

On the Lake of Volcanoes

Black birds fly above an imploded volcano,
its dark lake surrounded by volcanoes.

As the earth is unnamed, these eyes,
for naming, forget but what they see.

The wider world divided
Into smaller pieces of itself.

Life doesn't change us, we change
faces in life, the wind closes the door.

The trees on the ridge rise against the sky,
like tufts of hair, wrapped in twine.

Wonder is full of wonder and fear,
made fearless, like an empty bowl.

I speak something of nothing, else
music is merely its own making.

Lapping at the shore, soft whispers,
from beneath the shimmering surface.

I hear music, words woven, burnished
into a kind of sweet movement.

I become what I approach, then turn
back to speak what is beyond reach.

Ladder against a shed, a woman
in blue picks fruit from the garden.

The town across the volcanic lake
seems unchanged through its history.

What's close appears alive, what's
distant wraps the world in permanence.

How many beautiful gardens would
there be if we were each content?

The boat that scouts the lake, slows
to a drift, then speeds off on its rounds.

A wasp lingers, body pulsing,
a lizard leaps on the rocky path.

She walks among the rows with
a bowl, to collect a meal's making.

Something bites her, she jumps and shouts,
is this not the heart of the real?

Now tell me what country does not
call itself the home of grace and grief.

Workers clear the sloping shore
below to irrigate an onion patch.

High above these hard workers,
I sit on a deck, reading Neruda.

I read a long poem by my old
friend, about life, love, and death.

Like Neruda, he seeks the primal
in the mundane, they find themselves.

I stand in the crowded moment,
until it's been shed of its clutter.

A third man comes, the three consult
a watch that gleams iIn the morning light.

With quick blows, the dusty soil billows
above their hoes in dry clouds.

The earth, greater than those who
work it, who think of it, who live and die.

The men look up from their work
to see a stranger reading poetry.

Among words, a massive presence,
the unfathomed deep, sharp hoes at work.

Yellow and red for the hummingbirds,
and there, the woman I am with.

How can she not be the same as this
ungraspable reach, this rich soil.

I see a man in a wooden boat,
a couple walking by the shore.

I see essence, not of primitives
in some idyll of pristine life.

These men work for wages, have cell
phones, motorcycles, and time for fear.

Their hands move swiftly, smoothly,
to place and cover the onion seedlings.

The sun seems caught by the edge of the
roof, the slightest breeze cools my skin.

Like them, I converse within, as I work
these words into fertile ground.

She asks one of the men if she
might photograph him at his work.

The boys throw water in a spray,
in imitation of the men's grace.

Each one walks barefoot to the lake,
it doesn't matter if some gets spilled.

The thirsty ground will take the water,
the summer rain is months away.

Bamboo is cut with machetes, to make
sticks for string to mark the patch.

The page before me has rows of words
that turn the blank to planted seeds.

An old man and woman plant
a garden at the top of the hillside.

She holds a watering can, he digs
with a hoe, she wears blue and white.

A skirt, a blouse, a scarf on her head,
he wears a hat, t-shirt, and jeans.

They talk, she more so, he seems
less eager to speak, until he begins.

She stirs the water of words, he
calms the water, they swim together.

Old bathers in words, they know each
other's strokes, splashing, diving, drinking.

They sit by the side of the garden
and shade themselves in silence.

The planters have gone, no workers
among the stalks, the lake, sleek and calm.

A wasp attends a drying pair of
socks, the hot sun burns the dry air.

A wasp lingers at a flower, the wake
from a launch ripples ashore.

A house on the far shore seems on
fire, smoke drifts up the steep incline.

The fire burns down, perhaps it
burns up what is no longer needed.

What's needed is called by different
names, I might call this life by a name.

A family of seven walks by,
on the path next to the water.

Mother tells one boy to wave, he
waves, another waves, then all wave.

One young boy waves, by throwing his
arm in a wild arc, back and forth.

I wave back, across the brief absence
of distance, a simple greeting.

Travel brings us to the moment
of ordinary grace in meeting.

A stout woman sits beside the lake,
a boy tosses a fishing line.

A green growth spreads itself, offshore,
muffled voices, birds, a motorboat.

An active volcano rumbles, not close,
louder than anything near.

Can anything so great be called humble
when it's humbling to our kind?

A bird flies at a high window,
as if in love with its reflection.

Perhaps there is reward and purpose
in everything, or there is not.

Or else, there is celebration,
embedded in all we are and do.

Walking in Cape May

Cat beside the chair, on the deck,
asleep, its leaping, confined to dreams.

Walk to the corner, a few steps
on sand, and then, the eastern ocean.

Beside the sand beach, motors purr,
roar, no bikes on the promenade.

Muscles pump legs, arms, kites held back
against the wind, a small dog, prances.

Three gulls, as if one, stand still,
facing the wind, never not in motion.

Three gray gulls stand still, as if one,
until one drives the others apart.

Three gulls, stand apart, at the edge
of the ocean, each tending itself.

Five gulls, in a row, preen themselves,
one wanders out of line, preening.

Three elderly women, on the sand,
birds of three breeds, in a tight bunch.

So many feet in the ocean,
legless fish wonder in wild surmise.

Oceanside, the unfathomable deep,
across the road from rented rooms.

Walking in town, on the street above
the ground, facsimile of earth.

Rockers on a veranda wrap the
hotel, squirrels leap in the grass.

A wafting, gentle breeze caresses
the shade that blocks the burning sun.

It can't hurt me that I am alone,
when I am alone in wonder.

Here in my eyes, not the world, but
the color of the world awakens.

Swans, beyond the parking lot, big
and fed, ready to fly, without will.

Gaggle of geese gather the calm, float, dip,
rise, spread their wings, skim the pond.

Ruffled white swan, Cleopatra's barge,
a regal black swan swims apart.

Hawks, geese, swans, down from trails
in the sky, followed close by human eyes.

At the end of land, a shack for food,
red-faced visitors eat their fill.

Mafia wannabe, in style only,
dragging fries through the cheese.

Wonder moves, place to place, wonder
stays wonder, different faces glow.

Butterfly plumbs the depths of a
carnation, secure in its easy gift.

Folded chair swings on the back of
a tottering man, the beach beckons.

Old ones masquerade as their young
selves, half-believing the happy ruse.

Sailboat, atop the sea, cannot swim,
cannot fly, does the in-between.

It takes time to let go the names
of what we see, or but a moment.

Joy Profound as Sorrow

Love poems from the past or present,
lock a certain sorrow in time.

Love spoken, lives past love, love alive
lives unsaid, free from naming it.

That moment, just past, fading edge
of who we are, escapes love itself.

Love itself cannot be spoken,
except of, after, toward, and from.

