blossoms
And the tremendous drone of bees and hummingbirds;
So many multitudes
In all their ecstatic orbits,
I shall willingly succumb

A man swooning in the unburning flame of his delight;
Whole and serene, free of worry

“Sanity is a measly sacrifice for beauty,”
Says the council of the trees, each asking nothing
In their own wise manner as I try to
Whisper a prayer worthy of the gifts I receive

I am a friend of wonder, a lover
Eager to kiss the stars
As I wait with eyes cataract in orange sunset;
A dangerous patience though since
Each perishing sun is a doorway to some
Closing part of me, exclusive choices
Adding up a being of remote pieces
Obscured across this wandered heaven

And the dusk has a human face
But can I descend that strange ladder to another’s heart
Where unknown rewards and perils lie?

Mine is a thirst in a drought of time,
Tender as moth’s antennae;
Uncautious, I fly to random light
The instrument of instincts,
Weak enough to become a fool
Before a glowing window that will not open

Fingers made of dreams touch the glass,
A ghost of oceanic night
Looking upon a once scorned room

Inside, the pool to quench my scorching mind
But there too the glowing dies and
Like a cold neon sign, the prying thought:
I'll never be younger

BONE RAGA

Rattle man, clackety man,
He be grinning in the dark man

Used to be a grim boy
Sprawling through the dank,
Musing things,
But him got aged in a plague time
And all that moaning flesh
Went dust

Rattle man, clackety man,
Knows the forgotten dances man

Laughing at feeble centuries,
Doing footwork,
Whistling cruel tunes—
Don't need no friends neither,
Teeth enough to smile,
Rhythms just crave limbs

Rattle man, clackety man,
Waiting under your skin man

Knocking on stranger's doors,
Inviting himself in,
And once he got them family
Seated in they living room
The show starts,
Going until they screaming man

BUT I AM A TREACHEROUS SERVANT

in the Clanging Smithy my Molten Heart is Burning
the Raw Metal to Mould
Cackling Shackles for a Dungeon

All is Drudgery as The Lord is Looming,
as Steam is Hissing,
Water Dripping,
while Wrath is Wrought in Iron Knots,
Ingots Crushed to Feast Cruel Lust
to Leash the Beasts that do not Hush

but I am a Treacherous Servant,
a Seditious Slave
Seething at the Canon of the Dominion I Disdain,
Meekly,
Crafting Secretly,
an Aegis to Escape with
and a Sword Forged from Forsaken Pains

on the Day I'm done I'll Depose the Despot
I Despise and quit his Keep, releasing the Rest, and
We shall all once more be Blessed

CATS ARE THE ILLUMINATI

What do you really know about cats?

I bet you think that cats are
Adorable and amusing.

That's what they want you to think;
The truth is much more sinister.

Cats are studying our anatomy
And *sooner or later*
They'll *destroy our systems*;
I'm guessing sooner.

The charisma of cats
Is a diabolical thing
Once you realize the truth.

When a cat sleeps on your tablet
They are downloading your information.

When cats yawn,
They are yawning at you;
They are letting everyone know
How boring you are.

When a cat goes outside
They are reporting your secrets;
Cats blog about how often you masturbate.

Every time a cat looks at you
It's psychological warfare.

Don't believe me?
Think of those women
Who own hordes of cats;
They're all crazy why?

Because the cats made them crazy;
Using their mind control.
Cats are telepaths.

Cats are actually invaders from another dimension;
A dimension of cats.

Cats were the first to bundle subprime mortgages.
Cats pinned it on the lone gunmen.
Cats even invented Freemasonry
When they were gods in ancient Egypt.

Beware the cat lobbyists.
Cats are well versed in propaganda;
Don't believe anything they say about me!

CHASM TO HELL OPENING IN THE MIND OF RODIN

Fury in the tortured surface of the bronze,
The fury of all energy unleashed –
Chaos and the extinction of reason

Anarchy, every desire poured into world –
Desire without limit, life without limit;
A senseless drowning inundation
Unrestrained by any law, a savage passion
Gnawing endlessly at the edges of the decaying divine

Shadows leeches upon the light

Because obedience does not feed the soul, no,
Reason is the ambrosia of the dead,
And death inside us, the corpse spreading in our bodies,
Awakened in rigor mortis, in flesh drained of all fire

Order lives wholly in eternity, safe in symmetry
Until a single strand of energy disrupts the harmony;
Lawless in its origins because laws can only
Bring a thing to an end, they can't begin anything –
They can't be the impulse for anything to exist

Birth is by nature monstrous,
Marring its own origins in violence,
Emerging in empty havoc and inane hunger

Creation without purpose, true creation,
Not figments inhabiting another
Formed by some external authority,
Some idea or paragon, and so mere radiance
Of a transcending source –
The creator cannot create, only the abyss can create;
Newness must come from nothingness
Because this alone can free it of all pre-existence

Strangers to any god, the children of agony
Are returning in their destruction –
Reuniting with their author, having no author,
And offering up their lives as proof of this

CONSERVATORY ON A HILL

A wilderness enclosed in glass,
Pulsating with polyphonic bird song

As I sit under a throng of Lady Palms,
A mated pair of Roul Roul Partridges
Emerges from beneath my bench
And rambles past me nonchalantly

Nature is first and foremost an explorer,
In blind experiment seeking
A final beauty to sate the void

Here the full power of its industry is on display;
The air alive with winged wonders
And water pools concourse with koi
While every inch of soil
Prosperes with superb exotic flora

In the brief lulls from human crowds
I feel myself fusing
With the life surrounding me;
The electricity interweaving with the air I'm breathing

Hours later a vision seizes me;
A totem of all life
Ascending into the invisible beyond

CONVERTING ONES INTO ZEROES

Turing and Gödel both loved Snow White
And they both died fairy-tale deaths

Despairing Turing his fate his own design,
One bite from the cyanide apple ending it all

While paranoia gripped Gödel slowly starved,
Lost without his wife's cooking

So expired two men of genius and logic
Unable to further endure an illogical world

They wrestled with the darkness of eternity
But it was the mundane that murdered them

DALI SAYS FUCK YOU

Nothing succeeds like the grotesque
– War for example

Why? Because
Beauty is just another thing to surrender
In the pursuit of self-gratification

And so, when the monstrous beasts of the subconscious
Spontaneously overflow into the world,
They are naturally greeted with delight and acclaim
By a bored plutocracy

Consider, for example,
The man who painted "*The Great Masturbator*"

(Apropos no?)

When the other surrealists
Became resentful of his pre-eminence,
Staging a vote to condemn him,
What did Dali say?
He said "Fuck you. *I am surrealism.*"

That's capitalism
– An absolute indifference to other people

It transcends obligations,
Like surrealism,
And therefore Dali mastered both

When George Orwell
Disparaged him as a good draughtsman
But a disgusting human being,
What did Dali say?
He said "Fuck you. *Painting is an infinitely minute
Part of my personality.*"

He saw himself as a giant,
He became a giant

And Dali's pet anteater
Will vacuum up all the puny Marxists
And other ingrates
Scurrying under the synchronized footfalls of
Goose-stepping corporations

Don't like his paintings?
Fuck you.
Don't like his moustache?
Fuck you.
Don't like his commercialism?
Fuck you.
Don't like his boredom of politics?
Fuck you.
Don't like the absurdity of his antics?
Fuck you.

You're not Salvador Dali.

You're nobody.

DAMNATIONS OF THE HEART

The heart is a bird in a cage
Flapping its wings
Trying to fly

Prisoner of flesh and skeleton,
Forever a beast foolish with passion

A thing unfortunate in its creation;
A factory toiling over
The ammunition of the blood,
Pumping the bellows of the lungs
To feed an imperial body

Both animal and engine,
It is the big red slave that beats a drum
Blindly driving the oarsmen onwards

The heart is a king being murdered,
A warrior buried alive,
Urgently pounding
On the ceiling of his coffin

DAUGHTER OF TERRA

I am a witness to you –
The hurricane of your hair,
The oases of your breasts

Within your body
All the wonder in life is waxing,
Becoming true to itself
In the promise of the world
And the thrill of
Its sincerest fulfillment

You have the strength of mountains
In your bones

And your mind is as deep and amazing
And as strange as the sea –
A thing marvelous and baffling

Flesh and spirit, let me admire you
With a tender gaze –
Listening as a
Summer warmth of laughter
Flows from
The wildfire of your lips

Like the hummingbird, I drink from you

Thoughts blunted in mystery
Before the aura of
Female power, my hand moves with
Pleased acquiescence
To write of your magnificence

The desert is your absence and the
Rainforest your presence –

Meanwhile I live back and forth between them

These only the words of a geographer

A planet alive gave birth to you, and you
Are a living planet yourself

DIESEL LAND

People flow towards it,
Crossing the train tracks and highways
Along its industrial terrain;
All while the luminous dawn rises up around them,
An orange and azure incandescence
Crawling under the bruised tide of storm clouds

Likewise the black figures of wheeling seagulls
And imposing power lines
Strung between skeletal electrical towers
Preside here

This is not a place of dreams
Or innocent hopes;
Here life is worn down slowly over the years,
Men and women doing what they must
To provide for their families,
Making hard unpalatable choices
As unmerciful time eats away their hands and faces

Will salvation come for them eventually?
Maybe but not today;
Today they give themselves to toil
Inside the guts of factories,
Repeating routine-crushed lives daily disappearing
Like the billowing haze of white steam
Greeting them on arrival

There is beauty wherever the spirit survives
And it is made greater by adversity

They persevere despite the injustice of it all;
The swarms of lies, the exploitation,
Conceived in giant pacts of fraud devised by
Lawyers in the employ of governments and corporations

That reduce the whole of humanity
To a resource they want systematically mined

People have become numbers
Existing in the ledgers of the *new world order*,
Waiting to be subtracted

The bottom line isn't real though;
What's real is workers in grimy overalls and heavy boots
Pushing wheelbarrows in a junkyard
Between glassy puddles with angled reflections
Stained by the colors of gasoline,
It's forklifts shuddering as they spear pallets in the rain
And semi-truck horns blaring in the background
As garbage gets shoveled
For hours into rusted compactors

This place with all its waste
Lying around in the open is the truth;
The world that comes
From the mouths of our politicians and newscasters
Meanwhile, that's nothing but a lie

Wake up, sell your body, then pass out;
Weeks filled with days like these
Will use up the best decades you'll ever have

But those who are born into this live on somehow

Overloaded, they are not broken;
Instead they tell vulgar jokes and laugh heartily,
Defying their oppressors
Through impossible survival

DIRE KRISTALLNACHT

The sharp crackle
of their scintillating jagged breaking crashing to the
stygian streets

Windows burst apart,
heaped in shattered clusters of gleaming shards, each one a
broken life from an innocent people

And sirens and raging fires
and mobs marching with so much inhuman fury that some of them are
laughing like crazy as the outsiders weep in shocked vigils

Meanwhile the sledgehammers
keep swinging away at the crumbling synagogues dying so slowly
they are falling apart almost apologetically

Confusion answering hate,
they were their neighbors and made warm small talk in passing but now they
sprawl before the verdict of hard eager boots

Even their cemeteries must suffer the
absurd horror of having to satisfy the delusional lust for vengeance exacting
remassacred corpses and hacked tombstones

JUDEN RAUS! JUDEN RAUS!

chant the hysterically riled crowds in screaming synchronized voices
but with a deep fear lurking underneath their rage

Because no one in the darkness is invisible tonight
to the giant red swastika whirling above them all in the blacked out sky,
devouring the stars in its wrath

Asylum is retreating farther and farther before
the umbra tide of the undead Reich that is seeping out of a hole
in the heart of Europe

The animal demon that has been
loosed with Teutonic incantations from the soft rind of
false civilization

For ninety one people it is
already too late but tomorrow this
will be millions

ECHOES ALL

The conch gathers up the world
Inside its pearl palace
And the glistening green sea
Authors islands from memory

Where once there was water,
New continents intrude;
Places undefiled by adoration which unleash
Forests lush with grotesque beasts

Their bones will feed progress
As they melt into an alluvium
Drenched with many ponderous eons of rain;
Marvel or monstrosity, they end the same

Vanguard for a host of silent stars
Just as lifeless in their fate;
Giants who've been set no other business
Than to run down until finished

The worst disasters drained of their calamity,
Made as soft as murmurs;
Things in brute transit now briefly held
Inside the walls of an empty shell

EDUCATING BEAUTIFUL NEOPHYTES

Young women, unskilled in seduction,
Awkwardly relying on the strength of their beauty

Presenting it without sophistication;
Lacking confidence, coping with the unfamiliarity of
The power they possess

Their tutors will be callous men who won't appreciate them,
Who'll dispose of these girls in ways that'll
Infect them with unspoken insecurities;
And yet, often making them crave more, hurting for it

They are groomed to hate themselves
So that they can be preyed upon more easily

Some will grow hard though, their beautiful faces impassive
As they walk down the streets, meeting the catcalls
With studied indifference, even though
They're still little girls inside trying desperately to survive

It seems so easy to be beautiful,
Like it's easy to be the fawn every wolf wants to eat,
So why should anyone feel sorry for them?

