

## Clicking Heels in the Square

Clicking heels in the square, four-corner toss,  
a big man with a skateboard, sunshine, ice cream,  
bright colors, innocent grins, *Beauty dresses itself*.

Skyline against a blue sky, a man's hands behind his  
back as he strolls, many paths crossing, lives entwined  
by conversation, tender tentacles of confession  
and question, two boys tap dancing.

## Flowers in a Tree Box

Flowers in a tree box, petals on the ground, two men talking,  
a car stops, a crumpled fender, a somber man leaves a note,  
shows it to a witness, gets in a black pickup, a man passes,  
walking his bike up the street, checkerboard tennis shoes  
abandoned against the curb, a kitchen cabinet in the gutter.

Rain like spitting, pigeons help clean the street, trash barrels  
chained together in a row, a farmers market with fruits and  
vegetables, cheeses, breads and baby kisses, crowds of  
individuals, couples, occasional threes, sampling delights.

## A Padded Bench in a Small Garden

A padded bench in a small garden, an old woman reads  
a book in private laughter, graffiti proclaims *Joy Tostada*,  
either someone to meet, or a tasty treat, a concrete frog,  
grown green with mold still waits to leap, two men agree  
that something is *stupid, fucking stupid*.

Benches are for sitting, people sit, chairs are for sitting,  
people sit, sidewalks are for walking, someone sleeps.

### A Street Carpeted with Fallen Leaves

A street carpeted with fallen leaves soaked by rain,  
a sports jersey in a wet heap, a great blue plastic tarp  
across the face of a four-story building, billowing  
in the soft wind, rain falls out of the sky.

Crowds fill the bar where the famous poet drank himself  
to death, where resurrection and celebration try to take  
his place, what one looks for, one forgets to wait for,  
to wait for a poem is to wait inside its coming, walking  
on the street, looking at everything, thinking of nothing.

### Three Adults and Ten Children

Three adults and ten children go into a gallery,  
holding a rope with soft rings attached, the children  
giggle, they laugh, they ask questions, they watch  
their feet, going up the steps.

### Police Cars in the Street

Police cars in the street, a bus bumps the curb as it turns  
the corner, *Are they making a movie?* mothers and kids  
in the park, a breeze blowing, several streets, cleared  
of cars, a sewer line being repaired, underground.

Sunlight on sidewalk tables, a corner food market,  
taxi after taxi like a flow in a flood, a paper sign says,  
*No Parking Monday*, manhole covers and sewer grates  
pulled from their places, walkers nimbly skirt the site.

### A Fitness Club

A fitness club, with a wall of windows,  
where men sit, eating, looking at the street.  
the sidewalk, a mixed quilt of square sections,  
a brick street, like fitted rows of fat red beans,  
time has turned rows of facades into unlikely  
combinations, each easily ignored, the whole  
has aged to a comforting familiarity.

### Razor Wire

Razor wire, coiled artfully above a wall,  
a woman sees her way along the sidewalk,  
her dog smells its way along the same path,  
*How you doin', Kevin*, one man asks another  
with a smile, *I'm doing fine, man*, his friend  
answers, with an easy laugh and a grin.

### A Green Bicycle

A green bicycle, chained to a wrought-iron fence,  
its rear wheel bent to a loop, two big dogs pass  
like the flow of silent black water, an older woman  
sits on a chair on the corner, her makeup being  
done by a much younger woman, an older man  
intently watches the procedure unfold.

### Café Patrons Talk in Pairs

Café patrons talk in pairs, men on a scaffold  
scrape an unpainted building, nannies bring their  
charges in the café in carriages, workers lie down  
for lunch against a wall and survey the street.

A truck, its radio blaring, bumps and bounces  
down the narrow street, yellow blossoms hang  
in rows from a skinny trunk, four potted trees  
stand like sentinels, like potted trees waiting  
for a bus, a pigeon, in a patch of dirt, pecks  
at the ground, like clockwork, ticking.

#### A Man Photographs a Man

A man photographs a man making a video of a man  
and woman walking, a boy plays with a large balloon  
on the front steps of his house, his father nearby,  
tall girl, smoking a long cigarette, leans to one side,  
in the doorway of a shop, dressed in black with silver  
bracelets, a silver medallion dangles from her neck.