Heartfelt tales, the finest we can say,
exclaim to name what we love.

Greater love than love, love rains,
pools, streams, flows oceanic, unseen.

The heart of love, center of the
center, cannot be lined or margined.

Love will not be orated, love will not
be declaimed, love's heart is mute.

In love's orbit I spin, in love's halo,
I glow, spun out from love's core.

Circle love in loving, fly out from
love in rhapsody, find love found.

Rescue love from its arrows,
grasp love in the origin of the bow.

Sing love, speak love, build houses without
ground, joy itself remains profound.

Thing of no thing, this heart, that heart,
no heart but the real, sings itself.

As all metaphors sing, not one
speaks love, that certain uncertainty.

No sorrow in love, only sorrow
in leaving love, I leave leaving.

All at once in moving, I am still,
all at once, in love, I am love.

Shock of my heart, as it wanders
the world, to be at home in motion.

And still I sing, I sing of love,
without sorrow, I sing myself home.

Counting the Ways

How do I love her? Shall I count the ways? What ways? No ways in love.

All the ways of counted love are not of love, love is uncountable.

No ways, yet I love her ways, she's kind, considerate, blunt, outspoken.

Unconcerned how she's seen, loud, tender, loves dirt in its fertility

A light in her eyes that dims, darkens, and shines, ready for anything

Signs of love are, for her, tangible, in thing or deed, she sees what's done.

Expressions of love are expendable, not trusted, ephemeral, however well-meant.

She prefers tokens of consideration rather than passions proclaimed.

Still, she's passionate, in her ways of a lifetime, and in the moment.

Artist, gardener, maker of pottery for beauty and use, she sings.

In a life of tragedy and work, ready for play, she laughs aloud.

A dancer, she can lead and follow, she plays at being romantic.

Romantic, she loses sight of it, then picks it up, in an instant.

Candid, tactful, bold, shy, she barely recognizes her giving gifts.

Self-aware, she knows how good
she is at being alive in this life.

I love her ways, but my love cannot
be found where it might be described.

What's the reason for sky where birds
pass in flight and rain is born in falling?

I look in her clear eyes of love, and
I see love, not looking to be seen.

Looking for nothing to see, I see
what love is, uncounted to be.

On a Sidestreet in Paradise

White clouds, deep blue sky, dark green
trees, sea, I lie down in its lush painting.

On a sidestreet in Paradise, beyond
these hotel walls, trade winds blow.

In the lobby, a small boy on his
laptop, a boy on a dolphin.

Nearly naked woman crosses the
street, with nearly naked others.

Crepe paper, stuck to the stucco
ceiling, a night's quiet aftermath.

Ukulele, guitar, bass, and steel,
aloha's rich island song.

Music calms the yapping dog, curled
up in peace, at the foot of the notes.

Joy's pure music, dancer, talking to her
friend, jumps up, points to the sound.

Hula fingers, while other hands walk,
hers dance, while others talk, hers sing.

Rain in the sun, slippery stones,
walkers wait beneath an overhang.

Pigeons, not beggars, on missions
of survival, scan picked-over sand.

Plumped out skin and bones, Miss
America at the beach, her devotees.

Crooked clock, a circle on its side,
in some cities, tells the right time.

Flag pole in the lobby, unfurled,
hanging limp, wrapped in flowers.

Crescent in the leaves, reminder
of the moon, that orbiting fondness.

Peacefulness, in this room where no
one lives, people come and go, night falls.

In paradise, things go about in
disguise, like sorrow and sadness.

I go for a walk with a Banyan tree,
its pace is slow, I slow down.

My sandal breaks apart, my foot
escapes its flimsy attempt at binds.

This island must feel its sorrow,
absorbing rain, sun, fallen men.

Burrs in the grass, unknowing where
I step, lead my path, follow after.

A small girl with a crown, gives it to
another girl, twin queens of heart.

The island does little to keep
the sun from owning everything.

I see the old, old people dancing,
light of foot, in the setting sun.

Mother hen with chicks, her small crowd
scurries past men, women, and children.

Australians on the beach, the
beach, not Australia, is the beach.

I float in the ocean, stumble in
the sand, walk upright like a man.

Nomad, she tents herself beneath the
beating sun that demands its price.

Surfers, waiting for fresh waves,
the sea gives, and, in time, gives again.

Those who hope to ride the power
of the wave, ride its beauty as well.

Perched on volcano and ocean,
the clouds become a ready refuge.

Green, upon green, upon green,
on this green isle of volcanic rock.

The ocean caresses the shore, with
its claws, its jaws, its bearish roar.

The farther I look out to sea,
the better I see what is near.

A Spoon in a Cup

All these ways of being alive,
such invention, a spoon in a cup.

In the mirror, over time, this changing
face, in endless space, the moon.

I stand to go home, and a thought
falls out of my pocket, so I stay..

I am stopped from the practical,
I come back home to the opportune.

This life's a low-entry profession,
come on in, the water's fire.

My story lacks assemblage, a handful
of pebbles, tossed on the sand.

The stories of our lives, we trade
them, until we are worn together.

The old days have died, I visit their
graves, the stone, so finely carved.

In plain sight, the unhidden hides, in this
room, there hides no room at all.

In abundance, I seek austerity
and find it, in abundance.

Do I breathe the air I praise,
or has heaven become so prosaic.

All these ways of being alive,
such invention, a spoon in a cup.

Woman of Oaxaca

Against a rock cliff, her uncertain
comrade, a small bird, pecks at cracks.

Sun on her shoulder, soft whispers
of heat, her bones, glow in their fire.

This earth, this bed, from which we rise,
she opens her eyes and soars above.

Halfway home, flat on her back, unhappy
fortune, *What delight*, she grins.

Soft stone, assured of herself, she
seems to prey, to leap, to pounce, to rest.

In confinement, rage falls quiet,
thought resolves in its disappearance.

Contained despair seeps into flesh,
despite the desire to fly free.

The wind is loud and broken fluid,
and when the wind stops, she's silent.

Her soul waits for nothing but to strike
from the heart, and peacefully sleep.

Her arms wrap her legs, her legs
wrap the journey in muscled symmetry.

Her chair, designed for ease, is joined
with the earth, and open to receive.

Perfection reclines in what she is,
imperfection finds itself, as well.

Her tree grows around itself, from
the ground to the sky into everyone.

Her back, strength of where she goes, wall
of the past, fronts what she leaves behind.

Dark remains, until her dark becomes
her lighter self, and she's on fire.

Clouds on the ground wrap her feet, she
sits in the sky, bends low from on high.

Contorted by laughter, untwisted by
peace, she plants words in the air.

A glacial shelf borders her tropics.
From her squint, she sees nebulae.