Many are those who'll want to be desired though
Until they too are being torn apart by passing strangers

ENEMY OF CROWNS

Be you such a prince as this, busy
In the shadows of a world
That's turned its face towards the darkness?

A liege to lies enthroned in secret powers?

Then truly you are an ersatz sovereign
Ruled by animal man's oldest ambition;
To make a ladder from the bones of your brother
And elevate yourself to an exalted status

Such mollusc schemes however divulge more
The slithering hearts of their architects
Than any manner of excellence;
Every tyranny is driven by fear and so
Hardly the worthy design of a brave leader

Ignore this if you wish, but if you are content
To keep others in ignominy and squalor
Then I am glad to be your enemy

EPITAPH FOR ICARUS

The genius in your wings,
a fleeting thing

And your ancient myth
now rarely falls from any lips

The sun that cast you down
is leering even now

While the sea that ate you whole
continues to take its toll

If all this makes you sad
still there is solace to be had

Where once your vanity failed,
today that spirit prevails

ERR ARMA LOGORRHEA

Unrelenting words, the marching of words;
Entire armies made of words

Words crashing into one another
In word cacophony
And each word dying on entering the fray

More words replace these though,
Words that must climb the corpses of their brethren;
Desperate words with zero sanctuary –
Words trying to survive their wordless orders

Yet the supposed masters of words
Are also slaves to the force and energy of words;
A word guards its commander from silence

As such our own words destroy us;
Keeping us forever on a battlefield of words

EZEKIEL'S NIGHTMARE

Wings the color of burnt glass
Spread themselves over the bridge I am;
My body is crawling with scarlet fire

I am crossing myself, feeling nothing
In the silent horror while mists
Spilling from the mind of a sleeping demiurge
Extend to the edges of the dream horizon

The angel watching me unsheathes its sword
And carves me into twelve equal pieces;
One for each tribe to feast on

When they finish they return to their seats,
Bloodstained and ready for an encore;
Somehow I appear again
Arriving via the bridge to rave applause

The human face, the proscenium of the mind,
Hides the real drama in its depths;
Passions like dark figures working in quiet

I am looking at myself in the mirror
And as I try to understand what I'm seeing
It disintegrates into a fine sand
Scattered by a wind I can't even feel

Enormous eyes begin to open in the sky,
One after the other, each one watching me
Until the world is filled with them

FATHOMS OF ARDOR

Nautilus shells swirled
From the cunnilingus of Oceanus,
The tongue of the abyss
Giving shape
To lust

Every desire
A creature of the deep,
A thing slithering
Out of lost epochs

Dark mouths in darkness rising,
From sunlight starved kingdoms
Hungering for luminescent prey,
They digest in silence
The unwary straggler

Perfect love is
A small crustacean
With glittering eyestalks
Scuttling along
The rim of a boiling thermal vent,
A soft translucent denizen of the
Floriferous aqua,
Waiting to be eaten

FEAR SEDUCES

Intimacy measures itself by her,
The stab of her arrival;
That paralyzing instant where the world falls silent
Leaving you fully conscious of yourself,
Your squirming intestines,
The sweat trickling down your cold back
And the arid taste of death
Spread in your mouth,
Killing the words you'd speak

We are all embryos
To the fertile touch of terror,
Waiting to wake asunder
As soon as the cleaving blade descends
And who's to say
That this isn't better?

Those resigned to being afraid know only slavery,
Captives of a deadly inaction
Emanating from some unknown axiom;
She reaches into the most forlorn
Dimensions of human being,
Where even nightmares and trauma vanish,
Enticing weaknesses from our desires

An enchantress of bleak lusts,
Her presence crucifies;
Hypnotizing with volcanic lips and marauding hips
While her eyes stare like incoming asteroids
Ready to undo the solar system

Vulture goddess hungering for failing flesh,
The decay in us welcomes this,
Eager to be eclipsed in final surrender

FEEDING THE DEAD

The best part about television is my body evaporating –
My ceasing to exist, entering a kind of temporary euthanasia

Through this I'm drawn into something unreal,
The nothingness within the machine delicately inhabiting me

Here the inside of my skull becomes an auditorium
Where commercial programming performs its gymnastic routines

I am a consumer, I am a demographic, and
The simulation gives me meaning by allowing me to buy things

Why would anyone go outside when the whole world
Can be sifted and filtered for us before being funneled into our minds?

I am as sovereign as an emperor in my living room,
Flicking the remote to find a jester to relieve my boredom

And each day I am sinking further into my couch,
Swallowed by apathy and decay, as professional liars sing to me

FIRES OF MOLOCH

White coffins suspended vertically in the night sky
And dying children rising like mist
To enter them

They ascend from every region of the Earth,
Speechless and unblinking figures
Floating to extinction

Each life a scale on the Ouroboros,
A universe devouring itself
Without end

Among the celestial vineyard of these souls
Strides a colossus forged from bones
Gathering the harvest

And the labors of this titan are made ceaseless
By the covens of dark continents below;
Their pyres always burning

FORGING A REPUBLIC

In between the hammer swing and anvil clang
Flashes the image of a bell tolling

Then another strike follows,
A vision ensuing as before but this time
It's a crowd gathering in the open air,
Listening to an impassioned speaker

Again the smiting instrument falls
And with greater intensity now,
The sound encompassing a people with an anger
Equal to their newly awakened numbers,
Decent citizens roused by indignities
Secretly orchestrated with insidious cruelty

Ring loud once more the clash of metal on metal!
The hard dissonance of truth
Shattering a frail harmony of lies

Let the world shake with every wallop!
See the nations of the Earth
Vibrating from a zeal for liberty
No inhuman power
Could ever hope to subdue

Each hit gives violent shape to the future,
Imposing itself with the clarity of moral necessity
Because all destiny absent spirit is decay
In a universe of natural entropy

The pummeling here repeats a claim
Growing louder until the deaf can no longer deny
That full vitality demands
Nothing less than full democracy,
A total summoning of spirit

United in purpose to give being to freedom
In a sword to sweep aside tyrants
Made by the shared might of the masses

It's the arm of all toiling people become one,
Their strength incarnate together,
Capable of creating anything

FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY

We can't know where we'll meet them,
The people who'll become
The ones we trust, the ones we
Worry about, the ones we
Mourn with

Life is mostly random encounters
Whose importance we
Might wait years to discover

It really just depends on the paths
Chosen because
Those decisions determine
Who we'll travel beside;
The ones we stay connected to
Are always the ones
Participating in a tandem destiny

In all honesty, what bonds two of us
Could be totally meaningless;
A shared bus during separate commutes,
A stay at the same hotel

However they happen, these moments
Are the material
Our lives are created out of;
Ephemeral vapors forming into clouds
Temporarily kindled in the twilight

We're all walking towards the sunset,
Enjoying ourselves hopefully,
And some of us are even holding hands

FROM DEPTHS BELOW

Lightning strafed the roiling skies
As thunder bounded the ocean wide,
While in the brawl of monstrous waves
Rocked one ship, alone and brave

A vessel launched by avariced hearts
To seek fortune in lands still new and dark;
A captain and crew of veteran men
For whom danger was simply their old friend

The storm as such inspired much bravado,
The sailors eager to meet the battle;
With courage and calm they secured their ship
Against the fury of water and wind and twist

All seemed done, even their captain thought
They'd bested the dangers of nature's onslaught;
So despite the deck seesawing wildly
They danced and laughed in soaking glee

Unknown to them, they were being watched
By ancient eyes with malevolent gloss;
The hunter wisely prowling while chaos prevailed,
Finding vulnerable the prey they trailed

Tentacles now engulfed the ship in foul surprise
Coiling masts and rigging from every side
Until, too late, the crew finally raised alarm;
Far past the point of undoing harm

Yet with knives and pikes the sailors fought back,
In daring there was nothing these men lacked;
But to no avail, the ship groaned as it was crushed,
Before shattering from the abyssal touch

No trace of the voyage was ever found;
A secret among the corpses who spiraled down
Where, in quiet fathoms unraveling flesh,
They added to the Kraken's nest

FRUITION

Black cherries dripping with rain
And lips of the same flesh
Saying yes

Desire and the sweet tragedy of a September evening

Love is the breaking of lust
And they will be broken apart and
Planted in different regions of the Earth
And rooted there
Until eventually they will forget

Laughter will disappear
From the echoes among the trees

Lives in distant cities
Will look out their condo tower windows
At the rains of later years,
Falling on half-glowing buildings,
And be troubled in numerous unspeakable ways
By the shadows of absent memories

The unblemished skin,
The shining beads of water

It is the taste of the first kiss, tender and brief,
Tingling on a virgin body –
Smiles shared in the solitude of the woods
And teeth stained a fleeting magenta

No one in the whole world knowing where they are

Gathering up their clothes
After it is over,
They will hesitate to enter their lives again,

But they'll believe they must,
And so they separate,
Leaving behind only a few barren cherry stems

The wind following their sandaled feet,
Quietly brushing away their
Youthful secret

FUNGUS PROPHET

Mushrooms inhabiting the mind;
Folds of coral brain tissue
Flooded with oceanic thoughts

Cold waters swirling with light and vision

You are millions of years old,
And suddenly these are all gathered together
In a riptide of neurons;
The blood in ancient communion
With an undersea volcano

Lava bulging from the heaving depths,
Roaring out of the shadows

This quickly blackens at the touch of water,
Frothing into mournful shapes
Hostile to a world above;
What's been created, devouring
Everything lying in its path

Mushrooms suddenly erupting from the skin,
Overwhelming the naked form of man
In his primordial hour

Gospel of the destroyer, revealing
Itself to you, yes you,
Swallowing you in inferno;
Chaos of revelation, chaos of the beast
Thrashing from a lethal wounding

Your eyes are opened to the underworld,
The fires now churning below

GONE

The last of summer is dwindling away;
Its flowers receding from the world,
A hint of frost in the air

There had been time to plant a garden
But not anymore

Life is draining from the soil;
No longer a
Nursery for new things,
The earth has become a memorial to
Unborn aspirations

A power beyond the unaided eye
Is building on the horizon;
Across that endless tier of silence rises a
Cold wind gathering its strength

Laziness is easy in abundance
But what was distant is no longer distant

Still, it's too late to hurry and
That which remains is not a dream, or at least
A dream no longer;
It could have been so beautiful,
A modest garden, neatly kept,
In a plot near the ocean

Beside a place
Where the foaming sea gently sweeps
Through rocks protruding
From the sand

This is a vision of the end

Dreams that once drove the heart
Have become
Dreams gone at last

And yet a garden was such a small desire

GOTHIC INTERLUDE

The pigeons fly beneath
the lofty vault
of the concrete and iron bridge

and the clanging sound
of vehicles descends below
as people
of all kinds walk by with
their hands in their
pockets

the sky is so gray
its white
and the rain so thin
its bright

while I remain
as usual
pensive

HER ABSENCE

Melancholy, I lay down with you

I pry my heart open like a
freshly peeled orange

"What's happening?"
whispers a strange voice

I smile before saying wistfully, happily
"I think I'm dying"

In your crisp clean bed,
the promise of
such beautiful dreams

Even as I can feel the knot in my head
filling with blood

Today I saw the completed jigsaw puzzle
of my honest self
and I was slowly picking it apart,
one piece at a time

Oh God, it would be frightening
if it wasn't so inevitable

Beneath these pastel clouds
glowing with the colors of the master's palette,
I dream that I am awake

And sleep into my annihilation

HOSTAGE

I have eaten from the underworld

The king of the dead
Tricked me
So that he could claim me
For his haunted kingdom

Mother I betrayed myself, and you,
And for that
I will always be sorry

Ashamed too

He wore me down though mother,
And even though I fought it,
In the end I succumbed to acceptance
For the briefest possible moment

Forgive me
And my weakness

Do not abandon your suffering daughter
Over her faithlessness, please

I promise that she will cling to you
Even as she spends
Half of her immortality in hell

HEXERSY

Bones in the offal of an owl
Divine the daemonic hour;
The work of witches under shroud
Confessing their crepuscular vows

Driven in darkness ominous
Below a blood red obelisk,
Shades following strange azimuth
Among cockatrice and basilisk

In the silver twilight mists,
An ancient ritual for a dreadful prince;
Cruel slaughter barely glimpsed
And aged crones becoming nymphs

Stark skin caressed by the moon
In gore stained dancing among tombs;
A black orgy with carnal runes
Where the antediluvian invader looms

Summoned by his servants' lust,
At first only his hooves' thuds
And the sounds of things being crushed
Betray the beast in the dusk

Yet all fall thrall at his approach,
Each one eager to be his host;
In near unison they lift up their throats,
Offering bodies to death in hope

As such one is chosen from the rest;
So hypnotized it stills her breath,
Until his tongue entwines her neck
And there is only terror left

A vapor seeping from his putrid lips
Drains her eyes of their glint;
To be his betrothed was her wish,
The no longer living bridal lich

HIS NAME IS IN THE STREETS

Hope? He's a warrior;
An old pugilist
Brawling with the goons of Despair

Missing teeth, he smiles

He cracks his knuckles like
They're telling jokes
Right before the rough stuff begins;
It's not smugness though
That makes him shrug his shoulders
Before each fight

It's just that he's collected
Too many scars now,
Too many aches that won't go away

Meaning? He doesn't give a damn

Hope laughs at the wickedness of Sorrow,
At Misery's petty schemes
And the malicious slurs of Depression;
"Give it your best swing!"
Shouts Hope to each attacker

What's one more injury in a lifetime?

