

Sunlight is a Balm

Sunlight is a balm that falls over everything Orpheus
singing is another balm along with sleep and curiosity

Stillness is a dragon with clear eyes it will drink all your
thoughts until even fear is gone the same as your balms

In stillness you can forget about time and the fearful events
that pass for reality in your dreams all your contradictions
wars engagements get pissed away like so much beer all
temples of thought luxury and lust are gone in a flash

Common Sanity Gets a Fever

Common sanity gets a fever like an engine with gas in its heart
like a fist flung against a stained-glass window like digging up dirt
in hopes of finding a fortune like waving your scarf in the mirror

One of us has lost his bearings is bewildered has plants too big
for his pots he sits in agitated peace in self-betrayal and full bloom

Involuntary begs the question there's always time for second thoughts
but this is an errand of necessity like hauling coals from Newcastle

Motives die in the nighttime are born again at dawn true madness
dawns first and when it shines we wake up from time's deep sleep

One Good Image

One good image is dropped from the mirror the soul
is seen separate from its gaze seven sins are washed
in one's reflection a sun bird flies into the heat of itself

Trapped between the feathers freedom is never lost
in flapping or the heavenly furnace but it's manifest
in one's wings one thing follows another until one
wanders off from following and creation occurs

This is not juggling or dabbling in talk it's not walking
on the moon or driving too fast it is song lying against
the mountain range one arm along the crest ridge
the other pulling the wind within

Here's Our Little One

Here's our little one bursting up and out of the atoms
here's a mint to chew on the last one out gets to keep his tail
the rest get pimples and complexes and a host of delusions

Here's the low one the high one the middle one diving
in the waterfall the distinctions are lost otherwise we see
the puffed up the washed away and the forgotten even
a small mirror can't fail to reflect how sad it all seems

Here's our little one a swimmer in mirrors never forgetting
to notice he's also the ocean the atoms keep bursting in him
like openings to the sky like bubbles up and out little pieces
of nothing that pass into a much bigger nothing known or
unknown to his knowledge or his knowing

Like Tiny Monuments

With nipples like tiny monuments the bloom is off the rose
and wandering all over town fast cars eat up the pavement
like blurs of silver and green and the singer metamorphoses

Swollen from nothing into big things we get a name then
someone demands a song it's a rigamarole pull back the veil
pull back the curtain pull back the blanket see the small thing
swollen to a big thing playing in the vast arena of the world

At the seaside a big wave of nostalgia washes my body back
and forth from tub to washboard and onto the clothesline

Is there a shorter story than this one glitzy lights amusement parks
the internet another version of the future playing tricks on memory

The Wise One Says

The wise one says there are no wise ones from Kathmandu
to Mississippi from the law makers to the totem carvers but the
wise one's music flashes like fire even when the fire's gone out

Get here as fast as you can before the wash of time swamps you
bright nights and milky days both carry death in their backpacks
the wise one walks around with his eyes open behind dark lids

One way to cross a bridge is to fly over it if you find a golden
ring of sand in the desert it's another cause to celebrate or
it's another temptation to ignore celebration altogether

No Naked Rumors

Rumor that's all there is until one rumor becomes a bestseller another rumor becomes the source of a thousand rumors then one rumor gets in hot water when it begins to tell the truth

The inner and outer structure of an airplane is more valued than the embrace of flight in the desire to organize wonder and necessity into a working plan with a congenial façade

If you wonder about the ingredients of enlightenment are you trying to get somewhere in yourself or are you trying to leave yourself behind or is it about achieving some effective comfort

Serious people think they're in charge or they think someone else is if you're truly naked rumors have no costume to dress themselves in

Nearer My Being To Thee

Singing *nearer my Being to thee* with klieglights and the sword of Zorro with women who look like waves and sperm whales dashing back and forth to the supermall carrying the umbrellas of Cherbourg

It's a tragedy when people die or get married or have a baby
and it's an occasion for rejoicing like harvest time for the heart

The jungles are full of amazing animals where jubilation rules the blood
where sensation is outstanding there's no reason to stay in school when
wild music is playing we can let the police take care of the problems

Politics poverty storms sudden wealth bad accidents treachery
anything can be tragic if you can't see peace in your center and
when you're dead you can let the priests take care of the problems