#### A Dancer with a Backpack

A dancer with a backpack walks past a man in reflector  
sunglasses, past a duct-taped bicycle seat, past a sunglass  
store, past *Unique Gifts for Sale*, past onions in a sack  
by a restaurant door, a small sign says the *Park Closes  
at Midnight*, chess pieces, set out for missing players,  
a hybrid electric bus passes a man in a big bow tie.

#### A New Patch of Sidewalk

A new patch of sidewalk, laid as if sculpted and painted  
with precision and care, a drainpipe, painted white, so many  
times it looks like frosting, a face sculpted into the wall with  
an open mouth and staring eyes, bunches of crumpled paper  
like clumps of snow, a postal worker's cart by an open door,  
a fast strider, his hands in his pockets, talks on the phone.

## On a Sunny Day

On a sunny day, people strip down for less action, seven tables against a wall, a passing couple argues in Italian, up the street, seven more tables, around the corner, four more, the streets are full of cars, a restaurant's grade is still pending, a middle-aged man sings loudly, badly, his earphones protect him from censorship, all other's and his own.

## Everywhere Dirt Can Be Found

Everywhere dirt can be found, trees, bushes and flowers seem to follow, *If I'm not happy*, a man says, *it's because I'm habitually stupid*, an old man with a guitar reminds his friend of a younger man with a guitar, on the same steps, many years ago, near a building where artists have lived for forty years or more, *No Littering, No Loitering*.

## A Popular Walkway

A popular walkway above the street, fashioned from a rail line now defunct, where people walk and talk, take pictures of each other, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, fathers, daughters, mothers and sons, couples, families, singles and groups, new faces, and new faces, and new faces, click, click, click, ice cream and coffee, a siren wails, the cityscape seen through bushes, rushes, and trees, the sun sets across the water, behind the western skyline, warms the walls, friends stroll arm in arm, a baby carrier with arms and legs flailing, a psychic, a saxophonist, *Free Tea for Everyone*, the end of another beautiful day.

## A Skateboarder Texting

A skateboarder texting, a man with shopping bags in both hands, a panama hat, red pants, a tall woman in a short skirt, small cars parked in small spaces, bicycles chained to scaffolding, a noisy pressure-washer runs at half power, a bike messenger runs the light, heavy metal doors on an apartment house, dogs on long leashes, foreign languages spoken like mere accents, "Is it like from the 80s?" one asks another, a man carries a metal tub in one hand, an old man rides a bike, a cane in his backpack, the light turns green.

## Thousands of Dancers in the Street

Dancers in the street, a passing parade of hands, feet, arms, legs, torsos, a steady beat, spectators line the route in rapt attention, celebration, syncopation, the music of all nations, costumes of garish colors, beautiful colors, all ages, whistles, leaps, a scene of organized grace and routine bliss, in the partly damp, partly dry avenue, out-of-towners find a new favorite restaurant, a man in dress whites with his date, a unicycle passes, then a limousine, a shopping cart piled high, a child holds a balloon animal next to her daddy's whiskers.

## Trains Run Out of the City

Trains run out of the city, trains run into the city, people sort themselves to the right tracks, moving slowly or swiftly, sit, sleep, mill about, in vast caverns of majestic architecture, children sleep when they are tired, eat when they are hungry, the rest seek some similar accommodation, with as much foot traffic below the streets as above, everyone's in love with arrival, here, there, and everywhere.

## In the Station

In the station, talkers bend to each other, a steady murmur and rumble in the background, “Oh, you know, that’s how I met him,” a woman says, and another sighs, “Let me go look at the schedule,” dark skin, light skin, a man slyly picks his nose when his wife goes for a newspaper, a tour group awaits further instruction, an American flag t-shirt, name tags, trains await, ready for boarding.

## The Train Rocks and Sways

The train rocks and sways, north out of the station, conversations seem less driven by destination in the passage of time, city blocks become banks of windows, wide expanses reduce to glimpses, a man leans close to his tabloid paper, buildings change from homes to housing, *We live to live*, someone says.

Back into the city at night, the train becomes the first part of a party, brightly lit rolling rooms in the enveloping dark, a white limousine parallels the train until it slips silently away, *As you leave the train, please watch the gap between the train and the platform*, “End of the line, everybody off,” “He didn’t say that,” “He should have.”

