



**WE ARE LIVING THROUGH  
MONTHS WITH WEEKS OF  
DAYS LIKE THAT**

A POEM A DAY (AND THEN A FEW MORE)  
FOR ONE HUNDRED OF THE PANDEMIC DAYS  
LEE GUNDERSHEIMER

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FOR ONE HUNDRED OF THE PANDEMIC DAYS**

**BY LEE GUNDERSHEIMER**

February 21- May 31, 2021

*To All Who Inspired*

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FOR 100 OF THE PANDEMIC DAYS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

We Are Living Through Months With Weeks Of Days Like That	4
Deadlines	10
The Border Between Sick and Well	12
Is Performing Live Dead?	14
Ponzi Policy	16
Am I Blue?	18
Not A Democracy	20
The Almost Poem	22
God's Eye View	24
The Next Wrong Rhyme	26
Prometheus	28
The Art of War	30
Arc Welders	32

A Moment Ago's Meditation	33
In Times Of Trouble	36
Rewrite	39
One Day	39
Bought and Sold	40
The Attraction	42
The Effect May Cause	44
Spring's First Fresh Rain	45
Macbeth, She Wrote	48
Too Short	52
The Border Of How We Are Human	53
Rule Change	55
Haunted	56
Which Side of the Ides	58
Fasten Your Seatbelts	60
More Than One Magnum Opus?	63
We Are Living Through Months With Weeks Of Days Like That	64
March Madness	67
Childhood Sweethearts	69

Closing Matinee	70
Calm Before the Storm	71
Only Thoughts and Prayers Do	73
Two Early Tales Of I Wish They Were Pulp Fiction Cowardice	75
Divorce Day	78
GOP Haikus	80
Not So Funny Limericks (A Failed Request for Humor)	82
Touched But Not Felt	83
Make Acceptable Gluttony Again	85
The Grand Tour	87
Three Witnesses	89
Who You May Never Get To Be	91
What Is Worse Than Criminal?	93
Who Was To Remember When And How Long Will It Take To Get To Where's Starting	95
Stop Existing To	96
Them To Cower	96
Adam's Debate Team	97
One Out of Three	98

Here We Are Was Yesterday's Tomorrow	99
A Dog's Life	100
Hard Copy	103
Dancing On This Moment's Ceiling (for Kathy)	105
Human Nature	107
Call Me Before You Come Over	110
The Caliber Conjecture	114
Your Case Will Come To Rest	115
Drawing Lines	117
Relay	119
Red Before Wagner	121
Creation	123
Book Tour	125
She Makes Things Better	126
Never Enough Amalfi	128
Always A Winner Just Not Ever A Prize	130
The End of Earth Day	132
Poem*	134
Fluke Index	136
Thrill Ride	138

Your Yesterday	140
An Art With A Measure For Measure	142
Democracy for Dummies	144
One Night	146
The Language of Justice	147
This Is The Way Things Are	149
Yesterday's Mayday	151
One Trip Around Two Lakes	153
UnCivil War Letter	156
Sonnet No Number	158
Four Families	159
Love Poem For Liz	161
Mozart's Mother	163
We Love, We Worry	165
110 Miles	168
Life As We Don't Know It	171
A Garage Called Paradise	173
Tribal Problems	178
How Things Don't Work	180
Prayer	182



How Much Time Is Spent Hoping	183
Digital Rear View Mirror	184
Another Still Thirsty Day To Drink Up	185
Narrow Window	186
Rape Scene	187
Random Thought Generator	189
Memento Mori	191
Skill Set	194
The Creation Cycle: The Beginning Light	195
The Creation Cycle: The Gasp Before Last	196
The Creation Cycle: The Geology of Things	197
The Creation Cycle: More Than One Infinity	198
The Creation Cycle: The Opposite of Creation	200
The Creation Cycle: From Where I Sit	201
The Creation Cycle: Keep Them Holy	203
The Creation Cycle: Of Course A Coda	204

# DEADLINES

Some wait until the last moment  
Others are off to the races  
Even before the starter gun's bang.

There are so few goalposts when diapered  
And before you remember waking from please no not a nap,  
Just after a.b.c. and d.e.f. comes this thing  
Called homework, and you have to be kidding me, chores.

Middle school assignments they claimed  
Teach you much about  
Your ability to make the grade  
But the facts prove it just a waiting room  
For the years that the too cool call High,  
As in hey do you want to get?  
Cause for many the novel is the latest way to check out  
how else will you ever possibly endure  
even as the straight affluent A's manically pad their activities.  
The score is to get the right school rating them's golden  
Others go steady burrowing into  
nothing could matter more than is it true or false first love  
while there are too many whose after school jobs  
plus weekend work add up to not part of their time but full.  
Please teacher, my home work assignment  
Was keeping the heat on in my home

Is it any wonder that so many stumble into their lives  
Hoping they still have a parent to home them  
taxed with file dependent? Lucky they are, even in their despair,  
sheltered to not know the many more alone  
but a bad day away from out in the cold.

Remember well the due date for the test,  
It is all but a too short I thought it would be long enough essay,  
and don't even get me started with the dreaded group project.  
They all graduated anyway, but somehow never leave-  
the do so little but grab the passing grade anyway,  
the grand quibbler who gets everyone to do it their way,  
the joiners who agree, without them to fan the flames  
the worst thesis wouldn't be chosen,  
the weakest argument couldn't win,  
the shallow research would not stand,

and the wretchedly designed supporting materials  
the poorly titled, the art badly drawn,  
could not be turned in as if making the grading.

But as you reach the end of your life's semester  
Clarity comes flying at you  
Flushed out into the clearing:  
You can no longer depend on delay.  
Though yes, no, there aren't really answers, there is  
an assignment,  
there truly are words that will add up  
to a poem that has rhythm, a scheme that somehow rhymes.  
Do not miss the chance to turn it in  
Yesterday's work has gotten you closer  
It is due today, that is a given,  
You may hope  
but might not have

2/21/21

# THE BORDER BETWEEN SICK AND WELL

We have cancer.  
A diagnosis dreaded.  
We have crossed over.  
For how long?  
How did it happen?  
What is the prognosis?  
Is there treatment?  
What stage, has it spread?

Sit for a moment in the cold antiseptic  
examining room, and wonder why:  
We cannot agree on any of above  
the where or what or when or how.  
Take a long look and listen carefully  
to those who question how best to protect  
the border between sick and well.

We are being assaulted  
Malignant, Metastatic, Micro-Environment  
all could be applied,  
our disease has the ability to hide,  
is unwilling to die and mutates.  
We are slowly watching it destroy  
what's left of our healthy environment,  
the sanctity of our democracy.  
We assault ourselves with proven poisons,  
made all the more virulent in pursuit of profits.