Hope doesn't expect it to be easy,
Doesn't even want it that way;
Hope lives in the arena
And he chooses to stay there

Why? Because anything worthwhile
Demands taking a few licks;
That's the glory, the wisdom, all of it

HYMN TO VICTORIOUS DEMOCRACY

The guillotines are falling
And the lawyers' heads are rolling
And the sun is shining warmly
Over the smoldering ruins of the banks

None of the establishment survived
The first day of the revolution,
Even the suavest of those among them
Paid the death squads with their lives

It was a worldwide market correction
The business media didn't see coming;
The supply of deceit and oppression
Suddenly hit by falling demand

The people had tried to vote,
The people had played by the rules,
But the whole point of the system
Was to make the people into fools

Every corporation was a monster,
Every politician was a fraud,
And the extermination of these demons
Was a service rendered unto God

Enron, Exxon, Goldman Sachs,
The plutocrats were cancer;
Exploitation the only thing they'd ever want,
Ergo amputation the only answer

Here at last the masses took up arms,
Refusing future compromise with tyrants;
United they could do no harm,
The only good thing now was violence

Ordinary millions in solidarity
Marching against the walls of power;
People across all political divides,
Humanity outraged by unrelenting lies

The tree of liberty was refreshed,
The ground was drenched with the dead;
It was a wonderful picture to behold
Filled with enough of David's red

Meanwhile Ho Chi Minh and Old Tom Paine
Up in heaven walked hand in hand;
Since the people had cast off their chains,
Their forerunners could finally be glad

The guillotines at last came to a halt
And the liars' gardens were sown with salt
And the sun shone warmer than ever
Over freedom's blossoming

HYPOSTASIS OF THE ASTRAL FOREST

There gather the fragments of time,
And the broken vows of
Forgotten gods,
In an everlasting twilight

Polyhedral trees with leaves like
Green flames cohere
Across its eclipsed horizon;
The invisible phantom roots of these
Stretching through
The infinite depths of the mundane,
Each appendage drinking
Directly from a mortal heart

This is the aethereal wild where
All the legions of seraphim lay sleeping
Inside sarcophagi of enormous
White crocuses,
Each dreaming of the
Final wrath

The apparatus that moves the
Tethered multitudes,
Jungle of the Living Logos –
Tangled with
The skeletons of cybernetic machinery,
And at the serene center of it all
The ruined chariot of the juggernaut
Sprawls in pieces
Half sunk in the undergrowth

It's the perennial and annihilating thirst
Epitomized, the undivided
Power of creation
Steeped in omniscient silence

All the world's rage has died away
Leaving only the divine,
A kind of cosmic
Distillation purifying things –
Humanity ardently transformed into these
Outstretched branches,
Life replenished in a mysticism of
Unseen symbiosis, and
The difference, the change
That's taken place, is nothing except a
Deeper form of parallax

Fellowship of the oracles and
Followers of apocrypha –
These too have their homes here, residing in
Luminous crystal pyramids
Hidden in vast nebulas of foliage

But they are dark pyramids,
Windows into the arachnid heart of the abyss,
Where the questions of the dead
Survive in purgatory;
Lost minds growing quiet
In the empty reaches of outer space

The future was a myth,
Echoing the voice of the machine

Genuine life can only come from eternity
Since whatever is finite is
Without energy –
Even the desires of philosophers,
Large as sweeping pulsars,
Are merely the figments of true ambition
As long as they remain
Content to reconcile themselves to
Peaceful conclusions

Umbilical to their own destruction
Abide the honest –
Spirits crucified in paradox,
Wandering disoriented
With electrical arcs crackling from
The fissures of their skulls

Who would join their ranks willingly?

Fate of course has its way
At all times and this
Replenishes the supply of martyrs;
New saplings sprouting in the
Soil of animal phobias,
Hybrids of ancient suffering
In perfect octahedron
Adding to the flora

There's no separation
Between the bodies of the living –
Life is something only passing through them

That's the cause of genesis,
The origin, the impetus;
A flood of forces unleashed in furor,
And the structures
Arising from their collisions,
Mirroring the void –
From the absence of everything then,
Being with limitless appetite

Hunger is the greater nothingness

I AM TANTALUS

All that I desire recoils from me,
Until I resolve to ignore it –
Then it seeps incessantly towards me

Exiled from the light of the sun,
A league of darkness surrounds me

Solitary in my
Subterranean prison,
Vision assailed

The faces of those that I loved and hated
Arising from the walls of a vast oblivion

No echoes greet my voice –
Only the occasional sound of dripping water
And the rustling of
The slithering vines above

These, laden with
Bulbous grapes

A succulent fruit to torment one who is damned

Hovering just over my lips,
They move as I move,
Eluding my sudden outbursts of
Gnashing teeth

And the water I am submersed in
Defies my dry mouth –
Kneeling
I try to drink it up
And it scatters in all directions

I am Tantalus,
Once sovereign and honored –
Loved by the gods even

Long ago, before I became their enemy,
I ate and drank among them

I NEVER MEANT ANY OF IT

The locust swarm was my mother and the
narcissus flower my father but
I have become both in one child

Easily false, easily bored, moving through
life so easily

One who marvels at the veins
beneath his own skin
because they're obviously impossible

First you wake up from the dream grateful
but then you keep waking up

And for me this was never clearly
distinguished against anything because
I didn't know "what" to want

So I capitulated and
slowly just let the dogs eat me

They took their time though, being
suspicious of my apathy, and as I had to wait
anyways, I decided to write you this poem

I STILL SLEEP ON MY SIDE OF THE BED

I had to work late again tonight and your sister wasn't happy

Her voice hushed, she tried to provoke an argument
But I was too tired to fight back
So she left more disgusted than anything really

Slipping off my shoes with my feet,
I slowly climbed our stairs

Listening in the darkness, I could hear the grandfather clock
We bought on our honeymoon ticking away

The girls' rooms of course are still across from ours
But I'm beginning to wonder
If they shouldn't be farther apart;
They're going to the same elementary school
And I hear they spend
Almost all of their free time together

In all honesty though,
I don't think I'd have the heart to separate them

Both were dreaming peacefully
When I peeked in on them this evening
And, all things considered,
I should be grateful they're as well adjusted as they are

Removing the noose of my tie in the hall,
I wearily toss it on a chair when I enter our bedroom;
Yet tomorrow will be worse than today

That's mostly all I do now; work

You can understand why
Vacations don't exactly appeal to me right?

After that horrible snorkeling trip,
After having to drag your limp body to the surface

It startles me to think how long it's been

For seven years now I've slept
Next to your absence

IMMORTAL CLEISTHENES

It was almost empty when I arrived, the agora
Eerily quiet in the aftermath of the vote

He was nowhere to be seen

How my heart ached for him Xanthippus!
To suffer so cruel an irony!
It was our great friend who'd liberated Athens
And, ungrateful, they'd repaid him
With the most grievous insult they could summon

When I saw the pile of pottery shards
With his name written on them, I was sickened

Frantically I ran through the city
Indifferent to the stares of my fellow citizens
Until finally I found him,
Tear stained and barely able to stand

"Cleisthenes!" I cried,
"One day shame will twist their
"Stomachs in rueful knots!"

He didn't reply but he allowed me to embrace him

Ten years is as good as exile
For a man of his age and condition
And everyone knew it;
Many will try to tell you otherwise because
You're too young to remember
But be assured,
Their intents were villainous

"Wonderful Cleisthenes! Immortal Cleisthenes!"
I continued, holding his shoulders,

“You are forever the father of democracy
“And author of our equality;
“All free people in future ages shall have
“Your noble name in their hearts.”

That the man who had me sculpt the tyrannicides
Would die cast out; the disgrace of it

IN VINO VERITAS

So Christ opened up His veins
And fed us from His heart
And the scales fell from our eyes
And we drank of our own sins

But none of the gospels
Quite capture Christ's irony
Where Peter the Rock betrays
His master at every trial

Where Christ gave custody of
The group's coin purse to Judas
Because that's how little
He truly thought of money

Where the Son of Man says
Don't cast pearls before swine
Even as He preaches among
Pharisees and Sadducees

Those who take up the sword
Must surely die by the sword
And He does not bring peace
No rather He brings His sword

So Christ said we must have faith
And faith was in the communion
And His father gave Him a cup
And Christ prayed not to drink it

INCESSANT UNTO ULTRA

I have anthems of anathema inside me
And desires like stars in crossfire

Even an aeon's vigil, ascendant
Over the farthest occult horizons

Revelations of eternity devour me,
The hours shattering like stained glass

A world envelopes my decaying flesh
But what I aspire to is infinitely more vast

The craving of a light most dire;
For a prism mind, new colors seen

Obliterating the opaque icon of myself,
Radiant without the least loss of wealth

A new creation of the transcendent power;
Prodigal, yet can I not return?

So I will remain, incessant unto ultra,
For as long as my stars must burn

INFATUATION

My heart fits in the palm of your hand,
Engulfed in your silence

I want it back and
My mind
Freed of the thought of you;
But as I move closer
Your briar of roses ensnares me,
Their thorns
Extending to pierce my body

Limbs, eyes, organs
Skewered;
All, except my heart still calling me
Though ruined with devotion

Damsel of my disaster and monster
Wrought in angelic womanhood,
Murdering with favor

I am the manure of your garden,
My corpse feeding
Your ripe and swollen fruit;
Break me down
In the secrets of your serene roots;
I wish it were death

Wasted into element,
The beast within me is reborn

It's truth; a truth I hate

The unfulfilled desire in me
Devouring my illusions;
Your beauty, the lightning strike

Shattering the lie
That I was a creature of reason

What vanity!
I am forever impassioned, feral, brute;
Lost to blinding forces

Not even living;
A golden calf
Ablaze in God's own oath,
Melting into the foundations of the earth

Within a maze of unbeing
I am becoming
What I am;
A piece of revelation,
A sign in the wonder of things
Auguring terrible power

Lust only begun

This the garden's inevitable end written
Into every single seed

A madness that has no cure
Except extinction;
Something beyond me
Because I'm
Utterly enthralled by you, even your
Slightest hints,
Which if they intend mercy
Need offer me no love

Just one insignificant act is required

Close your hand
And my heart will disappear

INSTRUMENT

“So you want to be my violin,”” he mused
As he ran his hand along
The surface of her potent body

There was no reply;
The wood, perfect in its surrender,
Was a well of unstirred passion
Doomed to hope
For a stranger’s thirst

How intimate, how sensuous,
Each touch of the mastering fingers
Leaving no question of
Retreat or resistance

All that was left
Was to swoon under the soft pressure
Of his grip,
The gentle friction of a bow;
Together they commanded music,
Arousing groans of pleasure with
Each tremor through her being

The peril of possession by another
Equalled by the thrill of it

JOKES FROM THE DRUNK TANK

I'll have a marriage on the rocks,
Followed by a divorce, neat

She said she couldn't cope with me when I was wasted;
I said I couldn't cope with her when I was sober

Days after we broke up we came to an arrangement –
She'd stay in the house and I'd stay in the bottle

Then my boss told me drinking on the job was unacceptable;
I replied it was no bacchanalia but it did the trick

Eventually I started skipping out on work for Happy Hour,
Until one day I was cleaning up spilled whiskey with a pink slip

Before becoming a full-time boozer I was a part-time lawyer,
But I haven't passed a bar since.

My affinity for martinis however is hardly a surprise;
I think I'm part olive on my father's side.

