

## Haiku Cafe

In the near, under the sky,  
The decimation of desolation.

A twinkling in the night, an opening,  
Are we not like each other?

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

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

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.

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

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

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

If you were the one in charge? A see-  
through blouse, long lists of things to do.

Lumberjack walk, mumbling, Is war  
the antidote to complacency?

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

Magic Marker, puffy parka, graphics  
mascara. I say you're right.

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

Ankle bracelet, bomber jacket,  
double chocolate, Some catastrophe.

A rhapsody in words, I thought it was  
mine, maybe not, maybe it's yours.

Tell the truth, you've seen it all before,  
The edge of your seat, a slight shrug.

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

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

Pretty postcards. And if I die first?  
Cup of tea, big hug and a kiss.

## I Is My Name

I is my name, used everywhere,  
by everyone, it's an alias,

I stands on a stage, I looks at  
people's faces. The world is alive,

I reads written poems in reference  
to what I sees around me.

I also writes what I think, feel,  
know, imagine, and what I is.

Since I is an alias, what  
I says is also an alias.

These poems are an alias for I.  
I - the alias maker.

What is real and what is not real,  
sometimes I know, sometimes I don't know.

It's hard to keep it straight,  
when I is an alias for who I am.

If I speaks of a bear, the wind, the moon,  
or the trees, it seems more clear,

But all things are an alias for their  
essence - they are what we see.

I say I is an alias, I try  
to indicate its essence.

The essence of I is not as  
definable as its name or face.

Awareness of the essence of I  
is the freedom of detachment.

I often say I, at the very  
beginning of my detachment.

Then I say goodbye to I, say hello  
to everything, then let go,

I say bear - there is no bear. I say the  
bear lives in the woods - no woods.

And there's a bear, there's a poem, and  
there's an I who writes these words.

I is lost in the details - the details  
are found in their essence.

I looks down the road, and I sees  
a running bear. I runs with the bear.

I is the bear, I am the bear,  
I is the bear running, I run.

The more I say I, the more  
I am defined as the undefined I.

Each of us is I, I speaks for  
all of us, I has many other names.

Repeat after me - I, your name,  
repeat after me - My name is I.

I go for a walk, the rain comes  
down, I become wet, I is the rain.

I cry, I cries, tears fall, I rains down,  
the ground, is drenched, I is the ground.

I have my ways, I is the way to I,  
I gets in the way of I.

I walk with a striding gait, I slump,  
I slouch. It is what I does, do.

Essence is always here. The face  
of essence fades in and out of sight.

I is wearing a shirt in the shape  
of I, it's a new cotton shirt.

I is wearing new shoes, I is bare  
foot, I is footloose, without feet.

I has no face, I takes my face,  
it's a nice face. Faceless, I smiles,

A brightly plumed bird flew by, ten  
thousand years ago. Did you see it?

Dream the future, what will be,  
it lives, too, in the alias of I.

Room of aliases, this churning  
cauldron, this amazement of I.

This love of life, common  
inheritance, pomposity of self.

Engine of dreams, origin  
of imagination, I let I sing.

Shout I from the hilltop, whisper  
I in the darkness. I lives its life.

I say I in poems, I say I in life,  
you is no different..

We is no better. It's another  
alias. We is plural I.

Do not despair. Fall back in  
recognition. I, you, we are fine.

Who we are is naked and dancing  
through time, this nameless dance of life.

Even in our unspeakable death,  
we dance the joules of molecules.

Stop and dance, I tells my self. There's  
room to be free, here, inside this I.

## A Curious Boy

Pine cones litter the way - soft  
grenades - a tree's regeneration.

A curious boy follows a snake  
as it slips under a closed gate.

A child is a mind in a body at  
play, before fear is named.

Garden cafe, elbow on glass, the earth  
lies deep beneath restless feet.

Old dog howls at the moon in the  
dark night of a clear blue sky.

A greyhound gracefully runs by its  
owner's side, tethered by a rope.

Looking up, barely out, a man talks  
of honkey-tonks and road repairs.

All rivers flow to the sea as if  
they're one, but for the alligators.

Laughter interrupts life with more  
joy than melancholy can recall.

An old man sleeps in cafes,  
resting the machinery of his heart.

An old man, a hero in his  
private memory, loves licorice.

An old man sleeps in his chair, pen  
in his clenched fist, papers in his hat.

Deep in Oregon, an old man recalls  
his mother's critical tongue.