She is an obelisk, a monument
to motion in the moment.

Her hand is alive, her heart, beating,
from parted lips, her song is sung.

Wrinkled skin, in the stillness of thought,
smooth silence becomes her lover.

Jagged edges cool the day, oiled
edges warm the night, these icons.

Wise in her dark leafy bed, summer
blurs the bodies of her love.

Time wanders away, rushes back, she
touches others, pulling time apart.

That night in Oaxaca, inside the
cantina, sheltered from the storm.

Haiku Café

Haiku café, shiny surfaces,
disentanglement, Funkytown.

Under the window's fading light,
enclosures of private thought.

In the near, under ceilings,
the decimation of desolation.

Dance of contraries, the line moves
slowly, things fall behind the counter.

The wide, slow turn of events, seeing
the wind jump, the short breath of space.

A twinkling in the light, an opening,
are we not like each other?

Deep mud of mind, time to be free,
frown the brow, the weight of waiting.

Heels squeak, a place to sit and talk
amongst the peoples of the earth.

Wonder opens wide, voices raised,
something of everything's said aloud.

Change dances with the familiar,
memory's reborn in the fray.

She wears a jeweled ring, he points
to a piece of the painted ceiling.

White grains in a shaker, high sun
in a pail, elbows on the table..

Lone figures, blinking light, white scarf,
glimpse of snow, sitting in the shadows.

Uplifting thoughts animate the stillness,
The light stays open all night.

Three grownups in a cluster, a child
by herself, she knows how to dance.

The nuclear family, scattered,
We live in front of the future.

Vague shapes in the once-shiny floor,
toddler puts the toddler seat away.

Plaid jacket zipped tight, dust in the
ceiling vents, *Breathing is personal.*

Tight mouth, pulled to a pinch, fast texting,
ripped jeans, *Anger serves the angry.*

What's invisible? Singers in unison,
a laughing pair, stir sticks.

Shiny patent leather shoes, *Non-*
compos mentis. It means I love you.

Moving quickly, flight control, abrupt
landing, complete stop, the last seat.

Ponytail, inside a hoodie, eyes of wild
abandon he says, *Welcome, welcome.*

Serenity floats across her face,
painted birds on the window glass.

Chewing his teething ring, fierce
look of concern, a little potentate.

Sherlock Holmes was here, blue shirt,
brown hat, cargo pants, white tie, vest, no pie.

An empty coffee cup, pockets full,
a brief aside, *I like hiking, cold is relative.*

Thrift store tag, obsidian bracelet, three-page
San Antonio pamphlet, driving by himself.

What's your frame of reference?
A funny smell, knock before entering.

Startled look, large tub on a truck,
ballet slippers, hung from the mirror.

He nods, a big gun in his holster,
We live in bastions of plenty.

*More than meets the eye, the
origin of absolutely everything.*

What if you were President? a see-
through blouse, long lists of things to do.

Whispering, she clicks her fingernails,
a gradual darkening of the outside light.

Aging lines that didn't used to be there,
two small drawings, done with care.

Ziploc bag for brand-new brushes,
Southern accent, stern look, eyes aglow.

Mumbling, lumberjack walk, *Is war
the antidote to complacency?*

Sheepskin coat, heart pounding, *It's clear
we care for the same things, you and I.*

Salt shaker missing, socket cover
missing, sudden feeling of bliss.

Argyle socks, sighs, nearly cries, sighs,
pulls her hair, sighs, she looks at the door.

Magic Marker, puffy parka, graph,,
mascara, *Answer the question.*

She's flamboyant, he stumbles, gloves
off, shoulder shake, *Let the show begin.*

Ankle bracelet, bomber jacket,
double chocolate, *No catastrophe.*

Painted shirt, painted tie, jumping
jack, pencil, murder, tapioca.

*A rhapsody in words, I thought it was
mine, maybe not, it might be yours.*

*Put it on, take it off, put it on,
take it off, put it on, let's go.*

Old man, balding head, doing the cross-
word puzzle, near the table's edge.

*Tell the truth, you've seen it before,
on the edge of his seat, a slight shrug.*

*It takes imagination, bright lights,
and a peaceful place in the heart.*

Pretty postcards taped to the wall, *What if
I die first?* large cup of tea, big hug and a kiss.

Baggy pants, hearing aid, patent leather,
hook and ladder, knitted socks.

Pair of flats, painted toes, a
wrinkled nose, pottery, jalapenos.

Diamond brooch, imperious demeanor,
She says they're all delinquents.

Muscles on top of muscles, gold
chain, baby in a numbered jersey.

Bright skies, sore arm throbbing, poised
to leap, scan the book of maps, start over.

*Say when it's time to go. It's time
to go. See you later, Buckaroo.*

Prepare to Dance

My arms rise and a great being
emerges from me and engulfs me.

This deep love is disappointing
to a life of naming desires.

From deep within, sleeping beauty
arises of her own accord.

There's no one to blame or credit,
this is the love song of all beings.

Splendid fighting queen, her castle's
in my heart, never has she left it.

Emptiest eyes I've ever witnessed,
this love swallows its own name.

There's no one here but here, sense
can't make, missing her is what misses her.

I miss love when I allow it, this missing
begets knowing true love.

From my seat in paradise, some
part of me clings to unhappiness.

I hear the whine of an unfavorite
dog, here in my dogged mind.

How far within the unknown of
love am I prepared to disappear?

Love's arrows aim in, toward the heart,
loss lingers at the abandoned bow.

The only fear in love is its loss,
until I breath it large again.

I try to pinch between my fingers
the invisible sleeve of love.

In my broken heart lies hidden
the love of the never-broken heart.

Greater than my narrow hold on what
I hold close, lies what can't be held.

I let go of this cherished thing that
I hold, for what, unheld, holds me.

Can I claim some shape of perfection,
come to life in the simple heart?

This love lives between the last breath gone,
and the next breath, not yet breathed.

Deprived is a shadow. Where light
goes looking, it cannot find the dark.

I lose love, to gain love that laughs
at time, as the ocean laughs at rain.

Let this love become itself, so all
can see how it can become two.

I look to be this love I'll be, without
ceasing, when I cease to be.

The phoenix rising, sings, *Let me
burn, until I am fire itself.*

All earthy joys are exquisite
and immediate in this moment.

All small loves turn to paper
houses in wind, in rain, in fire.

I desire to breathe, to exist,
or do I only fear their loss?

I can't remember when this paradise
was over there, somewhere else.

We live inside our lives like dreams
in sleep, like leaves in a whirlwind.

It takes only a little fear
to back off from this reality.

This is love's only definition
that doesn't lie, just a little.