Disease metaphors are not unique  
Nor is the employment of battles and wars.  
Less clear is the prescription for treatment  
We witnessed an assault, a  
sort of radical mastectomy,  
will they next attempt amputation?  
Can you blame them? Will you?  
The more holistic, the alternative  
treatments have not borne fruit.

Fortunate, for now  
our tests came back cancer  
free, they call us survivors  
as if there is little disagreement.  
Most do not, most succumb  
but if lucky enough, there is no  
walking away,  
There is only day by day.  
Diligence and doing away with  
all proven dangers, even  
if some insist and benefit from  
the belief they remain harmless.

2/22/21

# IS PERFORMING LIVE DEAD?

It used to be that nothing was as dreaded than a cocktail party  
if you don't drink and small talk looms large.  
Never a fan of the heights required for social climbing  
and lacking the right outfit, unless the styles have boomeranged  
back around as they do (except for shoulder pads)  
never having mastered the rules of engagement  
and I don't do shrimp,  
though I am marked safe from the unrelenting parenting boot camp  
and the deep spiral, the mounting predatory financial insecurities.  
Yet after a year of cloistering with pets and my partner  
as soon as the declaration day of the normal that will be new  
I might stock a bar and write the damn invitations myself.

Countless have lost their businesses, a year or more of learning,  
the avalanche of life's losses tumbled toward us unending.  
Though reported daily, the tally cannot be measured,  
still none more unfathomable than the lover, grandparent, cousin  
life long friend now gone. We cannot keep hold of any meaningful  
perspective, lost, even as each day we grasp hold of what was our everyday  
transformed, translated into at least we still have this, can still do that. Still...

We that work in the arts, at some point in those long ago pre-pandemic  
days reached a difficult but all too essential acceptance,  
made our peace with our possible poverty of society's successes.  
Many a day we visited the Museums of High School Friends and Their Families  
the glorious gilded, gated, and glittering lives displaying  
their breathtaking traveling adventures, careers careening full speed  
they unwrap the latest magnificent achievement the purchased product of their  
hard work  
costing more than our entire annual take home.  
And often asked- you guessed it, at the after their work, over drinks-  
if we'd play another part, put down the guitar, give up the dance  
and we'd wave off the hors-d'ouvres, telling how damn lucky  
to be granted an audience, one chance to conjure our creativity  
in our local juke joint, storefront microstage, the on loan high school  
auditorium.  
Look out! No one could contain us as we rocketed to the stars  
propelled by our purpose, watch out- try to contain our catalytically  
combusting,  
exploding passions unfettered.  
Are we making a scene?

So sorry, it's the champagne.  
Picture giving birth, getting married, folded into winning the lottery-  
that's close to the feeling  
of a performer riding deep inside the center of the towering wave  
of their artistry allowed- until-

Blackout. All that gone, snuffed out. The plug pulled, the curtain closed.  
Some even shuttered while still onstage.  
The bills add up, the worries mount, the emotions overwhelm,  
Yet what sustains, what scrap of hope we keep in our pocket  
and when most worried take out and kiss softly and hold onto  
is the knowing that history has never been unable to burn it all down,  
shutter all the stages, kill off creativity.  
We have returned from plagues, wars, cries of blasphemy, even television.  
Long live live performance.  
Don't read that wrong.  
Life comes most alive as long as live performance lives.

2/23/21

# PONZI POLICY

Think of all the families that are provided for  
by the insurance Ponzi scheme  
There are corporate Joe's and Janes  
the storefront good neighbors,  
the detectives that claim payment or not,  
the marketing firms, the ad-makers,  
the entire towns the major firms call home.

We are made to fear our lives without them.  
Have accepted that somehow the idea  
is fair that we are in good hands but if it  
was not profitable as hell, how could they  
continue to sponsor stadiums and bowl games  
or the local little league team your child plays on?

What do we not roll the dice and cover?  
Our homes, cars, boats, businesses, pets  
health, that cruise or flight,  
and don't bet against your own span of life.  
And nowadays they are not even subtle  
about how loud they scream the need:  
Honey, our friend just died, are we covered?  
You don't want to leave home without it. Mayhem.

There are plans to supplement the plans  
because you should make sure to cover your coverage.  
There's bronze, and silver, but go for the gold,  
there's a network that is in, or you risk the referral  
and pay that not in the club fee.  
A new cottage industry will even buy you out  
of the policy early that you couldn't live without.

What does it say about our society that  
this organized and well oiled casino thrives?  
Whatever tribe you call yours has bought in,  
your faith, your service, your age, your love of country,  
the rates with us are better, you benefit because we care.  
Read the small type and make sure you are covered  
from catastrophic fires, floods, or drought  
Because we are there by now, you either will make it  
Or oh well, so sorry, not in scope,



'cause we are all trying to stay alive-  
Your brokers, not the customers,  
Have you seen those payouts?  
We can't keep pace,  
the whole damn straw house barely standing might blow down.  
and there is not a term, or contract, or corporation,  
there's a reason, whether we like it or not  
that no one can cover those Acts of God.

2/24/21

# AM I BLUE?

Lady Gaga's French Bulldogs were abducted at gunpoint, her dog walker shot, they were whisked away alive. She has offered a half million dollars no questions asked Reward for their return.

The House of Representative is holding a hearing on the security breaches during the Capitol insurrection. meanwhile in the Senate, Ron Johnson blamed the overthrow on liberals dressed up as Trump supporters.

While the Biden administration has hastily created a vaccine program where there was none a new virulent variant was reported in New York City that might be resistant to known treatments.

Donald Trump's taxes were released to the District Attorneys in New York City, but he defiantly plans to begin his comeback as kingmaking keynote speaker at CPAC Sunday.

The House is trying to pass the historic Covid relief bill and the numbers of jobless were down to seven hundred and ten thousand newly unemployed last week, only. The record close to ten percent unemployment rate remains. NYC reported that sixty six percent of all those working in the arts and recreation are out of work and without Government assistance will not fully recover.

I woke up this morning after having met the most wonderful radiant Black artist in my sleep. It was an opening night of her exhibit a series of endless rooms with magnificent paintings of current injustices and those responsible perfectly portraited frozen in time, pinned to their crimes, they were so brilliantly, artfully positioned in guilt. She was tall and magnificent and decked in a feathery white gown colorful braids, and a huge smile. There was an instant connection that somehow occurs in one's dreams, more profound than love straight to kindred spirits. She was gloriously in her moment, and I was swept into her power and yet somehow she remained human, humble, joyful that her work

was being truly seen. She took my hand and brought me into a large white room and laughingly said, this is to be her next piece. It was going to be art pop influenced. Bright Andy Warhol and Lichtenstein- and just as she was gleefully telling me, secretly confiding about to show me what colors it would contain, she began to paint right there in front of me-

One of my dogs, the one who is old and dying woke me wanting to be allowed to stumble downstairs and out into the cold to begin what might be one of but a few of his last days. And then the news broke, Lady Gaga's dogwalker was shot...