An old man, who's not yet old, seeks  
his perfect fate in a woman's eyes.

This vast and eternal peace, a breath  
in the heart, a moment on earth.

Feet sting from running on cement,  
unlike the river's muddy bottom.

Rings, on her fingers, on the keys,  
they flick like fleas, like crocodiles.

If music plays in my ears, and no one  
hears my voice, am I deaf to myself?

By the lake where I once lived,  
a man teaches boys to control a ball.

I rest in a soft warm breeze, gently  
caressed by the ignorant world.

City of no bugs, birds, or beasts,  
a running mother pushes a pram.

The wind stirs the trees, branches,  
until the leaves seem to control the wind.

Some walkers stride, some stroll, some pace,  
some run, some stumble, some skip, some race.

Sun on the water invites the eyes  
to dance, alone, or with the trees.

Here we weep, as in the world, we  
bully, and the silent children watch.

## Modern Art

Looking out from a gallery,  
I look deeper within from within.

Water runs in ruts down a hillside  
from a copse of trees like bleeding.

In this modern gallery, white stairs,  
white walls, a flat white maze winding.

Artful eyes peer through artful windows,  
a dark hall, chunks of broken lives.

Black and white movie, empty room,  
wall of cries, a woman eating grapes.

All-white photo on an all-white wall,  
a stark likeness of its background.

Art breaks spaces into space, unboxes  
boxes, throws curves across sleek floors.

Bare white room through, an open door,  
a thick wall of undulating waves.

Flesh is film, blood is air, move from room  
to room, see the wide walls breathing.

This day has me wondering,

Four figures dance in a boat, an oar  
stands, smoking a long cigarette.

A man stares at an unpeopled nude,  
he sees a wound in painted skin.

Fruit on the floor gets a laugh, famous  
artist paints his mottled face large.

Long gallery steps, without color, smooth  
as the floors, watch where you step.

Back on the street, reality made  
abstract, the abstract made real.

Things can be made art, we become  
the art, street repair everywhere.

Traffic slows to a crawl, lights come on,  
the light fades, we linger over tea.

Geese, squawking in flight, come to  
rest on a pond, as if by its design.

## Stop Time Look Around

The only thing that saves me  
from this poet's life is its poetry.

I paint in the dark, wet colors on  
wet, footprints in the surging surf.

Sitting still in my chair, all these years,  
I barely notice its winged claws.

On this path of nature, the moment  
bursts into the air around me.

The wind has no feet, the light has no  
wings, heat wears no hat, cold no coat.

I run to the world, forgetting  
my feet, I watch my feet and fall.

This life of words, dancing in the dark,  
holding a flickering candle.

Behind my eyes, I catch the glint  
of gold in their blind capacity.

This peace, never not here, I seek  
its reflection everywhere I am.

In this dream, I'm a stone mason,  
building walls of words that disappear.

Newspaper, bereft on the table,  
in the sun, dried of its content.

The greatest heartbreak we see  
is the one we create by our presence.

In the pain of the world, eyes choke  
with tears, anger comes without relief.

Death's unbeaten in the taking  
of lives, yet we challenge its record.

My brain in knots, I complain about  
knots, when complaining ties the knots.

These exploding molecules,  
rolled into a conglomeration.

Poetry points at nothing, the sunset,  
the dawn, the cold cabbage soup.

Work's a meditation, I say, and  
the day flies by like a fat bird.

I see the sun, mine, I see the moon,  
mine, I see myself, no one here.

The songbird does not care what  
I think, nor I what the songbird thinks.

I lean a ladder to climb a wall,  
spider ignores my mimicry.

Young girl's dog has a muzzle on its  
mouth, its nose, full of the world.

Swallows, in eros, climb the clouds,  
amid crowds of loud, wallows of wings.

I hung half the earth on the sky,  
it began to fall, I held my cry.

I saw the world in a room,  
the room was empty, I saw it all.

To become truly naked, no more  
anthropomorphizing myself.

Exhaustion crawls up my spine,  
back up the pole into the firehouse.

Skin of one hand slides across the  
other, two cats fall asleep as one.

Cars in the window, rushing by,  
smudges in motion against the sky.

Obsession blurs the moment, for  
the sake of its own darkening light.

Wild boars on a wild island, free,  
in their sense and sensibility.

The summer sun's oven heat, no walls or  
doors, cooks this great roomless room.