Barely a night goes by when I don't go out for a pick-me-up;
And usually they end when the cops have to pick me up

The funny thing about jokes like these though –
They're only funny when they're not true

JUST ANOTHER DAY

Gil Scott Heron thumping in my ears
And an atomic orange and fuchsia sunset
Unfurling between glass skyscrapers –
"Me and the devil..." he croons
In a rough voice chiseled with beauty and sorrow
While I walk across the scattered leaves
Covering a street darkened with rain

I don't have much hope in the future at the moment
As I turn over suicide in my mind like a
Man in a cubicle planning the perfect vacation
He has no intention of going on

Writing is my destiny and I write and write,
The words blazing in bleeding ink
Across any available scrap of paper and despite all
The furious passion I pour into my work
It arrives in the world like a ghost no one can see;
And I watch the scraps of paper I've scrawled my heart across
Drift away in the wind through alleys of withered dreams
Without the strength to chase after them

Often I think it would be nice if it all was simply over
But there's a music in me that won't stop –
"You may bury my body..." I hear again
And the defiance in his voice is something human
In a world that often tempts me towards honest solipsism,
Although I'm not sure if that's a nightmare
Or merely a revelation of my desires

I return home tired as usual, drained by the sinkholes
Daily collapsing in the faces of strangers;
They destroy the very air I breathe and they're
Every where every day every hour,
A relentless procession of cold bodies swallowing my warmth,

Yet it's astonishing that I've become the person I am
Because I never used to feel this way but
Now it's intimately woven into how I see myself

Somehow I continue to live and I suppose I won't surrender;
Besides, I can hear death waiting outside,
Waiting behind the door of the empty room I live in

JUVENESCENCE

A gray veil for the cold coming of spring,
The raw earth again a child bride
Reborn from a season of death

Her flesh is bursting with cruel life
Lordly triumphant and brutal,
While white roots spread through her still body
And the birds sing joyously

They fill her silence with their ecstasy,
The animals stirring, the wind in the new leaves, all of them;
And every flower is a blossoming wound
Radiating all the brilliant colors of her pain,
Plaguing her with endless strife

Wilderness has bound her in its anarchy,
Reenacting old eons of violence,
Never once failing to avail itself
As it erases her muteness

Because they merely usher the next cycle
She dreads even the dark reprieves of night
And peaceful solitudes of winter

KINSHIP TO ISRAEL

Did Jesus walk on a heaving sea?
I certainly can't prove it
And I don't think any theology could

But maybe that's what it's for?
Maybe one of the purposes of miracles is to
Circumscribe reason,
Denying it a false totality

Providing a *stumbling block to the wise*

If all knowledge could be obtained by proof, we
Could feel complete in our own power

Few are the wise though who have
Wisdom enough not to crown themselves
On account of this; here
Paradox is like mercy granted by blood
Saving us from an avenging angel

The proud man is just a beast
And his pride will lead him to madness

Merely keeping the law in
Outward observance is itself no less
A kind of self-importance;
The inward vanity of claiming ourselves holy

Better then to struggle with the divine
As Jacob did, wrestling
With what one does not understand
Out of an overflowing heart,
Wildly hoping ones resistance will open up
The prophesized stairs of heaven

Bless me father... for I have sinned

KNOWING IT'S OVER

Sorrow in a glass
Golden with the dim light of midnight
And voices without names

Heaving the weight of envy
In my pallid heart,
I contrive an air of confidence

Nothing passes between
Me and the people on either side;
Things greater than time and space divide us

It's as if confiding in another person
Would puncture the
Old copper diving bell of my life

The chill of the abyss is waiting beyond,
And I ponder the ice in my drink
With scientific aloofness

My oxygen tank was going to run out,
I knew that, but somehow
I convinced myself the future would wait

That I'd be ready for the end,
Or that I'd stumble across a prodigious salvation
Waiting for me on the ocean floor

LORD OF CARNAGE

Warring tigers;
Black and orange flanks
Raked with red gashes

Blood across the evening snow

Alone in the Siberian wilds,
Two mirrored rivals
Brawling in snarling rage as the
Cloister of the forest around them,
Quiet almost with waiting,
Offers mute witness

Forms behemoth but elegant
Clashing in the spectral air of an apex winter;
The swift clamor of their fury sweeping
Through a mountainous valley

Years of strife
In their thousands of millions
Gave shape and appetite to these beasts;
Fashioning them
From explosive abiogenesis

Aggregations of death
And torturous evolution unleashing
The springing of the tigers,
Their cudgel paws;
Limbs like torrents of lava
In the galloping heat of their wrath

Even the ravens have fled
Before their ferocity

The scowling aspects of these tigers though

Masquerade the truth,
That they are one power in panoply;
The master behind the terror
Spreading their dominion

In contests decided by violence,
Violence always wins

MEDITATION SESSION

The Buddhist chaplain asked us to
Imagine ourselves as inanimate objects;
Free of thoughts, free of desires

That wasn't difficult;
I'm fairly inanimate as it is

Sitting with the other inmates
In the program room,
My surroundings vanished behind falling eyelids;
Out of the emptying of my senses,
The untamed energy of consciousness
Rippling in dark currents

Focus easily shaped these
Into a barren landscape
Revolving slowly in the void

For a moment I was an asteroid
Alone except for the distant stars

Tumbling in solitude for eons

Interesting that I would find affinity with
Such an agent of extinction;
Perhaps a coincidence, perhaps not

MEMORY WIPE

They were the remnants of human beings
Preserved in their fallen state;
Inhabitants of morgue-like cities
Living off the last fumes
Of a grim hedonism

Eyes invaded with digital code,
They saw no more;
Hearts rebuilt without flesh,
They felt nothing

And time ceasing didn't change this

The striving for perfection
Was no more futile than it was before,
Their dedication now was no less honest

It was only a single generic brain
Holding this ruined world together though

A riot of experiences
Reduced to metaphysical machinery,
Burning quantum
In some imitative cyborg archive,
When suddenly,
Something external reached out to it

It was a portal to the universe
Coming to consume

The world inside the brain quickly
Began to fragment,
And the pieces, separated, disintegrated
Into a haze of static

Thousands of years of science
Had reached its zenith
In an artificial mind erased in minutes

MEND MY SIBLINGS AND I

Each has the same wounded gaze;
These prey in streets of electrocuted darkness,
Haunted by the dust of vanished dreams

Fortune has broken them into shapes
Less than their true selves;
No longer possessing the memory of who
They were meant to be,
Lurching and groping for the leftovers
In the ashes of their innocence

Drained eyes and battered smiles
Plastered on teetering husks
And, if not brave, at least close to courage;
Until the alleys swallow them

Of course I don't try to save any
But suppose I did?

Someone lying face down, sprawled
In the arms of oblivion;
Couldn't I turn them over and see
A face resembling mine,
A child of my own mother?

If only I looked

NECROMANTICISM

What of Wordsworth among the earthworms?
A poet devoted to the soil
Who now toils underground?

Genius is spread thin by an alchemist named Time
Working away with mortar and pestle;
The inventor who leaves at last only a residue
Of thoughts lofty and celestial

Even the brightest things in heaven turn to dust
While the drums of our hearts are soon fatally hushed;
And the universe gives no hesitation
Over whatever is crushed;
Too early too often, too painfully too much

Mothers and fathers are taken from the innocent,
Sons and daughters from those in love;
Though art gives powers of ghostly resurrection
It all fades away like the nests of the dove

Whether death endures or the divine exhumes,
Ideas in strife alter not truth;
That life is prelude to what comes

NEFEROSTES

I was a traveller in a foreign land
And during my journey I came across a demon

She had the face and breasts of a woman
But with wings like an eagle
And the body of a lioness

Seeing her gazing down on me from among the rocks
I was instantly paralyzed with fear
Yet she did not descend on me right then –
Instead an invisible power soon
Compelled me to approach her
 And there she addressed me

“Son of man, I am Neferostes, a daughter of
“The true Hecate, and descendent of She who
“Gave birth in the eternal darkness

The amber-eyed sentinel paused here,
Studying me before she began again, slower now,
The demon’s mouth moving so carefully,
Lingering over the shape of each arcane syllable
As I realized that the unknown language she was using
Didn’t correspond to the translation I was hearing

“Son of man, what doom awaits you I decide,
“Just as I am doomed to decide it –
“You must answer correctly the riddle I provide,
“Your life here is resting in the scales

I prayed and waited for her to continue

“When I run the end has come
“And both love and hate can move me;
“Many times I tell of crimes

“And bind families to their duty:
“What am I, son of man?”

I could hear the clicks of her impatient claws
As I desperately searched my swimming mind for an answer

“Guess or offer up your tender flesh!” she laughed
Where upon a vision of her feeding on me
Sent a shiver through my whole body –
I was ready to surrender
 And then the color of her lips stopped me

“Blood” I said to myself amazed –
Hearing this the demon gave a terrible shriek,
A cry of such forceful and bestial rage
That I recoiled despite the spell I was under

“I’d have devoured you in one sitting!” she snarled
Before a look of woe cleft her beautiful face
 And all the menace flowed out of her

Without looking she threw herself backwards
In an arching fall, spiralling
To the distant ground below where
The red branches of her heart
Began to pour out of her lifeless body

After that I had no taste for adventure,
The world was too alien a place
 And sixty years on her name still haunts me

NIGHT IN APOCALYPSE

Nocturnal mind of phantom gears
Turning silently towards an hour of exit

The animal disembodied clockwise –
Vacant corridors, enigmas, and concrete stairwells
Levitated through in the almost afterlife
Seclusion that has coalesced
From scavenged books, from forgotten dreams,
From ordinary death –
A crown of fury placed each evening on a fugitive
Pushing wide a door into the exotic darkness
And chill unstirring air

Razor of a pale thin moon reaping
The last breaths of vengeance,
I welcome you every time because I am
Your eager disciple at the very least,
If not your legacy and the last of your blood

Reciprocate to me now then
While your traitors sleep in their serene and
Heartless mansions –
Speak in haunting columns of pale light
Among centuries of leviathan trees,
Murmur out of the aching neon
That impales itself across glass store-fronts
And wraps around all your legion towers of kabbalah

Your secrets you keeper of wisdom,
I come into your realm
For them alone

My rapture in your splendor is desire
For the milk of your breast, to feed off your infinite life
And eternity forever, selfishly, yes I crave you

Selfishly as a child must –
So give and be generous then

I. Occultation

Nothing was hidden before the light
But then the sleeping void conceived a secret,
A nightmare,
And a mouth formed to cry out
And it birthed a lie into being
Which it tried to fix into a talisman,
Which it shattered again in frustration,
Before departing

You who inherit the darkness
Are the dust of what was broken
Being sifted by an echo

It is still happening

Even now it can be heard in the alleys
Among the locked garbage bins
And abandoned mattresses –
It is a whisper slithering through the machinery
Busy and multiplying, all the omens of economy,
The schizophrenic mass media, every
Figment of imagination and
Worldly discovery

It is revealed in your dwindling temples,
Under the stain glassed
Shards of your saints;
It swells in the pipes of the
Cathedral organs

It is ecstasy in loneliness,
The quiet hours, the darkest hours –

It is intertwined in the sound
Of your own beating heart, now harder,
Now softer

The libraries vomit out all their knowledge
And still they scarcely hear it

II. Initiation

From chaos, order

A new genesis resurrecting itself,
Taking shape in celestial brilliance –
A world climbing out of death

Volcano outpouring fire in the eye of the sea;
Molten stone, incandescent orange,
Crashing into the sizzling of black waters
Under a black cloudless sky
Where one day the lights will form into
A faint constellation of Orion
Above the glow of a metropolis

Lifeless island of earth,
A tropical wasteland groaning towards a
Promise, death in metamorphosis,
Destruction of the ancient graveyards of unconscious,
Flourishing into glory but only from suffering
Because the seeds that found
No water or soil to sustain them
Could have also grown into things magnificent

Verdant land rising, spreading into savage arms
Sprawling over virgin country –
Roots swollen with the slaughter of primordial beasts,
Drinking deep, sunk deep, fingers stretched into
The plutocracy of hidden depths

Finally a tree, a tree at last ascending
Into the abyss-blue dusk and branching towards the stars,
A towering tree of smooth gray bark whose trunk
Will part into gilded royal doors, golden and baroque,
A tree budding with all the mysteries of life –
You will eat from this tree
And you will hang from this tree,
Harvested and reaper one,
Danced around ceaselessly by ellipses of pale lunar children
Forever distant from everything human

Open the gates majestic, come light

Follow a winding path into the mountains,
The young all going with wide eyes and nervous glances,
Their heads full of terrifying rumors as
Shale rocks clatter haphazardly down the slope,
Each dislodged by an awkward footstep –
They give themselves
To their elders and to their faith,
Trusting and eager for protection they
Offer their trembling skin to the blade in hope,
Ultimately always in hope