2/25/21

# NOT A DEMOCRACY

We are a Republic  
Not a Democracy  
is the latest proud  
gotcha gauntlet  
hurled by the Right.  
"Madison Federalist Fourteen"  
And they couldn't be  
more accurate  
"Protect the opulent  
from the landless masses"  
Make sure to point that out  
That's in there too  
Because that is their,  
sorry, I mean, was the goal.  
And shame on them  
for not pointing out  
that slaves and women  
were most certainly  
locked up and out  
of his process.  
You like that Hamilton  
they jeer, sing every song  
(even though they are the ones  
cloaked in originalism)  
Well he was careful to label it  
Representative Democracy  
not direct democracy  
We are not one person  
one vote. We elect  
To be represented.  
We rest our case.  
Now what they are  
running Rikki Tikki Tavi  
and chasing their own tails  
to prove is that  
a justified minority  
(because there are  
many fewer of them)  
can and should rule.  
To protect you from the  
dangerous and ill-informed

majority, the manipulated mob  
the populace, sound familiar?  
They also only love to quote  
Lincoln when he is not arguing  
against them, with those  
dreaded For the People words  
which just so happens to be  
the name of the law being  
passed to allow more to vote,  
make it a holiday, and to extend  
early voting and to have  
automatic voter registration.  
This may be the single  
most important legislation  
In our lifetime.  
Fight for it. And then  
let those who actually  
believe in what they are  
trying to do to control others  
convince a majority to vote  
against their own best interests.  
That may be very difficult  
without suppression,  
gerrymandering,  
and "campaign finance".

Remember the words  
Democracy and Republic,  
mean nothing without  
the ideals they stand for.  
Ask the North Korean  
Democratic People's Republic  
if you don't want to take  
my word for it.

2/26/21

# THE ALMOST POEM

I often wonder what might have been  
Not just with my own personal  
paths not taken,  
they come large and small  
jobs not secured, moves made to reinvent,  
some are just the stuff of reverie  
like those two very beautiful ladies  
who wanted me to repair their  
VCR hookups in a penthouse  
apartment, I kid you not  
when I was managing  
a Manhattan video store.  
You cannot make these moments up,  
it actually happened, however  
tawdry misogynistic fantasy sounding it seems.  
I got them connected, but turned  
down their offer of a cocktail to relax,  
because I was in charge and felt it wrong to  
leave the store without a manager  
and have never really taken to drink.  
I often chuckle to myself what was  
I thinking, but who knows what dead end  
In the days of AIDS or just your average  
STDs was avoided.

No, what keeps me spinning during these days  
of did you wash your hands, don't touch you face  
was more like what if Gore had contested  
the court ruling  
JFK or MLK had survived  
if we had actually intervened to save the Jews  
in 1942?  
Why is history such a collection of moments missed  
that could have stopped wars, saved lives, what  
if Earth Day way back in the seventies had been  
the actual call to arms that it was designed to be?

I suppose for each Almost that is regretted  
there is one that provided and protected  
like the speeding freight train that I  
glimpsed out of the corner of my eye

while driving just my second day on the road.  
I did not even have time to slow down, the safety  
lights and alarm had failed to engage but,  
I crossed the track and then pulled over and wept  
just a moment more any other way and

So as long as we are gifted the turn right  
no left, the day awakening newly strong  
after a week of shivering sweats,  
it is ours to make sense of  
from which is to be learned  
and from what is solved by  
surveying the risk reward analysis  
and after accepting the dare  
just roll down the hill  
laughing and tumbling  
both toward  
and all  
in the  
same  
instant  
away

2/27/21

# GOD'S EYE VIEW

I remember driving along the coast of California  
Above Marin those little coastal towns.  
Now think of this as one of those camera shots  
that start way up high, the car just a dot  
along the jagged, rugged, winding road,  
and as it slowly pans down we stopped  
at an overlook with a park and playground  
right next to the sea, just up enough not to flood.  
And there was some full court in action  
the athletes better than good, just pickup  
no uniforms, yet players who well knew  
what each other 's had was worth  
them religiously gathering to game.

And the camera should pick out one pilgrim,  
it would be hard for anyone not to notice him,  
not quite tall but imposing, taugth, long hair, dirty blonde,  
held back with a piece of bandana,  
and he was in command.  
No one elected him captain, he just was  
by sheer force of ability and some kind of  
pre-ordained ability to lead that had  
led to hours of practicing his ball handling  
shooting, court sense, and conditioning,  
above all else, perhaps even at the expense  
of jobs, and girlfriends, who cares about rent-  
when he was on the that asphalt, it was his.

It wasn't just that he could shoot from anywhere  
and had that ability to weave and dart faster  
than those with more speed, and could take  
a hit by those with more strength and still finish.  
It was how the game came to him, even on defense  
you expect this in stadiums, the well paid elites,  
there are even now two or three on each team.  
But racing back and forth on this coastal court  
for no renown or reward but the Saturday stats,  
it occurred to me that no matter where or at what,  
It could be the Girl Scout best at her cookies  
Or the dog in the park, that could outplay all the rest  
On any given day, at this one particular place



There lives the demi-god, the best of the best.

But that was a good decade or so ago,  
Had he lost his step, his crossover no longer crisp  
Did he even still come out for the game?  
As the focus pans back slowly across time  
It stopped just long enough for him  
To drain a shot from near half court and look  
Over it seemed right up at me and winked, freeze frame.  
As slowly we left, to go find some lunch spot,  
I thought of that grin and his proud back trotting gait,  
as if to say, this is my house, you're right  
visit sure, vacation, but you go find your own.  
I think of that court by the sea,  
And the king even just for that day,  
the got game on display  
his glory often replayed.  
Hey, your work,  
all that effort,  
it can be cashed in,  
for there's your proof  
what it means to have been golden.

2/28/21

# THE NEXT WRONG RHYME

Who thinks they are teaching their child hateful things,  
the lessons imparted of less than?  
Does anyone aspire to be the reincarnation of  
a once proud powerful plantation owner.  
or the great Mongol horde conquering one?  
And yet here we are, a generation once again  
living next to this lout and that, too many to count,  
what poor sods, aren't they just the worst?  
Hapless, hopeless, helpless caught twisting in the wire,  
we are living amidst much to never aspire,  
the stuff of despair and true shame.

Yet to forgive our species as caught  
under the spell of pure evil incarnate  
seems like part and parcel  
of why pain persists throughout our history's lament.  
Not our fault, bend the knee, we must pray and repent  
and look up to all the saints. We make great arches and paint  
ceilings, heal the sick, write songs, freedom fight.  
Focus on the light  
and find your own way.