## Vine-Covered Iron Spikes

Vine-covered iron spikes top a wall, to repel intruders, one assumes, a driver signals another to roll down his window, a small pink building seems to lean against a larger brown building, a sign in a bar window, *Respect our neighbors, keep the noise down at night*, a dirty mirror leans against the sidewalk wall, talking on the phone, a man backs his car to park, across the street on the opposite side.

## A Surveyor

A surveyor punches the keyboard on his tripod, a man gestures dramatically as he talks to his imagination, workers eat lunch and talk on the narrow sidewalk, tiles in a blue bag are *up for grabs*, a fluffy white poodle gets everyone's attention.

In the museum, the clatter of children's voices, a skeleton as tall as a house, sleek as a glider, animals in natural settings, windowed vistas into other realities, two kids run from one scene to another taking pictures, skittering across Africa in digital images, *Please do not touch the elephants*.

## Eyes On the Subway

Eyes on the subway look at shoes, doors open and close, some riders stand, some hang on, some don't, no eye contact, little talk, earphones, eyes down, eyes up, occasional recognition, no acknowledgment, the train lurches forward, lunges to a stop, *Do not hold doors, Do not lean on doors, This is an air-conditioned car, Please close windows*, a man hunches over a 12-step handbook, *Stand clear of the closing doors, please*.

## On the Sidewalk

On the wide sidewalk, a father, mother, daughter, dog, a nanny, small girl, boy, dog, and in the street, truck after truck negotiate the narrow passage, *Roofing, Catering, Delivery*, a man crosses the street with one finger holding a bag of bottles, a moving van moves, with a large soda on the back bumper, the driver's cigarette out the window, owners sit in their cars and wait for the no parking time to expire, near a busy highway, next to an ancient river.

New York City, Established 1664

*New York City, established 1664*, says a man's T-shirt,  
"You need gloves, you need protection, watch your back,"  
says another man walking in the car who talks to everyone,  
only a heavy-set, square-jawed man responds with a smile,  
"Here's the map," a woman says to her companion, "you find it,"  
as her two thumbs work the small screen like jumping beans,  
white wheels on a plaid shopping cart, a man runs to shove  
his bag in the closing door, too late, a look of resignation.

In the Museum Galleries

In the museum galleries, all these ways of seeing,  
the crowd moves like bees in a hive, never quite colliding,  
big, small, bright, dark, metal, wood, paper, canvas, fabric,  
plastic, clay, stone, glass, stairwells, benches, sculpture,  
painting, photography, construction, deconstruction,  
monumental halls of art and culture, *art inside art*,  
a man takes a picture, a woman raises her glasses,  
a man and woman draw the sculpture in front of them,  
a man reads the program, a woman takes notes, a man  
scratches his neck, soft chairs in a row beneath a louvered  
ceiling, a couple holds hands, "It's time to go," visual overload,  
medieval art, modern art, ancient art, out through a labyrinth  
of wonders, meet by the front doors, back to the street.

In a Café

A man works his drawing pad, a young woman reads a book,  
a man calculates chess moves with his iPhone, abstract art covers  
the walls, laptops open, couples talk, music plays, potted plants  
on every surface, a skylight illuminates cartons of milk on ice,  
dish trays, water cooler, next to the counter to the kitchen.

The front door is open, a line forms and reforms at the register, benches form a square in the middle of the long room, a phalanx of tables fills the space from halfway back to a yellow brick wall, bookshelves fill one wall, a high counter with stools the other.

### In Another Café

A barista cleans the windows, lounge chairs surround a circular table, a long wooden table, a banquet setting for tea and coffee drinkers, a be-whiskered man talks softly to his computer, three men at a bar, facing the street, high windows in a brick wall frame the tree-lined side street, a padded bench fronts another wall, a woman pulls on a sweater to fight the air-conditioned chill, a man in pajama bottoms, a woman writes with a pencil, a table opens up, another woman swiftly lifts and carries her belongings to the open table.