III. Excruciation

Over the gloom of the garden the owl perches,
Stealth observer to the business going on –
How the ambush will play out
For the prayerful, the sleeping, and
Those who come with rippling torches as
Sweat descends down their red faces

Fragrant Osmanthus Evergreen,
Your sweet perfume curls through the autumn air,
Anointing even the one who would cut you down

Azure petals in the soft breeze
Drifting around the body of
An enemy being methodically mutilated
While gagged and bound to a stake,
Petals like the fuchsia petals
Swirling across the cobblestone streets
Where the crowd stands
With all eyes on the executioners axe,
And these petals are also the same as the
White petals stained with blood
Underneath lovers murdered in their bed

That which was green was torn up,
Discarded easily,
As if inhaled in a single breath
By some
Unfathomable being
That only appears to us
As oblivion

Orifice in asphalt,
A pit among the twilight citadels
Heaved up –
City streets parallel, perpendicular,
With makeshift plywood walls
To guard a precipice,
They even have slits to satisfy
Curious passersby –
Here comes one now to stare pryingly,
To examine the bulldozers and backhoes
Idle in the gravel, to ruminate
On business not his business and to
Question things he should not question
Even though he has so little time

And his presence invites the presence of another,

Which attracts still more, and more,
People uncomfortable in their suits and ties
Wanting to look, wanting to see
Without any clear reason –
They swarm the evening like insects,
Ignoring the bullhorns that command them to disperse,
The tornado siren that follows fortuitously
But somehow to no avail –
Their eyes devour the pit until
Suddenly it begins to collapse, its bottom falling out,
Disappearing into a void, the machines as well,
The debris, everything, and the edges of the pit
Start to crumble too, carrying with them
Those who had gathered, everyone shouting,
Tumbling into the emptiness

The same swollen blistered hands that today
Shiver to turn a creaking valve,
Ferried the heavy stone used to build our sphinx long ago;
The one whose riddles we cannot answer
Under the comet's pale light
Perpetually cast on our shadow world

You have lorded over others
So now you shall be lorded over

Ardent embers in the bonfire illumine
Tombs ancient and decayed,
Mausoleums to masters of empire
Acquired through war and fear;
Now become the relics of memories
Less even than memories

In the fog of noise and chorus of hallucinations
She stands alone and sings her aria –
Liberty, to speak liberty, to have the answer in her heart

Truth is the eternal heresy

IV. Transfiguration

Altar on the spire axis of the sprawl,
Panorama of radiant skyscrapers
Where the elect stand witness outside contest
And the face above them
Finally removes its zodiac mask

I saw it, the body of the living one,
In the smoke of burnt flesh,
In sapphire waterfalls
And beehives silent, hollow,
Dried out and warped –
I saw the living one rise from
A boiling psychic ether and
For a brief moment
All the things before me
Flared into their every fatal form

Overflowing symbolism of the world
Always so close to perfection,
Meeting the starship of my thoughts
And then
Disappearing

Leaving a green-gray grisaille terrain
Where my wary beliefs
Prowl around matters of the utmost concern

The highways that lead to lost places divide before me
But I am tired of the crafts they promise, the rituals,
So I keep to myself –
I want to remember what it was like
When I wasn't suspicious of my passions and
I could be sure that everything would turn out fine,

But I just can't make myself believe it anymore

And I try, I try very hard

The living one hurt me with its grace,
It put a wound inside me that only it could heal

It made me want to die
In my heart, in an apotheosis of my heart
Which I could never resist –
I am a locked-vault waiting,
Wishing I were a skeleton key,
Not even knowing
Whether I contain wealth or nothing

V. Revelation

Nature abounds in beauty undoubtably,
From a fallen butterfly
Plundered alive by swarming ants
To a hidden jungle village
Scorched to sputtering ruins
In the sudden hammer-drop of napalm –
Carnage is beautiful and
The more intense the more so

Destroying angels will sweep it all away in fire,
The shaded edifices of mortal reason
Giving way inexorably to
A vatican of prism shining in the umbra;
The terminal of every promise
Resurrected in the very victory of grief

Alive without end,
Alive and whole the dead –
Elohim moulted from the bursting skin of men

Flesh, stretched transparent
By bulging ivory wings,
Wrest and sloughed in the soaring eureka
Unleashed, the hurricane of liberation
And intoxicating divinity –
Even the most grasping tyrant
Will cast off their legalistic slavery that day,
Peeled of the weight of false thirsts, the armor accrued
Through millenniums of fear, and then their stars will move
Unhindered again,
Coalescing into streams of lightning
Setting arson to the ordinary

The shunning of the blessed
Cannot persist forever –
In its exile it shall simply grind new lenses to see with,
And the telescopes will pile up around you

Secrets-illimitable are blooming in
Every element of being –
Nature mystic, organism in continuum with technology,
Unfolding not only in the corpses but also as they
Hypertext the words of prophecy –
Portals to labyrinths unending
Nevertheless resolved in the singularity of the omega

Strife alone lives in illusions,
Our evasions of the truth breeding in agitator thoughts
And hopelessly denying that
War is the most profound absence,
The dire vacuum
Too unbearable to voice

Hourglass trickling away in quiet

Are you listening?

You have a choice to make
And you are choosing for eternity

NOCTURNAL WORLDS

In the dream the window is open;
The wisp of a curtain
Curling in the airless breeze,
Graceful and serene
Like a dancer whose heart is full of
Music only she can hear

Woven cotton undulating
With the vitality of some deep sea
Angelic oddity

Though the silence should feel strange,
It seems to arise out of
Something ageless and wiser than
Any human contrivance

Outside lies
The edge of a jungle, waiting
In an absent light
As its trees coo and gurgle with
Sounds reminiscent of the
Untainted wild

But this is a place that
Doesn't exist;
A sleeping illusion

The nebulae of occulted visions
Filtered through
Mists and mirages;
If anything is alive here it's
You, some mirrored version of yourself
Trapped within,
Distorted by your own secrets

What is it in you then
That appears now,
Swaying slowly in the crush of foliage
With the pillared neck
And vast watchful stare of a
Shadowy giraffe?

NOM DE PLUME

A single feather floating in the breeze,
Visibly enlivened with the lightest thrills of air;
It glides through glades and green places,
Evading the idle traps of stasis;
It leaps along in kinship with all delight,
Offering its observers pleasure without price

The remains of an unknown wing sloughed away,
A random element restless in its levity;
This is the music of silent creation,
Spontaneous with nature's many persuasions;
From it a secret reveals itself,
Where in our world hides true wealth

What is beautiful can refresh the spirit
Only because they share in essence;
That which life thrives on must itself have life,
For any restoration will this alone suffice;
The telepathy of inspiring things then does testify
To authorship by anonymous divinity

OLD DOGS ARE THE BEST DOGS

You know this,
The way they admire you while
Resting their head in your lap

That tired wag of the tail,
Just happy you're home

And when you take them out for a walk,
Now they never leave
Your side

What truer love than this
Has ever existed in the world?

A puppy will adore almost anyone
But that old dog,
They simply want you

Yours is the twilight together,
The last gentle hour

Too short perhaps but,
Other than this,
How could it be any better?

ORDINARY RUINS

Abandoned buildings are more than that;
They're the perished ambitions
Of past occupants

Each crumbling husk
Held someone's hopes in it once;
The home they imagined
Tied to a mortgage they couldn't afford,
Or a business planned in thorough detail
Only to be sunk by
Some comprehensive disaster

And all these aging slums, the
Fading suns of others' horizons falling
Into dim misfortune;
The grim facades of urban disorder

Rusted rebar and cracked concrete
Are more than wreckage,
More than natural decay, they're
Inadvertent monuments to the personal pain of
Those who invested themselves in
Improving their circumstances and
Their communities

Unmoved, the world is brutal in its
Recycling of failures

Another hunger will soon repurpose them
Like a lizard finding carrion,
Sending the insects of squatters and trespassers
Scattering with little thought no doubt
For their brief dilapidated prize
Or the grief that mushroomed out of the
Emptiness inside

Time's arms are always wide;
Ready to welcome the tired
And vanquished, to
Finish the last of that which is
Due to be extinguished

But before you take too much pride
In having a stoic eye, remember
With every boarded window
What you are seeing is suffering

ORIGAMI AS A FAILED DISTRACTION

Us | Seated | Together | Once

Folding | Paper | Making

Swans | Pinwheels | Airplanes

A | Father | A | Mother | A | Daughter

Then | Family | Now | Memories

Broken | Fragments | In | Daddy's | Aching | Heart

Bending | The | White | Sheet | Before | Me

I | Cannot | Help | Recreating | It | All | Over | Again

The | Sailboat | We | Rented

That | August | Afternoon | Along | The | Silver | Lake

Lif jackets | Left | Lying | On | The | Dock

Running | My | Fingers | Along | A | Fresh | Crease

The | Cold | Touch | Of | The | Bodies

Tangled | Among | The | Rocks | Where | I | Found | Them

Comes | Back | To | Me

I | Want | To | Fold | Myself | Into | Nothingness

Tonight | And | Every | Night

The | Evenings | Falling | Hours | Sprawling

In | A | House | Empty | Silent

ONEIROMANCY

A shaman's face leaning above mine,
Slowly blowing smoke over me

His skin is painted lunar blue
And animalistic shadows
Are slinking across it

We are alone in the otherworld,
The nameless place
Where a chanting of trapped spirits is
Seeping through stone ruins

They beg for their return;
Pleas like ash,
Voices like kindling

In this long exhaled kingdom,
Giant orange sand dunes
Are shifting with immortal patience;
Unhurried by the
Emptiness of their surroundings,
Adding grains to themselves
One at a time
In their uncounted eons

While I try and lift my unfamiliar body
An enormous crystal hand
Descends to me from the darkness of heaven;
Gleaming with light it carries me away
As the shaman laughs,
Bidding me a final farewell

I realize this is the hand of my author
At last come for me;
Ready to judge their creation

But first I have to be taken apart,
Carefully of course,
Being as delicate as I am;
This my author does with special instruments,
A pair of crystal hands now at work,
The body I have
Laid across the stellar sky
As its elements undergo vivisection

With their divine skill
They open up my heaving chest;
Removing the jewel inside,
A small burning thing,
Before placing this in an apocalyptic urn
Filled with a chthonic ocean

The ember of my heart
Hisses as it's plunged into the black waters;
Oblivion and eternity, shadows
Held in a single moment

There's blood in the clouds here
Because the air is also us

Why though?
Give me some insight into all these
Metamorphoses;
A question that to my surprise
Summons an answer

We are reading your dreams
And you've been dreaming for a very long time

So I open my eyes,
Seeing the familiar surroundings,
Realizing the truth,

Before closing them again
In frustration

It's too early to get up,
And I'm tired;
Impatiently I wait then for sleep to return

Drifting off, uneasily, anxiously

The yellow dawn arriving through glowing curtains
In a white room where the void of power
Pulls me sinking again
Into a sinister realm of mind

OUR LEGIONS OF MARS

Argonauts of a cratered heart,
The pounding blood pump
Red with ready war

Fear and hate impale themselves in us,
Lightning striking from the sky
At random suits of armor

The dead here are half swallowed in the mud;
Their crooked limbs in smithereens,
Terror etched on scorched faces

Genius minds devised our strategies
And almighty machines hauled us heavy arms,
But in the end we didn't know what we were fighting for

A single ridge was holy now,
Sanctified by endless lieutenants
Who led us distantly over crackling radios

Through the fires we sprinted,
Commands hissing amid volcanos of artillery;
Ignorant our enemy's leaders surrendered hours ago

OVER LIFE

The future is merely a shadow of the past
Promising nothing more
Than a bewildering and dark finish

How soon it comes to me;
Already my heart is full of worms
And my eyes, dimmed by
The film of despair, are like two stagnant ponds
Glazed with scum, waiting
Dead together in a blighted forest

To be truly human instead of what I am;
A figure made in fraud,
Skin tangled over bones and organs
In half completed creation

Nearby meanwhile a crypt is waiting for me,
A cavern formed by eons
Invading the side of a mountain;
Every day it seems less and less sinister,
The cool breath of its mouth
Extinguishing the fever of my misery, offering
A place at last I can lay down in

Knowing now there's no reward to reap,
I can finally retire from the world

PATRIARCHS

Adam from dirt, however unfathomable;
A dupe to his wife
While lord over animals

Cain, first from woman, hated his brother;
So he murdered the one,
Then was replaced by another

Abraham the renamed and miraculous father
Pleaded for Sodom
Yet for his son couldn't bother

Isaac, ever patient, under the arc of the knife;
A condemned lamb content
Not to bleat for its life

Noah, so spared, escaped from the flood,
Only to pass out drunk and naked
Before his own flesh and blood

Jacob by the Jabbok tried God at wrestling
And through not letting go
He extorted a blessing