But please, for the love of all that  
is the way to the dawn of a different day  
do me, and I hope yourself, this favor:  
If even just once, you think of striking your child  
like a worker who won't tote her own weight,  
or describe that less fortunate poor wandering one  
as why you should aspire to own more,  
or scoff at that culture that hasn't your fashion,  
commands their child to gesture obedience  
even as you do.  
Why not like us, like this, in a similar way?  
May it slap you if that is what it takes  
to note what you've accomplished,  
the harm you've just done,  
the river now foul,  
the ground newly tarred,  
the hillside ripped open and mined,

More could be said,  
though it circles not squares,  
if repeated it will always refrain.  
Its not just you, it was me, it was us,  
it is ever and always again.  
We've written it down,  
no deleting, was it wrong?  
The last line we must hope it was not  
the next wrong rhyme of our life's song.

3/1/21

# PROMETHEUS

There is a Great Basin Bristlecone Pine tree that is thought to be  
four thousand eight hundred and fifty two years old.  
Named Methuselah, though that patriarch was a pup at a mere  
nine hundred and sixty nine years young.  
Two thousand eight hundred and thirty three B.C. would be when  
its first seedling broke ground, newly born roots grabbing hold.  
It might be easy to mistake for a mineral rock formation,  
with trunk wrapping over and over onto itself,  
not so much seeking height as incredible width, thickness, sturdiness  
sitting majestically, on its own thrown of deeply gouged fifteen foot folds of  
bark,  
a cliff of living still fully forming wood.  
We can marvel at all it has witnessed,  
the seasons stopped long ago counting.  
All those shaded, climbed, having eaten from it's leaves,  
the peoples and species long gone,  
extinct, while it has lived on.

There was a woman named Madame Jean Louise Calment  
whose one hundred twenty two years is considered  
the longest human lifespan (if you don't count biblical legends).  
Borne in Arles France on February twenty first of eighteen seventy five,  
fourteen of her years had passed when they built the Eiffel Tower,  
the same year a dirty, badly dressed and disagreeable Van Gogh left her  
unimpressed.  
When ninety, she signed a deal to sell her apartment for two thousand five  
hundred,  
payable each month until the day she died,  
and the lawyer who thought he had the deal of the century  
died thirty three years later at seventy seven.  
His widow had to keep the contract,  
honoring the two years, one hundred and sixty four days remaining.

Now I understand it is difficult to truly appreciate the vastness,  
the scope and breadth,  
the breathtaking temporalness of time's unending accounting  
With all this mention of math.  
But what has really brought the whole thing jack-hammering home  
for me was hearing that Methuselah was not alone,  
there was a brother Bristlecone, Prometheus,  
who was four thousand

eight hundred  
and forty four  
when it  
was cut down,  
felled,  
why in the good  
lord's name, in  
nineteen sixty four.

3/2/21



# THE ART OF WAR

There is an ancient Chinese treatise  
studied by those with eyesight  
myopically win/lose.  
When all you ever sum is zero,  
cleverness is yours to lay claim  
only once you've employed deception.  
The Art of War. While this title  
seems to elevate conflict to creativity,  
I will leave that paradox for others to debate,  
its lessons have been employed  
throughout the entire breath of our  
tortured attempts at civilization  
Which means you can't effectively argue,  
and I hope you will not claim this  
is exactly what I am doing,  
though I will assume some will try,  
by creating just that:  
A fog of futile war.  
Confused? Clarity isn't the point of view  
either side will be employing  
for once the lies, outrages, indignancies  
come tossing, tumbling towards you  
There is no dodging or escaping,  
Your only option's outlasting.

Potato Head, Confederate Statues,  
Sex trafficking, Blue Lives Matter.  
Take a knee, MS -15,  
Election fraud, mean tweets  
Defund the police, who is  
next, Abraham Lincoln?  
Witch hunt, Russia Hoax  
Stop the Steal, Fake News,  
The Enemy of the People  
March 4th, What's their Pronoun  
Cancel Culture, Chain Migration  
Goya Foods, My Pillow, took my twitter  
They want your 2nd Amendment

Diversion is but a Cat in the Hat this way while that  
Feint is to incite state Capitol buildings during the vote count  
Demonstration, tear gas protesters to cross a street  
Ruse is voter fraud and multiple law suits equal unsafe  
Display? Razorline the streets with fencing, build that wall  
and separate the children, you see, watch it work.  
There is not a tactic unemployed, show the tell in broad light.  
Magruder's Principle- the only way we don't win, is if they say we lose.  
Jones' Dilemma- informally known as gas lighting, the election was rigged  
And the phone call was perfect, if guilty go ahead and pardon  
Never admit, they call us the right, the only concession double down  
From Ancient Egypt to Roger Stone,  
Trojan Horse, to Solar Winds  
Hannibal To Wiki Leaks  
Tet Offensive to the Capitol Insurrection  
Winners camouflage, obfuscate, then  
Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman.  
We Michael Flynn, and that Cohen fool  
McConnell, Graham, Johnson and Hawley  
And when push comes to shove we play the Pence  
and let our media stream storm trooper.

So when you think you've got us pinned  
we will bide our time, and quietly Mar-A-Lago  
I'd watch your back and pray that Vance  
is better than all the others, because  
watch closely, which hand, the con is on  
In The Art of War more losers have won  
The winners get tricked into losing  
Politics is the uncivil war,  
with you hope heads or tails  
but the coin sides have just one  
now you're learning  
it's value, correct,  
Zero Sum.

3/3/21

# ARC WELDERS

Just wanted to remind  
that history's arc,  
indisputably long,  
only bends if we  
like expert steelworkers  
or glass artisans,  
turn it toward  
Justice.

There are countless  
who have made it clear  
they would much rather the angle,  
and will spend blood to attempt,  
bend toward, aimed right at  
their power.

Gandhi's oft quoted hopeful  
words about tyrants  
always being beaten  
think of It, always  
should be seen as  
a call to be ever vigilant,  
an opportunity to gather our resolve,  
not an invitation to observe.  
For the despots are defeated  
because we struggle with all we have  
they retreat, but to return  
when we forget to remember.

3/4/21



# A MOMENT AGO'S MEDITATION

There was a Monday before Mozart's  
Minuet and Trio in G major, though at  
five years of age this might not be the best example  
to contemplate the right before our world shifted.  
Hard not to be more awed with the unmatched life  
of notes arranging, the rest before overturing,  
orchestrated before a first baby tooth had fallen.

A lark caroled one morning  
just before Romeo's couplet with Juliet  
and it was sweet enough that a writer  
upon waking and hearing the tittering  
penned its love song into his act three  
scene five's youthful yearning.