I hope to save the world, alone,  
without the world knowing it.

Parts of the air, where is their map?  
This path leads me around the world.

In joy, I think of joy, often not,  
plumed birds appear, fly away.

Somewhere, in between here and there,  
here and there begin to live as one,

To be a doer, yet contemplative,  
doing need not hide its soul.

Mind does not free its thoughts, nor  
a burning barn, the terrified horses.

Forty-nine die at the wield of a gun,  
leaves cling to a windblown branch.

Farmer stands with one hand on his truck,  
his other hand, counting the rain.

Love is a word for what we are,  
other words say what we say we are.

Doors open, lovers emerge, they  
populate the night, the band plays on.

Wind flies, without will, through trees,  
blood floods the brain, ideas run wild.

Man moves, each foot thrown out ahead,  
sun cares nothing of trees or the sea.

Raccoon mother blocks her child, her  
black eyes, big as bowls of cactus.

Famed writer, rumored raised in a  
whorehouse, depends on his memory.

She died in Italy, he in France,  
she in Portugal, he in Spain.

Unbound by thought, all we do  
is a simple thing, even this thinking.

Memory knows but memory, your  
love knows who I am, my love you.

Time is a private thing, shared by all,  
air passes through our public lungs.

When I think to live without humility,  
my finest love leaves me.

Mind and God, mother of the father,  
I leave you for the open road.

This moment is temporarily  
forever, every breath knows it.

Thrust into the commonplace  
of tasting my own saliva, I breathe.

Wanting something to inspire me,  
I have only this boundless life.

These words are made of one sound,  
next to another sound, we hear their heart.

Crossing through thorny thickets toward  
a sea of clover, random birdsong.

I commune with golden butterflies,  
with my eyelids, these sudden wings.

Alive in peace, I walk back  
into town, craving the familiar.

I look up from my painting, to see  
what I'm painting, fresh in the real.

From this empty mind, in this  
fiery heart, I love this life of love.

Stop time, look around, nothing is  
gone, the moment is birthing itself.

## Spiraling Toward Armageddon

In this charade, I am real. My mind  
is a rabbit hole, I am ground.

I close my eyes, the world goes dark,  
they open, I am born in darkness.

All are welcome among us,  
until one is said to be a danger.

Triumph of the chosen over them-  
selves, in the shape of the other.

Fear and the desires of the fearful  
breed death in the name of life.

Cowed by a lack of faith in life itself,  
we arm to the teeth, and wail.

Dire warnings of the fearful drive  
us deeper into our own fears.

Failure to make peace among others  
brings us to war in our own hearts.

We wave weapons at each other,  
in the failure of our ancient faith.

Spiraling toward Armageddon,  
the end times for a world of love.

Not what any god of love would  
wish for, but a human desire.

Or we welcome human embrace,  
and become the presence of freedom.

## The Dancing Heart

Sending out grasses to fill my eye  
with spring, I become a new year.

I live as one not at peace with  
the world, and still, in peace, I live.

In the rubble of a fallen house,  
so many signs of it rising.

I look for residence in the distance,  
and it keeps returning home.

Viewing the cool moon, staring at  
the distant light, my eyes turn inward.

Whenever I see train tracks, I go  
along their way, no train in sight.

Poet, on the road, making words  
from the trees, the sun, and the air.

Lost continent of the young, drunken,  
drugged by recent epiphanies.

Steeped in boiling broth, the vegetables  
lose their memory of the earth.

The muse, mostly female, mostly male,  
imagination, mostly on its own.

Bobbing in the waves of images  
of the world, searching the shore.

This living hand, scribbling messages  
from a empty, shaken-out mind.

In fear's awakening, the mind  
resists letting go its stolen life.

Look where I cannot see, be my eyes,  
I'll be yours, we'll go there as one.

Words, made to be said aloud, resemble  
those that front the dancing heart.

## Sand from the Sunny Beach

In the desert, jungle awakens.

In the jungle, joy awakens.

The debris of trees, on the ground,  
surrounding its fertile genesis.

In this ocean of forest, I'm drowned,  
I'm saved, by its unsparing wilderness.

Those who come to the gate, swing it  
wide, except for the worm and the wren.

I strive to translate blades of grass,  
a bowl of soup, barefoot children.

Silence, followed by silence, followed  
by unspoken words, then words.

What tears are these? These tears rain  
down, a sky of tears pours into the sea.