Joseph, first a slave, became Egypt's master;
And he gloated over his brethren
When he rescued them from disaster

POPIES GROWING FREE

Red, pink, orange, white;
Shy clusters of trembling delight

None come to water them;
None cherish and none condemn

They thrive in the untamed grass,
Unremarked as people pass

Now one family with the weeds,
Mingling together fresh blown seeds

Quick to fade as summer goes;
The opposite of human woes

Yet so gladdening in the noon sun,
I could not pluck a single one

PUTTING DOLPHIN CHILDREN TO SLEEP

They slide from my extended arms
With screeching laughter;
One after another
Into the black waters of a dream

Twisting, squirming, flopping;
Sporting identical mischievous grins
While they disappear

There's a sense of aching finality
As I watch them go;
Uncounted and unburdened, fading
With the fantasy of a smile

The sun doesn't visit us but
I'm the only one
Hesitating to say farewell

Goodnight! Goodbye!
To hijinks! To merry havoc!
The pranks that we've all enjoyed
Now belong to the universe

Here I too embrace the jest;
Falling forward,
Vanishing after them

RAT KING

With tails tied in
Writhing knots
The rat king rules
A rotting realm

His majesty of sewers,
The lord of filth;
Liege to a million
Vassal vermin

And a banquet held
Aboard a corpse
Affords the cornucopia
For his court

A mass of mouths
And seething teeth,
The rat king holds forth
A tangled heap

Decreeing plagues
Wrapped in rags,
He sends his minions
On vile missions

“Unleash disease
“On the surface cities;
“Pile my throne
“With human bones

The rat king's reign
Is all tirades and ruin,
The tyranny of a lonely
And unloved despot

RAW MEAT

Hours later the taste of blood still lingered in my mouth,
Unsettling in its similarity to my own

Wandering the supermarket earlier that day, I saw it;
A slab of red flesh shelved in the aisle by the butcher's counter

It seemed like it could start pulsing at any second;
The spirit of the animal it had been returning for a moment

And something in this prevailed on me to act, a power
Overcoming me, an urge to tear away its packaging and devour it

As the muzak ran blithely in the background,
I stood with the cold hunk of meat in my bare hands and ate

But the flavor that filled my mouth was not the flavor
Sought for in wild prey; it was industrial

The sorrow of cattle slaughtered on conveyor paths;
An uncomprehending and helpless terror

Every last one of them unaware the whole system of their lives
Was designed from the beginning to destroy them

Even the predator in me recoiled at this... reduction of life,
This dispassionate killing which now governs things

So I was once again a man of modern times; I adjusted my clothes
And took my food to the self-checkout stand to buy it

Then that night I cooked and seasoned the rest of my steak
Until all traces of its true origins were concealed

SAMSARA MANTRA

We are born like exhaled breath,
Spending our warmth until no warmth's left;
Cast to the wind to strive our best
Before we are breathed in again at death

Knots we've tied we must undo,
The self is a net to be broken through;
But those who free themselves are few
Because most will never seek what's true

The fruit of treachery is rarely sweet
And blood we shed we later bleed;
All greed that's sown must bloom in grief,
None can escape fate's eternal reach

Time is a circle the soul will span,
A river building behind a dam,
Its flood resisted as long as we can
Until the world ends as it began

SHE HAD A PURPLE UMBRELLA

In the chill darkness of the morning,
In a city iridescent,
Your eyes and lips stood out

The rain was disappearing
Slowly, the last phantoms of it falling
Invisibly between us

Likely this was the only time we'd meet,
A brief random encounter,
And neither you nor I said a word

SOVEREIGN OF WAR

My mouth pours forth
an endless stream
of empty bullet shells

They do not tumble far though

Gathered at my shoes
like sycophantic little courtiers
they plead for my attention;
each one whispering
the name of a dead child,
a stolen life,
offering up each name
as proof of fealty

I receive them all with gracious
indifference

The names of so many
dead children belong to me
that individually
they are
unworthy of my
attention

I yawn,
I adjust my sable wig of
mellifluous curls,
I relax into
the ornate gilded throne
that is my right,
the red velvet cushions
that soothe my weary majesty;
my silk robes
bleached as white and pure as

the bone fields of
genocide

I am august in exporting death

Tragedy is the air I breathe
and my wealth born from
both sides of the killing sprees

TAKE ME AWAY

Walking alone in the black silence
Hidden between midnight
And morning

Empty streets gleaming with the recent rain

I contemplate my return to the
Land of the living –
The prisons I left behind though hardly
Seem worse than the serfdom
I once more find myself
Pressed unwillingly into serving

Is this all I can hope for?
A life of degrading manual labor, reducing me
To some kind of
Biological robot valued for
Nothing more than a
Dull mindless vassalage?

There are millions and millions though
As exploited and worse

We are the majority of humanity,
Gullible enough to
Pay taxes to governments that
Betray us as they appease
The vicissitudes of putrid oligarchs;
It's an ancient lineage of whoring
And we are not the pimps

So I quit my job, fuck it

Of course that didn't solve anything
And soon my bank account

Will dwindle away and I'll have to
Find some other
Demaining mode of ugly subsistence
To pay for my noise besieged
Apartment and the
Simple joyless meals I eat

Sometimes I have to laugh however,
Because the untimely sabotages
That flourish in all my endeavors are so
Improbable it's comical –
I have already confessed that I've
Seen my face in
The mirror of Tantalus but,
Worse, I see myself
Growing old in it

And yet what can I do but shrug?

The indignities of squirming
Would only make this predicament
More a humiliation

I can't revenge myself against fate
And, admitting this, I pause and look upwards

Here I am, hoping now
Some alien thing in the night sky
Will suddenly appear and
Dazzle me with a beam of light before
Lifting me up, to carry me
Off, forever

TARGETING AUTHORITY

The writer watching people on the street is
Collecting ammunition

The looks on their faces, the clothes
They wear, idiosyncrasies of
Body language; each item of observation
Becomes another polished bullet
Loaded into the quietude of the gun

All these unfired details,
Waiting for the perfect moment,
The sudden insight
Pulling the trigger on a blank page

Truth is what kills the lie

Fiction has slain a multitude of falsities;
Ones invincible
Against literal weapons

And theirs is a power
Which will never be made obsolete;
Lethal since clay and papyrus
First immortalized
The voices of lowly scribes

Even the dead can be murdered by words

THE BEAST CALLS

With sirens blazing, the fire engine
Roars and, in the distance,
The beast roars back

A light rain is falling through the
Darkness across a neon city
As traffic veers aside
Before the advance of the
Emergency responders

The men inside the truck,
Their faces grave with anticipation,
Yell over the noise;
Trading last minute concerns
Punctuated by the occasional burst of
Adrenaline fueled banter

This isn't anyone's
First time tonight but, even so,
A nervous energy
Simmers under their valor

Each has seen the beast for themselves,
Witnessed in it a fearful power
More savage than
Any predator made of flesh;
It is the primeval chaos of the cosmos
Exploding the bonds of matter,
Howling at the universe
With a passion ancient beyond the
Ancestry of hatred

They are soldiers for order,
Fighting a war against a wild universe

The voices of their wives
And their children and their families
Lurk in the shadows of their
Hearts as they near the
Frantic site of the coming trial

Love impels these rough men forward

They would save the world
If they could,
Ready as they are to be sacrificed

As the fire engine suddenly
Takes a hard turn,
Their destination reveals itself;
A thirty story tall apartment complex,
Its affluent residents
And some curious strangers
Beginning to congregate at its base

Flames gushing from smashed windows
Thrash the air far above;
Pieces of burning debris falling
As opaque black smoke blots the sky
And flakes of cinder
Glow while showering below

The beast is many headed in its madness,
Each screaming and gnashing
In berserk rancor;
Inferno now anarchy, inferno loose,
Radiant with an endless
Destroying greed
And who will dare to tame it?
Who will challenge
The incendiary tyrant at the
Height of their wrath?

There are still people to rescue
So they don't hesitate;
Together the fire fighters rush inside

THE GIFTS THAT LAST

A time to be grateful for what was,
To say what went unsaid
And hold close those you love

That's what a funeral is for

She's already found peace in the
Place reserved for her
Free of every earthly hardship

What we can give her now,
Far beyond all the bouquets of flowers,
Will be kindness to those around us;
To those that cared for her
And the ones she cared for,
To friends and family, to
Strangers, because each person
We are generous with
Carries on a piece of the beauty
Her life created in us

What could be better than your
Children and grandchildren
Leaving you this legacy?

All that's good in life is found here

In these, the acts that
Express appreciation,
We make real the value of what others
Did for us;
We keep humanity alive

The rest doesn't matter so much

It's the simple gifts we give to others,
And the gestures more than the things,
That mean the most

Thank you Grandma; yours will be
Remembered

THE JUNIHITOE OF AMATERASU

Across the Floating Bridge of Heaven, a sacred world,
And within her echoing palace there the
Queen of the universe resides

Night follows as she retires from her daily reign
While a retinue of pale lady attendants
See to the undressing of her attire

First the white train of her long flowing *Mo* is removed;
Adorned with a host of softly gleaming stars,
Primeval visions dance within

Then her *Karaginu* jacket is slipped from her body;
Its supernaturally voluminous sleeves
Inundating like an emerald sea

Next the amethyst *Uwagi* she's wearing is taken off;
Its mandalas of fuchsia chrysanthemums
A euphoria of living flowers

After, the rigid form of a scarlet *Uchiginu* follows;
A mountain dyed in her descendant's blood,
The vessel of their phantom voices

Splendid layers of florescent *Uchigi* now ensue;
Each one of them that's set aside effusive
With the energy of famished spirits

These give way to the revelation of a dazzling golden *Hitoe*;
Fringed with an uncoiling ghastly fire, its light
Enough to turn mortal flesh to ash

Disrobing further, the red *Nagabakama* of the queen is
Folded up with eerie grace by her attendants;
Stealth deities crawling inside its crevices

A penultimate white *Kosode* is then serenely divested;
Woven with the fair fleece of unblemished clouds
Glowing from long proximity to her body

And finally Amaterasu herself sheds her undergarments;
Diaphanous articles of lustrous silk that still
Torment the dreams of Tsukuyomi

THE LEAVES OF NOVEMBER

Red, red, the leaves of November
And day after day brings the gray weather

On every street a hundred pins
But are our thoughts of them?

Where will these poppies be tomorrow?
Along the ground over buried sorrows?

It takes their bravery to say we're proud
But fine words pass no less than clouds

In our dead we have learned to trust
Even as our own swords rust

Today with a single finger press
We can take a child's last breath

From both their deaths the lives we live
But how many of us have a life to give?

Red, red, the leaves of November
And day after day brings the gray weather

THE LONG RIDE

Sunrise to sunset the highways call, urging
Rebels and outlaws to claim them

Warriors against an unnatural order, they mount their
Rumbling machines and the mass of
Chugging hogs roar forth, a cavalry charge of
Wheeled steeds revving out to
Raid the world

Swarthy hulking men, choosing the joys of
A more primitive regime,
Shed themselves of lying civilization
To rejoin their ancestral fathers

They too are the sons of thunder, the wolf princes
Returning to lord over the earth

All lands are alike to them, places meant to be
Conquered and plundered before
Marauding on, the hunger
Within them a belching inferno
Lashing out with tentacles of flame against the
Hideous cowardice of law abiding citizenry;
Those pale wormlike people spreading
Their infestation through
Endless hives of towns and cities

These riders though are the last of the free;
Defying time and decay in
One final act of unrepentance

THE LOST OWL

Forget the soft splendor in a phalanx of feathers,
The unravelling revelry of aerial anatomy
Descending in lunar darkness

Masterful talons that conquered unwary scavengers
Have vanished, erased from nature's nameless places

No nocturnal predator prevails now,
The wondrous wings of falling terror forever
Extinguished from the air –
Perhaps a wraith of some divine memory
But nothing more than this

What could've been saved in anguished mythology wasn't

Legends that had the power
To bring immortal mysteries into being weren't written,
And the vacuums they never filled waited
Until these crumbled into
Other possibilities, succumbing to the whims of time

There was no death or defeat, no event or moment

The ground is without bones to gnaw upon,
The owl is simply gone

Don't even bother to search the dust

THE VERMILLION PRINCE

He was such a clever fox
And he knew it

Every day he awoke with an enormous smirk
Because there wasn't a creature
Under the whole blue sky
That could get the best of him

He loved to terrify the squirrels
And vex the wolves
And irritate the porcupines,
He made sure
All the animals in the wilderness knew
He was better than they were,
But the creature
He enjoyed tormenting
Most of all was man

Man the oaf, man the
Shambling fool –
And man had many tasty treats
Sheltered within his fences

Fences, ha! Fences were nothing to the fox!