### Fresh Baked Goods in a Window

Fresh baked goods in a window, a painter touches up a door, a police car speeds by, passport photos, a lawyer, podiatrist, veterinarian, *Music and Dance Every Thursday*, *Sandwiches Made Fresh*, new shoes on display, a wine store, new pumps in a gas station, construction in the bike lane, jewelry in a window, *How do you like your chocolate?* a jackhammer on the ground, blinking lights on an SUV, a man scrubs the sidewalk with a stiff broom, a sign warns, *Men Working Above*, subway entries on all four corners, no booth at this stop, an articulated bus turns the corner in sections, *Truth is one, paths are many, Please press the red buzzer.*

## On Facing Walls

On facing walls in the museum, a starved family from 1840 across from a gathering of the languid rich in 1920, ornate and decadent are compared, in the eyes of curious patrons, a naked bronze reclines near pilgrims in prayer, an historic chair, near an Indian buffalo dance on film, near the New York City street scene in 1901, near a bust of the artist's uncle, near tennis shoes under glass, a view of the Brooklyn Bridge, by the elevator, a small room that moves up and down.

## Around a Parquet Floor

Around a parquet floor in a great hall, beneath a high chandelier, the lesser paintings of renowned artists reveal art's commercial necessity, fragments of ancient art as body parts, much of art, thought religious, its defacement sacrilege, much of art, thought profane, its defacement righteous, an alcove with books, surrounded by the paintings they describe, quilts and quilted metal scraps, a feast of the awakened sensuality, dancers on the ceiling, hallways between the centuries.

## A Grecian Statue of a Robed Woman

A Grecian statue of a robed woman near a contemporary wall, a patio's brick recalls metallic mosaic sheets from Africa, a vented cover for a tree's trunk a square black table appear like modern art, "Are you hoping that art of some kind will be your work?" an older woman asks a younger woman, five plastic trays, stacked on a trash container, capture and reflect the light in layers, a woman talks on the phone, wearing a giant beaded necklace, fish scale slippers, hoop earrings, spiked hair and a striped skirt, stands to leave, as the museum café locks its doors for the day.

## Trash on the Sidewalk

Trash on the sidewalk, a ballet slipper at the center,  
a rock by a tree, a skinny man lifts and lowers beer kegs  
beside the iron cellar doors of a bar, a many-windowed garret  
looks empty, ghost white mannequins wearing black and gray,  
*Brunch will be served on Monday*, haze turns to brilliant sun,  
bikes, racked like tired dogs huddled together in exhaustion,  
a sudden rain runs in the gutters like children at recess.

## In an Experimental Art Gallery

In an experimental art gallery, sliding doors open on  
the people of the elevator, faces and bodies in clothing,  
a folding chair at a round table, a woman plays with makeup  
like keys on an organ, the night comes in after the rain stops,  
people dress for the occasion in their minds, a walkie-talkie  
hangs on the gallery guard's belt, several floors of exhibits,  
exhibition on every floor, a man in bright orange seems  
conservative, *Art conserves the radical among us*.

## Doll Clothes on a Woman

Doll clothes on a woman, a top knot, a neck tattoo, a famous artist,  
the freight elevator freighted with bodies, going up, coming down,  
hand-held camera with a zoom lens, toreador pants, necktie with  
a black shirt, frilly skirt, tripod camera with a side screen, a man  
keeps the beat on his chest, a woman circulates with a clip-board,  
two giant tureens in an aluminum canoe, *Life is a soup full of soup*.

## A Café in the Rain

A café in the rain, dark clothing, ponchos, umbrellas in a stand, tourists reading brochures of the memorial, a teenage son stares at the tabletop, passive, not forlorn, music from several decades, “The plan was to walk around, but the weather’s not helping, we may go back to the hotel, let’s meet up at Grand Central,” a mop for spilled coffee, recycle bins, faces from all over the world, Italian shoes, sneakers, boots, sandals, a cup with the skyline around it, a warm room behind foggy windows, fresh air comes in through the open door.

## Window Washers Rappel

Window washers rappel from the rooftop, walkers cross against the light where there’s an opening, a dog, as big as one might imagine a big dog to be, geranium pots on the steps, birds chirp, a clock tower, a fedora, a triangle mustache, a hand to the cap, a hand to the ear, fingers pinching lips, a smile, *to anonymously report unsafe conditions*, write a poem and leave it on the ground, *to anonymously report safe conditions*, a half-smile will do just as well.