Wanting to do one thing,  
another thing steals my desire.

When loved ones go away, love turns  
to dreams in the light behind the eyes.

Heart knows the heart of what sweeps  
the heart away in the heart of itself.

Earth is sacred to those who seek it,  
profane to those who ignore it.

Strong wind blows away the wind,  
old family photos, dried and crumbling.

I hear of a war, soon to begin,  
out of the war that never dies.

The work bell rings, filling the silence,  
unfilled, beyond the sounding bell.

When I fall from a small ladder,  
we fall as one, in tune with the earth.

I thought I had seen, but I had not,  
then I saw, and now I am seen.

The noise of the world is the noise  
of what's in the world to be heard.

Wasp, at peace in its chambered home,  
ready, if any threat were to come.

Joy in the world. There it is. Here it is.  
No, now it's gone. Now, it's back.

Tall ladder feels the ground when  
seeing remains in front of my eyes.

Bee circles like a seagull searches  
a new island across the waves.

My brother writes from the islands,  
sending me sand from a sunny beach.

Unbound by thought, everything  
we do is a simple thing, even thought.

With bowl and spoon, I'm ready  
to navigate the world, sea to sea

## To Touch a Love

I love who you were and who you  
have become, which one is the other?

Memories tell our difference,  
awareness unites us in the light.

A railing's shadow zigzags down steps  
as the sun drops to an angle.

A poet I don't know used my words,  
all is stolen, nothing's taken.

The trance of each beginning  
signals a deprivation, or a joy.

My shadow zigzags down the stairs,  
as much as I strive to walk upright.

A tourist bus passes, packed with  
happy people who live somewhere else.

I pause, in reading my friend's poetry,  
it takes time to touch a love.

The sun, in autumn, cooler than in  
summer, reminds winter of spring.

So desired outside, the child inside  
hides and wonders about the world.

## Shaped to the Ear

One fills one's bowl with words, then dumps  
them out, they cover the floor, the earth.

Ordinary reality, shaped  
to the ear, becomes musical.

We keep in sight what stays in the  
eyes, the simple wonder of seeing,

A harvest unseen, the nourishing  
ground, beneath the nurturing hand.

This body's life might be seen, if  
it too were revealed at the root.

Overwhelmed by life, sometimes by  
the name and the naming, yet we live.

Humble in its greatness, this life  
calls us to the same, until we see.

She walks twin dogs, who move apart,  
then as one, two parts of the same blood.

This heart of mine belches, farts, and roars,  
such crude beauty from tender source.

## Heartbroken

Heartbroken in the unbroken heart,  
we live as one or the other.

There's nothing in this life that doesn't  
show itself to be heartbreaking.

So much is exhilarating, but  
the end of it is heartbreaking.

So much is of generous delight,  
amid disdain and destruction.

real,

The true feeling of the human  
heart as a carrier of wonder.

True love, unafraid to be itself  
in a time of desolation.

This heartbreak is the finest way  
to honor what the heart knows best.

## A Rack of Apples

A rack of apples, polished and shiny,  
two hundred teachers waiting.

A man I don't know shouts across  
the cafe, "Who's gonna win the race?"

My head swims in the clouds, I've gotten  
too much sun or not enough shade.

Reflected lights in the window glass,  
flying saucers pose for photos.

Cars in the parking lot, trees on  
the hillside, neither wait for people.

I start to feel better, the blessing  
of a nap, or else the world turns.

Sorrow is my middle name,  
after sadness, ahead of despair.

I counsel myself, as I have been  
taught, and then I look to the sky.

There's no name for who we really are,  
some of us act the way we feel.

## Monk's Revenge

Fires drift from state to state,  
breathing becomes dangerous, ah yes.

Dark trees are lit, beyond the glass,  
the glass is lit from within, ah yes.

We seek to find our place in the  
history of hopes and fears, ah yes.

Words come slowly back, intent  
on the sorrow of this silence, ah yes.

New leaders take power, saying  
they do it for all our sake, ah yes.

Gasoline on the ground, the driver  
steps aside, no harm done, ah yes.

Ill has been taught as long as good,  
only this moment is born, ah yes.

Sit down beside the ones in pain,  
show them they are not alone, ah yes.

The sun shines in the shrouded heart,  
looking for ways up and out, ah yes.

Despair is but another version  
of unremembered joy, ah yes.

## Red Leaves

Red leaves in the trees, yellow and  
green beside them, blue sky up above.