Einstein woke up one day and changed time's clock,  
or at least finally defined it.  
As Newton sat to shade himself  
he had no sense of the gravity  
about to befall him.  
Think of all the scribes at work unimpressed  
at Guttenberg's Type A invention.

So then who recalls the always  
a day before the bombs fall  
the flood waters risen,  
the president flies to Dallas  
the First People's at war with the  
we have a right to be free Seconds.  
Families tucked into their beds,  
lullaby's have been sung,  
foreheads sweetly kissed  
carved cradles rocking to sleep  
not even a whisper sounding  
even as the Crusaders  
high on the hill above,  
swore oaths, drank devotion  
rising up at new dawn  
to do their duty of pillage overtaking.

Looking past,  
there is our tomorrow  
tempting, promising, offering hope,  
the new, creation  
all that is promised  
if we do our best.  
Turn the soil,  
plant the seed,  
once dreamed Dick Tracy  
devices abuzz on our wrists.  
Roving around Mars right now  
we'll return with another world's rocks  
in your pocket's a roomfull's computer  
now nano byte size

We have also crossed a barrier  
great underwater reefs on fire  
ice caps cracking open  
our poles drifting closer together  
mountains stripped raw,  
roads shredded mudsliding  
politically a canyon wide  
Democracy divided

The past and the future both writing today,  
the one has as much more value as the other.  
We look back and then ahead,  
turn round, face forward  
and wonder if what we are  
adding is subtracting.  
We must make peace with our place,  
what we have is enough  
the gift we've been given.  
An Elizabeth had to be first  
McCartney knew yesterday wasn't here to stay.

If you are reading this and  
right now is years away,  
then words still work somehow  
survival was worth our refrain.  
Off we go into now from a  
Then there will be this.  
And we pause,  
there's even a button for it now  
but is it ever possible to just

Stop.  
Honor.  
How grateful  
to have been given this chance.  
Now it is yours,  
thanks to them,  
before it is theirs  
those we never will meet  
yet with all of our heart  
we wish well.

3/5/21

# IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

When I was eleven I was arrested  
for shoplifting the calendar from  
the album of Let It Be.

I was not officially booked downtown only  
held by store security in a very cold windowless room  
made all the more frigid by my shivering fear  
while my mother shopping for groceries  
at the Winn Dixie next door  
could be located and arrived in horror  
to be questioned as to my criminal background.  
I was deemed not a risk to the community  
and released in her custody which, trust me, was worse.

Now I publicly admit this shameful incident  
not because it is a perfect example of juvenile delinquency.  
More stupidity-  
if you are going to steal, why just the calendar?  
It isn't even smaller,  
and if enough of a fan to risk incarceration  
the music, not the promotional materials,  
are the rich bounty you seek, but no  
I confess to you all to reflect  
on the immediate and lifelong effects  
this fabulous four induced humiliation  
has had on me.

My mother, who loved me dearly  
handled it perfectly  
and I have been so fortunate  
on both accounts which may  
be the heart of why I can recount  
this rare lesson learned and  
why I am about to ask you  
the questions of some who might not.

She grounded me for a month,  
but not after asking me why I had  
wanted to do something so obviously wrong,  
and what I think should be done  
to set it all right once more.  
When these things that upend

the fabric of our world, tear it,  
cause harm to our own character,  
what can be done to repair the break,  
to place our universe back upright?  
She did not say any of this directly,  
but that is what I felt to me  
and has stayed with me ever since.  
I cannot even actually recall  
more than the month held inside,  
but I do remember how low my  
head hung as she held my hand,  
and how long the walk out those doors  
and to our parked car lasted  
and how deeply sorry I was  
To have caused her so much shame.

I also remember how fast my heart  
was beating as I looked around  
slit open the beautiful record  
that I wanted so much  
and slid what I had found inside  
next to my thumping heart  
under my tee shirt,  
this was Miami  
no one owned a coat,  
let alone a sweater.  
Our climate made theft  
even more futile,  
the pimple faced security guard  
no Sherlock had hit the days quota  
and yes I have never stolen a thing since,  
and was even hired to  
work in the same store  
four years later in Toys.  
I often walked by the adjacent  
Record and Tape Department  
returning to the scene of my crime  
checking for other future felons  
for I thought who better  
I knew all of their signs.

That store was called Jeffersons  
and the segue is apt  
for when I see Josh Hawley, fist raised  
outside of our capital  
I immediately think,  
how does he get through the night?  
I could not sleep for weeks,  
how does the heart of Jim Jordan,  
or for that matter Cuomo,  
not burst from beating so fast?  
I understand that once wrong  
is compartmentalized deep  
inside the safe room of sorrow  
that must be built to survive,  
and Scotch and Ambien and  
other adult cheaters provide,  
but when Ron Johnson stands  
there and spouts yet another  
lie, I still wonder if there is a  
shred of his soul that like my  
shaking sophomoric self prays  
could we please rewind the tape  
lift the needle and go back  
to the beginning of the song,  
When I find myself  
In times of trouble  
so I do not even  
have to ask  
over and over  
why?

3/6/21

# REWRITE

Words aren't owned but borrowed  
We arrange them carefully. Like us  
they belong to the ages. Some speak  
quickly, others carefully take time  
We're all rewrites of another poet  
with a hoped for easy end rhyme.

3/7/21

# ONE DAY

Honk horns, passerbys can bump  
us on the way to work, we can be  
caught up in the storm soaking wet  
or wish our meal was more a treat.  
Stop. Smile. Think of what matters  
most, our world is now at peace.

3/7/21

Two Poems for A Sidewalk Poetry Walk

# BOUGHT AND SOLD

There was just a sponsor acknowledgement on NPR radio  
which when I listen to always silently sounds its own sadness  
and not just because it's radio,  
as rickety a platform as local news,  
with its shrinking demographic preached to long past conversion.  
But I worry for the sadists forced to work under  
such a temporary chopping block climate  
since every job in public broadcasting, as regularly as winter,  
must worry of the withering vine of  
federal funding slashed as superfluous  
to better make our bombs.

Quickly came the chosen donors,  
a local law firm, I kid you not, named Suk,  
the latest and most ergonomic desk chair,  
with more bells and whistles than a Tesla  
to place on your cut glass well designed chair mat  
and use sparingly because  
at our desks we should now for hours stand.  
Next, the latest AI for business explained obliquely  
using all of the buzziest word jargon, crossing  
platforms, some kind of cloud solutions, and is anything  
less cutting edge and more frighteningly traditional  
than undefinable Intelligence that may not be human  
based off site high heavenly in the sky.  
And after all and hopefully while one person was still listening  
was Americans for the Arts, with not even a tag line  
no sales pitch, just blurted out, we will mention you comrade  
for free, but you are no worse for wear as we- and that  
is when it hit me and I flipped my pancake-  
they are us and we are them.  
Creatives hoping to help each other even as we vie  
for the same smaller and smaller essential slices  
of the charted in our expensive annual reported pie.  
Do this pitch fast please, for the not for profit format was designed  
to break their vows of not peppering their programming with  
those damn stop selling me what I now must buy with your earworm songs  
and slick siren-like scenes peep tommying us with better than our own sex.

