

In This Place of Beauty

In this place of beauty, the air
builds rooms of textured detail.

In this place, each face
is serene, intent, or both.

In this beauty, my breathing is low
and soft, like the sigh of the forest.

In this place, my heart dies
and revives within itself.

In this beauty, the poem speaks
to the other purpose of breathing.

In this place of beauty,
one breathes the life of life itself.

The Quick and the Night

Breathing is the occupation of stillness,
in the flurry of being.

I am made still, after being still by nature,
still by desire, still by the habit of my ways.

And now I am made still by the
sudden encroachment of death.

Mortality takes up its other self,
as mortal death smiles at mortal life.

I am made still, not against motion,
not out of time, not in stolen truth.

To know this being made still, matched with
endless stillness, I am made quick in the meeting.

The quick and the night are the same delight,
when I am made essential, in their unseen sight.

Storm and Wonder

There are two moments that reach in the lungs
and pull the breath out for greater duty.

To witness natural beauty, and to proclaim love,
the lungs are disposed to their deepest wind.

I inhale, I exhale, in greater proportion profound,
when the spirit, this heavenly beast, arranges my lungs
into storm and wonder.

This sudden conversion of small into largest of all,
feels right size, to one who knows it as normal
and never not divine.

The Pretense of Incidental Dying

When death is what one anticipates,
waiting dies.

“I’m glad you’re not dead,” a friend says.
I happily agree, but death is not my concern.

“Death takes care of itself in you,” another friend said,
in the midst of his slow, suicidal dance of dying.

Analogies of life are left behind when waiting dies,
I come home to no more waiting for abrupt death.

Now I can live in forever, inside its moment,
without the pretense of incidental dying.

Ordinary Grace

It is grace made ordinary,
to be where anticipation once was,
waving its flags of warning and conquest.

Absence of anticipation is not without interruption
from the self-induced future, not without reflection
from the self-enamored past.

Imagination has not gone into a sealed box,
but lives suffused in the reality of every object.

My dreams are teeming with animals,
both ape and owl and a spare owl, too.

This arrival holds the door open,
until endless arrival takes its place.

An Arrangement of Wonder

I am the man who spills his drink,
when he looks at his watch for the time.

Any new force in life
directs this arrangement of days
into a slight derangement. Any new
ordering implies a disordering.

Arrangement is holding what's unheld,
it is being in concert with the wild.

A note seems held in the throat,
and the sound fades at a distance.

I am one who knows what time means,
when my cup of time overflows,
with emptiness.

As the Droplets Fall

To stand in the nature of what is essential,
I lose interest in predictions of what may come.

With my feet on the ground, my toes in the earth,
I can physically sense that rain is coming or not.

This is not the future foretold, but the present,
that grows more true to itself, as the droplets fall.

Magnetic Word Making

Racketed by disharmonies, I withdraw
to a few rooms and a garden plot.

Bachelored by the pursuit of lovers,
I retreat to the bedroom, the dining room,
the drawing room, the workroom.

My cluttered heart collects its obstructions,
even to its damage, until it is cleared,
and pumps again with original brilliance.

The life we lead magnetizes our language,
I am mettled, by being armorless.

All the Parts of Love

All of what I am, in the way I love,
invents a face before me.

My character is drawn to it, as all of
what I am invests my heart with grace.

I know I cannot depend on who she is,
any more than I can depend on myself.

The luck of the moment
is the look of the moment's attention.

It gives and receives itself, and I am
found between the parts.

All the parts of love are held apart
from each other, when one is first
infatuated, and I call this part,
desire.

Safe for the Sunrise

When one face of love fades,
what requires love to fade with it?

The sun sets, only in portion,
it doesn't jump its moorings.

If what I care for, slips my care,
why should I not care for caring?

I pursue her, some time after, ready to
forget the poem in favor of its poetry.

When I see she is gone where going goes,
I carry my heart home in my heart.

Safe for the sunrise.

Being Among Love

I return to where my heart has seen itself open,
to see it open again, in this way, among others,
in its way toward all others, still here in my self.

I return to the scene of the uncommitted crime, with
criminal intent, to steal what's mine by divinest right.

What I possess, or even dream of possessing, is only
mine in the recognition of its never having left me.

This being, in the love that I already own, is what I seek
in partnering my heart, in the delight of no difference.

A Piece of the Sky

For most of life, death is external,
a piece of the sky that might fall.

Until it appears within the profane and sacred
estate of the body, and one's Greek chorus
sings out, loud and strong, or falls silent.

Immortality is returned to its creation,
like a borrowed work of art.

The physical accepts its inheritance
of time, among the wonders and terrors.

Acceptance is a voice that soothes
the short-lived and sings the timeless.

What falls from the sky is peace on earth.

Composed of Peace

Even while fear has been my occasional choreographer,
I am called fearless, in this imagination called the world.

Every day, some terror scrapes my complacency,
I'm composed of peace, even when overtaken by war.

I disbelieve my own truth, until I forget to question it,
I am the ground, on which my fear dances arabesques
of doomed flight, I am the air.