Two lovers love, one waits, the other
loves, the one who waits, waits alone.

Fearful love Is the king of romance,
fearless love is all this that is.

I glance back at the edge of
the rapidly receding precipice.

I sing in, to the heart of the heart,
even grief awakens this love.

How can I love, when love begins
everywhere, and its end cannot be found?

I release love's shadow, I let light make
love to light, where is the problem?

Streets of New York

Beauty wears itself, lives entwined
with tender tentacles, boys dancing.

Crowds, where the poet drank himself
to death, celebration takes his place.

A short, narrow street, carpeted with leaves,
soaked by rain, fallen from the sky.

Patient wait for a poem, inside
its coming, one thinks of nothing.

To report building's condition, one
writes a poem, leaves it on the ground.

Like surging water, two black
dogs pass a seated, elderly man.

A girl, smoking, leans to one side
in the door of a fashion shop.

A parade, a steady beat, dancers
in the street, routine grace and bliss.

Trains run into the city, their
riders, in love with arrival.

Brightly lit lounge, start of a party,
rolling rooms, the enclosing dark.

A white limousine parallels the
train, then slips silently away.

Talkers bend to each other, in the
steady murmur, rumble and roar.

Man leans close to his partner, *See,*
we live to live, he says to the other.

This Blank Page

Back home again in the blank page,
at ease in its welcome expanse.

Where nothing is, I live free,
in the nativity of all that is.

A blank page is not nothing, nor
an empty mind nothing, nothing is.

Who talks of nothing, when all talk
is of something, even this nothing?

The word nothing's a mask of its
heart, a portrait of barest nature.

This blank page is a template of
everything that becomes of it.

This blank page is a photo of all
thought, before it becomes a thought. .

These words on this page are flick-
ering eyelashes on these seeing eyes.

Words clutter the page with the
textured sound of their empty origin.

Words that paint themselves to be seen
are made for seeing, to be seen through.

All these parts of the whole, narrowed
to something seen, show beyond themselves.

How can I say so much of nothing?
How can I not? What is this life?

Here by the grace of nothing, my
gratitude is boundless, still unseen.

Here, is a word for this everywhere,
Now, is a word for this always.

This blank page, that I call myself,
looks a lot like you, and you, and you.

This blank page knows no other, needs
no other, yet grows beyond itself.

These words outgrow themselves, blooming
wordless in the transformed air of time.

Nothing is nothing, until something
assumes its place, changing its face.

Empty page, mother of many births,
womb of wonder, its earth is here.

This blank self writes its heart in wonder,
and again, in thought, word and deed.

Words chase words, until I return
to the invisible starting line.

I'm home where *began* and *begin*
end in their quiet emergency.

This page contains galaxies in
the reach of its enticing terror.

I stare at emptiness before me
and recognize myself, alive.

This empty heart, vacant in aspect,
fills every word with its fiery pulse.

From vacancy, to drawn upon,
from unwritten, to written upon.

Who I am, this unshown unknown,
appears here, in words of life, alive.

I Spilled Coffee on the Buddha

The crying of the loons plays sweet
havoc with the croaking of the frogs.

Soles sink, grain by grain, weight reshapes
the sand beneath my feet behind me.

While I wait for someone coming,
I hear the lapping of the water.

My heart goes out through my ribs, to
embrace your heart, come out to meet it.

I feel alone, and the vast meadow
of love opens, once again.

I know how lonely it is, in the
night, after the howling is done.

I am as tired as any common
metaphor one might think of.

I lay down on the grass for long
enough to be at home with the earth.

In an open heart, I am made conscious
of my least conscious passions.

Life speaks through the hollow in a
stone wall, in the middle of nowhere.

I move about, invisible as a jackdaw
in a shoebox, some might call it murder.

A shabbily dressed old farmer, humble
and grateful, stands silent by.

When I feel love, I am not afraid,
I see the trees of the forest.

It isn't being nice that pleases the cat,
but gladness in one's heart.

There seemed a time, in my ancient
memory, when war went unanswered.

I asked to hear the secret of long life,
the answer came, *Don't hold your breath.*

An eagle rises from a song sung
and spreads its wings across the sky.

We march to the beat of a tin drum
in the hands of a small child.

I accused her of weeping, I recanted,
she forgave me, I wept.

I've lost it all, I cry, as my heart
begins to reshape the world.

A bonanza of grief is my reward,
I've learned everything but this.

Light grows louder, drowns out the color
that shown brightly, moments before.

When my body abandons its spirit,
I send it back in, for life.

Courage puts away the steely heart,
at the risk of one's uniform.

Parts of the art and the artist
are joined in their public embrace.

A flower says to one who adores it,
You - never - let - me - love - you.

I'm born, thrive, and die, in this life
of wonder in the blink of an eye.

Steam from a kettle, I can feel when
my dreams leave my sweat-soaked body.

Startled back into the common-
place of tasting of my own saliva.

This world, a vale of tears,
the same world, a vale of laughter.

Without guile or guilt, I spilled coffee
on the Buddha, we both smiled.

Love Letters to an Absent God

Here within this now, I have no
relationship with you or to you.

What separation is there between
us to keep us linked together?

How can I pray out to you when
you're not over there, somewhere else?

I pray out to you, but you're not
out there, I pray in, and here you are.

I liked you when you were over there,
you're here now, and I can't see you.

You are not what I imagined
when I imagined you from afar.

When I go away from you,
I'm deliciously miserable.

But my misery goes bad, it sours
and begins to cause me pain.

Who can I complain to, when
I'm the one who goes away?

With you, all my problems dissolve,
I'll never have problems again.

I gave up all my problems for you,
but I kept thinking about them.

Thinking, my favorite problem,
the problem I love, I give to you.

This love is polymorphously
monogamous and faithful to all.

My love is not jealous, it doesn't
mind if others' love is the same.

This love's like falling in nothing
but love, deny it, and it remains.

With this love, I can't compare
having with not having, I have it all.

I go away from this love and I come
back, and this love is still here.

I go away from this love, and
I find I haven't gone anywhere.

This reality can't follow me,
when neither of us stays behind.

My mind goes out of itself, my
invisible socks turn inside out.

This peace in my heart comes out
of my mouth, like silent words spoken.

Here I am, shouting from the top of
my lungs, even with my mouth shut.

I get rich on fleeting love,
but such love is the betrayal of love.

I love you, I say without words,
and the sun shines incessantly bright.

How do I love? Let me count the ways.
One way. Now, take away the one.

In this ocean of love, I touch love
with every nerve of my body.

One day, I see there is no swimmer
here in my part of the sea.

Love flows like water in water,
and the water can't remember when.

It seems I am alone, but on closer
look, I'm not here at all.