Man in an old truck crosses the road,  
his ragged Stars and Bars rippling.

Bone bruise on my heel, I walk slightly  
above the ground, training to fly.

The sun shines in the clouded heart,  
a hand touches the chrysanthemum.

The end of the parade, a rusted  
van, a trailer for the homeless.

Celebrants crowd into the cafe,  
in praise of recent happiness.

Mothers talk while children play,  
domination dances with submission.

Roads made of earth in towns, before  
the war, are now covered in rubble.

Death bangs on doors and windows,  
begging, "Please let me in, I mean no harm."

## In Their Democracy

The peeling bark of the sidewalk trees  
flutters in the light autumn breeze.

Happiness seems to linger, here and  
there, your hand on mine, mine on yours. .

Sun warms and then becomes too hot,  
cold and heat change places in the heart. .

Who can say a word against the sun,  
except those who blister and burn?

Hope's not hiding in things of love,  
yet things of love are hidden in hope.

Leaves pile up at the foot of the wall,  
around the tables and chairs.

Keeping warm, we walk through the cold,  
holding heat tight, keeping cold at bay.

Nothing calms like getting night and  
day together in their self-regard.

## On the Street

On the cold dark street, moving from  
one thing toward a different part of time.

All this talk, put one word next to  
another, wait for the air to move.

Words are like berries, succulent, tart  
and sweet, some may poison, some stain.

Dawn's light is twilight, noontime,  
Sahara sun, the cold light of the Poles.

Earth's gases, electric-charged  
in the sky, Aurora Borealis.

The noise of the world drowns out  
the pulse of the world's beating heart.

Slip gently in the raucous roar,  
slip gently, the peaceful quiet.

## Bouquets of Words

Any other poet is the same as I,  
the same as all "others."

One with no attachment to anyone  
shares a separate sadness.

A visitor in this life, it's easy  
to forget the physical.

We are quick prey to fear, until  
we sense its fraudulent display.

Occupied by thoughts, when we set them  
free from their connection, they fly.

I cut flowering thoughts from the  
stem, so I might put them in bouquets.

I hold bouquets of words, stemless,  
up to the sun, an offering to decay.

In their decay, I am loved  
and I love, in original beauty.

## Path of Flight

The path of flight through the woods,  
taken by the hawk, shows on no one's map.

Thought, through the mind, leaves  
a trail untraceable by any but itself.

During loud talking, I made a black  
painting with yellow gleaming eyes.

When I have no idea, I go  
where the no idea might lead.

Rain, flood, fire, growth, the woods  
are the history of the ancient earth.

My aged self has lost  
the optimism of its resilience.

Peace, love and joy are adamantine,  
crystal, magma, and florentia.

Here is my tradition, I am  
fire itself, I eat the future.

Here is my glory, I burn, let me  
burn, let the fire burn, I burn.

Fire in the forest takes no trail,  
no path, no road, it takes place.

## Another Gear

Li Bai wrote "Drunk - stand - step - stream - moon" leaving out the unpaintable parts.

Lately, I have remembered  
another gear in my being alive.

Not thought of for decades, unused,  
uncalled for, when all seemed to be well.

Only an internal threat, a disease,  
a birth, rouses the armies.

The illusion of safety is stripped  
to naked ways without their will.

I sew socks and begin speaking  
of politics inside selflessness.

They can be kept separate but  
sometimes the separate is the same.

These are the same in the occupation  
of thought, its fears and uses.

Abandon thought, the self expands,  
abandon thought, politics contracts.

Steam from the primordial soup,  
the smell of ancient fermentation.

The discovery of the self in  
one's self is bone inside the bones.

There is nothing new inside the sun,  
and miles away, its still the same.

## Border Crossings

A poem came to mind before sleep,  
and now the poem has been lost.

The poem has been lost to sleep, dream  
before dreaming, light in the dark.

The shape of something remains, a face,  
a name, but nothing stays to play.

I could have written it down, I could  
have started a conversation.

The poem came like a borderguard,  
checking my papers for thoughts.

No one knows me in the middle  
of the night, I'm a stranger asleep.

I am kidnapped, confiscated,  
swept up in nightly revolution.

Taken where there are no poems,  
given nothing but fresh, blank beauty.

Forty years ago, I came across  
a word I met again, today.

Border crossings, nothing but a  
beam of light arranged in a meadow.