At what point was it discovered that the next best  
solution to how to pay for things we should already want



was to sell the space, productively placed on anything that moves  
and most all of what won't. And as I sat there thinking of how even  
our news now slick stock car racing around  
every inch awash in pasted patronage  
is it any wonder that we have to worry  
the next outrage, boycott, just canceled  
if we say one thing that might offend.  
Who has their arm in our back  
and is working our hands and mouth's levers  
motoring without moving their lips  
every thing we make or say with ours.

And just like that the pitch had fast balled over the plate  
the riveting interview began,  
the chef who changed the way we cook vegetables  
but I was already bought and sold with despair  
longing for what even Michelangelo must have wondered,  
how does this world cost benefit beauty  
and must the market bare enough  
for creativity to sell her wares,  
and who if not you  
will benifact me to paint  
this huge ceiling?

3/7/21

# THE ATTRACTION

Millions watched as these very beautiful people  
sat in a very lovely yard, with the perfect portico.  
She talked of the kind of suicidal sorrow  
so many have witnessed first hand.  
Oddly not even in their home, it was borrowed,  
there's was now just down the road, I suppose  
to protect them from more harm, there are many  
who would like to hurt them.

I remember that man who wrestled alligators,  
he lived with them and gave them names,  
and he opened Gatorland, the finest attraction,  
and charged a few bucks and sold little teeth.  
And for years would toss them some meat and ride them  
and flip them over and rub their bellies to sleep  
until one day being wild reptiles  
despite a lifetime of captivity,  
they ended the act by tearing him apart  
and the whole place was torn down,  
no one would buy the farm.  
There was another one just down the road,  
not as flashy, but still,  
how many does one state need?

The world is a very odd place where folks  
race to place their trials and tribulations  
onto others and cry real tears they call crocodile.  
They can't drive past the place, there are signs every mile  
they are willing to stop their own lives just to watch  
some even plan a visit, and gather their brood  
who may be as battered and bruised, let's pile into the wagon,  
and despite our not dissimilar dysfunction,  
go on a much needed vacation.  
See they are just like me, seem too much like us,  
once you are privy to the sites past the curtain.  
Or please, they have every meal handed to them on a plate,  
why get upset they aren't free, it's a swamp out there.  
And soon there won't even be a habitat to call home,  
they're prehistoric and the world's outlived them.  
No, they are gorgeous. So rare, and look they have names.  
Why would some in the past have them killed for their hide

Well at least they were used to make nice shoes or hand bags.  
How heartless you are, they are living things, not for your feet  
to tread on as over priced status symbols of your poor taste.

And as the program ends, we climb back into our lives,  
drive away and decide was that worth the admission.  
The family left behind will settle in for the night, and will wait until  
The next production. But the small little ones, like their parents before them  
crawling out onto the stage, trained to be what surely they should never  
have been born into, are the next lineage, inheriting bright lights.  
Is that their circle of life, or the fairy tale song  
We have decided to write for them?

3/8/21



# THE EFFECT MAY CAUSE

What is a writer without a reader  
What is a killer without someone to kill  
What is a preacher without a believer  
The lover without someone to love?

What is a doctor with no one to heal  
An accountant with few numbers to count  
What is a soldier with no battle to fight?  
The architect with no buildings to build  
The baker with bread left to rot.

Think of a teacher with no pupils to teach  
The farmer with no crop to grow  
The chef with no meal to prepare  
The scientist with no discovery to make

We are the sum of all we are given  
Gathering together allows each one a many  
Society's the hive that must needs tending  
The Colony dug deep in the sand.

But I wonder which ant when scouting reported back  
The spot to move their hill much closer to the house  
Leaving me no choice but to spray to keep them outside  
Watching so many scurrying, helplessly, no longer safe  
Just a moment ago stealing off we found it, new food.

What is the discoverer who braves the new world  
With no plan save conquering to claim all their own  
The leader who leads by misleading  
The engineer that without testing tries bridging the span  
The justice that legally rules but still collecting favors  
The athlete at the top of their game still cheat to winning.

Thankful we are for the lessons that teach  
all is not in the knowing  
But rather the forgiveness that is our ability to spend  
The priceless buying of mistakes we must remember to spend  
For what is the reader whose writers wrote nothing but lies  
The killer loose living among us with nothing to repent?

3/9/21

# SPRING'S FIRST FRESH RAIN

I once ran and hop skipped,  
though in my late twenties,  
with childlike wow this moment matters  
down the streets of Manhattan  
in the Spring's first fresh rain.  
This was not Broadway or some  
dangerously trafficked thoroughfare,  
but rather the side streets  
farwest near Riverside Park  
right past where the Gershwins  
wrote their masterpieces.  
It wasn't my idea  
I must confess,  
the wonderfully wild  
and adventurous actress  
that I was dating despite  
the warnings against  
tossed her umbrella away,  
one of those dollar cheapies,  
that had already flipped  
wrong way out in the wind.  
You get what you pay for  
might have been a smarter  
and more logical response,  
but her shrug and oh well reaction  
was to immediately begin  
puddle hopping  
and laughing gleefully,  
not caring one bit that  
the shower was making her  
flowered peasant dress  
one transparent sheet  
of wonderment

My umbrella was a gift  
to myself with a pop  
up precision mechanism and  
since much of what the City  
forces you into rating  
was my go-to favorite.

So I like that, with its  
European exactness closed it  
carefully placed it into  
a brownstone's ceramic  
flower pot, then stepped  
out and into feeling immediately  
the surprisingly warmer than I expected  
cascade as if at a waterfall's base  
engulfing me, bucketsful, newly  
baptized. I laughed and blindly  
somehow found her hand,  
together we raced down  
the twenty or so steps  
Into the newly green parkside  
now empty and wide  
full of places to embrace.  
There was no lightening,  
but plenty of sparks,  
no thunder to fear thankfully,  
but there was music playing, I swear  
somehow now loud enough,  
it was crescendoing .