Where did this being here come from?
This love has no coming or going.

Love of mine, since I can't lose you,
how can I sing my sad song of loss?

I say I love, but this speaking is
beyond words, so I sing love's love.

This singing comes up in my heart,
in my throat, in my eyes, in my mind.

Before I knew love, I couldn't
tell who I loved, I loved the many.

I loved this one, I loved that one,
I loved myself, from time to time.

This love is now upon me like a year
of seasons, like uncalendared time.

Raindrops, falling, shout at the sea,
Prove your love to me, and it's proven.

I look in love, and where does my
wisdom go? I can't think of a thing.

I stop feeling emotional, my head-
ache and heartache go away.

I look in love, I look in and I look
out from nothing to nothing.

Living in love, we recognize
each other, in being who we are.

My seeing returns from where it
came, I find my love is here within.

Love's clothing conceals love within,
this love strips all pretense from love.

Love's light is my raw naked reality
stripped of all other claims.

Outbursts of love, inbursting upon
my heart, how do I find their source?

I look where direction has no
arrows, I look deep within the seer.

Within this love, I can't see without.
Where is without, within this love?

Within this love is everywhere,
and without this love is still within.

Wave and rain and ocean have no
quarrel to mend with each other.

Rain speaks to the greater ocean
it falls upon, enters, and becomes.

I say I love, as a wave becomes
itself, within the ocean's swell.

The greatest love I've ever known
comes from the love I've always been..

Finally, I have tasted my true love,
beyond all these names for love.

I stay away from love only when
I stay away from who I am.

This nameless love begins everywhere,
and its end cannot be found.

In these passing times, I teased with love,
a style of clothing, sometimes worn.

Now, this love has stripped me naked
to love without a moment's ceasing.

Life is not nothing to be left for love,
this love gives and takes nothing.

A man lives inside his life like sleep,
then one day, he is awakened.

In life, a man is lifted up, like
leaves in a whirlwind, like wind.

New love creaks in me, like pain before
the peace I have never not known.

Walking in San Francisco, 1974

Cappuccino overflows the cup,
cigarette soaks in the saucer.

Only thing the walker's waiting for
is the direction he's going.

Some people are out on the street like
they just wandered in off the street.

A man sweeps debris to the street,
table scraps, onto the floor below.

A man pinch-grips his cigarette,
the wing of a poison butterfly.

A wine merchant hauls empty gallons
to his truck, glass skulls on a string.

Gold, on his chest, young man sleeps
on the red aurora of his jacket.

A matron's casual slight, almost
seeing the object of her scorn.

Young girl, tiny silver fork earrings,
steps on her friend's foot and grins.

A man squats down to be the picture,
his wife squats to take it, they rise.

Blue ladies sit down in unison,
cross their legs into the bargain.

The square's monument to war, Long
tells Dewey, *Destroy the Spanish Fleet*.

Like you'd imagine it to be,
a building, in every detail.

Newspaper against the steps,
like a large leaf of legible lettuce.

Jack-hammer, next to the curb,
a giant battery-powered nail file.

Barber, sitting cross-legged in his
chair, reading yesterday's paper.

Here's the old puppet man, crossing
the street, with his bag of tricks.

Red head in a green hedge,
gutter ball in a bushy bowling alley.

He looks kicked out, cake box, smoky
vase, one paper flower, downturned face.

Against a marble panel, the blind man
holds his hat, waist high, with both hands.

A big yellow fish consumes two morsels
through a vent In its right side.

At the pier, mother, son dip fries in
ketchup, father, son split fish heads.

The pier, the arm of a tour j'eté,
the velvet curtain of the bay.

Strider throws the ripples of his
soles across the asphalt behind him.

The only conversations on the bus,
in Chinese, sound familiar.

At the lake, a couple embraces,
beside the road, beside their car.

Arboretum cat rubs against
Mahoberberis myethkeana.

Ducks and geese on the pond, a floor,
with all the properties of water.

A robin plucks berries into its throat,
quick fingers to the hors d'oeuvres.

A pale green hose lay on
the grass, perspiring violently.

A clean gray margin of fog, above
the turbulent blue page of sea.

Repeatedly, Number 3 slides into
home, throws the ball out to sea.

A distraught man, hunched over, as
waves end in a wash small boys play in.

A seagull, lying against the wind,
a small hand from a speeding car.

Traffic crush, a Niagara of boulders,
no barrel would stand a chance.

High window, potted plant, bald man
in a t-shirt, leaning to the sun.

Eight AM streetcar, silent readers,
restless eyes dart from face to face

Woman surveys the packed streetcar,
like scanning bad fruits and vegetables

She says she'll cut his hair, foams a
little at the corner of her mouth.

Reading the horoscope, she genuflects
at each church the streetcar passes.

Boy holds his transfer like an unhappy
message, home from the teacher.

Panhandler's hat comes off, goes down
between his knees, becomes an income.

Library patrons slip past guards, bold as
thieves, with their books in their heads.

Five old men, wearing hats, six old
women in kerchiefs, wind in the trees.

Old Chinese, holding a silver cane,
his face, swept clean of adornment.

A feather on the crosswalk, wheel
breezes, *The car lights, they're moving.*

Cars, on their quick drive home, small rooms
to die in, the streets are full of cars.

Young man nods on the bus, his lips
pink with the residue of cheap wine.

A street lamp glows in the doorway,
a picture frame of the narrow street.

Cigarette hits the pavement, like
the famous death of a firefly.

Fleshy Blue Boat

Words, flowing in the street, the grimy,
running, squatting words, the children.

Poetry, train on a track, truck
on the highway, sitting on a rock.

*He's out without his pants, I hope this
helps, and she tossed them in the street.*

A fire in my house, flames in my
doorway? It licks, it laps, she burns.

In France, spilling wine and paint, Miller's wife
showed him two tickets for the States.

She's just a tiny dot on the map,
yet things are going on down there.

Trees rush by, running like water-
color, desire flies to my heart.

End of the day, I go home, I go
home, I go home, I go home eat.

A picket fence around your love,
my desire, stuck between the slats.

Bee-Bop Bees, bop and buzz, their new
dance means extra honey in the hive.

Poetry/love - it's clear, you turn
the house on its side, people adjust.

Anatomy - each of us - a fleshy blue
boat - made from airplane parts.

This horse, my skin, my skin, a horse dream,
your wrist against my bare shoulder.

Running, out of breath, the box I
crawl into, is my path to freedom.

Eagle, noise in my ears, spots a small
moving thing on the ground below.

Out across the bay, I fall down drunk
on the far shore, in my window.

Eyes closed, I plant myself, a leg
kicks out a root in the cool mind.

I listen to the radio, all night long, the
sound of the sea rising up from below.