The Life of Death

Don't die sooner or later death is constant death is a ball
bouncing from moment to moment the underlying moment
is what counts unless you're bent on counting your moments

It is the nature of death to interrupt living and dying to call
attention to itself but death's big vision is without any images

The life of death is a big sky without clouds and more birds
than you've ever seen in your life the big picture is full of birds
flying here and there flying and dying among the sudden clouds

A Criminal Mind

I have a criminal mind and look where I am now I'm in a graveyard
and I refuse to be dead in a world of dread disturbed by my lack of fear
I'm a condemned sorcerer wandering in the fire drenched in amazement

The old ones are in a bunch the young ones are bunched up their
closeness eases them into war and dispute or stillness and compassion

Forgiveness forgets the crimes done to me I merely open my mouth
and out comes my own birth and with it the birth of the universe
nothing could more simply done or more impossible to achieve

Climb Any Mountain

Climb any mountain and you might see a sign that says
this mountain was built by the mountain builder take heed

But you took heed you took steps you bought a sweater
you took pictures you took time to write in your journal

You see the stars floating in a purple sky like stars cast
against an ebony night like millions of tiny lights in a vast
motionless lake but there's a shadow on the water that
claims credit for your comparisons even as you wonder
where the ideas of comparison and credit came from

If everything ever thought real was made real within
your single eye how could you not feel grateful
whether you knew or ever thought of a builder

Here's a Toast

Here's to a well-constructed ezine with love and war and fashion
with pretty faces among the faces of struggle triumph and defeat

Forgive me but we must have been lovers in a previous life said
one wave to another as they were pulled back from the shore as
their dramatic features become indistinguishable from the sea
before and after their birth astounded the shore once more

Rain is everywhere like music and parts of the night that merge
and withdraw from other parts of the night until the morning's
light makes night a fading memory here's a handful of sorghum
China produces it so does Nebraska millions of handfuls appear
everywhere holding is commonplace letting go is less so

A Rolling Apple

A rolling apple a peach on a branch a peeled banana like
rain falling from a human steeple like images constructed
from a lovely or unlovely afternoon let's be kind it's a gift

A pool of water won't stay a pool for very long even a tree will
walk away if you wait long enough miracles are commonplace
but the one who sees the common miracle is the miracle maker

Look at all the marbles in my mountain of marble the marvels
in my marvellousness diaphanous transparent thick built like
a brick Trojan horse empty of wars build your own house
into a home free from Trojans and their pesky war machines

Toss Me a Flower

Toss me a flower a wine bottle some fruit sprinkle my night
with lights toss a hat on my head throw a pair of pants on
my legs and glare at me in reproach the world is sickly sore

Eden is a graveyard you can only stack so many bodies
in one place pretty soon it's not the same old paradise
the language of art calls for fewer and fewer syllables

No one broke his leg today no one spilled anything hot not
one homemaker had a problem every skier made it down
the mountain so who's to blame when there's nothing wrong

Standing atop the Himalayas lends one no particular advantage
in love so next time you reach the top plant a kiss on the sky

Music in the Summertime

I'm shown what I imagine or is it the other way around
or can it be both with no difference between them

Does music rise in the summer or does summer rise in
the music or do we rise like music in the summertime

If I'm wearing an ugly color the day I die will I then
be free of such petty concerns and what about now

The most serene landscape appears on
the same screen as Death's Dormitory

If I wear bright colors to my funeral maybe I'll
forget to die maybe I'll only forget about dying

Flying Up the Down Ramp

As a diligent self-examiner use all your fingers pull the flesh apart
looking for worms among some of us it's a social bonding ritual

With the skill of a physician with bedroom eyes the intensity
transfers from internal to external from gangrene to the Ganges

There's an endless parade of glamorous strangers livestock
angels swimsuit models ignore the categories and breathe
the cars flying up the down ramp will keep coming
as long as the freeway stands

Everyone is a Fountain

Everyone is a fountain of glory worms regeneration clever names
for the kids genocide inspiration helmet laws new ways to drink beer
words that sing table manners bad jokes international conferences
and folk art yet my interest in the other seems worn down in time