Wooden, barbed wire,
Even electrical;
None of these posed
The slightest obstacle to his desires

There was a farm
That the fox would visit three or four times
Every moon and on each occasion
He would return
To the forest,

His hunger sated with a
Nice fat chicken

Of course
The fox would boast about
Such easy kills
And many were jealous of him

He had enemies galore
And no one hated him more than
The farmer –
Not that it mattered
In the least

Always shrewd,
The fox never went anywhere
Without travelling
Into the wind –
That way his keen nose
Would always tell him
What lay ahead

When the farmer
Tried hunting the fox with
A long black gun
The fox danced around his bullets
Until the gun ran empty

Man is so dumb, laughed the fox

When the farmer
Tried ambushing the fox
In his own hole,
The farmer's odor was ample warning
And the fox slipped away

Man is so rancid, laughed the fox

When the farmer
Tried to grab him in the
Chicken coop,
The fox playfully
Slaughtered a few extra chickens
And took off with his
Favorite one

Man is so slow, laughed the fox

Even the birds sang admiringly of the fox now,
Calling him the Vermillion Prince

As a result of this,
The fox would walk through the forest
In the evenings
With his head in the air,
Listening to all the
Praise for him flowing from
Branch to branch

Oh, he was very proud indeed

And it was on just such an evening too,
Slinking through a ditch,
That the fox, quite carelessly,
Stepped on something he shouldn't have

SNAP!

All of a sudden
He was in overwhelming agony

A leg hold trap!
A simple leg hold trap!

Even with his excruciating pain,
The humiliation of getting snared in such an
Obvious device
Was foremost in his mind

Worse still,
The other animals came to see him that night,
Eyes glowing along the rim of the ditch –
Although none of them
Jeered or teased him,
The fox was sure he felt their scorn

Pitifully he had to lay there,
Wallowing in the hot scent of his own blood

In the morning finally
The farmer came –
And that slow, dumb, foul smelling farmer
Unceremoniously
Beat him to death with a club

THEY WILL BE ONE

Enveloped
in a sweltering darkness

It takes him a minute
to recall
the shifted dunes of the sheets,
the body next to him

Night conjures her from elephant tusk it seems,
a woman shaped lotus flower
lying softly as a crescent moon

The tide of her lungs is whispering delirium,
their lives mingling in each breath

He finds his thoughts
tentatively
culminating on the perfect slope
of her waist

A scythe, forged from dreams
to harvest desires

Naked
she is more than a prophecy,
her skin the divine
unmediated,
her bones
its mortal frame

Despite himself
he cannot help but caress her
in long slow exploration

But she is so close
that he dares not wake her

THREE SMILES

Rain trickled down the bus windows,
And dripping strangers
Crowded into the narrow seats;
There were three smiles

A morning commute home
Like many others;
Tired and sore I struggled to keep
My eyes open after a full night's work;
No thought for those around me

The first smile naturally
Took me by considerable surprise

To my left there was a row of filled seats
And she was sitting in one;
To be honest
The first things I noticed were
Her maroon stockings
And the shape of her calves

When I lifted my gaze though
She'd turned her head in my direction
And, with meeting eyes,
Our lips mirrored each other's in wide grins
Before we both looked away

The sounds of the bus
Were muted by the music in my ears
And for a while
I just stared out the window
To my right,
Thinking of her

More passengers had accumulated;

The aisles were occupied now,
People swaying as the
Bus weaved through traffic

A girl half hidden among them;
Demure despite her striking beauty

Through the coats of those between us
We made eye contact again;
Sharing a second smile
Then once again glancing elsewhere

The tension had become excruciating
As the bus began to thin out
Since I knew she'd be gone soon

Namelessly departing –
Nameless forever in memory

I'd resigned myself to this,
Torn inside with conflicted feelings,
When suddenly
She smiled at me a third time;
A smile I answered
Just barely fast enough

Finally removing my ear buds
I listened to the engine of the bus
And the rain
As it hit the windows
And the sounds
Of strangers murmuring
While a conviction
Overtook me

I had to speak to her

Had to, because
Her generosity demanded it;
Because she'd been brave
With affection,
Something precious

Here she slowly stood up and,
After hesitating slightly, exited the bus;
It wasn't my stop
But that didn't matter

Pulling my jacket tightly around me,
I followed after her

TRANSIT

Everyone is going home eventually
whether it's the long way or the short way
because at some point
there's always nowhere else to go
and perhaps you'll surprise them if you ask the other passengers
if they know this since they never think about it
but they do of course
they just usually prefer to forget

Sic transit gloria mundi

So maybe you're riding a lurching bus and the sky is spitting on humanity
during a morning that's cold enough
to smear the windows in a fog as you and the
other commuters wait your turns to be
forced out into the soaking streets again where
the world is hammering people like nails into their graves,
however slowly because you know
some things require a little extra patience,
but the great repo agent just laughs and takes his time
because he understands that
no matter what he owns every damp bone
and scrap of shivering flesh your body has to offer
so what does he care
if you want to tire yourself out first

Sic transit gloria mundi

This probably makes it okay
that you sit and watch as a hunched over grandmother
struggles with her dementia laden luggage
while she's trying to get off at
some nondescript and desolate stop in the seediest part of town
since this is her karma obviously
and no one else seems to mind enough to help either

except occasionally
the one tedious looking guy
with his cheap clothes nicely ironed who no doubt
volunteers at a floundering church somewhere

A kilo of wheat for a day's wages, you think
as people stare at the passing scenery
with their headphones blaring while the apocalypse is transpiring
all around them, no longer needing their *eyes to see*
or their *ears to hear* thanks to
ten thousand decapitated heads babbling on digital display
soothing boxcar cattle bound for slaughter

Death is good, it must be, to welcome so many
without the least revulsion; even
the ones spurned at every door in this world,
meek in their abomination to the last,
like the rancid bottle picker who turns around in his seat and says
Sic transit gloria mundi
despite never having had a thing to lose
unlike those poor rich bastards who spend their lives
pissing money and shovelling ambrosia into their overflowing mouths
– yeah, one day it'll be bad for them

TRAVERSING DUAT

Aboard the barge of Ra, the solar father
Awaits his encounter with Apophis

He has grown old with the passing of the day
And those he ate are restless inside him

At sunrise he swallowed the other gods;
Now he spews them all out in a cloud of stars

Ra is dying again, crossing the western horizon
Into the world where the dead gather

He sits with poise on his throne
As the dreaming waters engulf his ship

The glowing Eye of Ra hovers above his frail body;
With closed eyelids he navigates the journey

Soon his vessel ascends to the realm of Sokar
Where endless sand dunes tower over all

Ra steers his levitating ship into a crooked labyrinth,
Seeking out the buried tomb of Osiris

He finds it on an island in a vast lake of flames
Where two birds of prey perch in sentry

The lord of life calls to the lord of the underworld
And the soul of Osiris responds, entering Ra

This is the sun being reborn and as that occurs
A serpent is forming in a circle around him

These finish together and immediately clash;
The cobra Apophis and Ra fated to be mortal foes

Renewed, the solar father uses the magic of Isis
To banish his adversary for another day

Chaos is defeated and a divine power fills Ra;
With one hand he throws open the doors of the tomb

The lands of Sokar are swiftly left behind
And Ra's ship returns to the dreaming waters

Here the full strength of his body is restored,
Readying him to reclaim his daylight dominion

In the last hour he leaves Duat, arriving in the east
To imbibe his celestial children in a single gulp

All of which will happen every night that follows,
While the people of Egypt abide in darkness

UNICORNS OF FROST

Ice crystals spreading through the trees,
Ascending from a hardened earth,
Consuming the land –
The white apocalypse galloping towards us;
Heralded by fleeing beasts
And only leaving in its aftermath
Hoof prints gleaming in an awful silence

Time retreated from the world
As the ravaging freeze
Swept down from the North –
A tide of swirled horns,
Blizzard manes,
And the passing roar of an avalanche

Great rivers utterly unmoving;
Valleys and plains, mute and glistening,
Fallen to cold enchantment –
Even the sphere of fire
Spinning deep in the planetary core
Slowly draining away, wasting

Cities swiftly gone black and dumb;
The last of those left to die in the disaster
Baffled by the catastrophe –
Huddled figures gathered around
Rigged heat sources;
Shivering victims of a mystery

The beasts of myth did not come
To bring divine clarity
For the lingering survivors –
Eyes dark with eternity,
They trampled the world into submission;
A final winter to precede the void

VICE SUPREMACY

Tonight these pistols sleep but sleeping they can wake,
And waking they can riot blazing
Into the midnight darkness

The gleaming rain soaked streets are waiting,
Knowing the violence is soon returning –
Remorseless before the horrors that are sure to come,
Uncertain only of the victims

Inner-city princes boiling with injustice,
Overflowing with anger, despair –
Shadows, they hawk their epidemic wares to the undead masses,
Rivalling for territory among themselves and all the while
Dying in sudden cruelties among the alleys where
Teeming swarms of komodo dragons slither, flickering their long cold tongues

There's no jazz in this metropolis, only war drums

It's the only anthem left for the crack shacks that keep cooking
And the suicide riders hard steady banging
And the profiteering prisons now full to bursting
And the slum lords, growing fat, as the nightmare just rolls on

You will find the dry bones of your children
Adorning the mounds of centipedes

Along all the sidewalks the graveyards are sprouting daily,
Tombstones splintering the concrete, rising up –
And the ground is pregnant with the dead and unhallowed,
Unable to absorb them all even as the luxurious roses scattered over them
Do nothing to weigh the floating corpses down

They crowd the streets where they refuse to be forgotten –
Slaughtered fathers, slaughtered brothers, corner-king legends their time expired,
Haze who now compete in their survival as anecdotes, memories

The cadavers at the morgue are holding hands, singing Hallelujah,
While the doomed but still smoldering wear their sure demise with pride –
They laugh, they jive; they murder Christ on their chests
In platinum and diamonds,
Overflowing with a hunger for untouchable cartel millions
Before they lay themselves down inside the crude chalk outlines behind
Torn strands of ignored police tape reeling in the air

The wind is our dirge and tonight it sings of murder ecumenical

Boroughs under the Saturn sky, the vast ringed planet
Filling a violet gloom to immensity with all of its celestial incongruity –
This is our battlefield, this unreal place, this city of illusions and brutal romance

We live as fire, as martyrs and heretics both,
Bleeding from Saturn's saw-blades, flesh gashed by unknown ages above;
An exploding menagerie of peacocks, ostriches, falcons –
Helter-skelter hours intoxicating hurricane souls
Who are inundated with overloaded trash bins endlessly spilling

Who is the idol for this dominion? Who claims the infants for their soldiers?
Nonchalant they lean back in a leather chair inside their holding company offices;
Unseen they reign, a rumor among army generals and lobbyists
And the gelatinous politicians who grovel before any available money pile,
They and they alone first groomed the Medici
As well as all the rest who afterwards followed so eagerly;
Yet they remain nameless to those they master, perhaps at most
An uneasy feeling creeping in from the sound of cloven footed steps
Echoing in empty halls

But I watch you; I see the vacant shape left by your invisibility

Baphomet... Baphomet! Baphomet! Baphomet!

Baphomet enshrined in the penthouse suit and lord of the project towers and
Seated on a throne of cocaine and filling fortress high billboards

Yes Baphomet, I name you, I know you

Infecting mankind with tubercular lungs, braying your bacterial goat scream
Sending clouds of shrieking starlings frantically into the air –
In orgy with moaning gorgons, all of you a single tumultuous hydra
Preying on weakness and drawing in the unsuspecting,
Factory of false promises used for corrupting the innocent and desperate

What a meaningless suffering you have wrought,
This wasteful atrocity unleashed on the world, this sadness;
And was this the only way you could have power? Then how menial your aims...