I'm beaten down, drunk on the difference
between that and who I am.

Fish jump out of the sea, sunlight sings
in the sky, birds fly, shore to shore.

Images flood the floor, lap the walls,
I drink and drown for a fresh poem.

Alone, I walked to school, the others,
running on paths, behind the trees.

Dedalus explains the death of
his son as a boating accident.

I go away, come back, go away,
come back, and the pear ripens.

I catch my finest thoughts in brief
moments, awaiting their swift return.

A glass, the rain, long grass, soft
music, leaping into the room, shouting.

Muscle cells, tissue cells, neural
cells, everything sells but poetry.

I wandered mindlessly into
this den of lack of iniquity.

*Yes, choose a profession, but not
prophet and seer. Shaman you, my son.*

My heart was a fish at sea. Life,
inland, has put legs on my wisdom.

Lying down, drips from the cup
slip warmly into my favorite shirt.

Seeing a glass half full, the wise say,
Look how that glass holds that water.

Hometown of the Moon

At last, the seeker says to himself,
Now you can begin without me.

I went to prison, then to a drive-in
for lunch, *What next*, I wonder.

Before freedom, chop wood, carry
water, after freedom, still busy.

Feeling depressed while singing
in the rain, I don't neglect the rain.

In my heart, even defeat tastes
like victory, I cheer, shout, and weep.

Nature poets in the city still catch
their breath, still gaze at the moon.

No talking to myself. Now, I listen.
Now, no one calls me crazy.

I point to the moon, moon fades, so
I point to the hometown of the moon.

Day after day, year in, year out,
rollercoasters on the volcano.

I raise flowers to arrest the sun,
I raise a candle to the light.

These words are an oar, pointed at
the place in the ocean called ocean.

I draw a straight line through
the invisible, until it disappears.

My mind is wood, inherently
wishing to become its own fire.

I'm not an ego, but life itself,
hanging out, on a Friday night.

Attack of the Heart

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

In this place of beauty, each face
appears serene, or intent, or both.

In this place of beauty, breathing
is soft like the sigh of the forest.

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

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

In this place of life's greatest beauty,
one breathes the heart of one's life.

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

Still by nature, I am made still
by my habit of living in life.

I am made still by the sudden
encroachment of my impending death.

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

To know this being in its stillness,
I am made quick by the meeting.

The quick and the night are the same
delight, here within their unseen light.

Two moments reach in the lungs to
pull the breath out for greater duty.

The lungs engage their finest wind,
witness to beauty, proclaiming love.

I inhale and exhale myself in some
greater proportion profound.

When spirit in this beast arranges
these lungs into storm and wonder.

This sudden conversion of small
into largest of all, feels right size.

When death is near, anticipation
dies and dying's less a concern.

Metaphor's lost, I come home to
no more imagining abrupt death.

I live death's moment, with no
facsimile of imagined dying.

I feel grace, not anticipation's
ache of warning and conquest.

My dreams teem with life, both ape
and owl, sleeping cat, and tiger too..

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

This new force rearranges one's
life into its slight derangement.

Any derangement tries to hold what's
unheld, in concert with the wind.

A note seems held in the throat, while
the sound fades away in the distance.

Time becomes meaningless, when this
cup overflows with true emptiness.

In the nature of what is, I find
the prediction of what may come.

Feet on the ground, toes in the earth,
I sense when rain is coming or not.

This is the present, that grows more
true to itself, as the droplets fall.

Racketed by contraries, I with-
draw to my heart, a garden plot.

Bachelored by the pursuit of
lovers, I retreat to open rooms.

Bed room, work room. wash room. dining
room, living room, and this roomless room.

My cluttered heart collects its
obstructions, even to its own damage.

Then the heart is cleared, and it
pumps again with original brilliance.

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

Parts of love are held apart from
each other when one part is desire.

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

The setting sun, in some portion divine,
is not cut from its moorings.

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

I pursue care, ready to forgo
the poem for its poetry.

She's gone where going goes, I carry
my heart home, safe for the sunrise.

I return to where my heart's
seen itself open and opens again.

To partner my heart, I seek to
see it delight in no difference.

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

Until death appears in the here and
now, and one's chorus falls silent.

The physical accepts its place,
among the wonders and the terrors.

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

In this imagination, fear is my
some-time choreographer.

Every day in the world, some
terror scrapes my complacency,

But I am composed of peace,
even when I'm overtaken by war.

I am the ground, on which my fear
dances its doomed flight, I am the air.

This room of spirit, grace, and love,
can't be entered by calling these names.

This approximation that we call
all we think we are, is tempting.

Each animal, not keen to its death,
slips into a comfortable calm.

In our dulled wisdom, we
experience an ease of eternity,

We tell our children that grandfather
isn't dead, he's only sleeping.

My body's a home of life and
death, and I am its overseer.

My truancy from this room of
time, lures me to a greater knowing.

True knowing is the bloom of
eternity in the garden of time.

Troy falls, Helen dies, this precious
shape of self is nearest to nothing.

What shall I compare to, when
comparison is the censor of truth?

We never left the garden, we
merely stopped being at home there.

Now the taste of death is on my tongue,
I don't need its bite to wake me.

It is here, if not in full, in
degree enough to be felt real.

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

Then I saw it was to be present
without time's furniture.

I speak to see the roomless room,
uncluttered of any name for it.

The olive-oil pepper-slice slides from
the sandwich to the plate below.

I witness the details of the
emptiness of the miraculous.

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

This is the way the sun enters a
room, the body, the eyes, the heart,

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

Entrance to the oracle's cave,
and the shock of its recognition,

I look askance at these poems,
and I see the approximate words.

In this orgasm of life, I live
the simple real of its sting.

Naked and Dancing All the Time

A painting draws a man into
the moment of his being alive,

Past memory and meaning, he feels
caught between prayer and making love,

If he calls the painting a master-
piece, it fades to definition.

I loved a woman of great beauty,
men became fools in her presence.

I wanted her to be as real
as the moment of her beaut.

I wanted to bring this life
of magic into its reality,

And not be something we elevate
and denigrate beyond our reach.

When my stunning lover left me,
the woman at the grocery said,

"You lost her, she was too much
for you." I agreed, and I disagreed.

I saw her like the rest of us,
who struggle to accept the moment,

To see beauty as an expression
of our common reality.

She pursued herself as a career,
to make her beauty a profession.

This is what happens to master-
pieces, each of us, a masterpiece,

When we do nothing to give
ourselves a name or a definition.

*

When I surrender to this life,
I become clear in my surrender,

But my thoughts work to regain their
hold, like steady rain on the window.

My incessant mind wants my
attention on the idea of love,

Where even the possibility of
love becomes another thought,

Like any of the forms of love,
until I release the thought of love.