The Room at the Center

The room of spirit, grace, and love,
cannot be entered in their name.

This nameless room is not entered
by anyone who has a name.

I cannot willfully enter it, I cannot deliberately
stay in it, even though, in its name or min, I might try.

How tempting is that approximation
we call everything we think we are.

I find myself inside the room I never enter
and never leave, only when I forget
the name of this life.

The Between

Every animal, that's not keen to its own mortality,
slips into a domestication of joy, a degeneration
of eternity, a comfort of critical illusion.

In our dulled wisdom, we jump out of airplanes,
and we make heroic the slaughter in war.

We tell our children that grandfather isn't dead,
he's only sleeping. My body is a community
of dying, and I am its overseer.

In the embrace of the last breath now gone,
and the next breath not yet taken, lies my death.

My life of freedom thrives in the space between.

My Truancy

My truancy,
from the rooms of *past* and *future*,
lures me closer to a greater reality,
than any lesson I might learn
in their halls of instruction.

I am a beggar at the source
of my education.

The heart of any true teaching
is the bloom of eternity
in the room of time.

The Precious Shape

In becoming a shape of self,
I become other than my origin,
and I slowly die, as the extraordinary
and the beautiful fade from me.

Troy falls, Helen dies,
this precious shape of self
is nearly nothing in comparison
to the energy of its invention.

In my absence of self, I become
creation, creator and created.

What shall I compare myself to,
when comparison is the censor
of my incomparable being?

In Letters Left Behind

I will never know this lover I call my being.
He eludes my capture, he never appears
whenever and wherever I seek him.

I seek him in shadow, in reflection,
in photographs, in letters left behind.

I hear him say to me, *We are nearly one,*
but I am the one that is you, and you
are the one who thinks we are one.

No Going Back

Man and woman never left the garden,
they merely stopped being at home there.

A true poem, true love, or the state of grace,
that proves not to be true to itself, cannot produce
a true poem, or true love, or the state of grace.

There's no going back to paradise,
until one awakens in its presence.

The Taste of Death

Now that the taste of death is on my tongue,
I don't need its effects to appear.

It is here, if not in full, in degree
enough to be recognized as it is.

I am dressed to suit the eternity I have never not been,
to know what's true, and to know my self-inspired twin,
in the false shape of deathless flesh, and what I have
been twinned to forget.

The Spirit in the Room

My earliest habit as a poet
was to describe the room I was in.

Now I see that it was to be
present without time's furniture.

The room I now intend to describe,
is the roomless room, uncluttered
of the physical, unfurnished by
thought, open, timeless, and empty.

It is the same room, empty and full
of everything I see before me.

Witness to the Miracle

Every life is miraculous, every person is witness to the miracle.

Each one's story is either witness to the miracle, or tries to claim it.

Claiming the miracle reduces to a description of the witness.

The presence of the miraculous reveals its impersonal gift.

Every witness to the miraculous sees the inseparable self, and basks in its unreachable beauty, at the will of no nameable cause but its reality.

The Porcelain Plate

I see the olive oily pepper slice
slide from the open-face sandwich
to the porcelain plate below,
and I am home again in the
furnished room of my eyes.

My heart comes out, to come in,
to the ordinary in this room,
where my roomless heart is at home.

In this roomlessness, I witness the tiny details
of the endless emptiness of the miraculous.

Before the Flame

Instead of the future,
I anticipate the present.

I look not at what occurs,
but at occurrence itself.

This un-doing uncouples me
from who and what occurs,
and everything remains,
undiminished by expectation.

The reality of what is,
embraces the flame in its fire,
before the flame is lit
and after the fire is aflame.

A Coin for Commerce

If I recover no gold from the mountain,
and still I sing its discovery,

If I see the source of the poem,
and the poems that follow are mere nuggets,

If each poem is merely a coin for commerce,
when their source is a range of unparalleled wealth,

What part is not a quest for gold, what part
is not a quenching of the thirst for gold,
and what part is not gold itself?

The Home of the Poem

I try to enter the home of the poem,
but it enters, instead,

The way the sun enters a room,
the body, the eyes, the heart,

The way all that is enters this and that,
transforms them, with no change and nothing but.

I speak of a room, as I knock out the walls,
and build nothing in its place.

I cannot build a temple in the middle of the temple,
except here is waxing poetic to burn for candles.

The Purest Juice

Here are all the secrets, rolled into one,
secure from theft, protected by their accessibility,
the source of every creation, the way to taste them all,
the purest juice from the ripest fruit, the moment of
conception, the nursery, and its generation, the trip
to the oracle's cave, and the shock at the entrance,
to see eternity, by turning to see from where we
have come, right here, where we are standing.

In Warm Water and Bright Light

Language is the home
of secondhand reality,
all reference and invocation.

I look askance at my poems,
and I see the approximate words,
until I remember the bite of reality,
where every image is pulled to a
black hole of unspoken recognition.

Distinctions are lost in warm water,
bright light, music, and delirium,
in the orgasm of creation,
and in the simple reality of being.