First someone invented the piano and by now you'd think every song
would sound the same yet we keep hearing original music maybe the ear
only chooses to remember or the mind is easily fooled or delight stays fresh

Wonder transforms the mundane the temperature of the sun cools as it
reaches the edge and then inexplicably heats up just like you and me

Heros Are Not New

If you want to know the truth dance like it put on its shirt
then rip your shirt off before you can remember your name

The way the ear works is no concern to the ear though it may
assist in the discovery don't give your machinery a pet name

Heros are not new drowning doesn't surprise the ocean birds
fly up and dig a hole in the sky simple joy is a revolutionary act
for which you arrest yourself as you commit crimes of the state

The Biggest Ranch

Even the biggest ranch these days has a fence around it cars up
on blocks religious volunteers walking to the house knocking on
the door surrounded by flying bugs and so-called wild horses

We are dust married to asphalt with concrete children who mate
with creatures from outer space dust mote memory forest primeval

You can take the boy off the range but you can't take the range
out of the boy despite wars leather clothing big hats sand dunes
in the mind and wind storms in the heart despite fences inside
the ranch and beyond the ranch the spirit is never deranged

Master of the Dream

Forget everything I say my love better yet forget it before
I say it I guarantee you'll fall in love with me and my poetry
this trick works just as well on all the other poet/lovers

Forget everything right before it occurs forget everyone
just before you meet them forget love itself and love
will be your legacy and you will be its originator

Every other animal is blessed with this forgetting
except you master of the horses you master of the fields
you master of the dream you mistress of the mystery

Secret Rumbling is My Nature

Secret rumbling is my nature along with generosity
I rumble in my generous way almost always in secret

It's natural for me to vulcanize without fanfare often in private
still willing to give generously of my innate self I'm born to it

Truthfully I am a singer quietly au natural proudly silently
a song in my heart open to the wind the sun the sky the stars
hidden mostly I teach my untaught unteachable being to all

I Hear Three Songs

I hear three songs from three birds singing three times
one of the birds keeps time for the others their harmony
is delightful here comes a hunter bang the birds are dead

This is a sad homage to beauty and a paltry version of myth
but I don't think the poets ever really cared about urns or
birds or even about words since talk is a row of candles
poetry is a row of light and love is a row of no rows

Once Upon a Time

Damn it all once upon a time my sacred ambition
has been to fly over the lands and waters of the earth
and weave them into a landscape just as they are

I saw the face of Jesus among lichen not a lichen Jesus
but Jesus rising like any guy might do from a pond or
pool his hair slicked back his eyes closed then open

I have dreamt of flying above earth and folding the four
directions into every moment in every place revealed
as they are now at any crossroads in space or time

To fly above and recognize myself below looking up
is to recognize myself flying above and it is to witness
myself above and below without ever leaving what is

Swells in the River

Swells in the river uncertain royalty friendship rings groping animals
gods on bended knee revering themselves revealing themselves

Flights of fancy gone into a hard stall a newer stronger gentler drug
all night kennels ala carte tales and overlapping stories this mud
abhors a clean clear vacuum and loads it up with these swellings

This caterwauling this overturned refrigerator this fortress mentality
this surfeit of gastro-intestinal disorders this leaning tower of babble
this messenger service this overweaning language this tick school

You could say that nothing is real you could invent many things
to fill the void you could call this life un boit bizarre regardless
we know that we live in a fascinating distracting reality

Wonder is born in this slide from nothing to something and back again
my heart is the water in which it swims neither stroker nor stroked

One of the Mysteries

One of the mysteries of poetry is to fill empty pages so that one is set free to notice the unwritten ocean wide beneath the words

In the beginning we don't like poetry until it starts to sound like something then we take relief in its verisimilitude then we despise routine and we begin to die until death and birth are green again

Poetry is the life song death song where the constant dilemma is that everything rhymes with everything and each new breath is fraught with wonder the constant challenge is to disguise this fact while revealing it each time these old words are said anew

The Chair Outside the Door

Swift kiss of eternity embodied in birth your awareness
wins the wars of whores you allow the reach of death
you concede to conquer I hear eternity singing its heart
calls me to tell the virtue of stillness in my own words

The chair outside the door