We know our thoughts, like breezes, gusts
and gales, like creatures of the wind,

Until this constant, blowing wind
becomes the element we inhabit,

Until all activity becomes
the decoration of the wind.

Whatever one has in one's mind
becomes a part of the blowing wind,

So that when anyone comes in from
the wind, they bring the wind with them,

The wind in the trees becomes the wind
in my eyes, the wind in my heart,

Until I gain a fierce tranquility,
or I succumb to the wind.

The constant wind seems intentional,
as if it had a will of its own,

I respond to the will of the wind,
I give it my fears and desires.

To claim these to be who I am
is like calling the wind by a name.

I have nothing to hold, and I have
no way to hold what can't be held.

When the wind relents, and the air
is calm, I rest in my windless being.

The wind is known for its fervor,
but this silent windhouse is my home.

Out of the wind, I see I am blown
alive by this windless being.

I'm here, living a life, and a wind
has blown through the generations,

From the beginning to this time
of forming words to an expression,

I am the same as the nameless
energy of its tranquility.

*

To let go of our common, shared
commitment to a life of naming,

Feels like betrayal, even when
defining this self is counterfeit,

Even when the words I speak, this
masquerade, compound the deception.

I cling to these approximations, but
something of nothing cuts through.

Until I hear the voice of stillness,
stillness remains in every word.

*

I grieve the loss of one I imagined
to be a part of my heart.

When I hold my loss, thought floods
the awareness that frees my heart.

When I resist the transience of
life, I become my own façade.

I'm drawn to these façades like a
dramatic play of pain and pleasure.

I sit in agitation and imagine
the presence of my peace.

And when I neglect the awareness
that would ease my agitation,

I grip my life of pain and pleasure
in the same fist that blocks its peace.

The dream of peace and power of love
soothes my pain and feeds my pleasure.

I love this drama of neglected
awareness and postponed freedom.

I cherish this moviemaking life,
this bright film of reality.

I love my desperate dreams,
populated by terrible circumstance.

*

This engagement binds my love
of the theater I see before me.

And when I leave the theater,
I engage my love of its relief,

Just as when any fiction
ends its imaginary existence.

In rebellion, my mind says, "You'll die
without these things you think you need."

Thoughts of freedom sound foolish
in the mind that's addicted to itself,

But the captivating drama of
life and death is a shadow show.

In love with light, I sit in shadow,
and from the shadows, I love light,

Until I break the contract of thought,
these dogmas, this belief school,

These ideas I hold close, this doctrine
that soothes and savages my life.

My mind calls this another example
of the failure of the mind.

In love of its own ways, this is
the kind of thinking the mind enjoys.

My mind tells me I'm the deceiver,
the deceived, and the deception,

Bound together in the way we're
human, living in the love of life.

Traitor to my history, I break
the contract of illusion, and,

If dropping out of the shadow
school is as difficult as it seems,

Where even among those committed
to its pursuit and achievement,

Such clarity seems arduously found,
how can I recommend it?

This is another message from
the failure of the mind's own habits.

To stay in the shadow school dims
the light, but when I don't know peace,

And peace itself seems illusory,
I may still recall its birthplace.

*

I've known that darkness is nothing
more than darkness, and not a sign

To deny the sun. Wherever light
goes looking, it can't find the dark.

In our earliest awe and wonder,
we dwelt in fear and desire,

Until the yearning to know who we
were became the romance of gods.

In the romance of this life,
I grew tired of approximations.

More alive in the moment that's
shed of its meaning, I fall awake,

And when I find I'm not awake
beyond illusion, beyond meaning,

I see that I am easily misled
by the habits of my life,

That cling to life itself. I attend
to the crowded moments of life,

But when I give in to the unnamed,
empty moment of life itself,

I pause, and I stop running around
myself, in anxious attendance

*

I honor the poet who died young,
who lived in pain before he died,

He lived in beauty, aware of his
mortality, death was his foil.

Being a poet is not what made
him present in his life or ours.

He stood in the nowhere of his
beauty, and he spoke the truth of it.

His rise from the fire was a look
through the eyes of eternity,

Neither his living nor his dying,
he was the heart of the moment.

Destined to die, our lives may seem
graceless, we want peace and survival.

We want eternity for ourselves,
we hope to fashion a fine mask.

But our masks cannot save us,
so we devise masks of eternity.

I forgive my dying, when
I live in this identical moment,

*

*When my lover leaves me, I'm grateful
for the love that lives in itself.*

This has been my ready expression,
and I have no more use for it,

Before, I may have gotten drunk,
a clumsy romance of the body,

Camouflage for facing myself
alone in an empty universe.

I choose to live past these addictions
and the romance of their uses,

Past love's facade, neither
its memory nor its anticipation.

I let go of balancing the imbalance
as something to be done.

Doing is done, and undone, until
nothing's left to do, but nothing.

I discover I'm free in this nothing
doing, not the absence of something,

But the presence of everything,
with no searching for anything else.

In the first shock of being, we fell
in love with the life of the mind,

This curious separation from
everything seen and unseen,

This demanding desire to unite
with the seen and the unseen.

I've lived in a mind that thrives
in the play of its enticing pieces.

I fell into the fear I was alone,
I fell through fear, through terror.

I fell into the abyss of my
own being, then into its peace,

The vast peace that thrives in the
unteachable fullness of life itself.

*

Living on earth, as the physical
children of physical others,

We create structure where none
exists, hello, mother, hello, father.

We want life to have meaning,
until meaning overtakes life itself.

Knowing my life at its essence
did nothing to free my compulsion.

Romancing existence became
my personal pillar of meaning.

I founded life on something of
nothing, as if that gave it meaning.

I shaped nothingness to my liking, we
have named this selfless self, soul.

In my thoughts, I became a hero
of concentrated emptiness,

In the fullness of being,
as a rich, romantic reality,

The meaning of meaninglessness,
a soulful version of the real.

And my greedy mind stayed at play,
always a thing in everything.

I thought of no thought, with no one
present to have the thought of no thought,

No one to witness thought's absence
except this wondrous thing of nothing,

I was at ease in a pretense I might
have enjoyed for a lifetime.

I kept a self that allowed for
passion, despair, and disillusion,

With all the character of anyone
one might meet on the street.

The self as soul, center of the
universe, placeholder of meaning,

I tried to match, in heart and mind,
the deepest of what I've always been,

But this selfless self's a self of the
mind, that believes its own beliefs,

Even when it knows the mind's workings
are a bundling of gossamer.

This domain of thought and feeling is no
small feat, we've done ourselves proud,

As self-imagining creatures
of our own beliefs and sensations.