Yes we turned out to be  
far from a life partnering fit,  
yet this one sweet smelling wet grass  
almost dusk, was the unknown exchange  
a lifetime of a shared temporary commitment.  
I don't think I have ever again  
meandered into the rain,  
and my umbrella was lost, by the way,  
it was New York, what was I thinking?  
The point is just that, I wasn't really,  
and I am remembering the fact  
that it is coming down outside right now-  
that first new Spring rain  
is today the day,  
pandemic or not, to just wander  
aimlessly awash, and worry not a bit-  
about work, and the world, and the simple sad  
fact that I can't for the life of me  
even recall her name, but can almost  
see her face. Would she care,  
I think not. She's had a lifetime  
by now of more rainy awanderings

Funny, though I have gotten my share of wet,  
have never just run and laughed  
and let freedom bathe over me,  
though even often chided,  
I have rarely since bothered  
to carry with me an umbrella.

3/10/21

# MACBETH, SHE WROTE

Think of this one as a quiz, like those online who-done-its,  
let's meet back at your questions and conclusions.  
If I told you that the greatest dramatist of all time may not have  
been able to read or write, for as the the son of a glovemaker  
who's name was signed as a mark as was his mother  
and his own daughter's Judith, common at this time  
for literateness was reserved for the manner born,  
and Shakespeare himself spelled his name in his own hand  
only six occasions, each time differently aligned.  
Now all the great writers of this time and place  
have verified records of penmanship and papers  
but not even a letter, let alone a play's single page exists  
In the Stratfordian's handwriting. His transcribed estate's will,  
one of those few times his hand-written name's survived  
leaves his second best bed to his wife,  
this from the romantic unparalled who wrote  
shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
This actor from Stratford would have had to read Latin  
Italian, know music, falconry, and Courtly manners, mastered geographic  
details of European cities, a fascination with girl's literature, have access to a  
priceless  
library of books sourced often and with great abandon.  
How does a small town grain seller, pre-public libraries,  
with no record of travel outside of London know Hebrew,  
Heraldry, and works yet to be translated from Spanish and Greek?  
May I sum up with this, the author who penned the greatest of works  
owned no books, left no mention of one of his comedies or dramas,  
retired at forty to return to his hometown,  
never once in the last over a decade of his life  
produced or presented a play,  
and dies at 52 with not a single work published.

Now the practice of the well borne to write with a pseudonym  
Was as common as crows, the animal imagery used to describe them.  
Is it not even for a moment possible that the small modest fortune accrued  
by this Shaksper or Shakspere- was as a clever producer and literary front  
to someone else's more probably genius?  
The list of those who have already questioned  
like you if you're now wavering,  
includes some remarkably good company:  
Emerson, Shaw, Freud, Henry James,



Mark Twain, Whitman, Chaplin and Helen Keller  
and oddly three Supreme Court Justices,  
O’Conner, Scalia, and John Paul Stevens.

The highblooded put forth to have crafted these works  
is a list almost as long as Hamlet,  
with some even theorizing that there may have been  
more than one secreted writer working together  
and freely borrowing from each other.

I may have lost you by now, but let me ask you this:  
would it intrigue you enough to explore this idea if  
the greatest poet that ever lived was not male,  
but a woman, of color, and born Jewish?

What’s wrong she wasn’t gay as well? I can hear you now,  
why not cover all of the progressive fantasy bases...  
But the odd thing is if you believe in the Stratfordian,  
then you might have to accept he was non binary,  
since more than half of the Sonnets are written to  
a young man with a lover’s sexual longing?

Now the second part of our test is to listen to this evidence  
as it was presented to me one day randomly,  
when a scholar whose spectacles were a bit bent to one side,  
and who might possibly be what is known by now as on the spectrum,  
but back then was just a bit eccentrically unkempt,  
becoming focused only when defiantly prosecuting his case,  
and begging me to help him make a documentary  
so that once and for all the answer to the greatest  
of life’s literary mysteries could be solved.

More on that in a moment, but first imagine my fascination  
when he centered himself, cleared his throat, continuing  
to be enlightened on this subject that defies easy explaining,  
you must meet the poetess Amelia Bassano.

She answers each of the questions I just asked,  
the missing puzzle piece to what has never quite fit:  
Her life’s dates exactly line up, which some of the other  
authorship candidates as they are called,  
even this William of Stratford’s do not,  
with the publication timeline that scholars agree on.

She was of Moorish Hebrew decent from Venice  
(see Othello, The Merchant of Venice)

Her father was a court musician

(access to royal manners and music)

Raised by a Countess once her father died  
who prided herself on education

and possessed one of the greatest private libraries of the day  
(learned languages and literacy)  
Became the mistress when only thirteen to the Lord Chamberlain  
(in charge of all London's theatres)  
Until once pregnant was married off to his first cousin Lanier  
(of suspected but still secret Royal lineage)  
who's brother produced at least seven court Masques  
using the renowned acting troupe, the King's Men.  
This amazingly unique woman of any age,  
(also identifies the Dark Lady of the Sonnets)  
and went on to be one of the first women  
to own and run a school in England, now-  
are you ready for this?  
was an author and published poetess, another first for her sex,  
Her longest disguised as a religious treatise to gain publication  
subversively advocating the rights of women  
to stand up to the abuses of men.

Now before you toss this off as just  
another too good to be true theory conspiracy,  
Think of how many of Mister Shakespeare's plays  
contain wise, witty women who  
disguise themselves as men,  
how many uses of the name Amelia are throughout,  
as are Bassano and even Lanier.  
(All three of her names, for you betters, the odds?)  
Think of all the themes of racial,  
theological injustice, the references to  
dying swans her family's heraldic symbol,  
Think of the number of coincidence's piling up,  
he was selling me craftily with his scholarship,  
wiping away weeks ago crumbs from his wrinkled moth-eaten cardigan.  
Her husband's name Alfonso, her father's name Baptista  
both appear in the Shrew needing Taming.  
Amelia was familiar thanks to her uniquely sophisticated education,  
to each one of the rare source subjects previously mentioned.  
But may I single out Music and one song in particular:  
King Cophetua and the Begger Maid,  
mentioned four times in the plays,  
about a young black girl in a princely palace.  
And he looked at me with the greatest of efforts  
for the first time making eye contact:  
Amelia Lanier was living with the rumored son of Henry VIII  
and was far from fair complected.  
She has, if you care to continue listening,

connections to the Denmark of Hamlet,  
the Italy of Romeo and Juliet, Two Gentlemen of Verona,  
and the ghetto of Venice's Merchant,  
the sources of girl's literature of many of the comedies.  
We may never know for sure and like all that is  
conjectured without time's physical proof,  
there is no way to say definitive.

But I can tell you these ideas being sketched  
by this beautifully mind complicated and the thought of  
him walking along the busy city streets with the possible solution  
to one of the greatest cultural questions and whose answer  
might upend the Western Canon with a woman  
of color and a non-Christian? Needless to say,  
and I hope you now will agree,  
that it was time to purchase some equipment and get to filming.  
So we did flying to Stratford and walked the streets asking  
folks how'd they'd feel if all they've known about England's Favorite Literary  
Son,  
might not be the whole truth as thought gospel  
and their answers were astounding, some open to listening,  
most annoyed to the point of anger.  
The same was true when we asked the audience  
lined up back across the pond at the production  
of which play I can't recall, one of New York's Shakespeare in Central Park.