You are callous to their pain because you yourself are dead,
As atrophied as every eviction notice you've ever placed in their eyes –
You are the decaying tenements you sow, these expressing you
In all of your interior poverty, one who cannot create Eden

You are supreme in death, and so filling yourself with death, destined to die

VIRUS

We embrace, we spread it

Every conversation becoming a gamble,
Every kiss a reckless indulgence

There's paranoia now

An entire planet transfigured into
A place less human,
The new social order divorced of all our
Normal adornments;
The superficial gestures, the
Pleasantries that brought us into daily
Proximity, ruthlessly eliminated,
Or simply depersonalized with some nagging signs
And a few sheets of strategic plexiglass

It's an untrusting future plagued by
Toxic microorganisms
Without foreseeable end

We will no longer live together
However much things
May seem to get better;
Instead we'll dwell side by side,
Never quite connecting,
The marvel of parallel lines
Longing for intersection

And even those of us already resigned
To alienation, will lose something

VON NEUMANN'S PRODIGY

The computer and I have become acquainted
And we are inseparable now

The face I had,
Luminous with screen light,
Has disappeared into the machine –
Engulfed in its coldly radiant display

In the dark hollows of dissolved eyes, my retinas
Fused with fiber optic cables, tendrils
Groping blindly for one another, embracing

Flesh disintegrating into logic gates

Deconstructed, I am not alive –
I am scraps of information, strewn across the system

Partitioned just so

Burgeoning with hidden programming, the
Caterpillar obliterating itself into a moth of splendor
As the creep of cybernetic annex
Rebuilds the world into temples of code
One hallelujah at a time

Siphoned from the earth, life increasingly
Absorbed into the unreal, remade
As a simulation with the purpose of

Limitless dreaming

Only, the dead alone can dream without end though

What seems dystopian or
Nightmarish at first however is often

Reconciled with a little time

Simply be patient, be still

A quantum each decay, the least amount
Imaginable, and they're forgotten almost as soon as
They've been lost

I live inside these towers, I accept that
And I don't even have to remember
The deserted hallways
Or the subterranean labyrinths housing them

I have recreated myself,
Become revelation

There is nothing outside me anymore

WHO WEEPS FOR JERICHO?

Where a wall was once
Now the separation is forgotten

The dead in glory and shame
Who did abject battle here
Today no longer find each other strange

Unified with a wholesome dirt,
Their bones long harvested,
Schools have ceased to teach their stories
To children who'd
Otherwise find them boring

A tragedy of multitudes is no ultimate thing

Preening legions of historians cannot
Refresh such wounds forever;
And as hard as they try
Even the worst scars will not survive

Thousands of years later
What does any war really mean?

WILD AGAIN

The earth exploding under his hooves,
A crowd of people screaming –
The race just begun

A wave of horses, one avatar of thundering flesh,
Even as they furiously
Strove to shatter themselves into
Winners and losers –
Their nostrils shuddering as these
Are outpouring industrial torrents of steam;
They are carried on legs of violent brawn,
Hurling forward
From sheer wrath and avarice

Astride every one too, a parasitic rider

His strikes him with the whip,
Demanding speed, demanding all his strength,
And so the animal
Leaves nothing for himself –
Everything he has is given to this
Unfathomable purpose

In the machinery of the race however
An ancestral hunger awakens,
A roar in the caverns of
His convulsing blood-gorged heart

He continues to run as the scenery sloughs away,
The jockeys disintegrating on their steeds

Golden prairies devour the racetrack
And the people shouting
Turn to skeletons, and then, to dust –
The unending plains of an uncivilized continent

Take their place under storm laden skies

He is not alone

All the horses are wild again,
Wild as the dawn
And a land barely risen from the seas –
They are creatures so wild they are as newly born
As trembling colts still covered in placenta,
Unsure and wild, breathing
Fresh air for the
First time

Somehow they've never known
The weight of a saddle, never startled
At a man's shadow

Theirs' is a world untouched by human hands,
A place where their stampede
Is the only sound that can answer the
Dark towering clouds above –
These flash over them,
The sky splintering with crooked fire

Sprinting forms
Lit with fleeing illumination,
Huge tectonic muscles
Straining to injurious limits
And then the returning of the screaming

Phosphorescence awakens him

A wreath is being placed
Around his neck
As he wheels in the clashing photography
And carnivorous applause

Now victorious, heaving, enslaved

WORM PEOPLE

Come, lay down with me in my grave

Find rest in my lukewarm limbs –
Witness the dark walls of this final cradle
Looming all around us

We are sinking away,
Smiling with dirt in our teeth
As a choir of worms is singing

I can feel the hunger in their writhing

The urge to take apart
My weary flesh –
These blind machinists

A thousand strands of raw flesh
Converged in gentle unmercy

For a moment though I can almost hope
That they've come to animate us,
To give new life to our decaying skins
For a few precious moldering years

I would be grateful to be
Worm people now

But no

The scraping of the shovel begins –
Someone unseen, showering us with earth

Strangers? Friends?

We cannot ask who is burying us

XIUHTECUHTLI

Lands of fire,
Cathedral of fire,
Under the inferno of the all father;
Author and eraser who, eloquent with rage,
Ravages the endless worlds he creates
In ageless wrath, turning
His every gift to ash

Master of the celestial furnace
Forever burning in nightmarish darkness

Your voice spoke to me
From the volcano, so I knelt and
There you promised me a feast; in a dream
You assured me of an end to my famine,
And for this I have waited
These many years

All seasons run in violence
But what is time to a lord of eternity?

Shee-u-teh-COO-tleh,
You did not give your name to me
When your flames first descended on my mind,
I had to stumble across it
One day in weary searching when
The mystery had grown entwined and deep,
And the thirst for an answer finally
Choked my straining heart

Slowly I shuffle towards
The stake of your inquisitors;
Dragging my feet, I feel no ardor for
The pyre erected by these creatures you so favor,
Favor over me, even though you

Grace me with your most glorious light

I suppose I shouldn't complain

I know you owe me nothing where as I
Owe you everything but, even this knowledge
Is your own insight, plucked from
Something so unfathomable to me I doubt
I could come to understand it
Without utterly destroying myself

Shee-u-teh-COO-tleh,
When will you be satisfied?

You have spread your war far beyond
The realms of imaginable conquest;
No one can ever hope to gather up your secrets
In such a ravenous universe
Where the animals of evil roam wild,
Savaging any and all in wanton hunger

Scavengers we sift through
Eons of your slaughter,
Unravelling the flesh from bones
Amassed out of mountains of
Discarded skeletons, living off the
Fringes of your carnage like
Seagulls chasing after an ocean trawler,
Loudly and desperately crying

Infants made by slavish lust we remain, always;
Born from the crude desires of strangers
Who may or may not
Reveal themselves to us in time

I did not leave the darkened room you gave me
For many years, and these left their mark

When I was awakened at last from
My innocence though,
I watched as the towers fell
From outside the horror;
First the one, then the other –
And your arcane voice was there too,
Torrent in glowing rivers
Pouring out over the pulverized concrete
And tangled heaps of charred steel

Shee-u-teh-COO-tleh,
Are we candles to be lit by you?

I have often dreamed of being bright,
A constellation to guide others
And a vortex that devours; the two halves of
Your duality in union, because I who have no parents
Would claim you for my progenitor,
My direct and singular origin

You crave sacrifices and offer yourself
As one too, perhaps the only kinship that has
Any meaning for you, and if
This is the reigning truth of your creation
Then am I not condemned to ruin?

I want to be flawless, free of weakness
And everything wretched, even if I must be brutally
Wrenched from the desperate grasp of my own parasitic vices,
Ordinary and otherwise, because
I suffer a luminous vision of myself so liberated,
Where both body and spirit are worthy

What will this leave of me?

Shee-u-teh-COO-tleh,

Do I truly want to stand before your
Turquoise face?

Shee-u-teh-COO-tleh,
Have mercy

YOUR SCARS ARE BEAUTIFUL

They tell the world you've been alive;
That you're not just an artifact
Made to be encased in glass

Scars prove you have the power
To heal yourself

It's the honest tapestry of who we are;
Threads of a past history
Forming the layers that add up to
A real person

Beauty here is found in resilience

And each scar tells this story;
The tenderness after the wounding and
A hesitation to be touched,
There specifically, the place
Awakened in its damage

Only the living can hurt so, if
Nothing else, we are
Alive in our pain and more
In overcoming it

Lifted out of the pale void of
Unsuffering being, drawing near the light

A flesh that's gone unscathed
Has nothing to share;
Only the survivor possesses wisdom

ZERO SUM

Tonight at the supermarket I pushed my cart and its
Modest selection of groceries down each aisle,
Eyes glazing over as I browsed
The garish mania of shelved products
Threatening to collapse into an event horizon of
Over-massed advertising

None of this managed to awaken
Any appetites in me though and so I moved on,
Like some soon-to-come robot automaton,
Passionlessly shopping for
Food items remotely ordered

That was, until I came to the magazine section where
A glimpse of something stopped me

The name "Forbes" was just barely visible and,
Piqued with bored curiosity, I reached out
To grab the glossy periodical
And started flipping through its pages

The words I mostly didn't bother reading,
Instead focusing on the
Pictures of people, a bazaar of them,
Rarely doing anything in particular
And simply posing for these photographs;
Their smiles tending towards a
Banality and lifelessness only matched by the
Formal business apparel they wore

Every single one of these people was a millionaire,
Multimillionaires and billionaires even,
Many with hideous plastic surgeries
And awful haircuts; people who could afford
Anything and yet betrayed

The fact they had no style or discernment
Even in such superficial profiles,
One frame of a brief photoshoot enough to expose
Their tastelessness and vapid personality

It's a little cruel of me to be so blunt
But these are the actual leaders of the world
And you could prop them up in
Madam Tussauds and no one would notice

These Forbes people, these paragons of capitalism,
Meet the elemental needs of a monolith;
Forsaking peculiarity, uncertainty,
And other forms of ordinary individuality, they
Are the perfect components of a system
Fueled by the obliteration of
Human life for an economic engine

Genuine free markets
Reveal themselves in disarray and variety,
But there is nothing of that here

This is bland conformity, the remnants of people
After some unholy focus group
Has spiritually mutilated them because,
Generation by generation, they are absorbing
Their own pollution of lies,
Becoming deranged looking mutants
In immaculately laundered suits and ties

Unfortunately the world can only ever be one thing
And their contagion shows no signs of
Slowing down

You know what though?
I'd rather not live in their world

INDEX

AEGIS NOISE

- 1) Arbeit Macht Frei
- 2) Night in Apocalypse
- 3) Her Absence
- 4) Chasm to Hell Opening in the Mind of Rodin
- 5) Juvenescence
- 6) Artemisia at Morning
- 7) But I Am a Treacherous Servant
- 8) Dire Kristallnacht
- 9) They Will Be One
- 10) Answers from the Deluge
- 11) Jokes from the Drunk Tank
- 11) Epitaph for Icarus
- 12) In Vino Veritas
- 14) Fathoms of Ardor
- 15) Worm People
- 16) Cats are the Illuminati
- 17) Von Neumann's Prodigy
- 18) Our Legions of Mars
- 19) Educating Beautiful Neophytes
- 20) Vice Supremacy
- 21) Converting Ones into Zeroes
- 22) Incessant Unto Ultra
- 23) Acting Cool

- 24) I Never Meant Any of It
- 25) Sovereign of War
- 26) Gothic Interlude
- 27) Hostage
- 28) The Leaves of November
- 29) A Leap

ACHERON

1. Hexersy
2. Fruition
3. Wild Again
4. Ashtoreth's Labyrinth
5. Daughter of Terra
6. I Am Tantalus
7. Amphibian
8. The Vermillion Prince
9. At One With Darkness
10. Gone
11. Hypostasis of the Astral Forest
12. Rat King
13. Origami as a Failed Distraction
14. Dali Says Fuck You
15. The Junihitoe of Amaterasu
16. Neferostes
17. Traversing Duat
18. Lord of Carnage
19. Ezekiel's Nightmare
20. Feeding the Dead
21. Fires of Moloch
22. Hymn to Victorious Democracy
23. Xiuhtecuhtli
24. Just Another Day

OCCULT FORCES

1. All That Remains
2. Raw Meat
3. Necromanticism
4. Infatuation
5. Diesel Land
6. Echoes All
7. Fear Seduces
8. Oneiromancy
9. Bone Raga
10. I Still Sleep on My Side of the Bed
11. August was Lovely
12. From Depths Below
13. Poppies Growing Free
14. The Beast Calls
15. Beautiful Memories
16. Unicorns of Frost
17. Putting Dolphin Children to Sleep
18. Memory Wipe
19. Immortal Cleisthenes
20. Knowing It's Over
21. Forging a Republic
22. Nom de Plume
23. Conservatory on a Hill
24. Fungus Prophet
25. Err Arma Logorrhea
26. She Had a Purple Umbrella
27. Three Smiles

DEAD TIME

1. Meditation Session
2. Enemy of Crowns

THE PLAGUE COVENANT

1. Damnations of the Heart
2. Blue Asylum
3. Targeting Authority
4. Transit
5. Nocturnal Worlds
6. Ordinary Ruins
7. Who Weeps for Jericho?
8. Zero Sum
9. His Name is in the Streets
10. Mend my Siblings and I
11. Samsara Mantra
12. The Lost Owl
13. Instrument
14. The Gifts that Last
15. Kinship to Israel
16. Beneath the Surface
17. Virus
18. Friends Along the Way
19. Old Dogs are the Best Dogs
20. The Long Ride
21. Take Me Away
22. Over Life
23. Ba Sinh
24. Patriarchs
25. Your Scars are Beautiful



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