Naming the unnamable became
the romancing of existence,

Until love of existence became
the love of its definition,

Here's the book of my gods, my passions,
my reason. They are the same book.

*

Brokenhearted in love, I have
never been broken in love itself.

Love has been my fullness, my
emptiness, my drug, my awakening.

I have been asleep in love, I have
been awake in love, my haven,

A respite from disappearing
in unnamable reality.

Why go any deeper in this being
here, when love is all there is?

I am the storm and the eye of
the storm. I refuse any refuge.

One man lay on the barren ground,
to witness the death of the body.

I lie in stillness to witness the
death of the proximating mind.

Unreceptive to directives from the
mind, despair seeks my quiet heart.

In this threat to control, thought
works to convince me I am my despair,

But I'm not this despair. I am the
moment in which despair occurs.

*

Every mother bonds us to
a life of union and separation.

Whenever anyone close dies
or goes away, one may despair,

I despair in the death of my love
of this life and of this being,

I despair in the death of my love
of the world, of love itself.

But I am that mother, no longer
here to anchor my love and fear.

This is the moment of release
from the romancing of the real.

Alive in the thought of being
a lover, of being thought a lover,

Alive in this moment, there is no
more need for this feint of the real.

Unheld in love, I am the same
as the love I imagine holding,

As if all love were a passing thing,
but this love does not come and go,

Whoever has lost a love may transcend
these transient thoughts of love.

I accept this despair, to see the
fullness greater than any loss,

I stay to see separation between
all forms of love disappear.

*

We are wise to listen to the wise,
until we leave the wise behind,

To go into the unknown the wise
can only describe from a distance.

We know the lush and dangerous
wilderness of our own existence.

Even if we don't trek to its heart,
its center is always with us.

A man tells his time as a monk,
its rigors made to free the mind,

He saw the natural aging of his life
had done the work for him.

Nothing was as clearly seen in his
mind, as when he stopped holding it.

I stay in thought's awareness,
until thinking fails to seduce me.

I stay until I feel the ground beneath
thought's construction, fall away.

I stay in the heart of love, until
romance is freed from its habits,

Until desire is its occasion,
and not love's authority.

*

Knowing who I am and where I
come from is not the end of travel,

Free of the mind's romance is not
the same as being sent to a Gulag.

I don't love any hero, any god,
any lover, any less,

For setting them free from the
desire and the romance of the heart.

Instead, I live in that wider
reality that includes them all.

I am not water, I am not movement,
I'm not the course of my flow,

I'm not the shadow of my stream,
but its occasion, its energy.

I'm the being of this awareness,
the awareness of this being.

When I stop eating my sugar, I think
something needs to take its place,

There is nothing so sweet, it needs
to take the place of reality,

Godot has come and gone, love itself
leads nowhere but to love itself.

This is what is so disconcerting,
this peace contains no containment,

My sugar speaks of paradise,
It guarantees my seat on the plane,

Until I find I am already
living at my destination.

Waking up in paradise is a
disappointment to the airlines.

After living in the house of
romance, now I live in who I am.

Familiarity is gone from
all I once thought familiar.

Without its deep romantic cast,
I lose the play of its filtered light.

Seeing becomes sight, sight becomes
vision, with no division between.

*

I took a welcome trip to a
foreign country, it was magical.

I went a second time, expecting
the same, but it was real.

I prefer reality, but I might
have denied it, that first time.

Romance is a charming dance that
doesn't seem false when it's occurring.

Romance makes the routine
miraculous, the miraculous routine.

This real comes dressed as itself,
I drank espresso in Progreso.

Reality terrifies and inspires,
I climbed the pyramids.

*

In this theatre of life, I see
other dramatic characters,

Dancing, singing, hating,
fighting, killing, loving,

I see others, in fear and passion,
accepting and denying life,

Acting in and out of control,
fully alive in their own being,

My character has substance, yet
with no body, costume, or language,

Nothing seems to be filling out or
holding up my life's performance.

Sitting in an empty chair, I see
arms, legs, the trunk of a body.

I hear the timber, resonance
and echo of a voice, crying out.

From deep within my throat comes
the call of kings, and I become a king,

I hear wailing, I become a naked
baby on a dark highway.

The roar of the gathering crowd
makes me a hero or a villain.

I sing out the voices in my throat,
until there seems no end to them.

Someone enters through an open
door, there is a picture on the wall.

Since I'm none of what I appear
to be, I'm free to be who I am,

Characters come to the fore, they
run the gamut of thought and action,

Emotions, intimacy, idiocy.
I hear a clock ticking,

I speak of the real, and I remain
no one, wearing my costume.

I want to know the script, what happens
next, I look across the footlights.

My throat constricts, there is stage
fright in performing this too-human life.

I become fearful of the empty, silent
stage, I want to know something,

Where should I stand, and what should
my character be? I tighten my belt,

I want to learn the comings and
goings of all the other players.

Do I speak? We greet each other,
I become one in their company.

Here is the director's chair, I write,
direct, and perform all the parts.

I stammer, when I can't remember
my lines, I posture, I hold forth,

When I have no speaking lines,
I become an extra, holding a spear.

I fade into the background, I stand
by the side, I come to the front.

I tear at the scenery, I topple
the walls, I rip out the seats.

I hope for meaning, yet nothing
changes the state of my awareness.

I rest in character, conscious
and aware, witness to the dram.

In the moment of who I am, none
of this is mine. I comb my hair.

I can't be misunderstood, something
tells the truth, I put down my script.

Nothing surpasses the theatre
of there being no theatre.

I create a show, knowing nothing
shows what is, but everything does.

I cannot tell what is, without
being its salesman. there's music.

There is nothing that does not
reveal what is, so I take a bow.

I speak as if I'm present, I claim
the space empty of my presence.

I'm sound in a shape that composes
a song to its own emptiness.

I take heart in the disappearance
of what makes itself seen and heard.

Holding out my hands. I shout, "I am
not here!" I whisper, "Here I am."

I speak to the empty reaches
of this theatre. It's a big space.

My mind swims, it swirls with thought,
knowing no-thought is thought's origin.

No-thought populates my thinking,
no-man inhabits my body.

No-stage supports my performance,
no-universe stretches to my end.

*

This man, born a boy to parents
in Illinois, stands on the stage.

He speaks to nothing and no one,
to everything and to everyone.

He says we talk together, so our hearts
may commune with each other.

We talk together, so our common
being may commune with itself.

This one that he is, who says there
is no one present, is the same one,

Who appears here now in place
of his emptiness. It is what we do.

This art that frames me human
is the same art that shows me artless,

In the art of this artless being,
a voice comes out of the darkness,

*Everyone is naked and
dancing all the time.*