It might as well have been Love's Labor Lost, because a week later  
our project and working partnership fell apart  
when I tried after friendly advice to get a legal agreement signed,  
since I had spent thousands on equipment and now  
six months of my time without so much as an understanding  
of who owned what if this perfect for before HBO thing took off.  
Sadly this desire to work out details that might mean control  
was not something unable to calculate with his mind  
that had literally added up and compared the analogous subjects  
and verbs of each the poets, the Elizabethan's entire works.  
He was now feeling assaulted with uncertainty  
and I who literally had never before worked with a lawyer  
walked away at this first timer's costly advice,  
since there was a refusal to sign a very fair split down the middle contract.  
And I understand now, even though it was never made clear,  
that he felt that someone was trying to own his life's thoughts.  
Isn't that an interesting end to a long ago tale  
of a possible writer who had to hide behind another's name  
just to be heard, and may have to history be long ago lost.

3/11/21

# TOO SHORT

In my life's Haiku  
May there be one more sunrise  
After my heart's hurting

3/12/21

# THE BORDER OF HOW WE ARE HUMAN

A father clinging to his wife and children  
one of thirty in a raft made for ten  
hungry, thirsty, weary as the poet taught us  
their journey our struggle, their worry our fear.  
The news keeps crying crisis yet for them it is true,  
the struggle has reached a destination never ending,  
even though they have trekked over thousands  
of miles and waded across even wider rivers,  
gathered at this water holding but a garbage bag  
with all they own, except a thousand dreams of a better tomorrow.

How is this in any way the place we want to be?  
What mark on the map of modern society has this charted?  
Most worry more of when does our condo board meet,  
how does the accident of who sleeps with whom  
wham-bam, you good sir are a king  
and you, terribly sorry, let's label you alien  
even though you've landed on your own planet,  
now respectfully let's change the call to a migrant  
even though you have no new species, season, or flight pattern.

I hope I am never so worried how many jobs  
might be left or where could we possibly fit them  
when these are lives we are speaking of, and you seem  
to have more rooms than you can keep vacuumed.  
I recognize these questions are thorny, as the razor wire  
being clipped as wrong or right as the smuggled side you  
have luckily emerged from, after all our borders ought  
to be respected, though I have lived in places where to cross  
the street meant your property value just plummeted.

What about your freedom and the lives that have been  
lost for you just to be able to whine you don't need them?  
Is it disrespectful to wonder how over and over we fight  
to make existence no better, more Antietam than Elysian?  
We have a calamity don't you see it, down South  
and it is only going to get even more serious,

they say it year after year, it used to be Europe  
yesterday's assimilated immigrant wave  
is today's crisis caravan that will become tomorrow's  
too many to handle, are you going to house them?  
I think of that father and his family and for them  
clinging to but one too hard to hold hope  
that they have escaped life or death persecution-  
Is this not the land where we pledge our allegiance to  
the idea that we all deserve to be allowed to be free?  
So until we have not a single field left wide open,  
or no place in our heart for more compassion  
then the crisis is not on the banks of the Rio Grande  
but on the border of how we are human.

3/13/21

# RULE CHANGE

I remember after school days spent  
Red Roving and finding home base  
so that you wouldn't be It  
in a very competitive round of  
front yard hours at a time freeze tag.  
The game we played less, but of all  
that we knew, might be the most useful  
right now, was Mother May I.

Back then we all knew the  
weakest links in our line and those  
who would come crashing through as soon  
as their names were called over.  
And most have all closed our eyes  
counting for this year's forever's  
hiding to avoid the seeking.  
Numbly in place, we have escaped  
the tag without having yelled freeze  
holding on to home until now  
what the heck, the sun has not  
gone done and the game is  
being changed right in front  
of our eyes without even asking.

So many are about to let go  
so happy to be unfrozen  
and you get the sense that  
they are already lined up  
shoulder to shoulder thinking  
their name's been chosen,  
The finish lines is in their sights  
The costly steps back to the start  
won't be avoided because they  
have heard it has been reached  
and they can go right ahead,  
no need to ask such  
a silly thing to have to even say  
who is this Mother?  
you certainly aren't mine  
who are you to tell me,  
May I? Bet on it.

3/13/21

# HAUNTED

Some live on in the full lives  
of their children and their children's children,  
family trees deeply rooted in the earth's ages  
ever growing outward filling a future of forests.

Others leave legacies of brave deeds  
or blood stains of terrible infamy  
forever etched into our history  
their names tied tightly bound onto their time.

Is it the making the most of mortality,  
for better or worse wedded to our temperance?  
I envy those who don't give even a shrug  
each day begins and ends with let's do this.

Some lift their brush painting pictures viewed pretty  
write songs for great singers to bring the house down.  
There is have you experienced that,  
just wow that's entertainment creation  
to fill out a user's cue on their service's stream  
or the prestige of wait for award's season releasing.

But I wonder if it is the ones who lift the ring's ropes,  
enter with no bell's wring to wrestle with the darkness  
to wipe away the ever awareness of the inevitable end  
of each new day's struggles to begin again.

I've no desire to rose color what  
when magnified weighs mightily,  
leads to down the well aloneness,  
falling off the shelf home breaking,  
with a love starving lack of ability  
to find the way right to reach others easily,  
the simple embrace, the widen opened heart  
that brings you home, nurturing neatly.

All I know is this, it is my fervent desire  
that hundreds of years,  
I'd take more if not gluttonous,  
into the whatever comes next  
You are somehow reading this.



I have left the world no heirs to my name,  
how unwieldy it is, they'd hate me just for that  
and I spoke to my late father just now,  
we have made our peace, he's more wistful  
I wasn't sometimes the best partner.

"You ought to delete this whole damn thing,"  
he advised, about to, even in his haunts,  
mix metaphors, "I know I didn't teach you much  
and a grain of salt, as they say, might have  
more chance to get under your sheet.  
Your deepest born into your core truths  
are best left locked tightly away,  
there's a reason no light lives  
at the bottom of the mine.  
Here give them to me, I'll take them away,  
Now you just forget that you were ever aware  
of how they are who you were born to be."

3/14/21

# WHICH SIDE OF THE IDES

The middle of March is black marked  
With full moon sooth saying beware of  
those with sharp daggers drawn dillusionally  
willing to shed blood for their republic's liberation.

There are all always two sides to the ides  
Those barbarians label us philistines.  
Still shouldn't the Church have considered a delay  
To renew their love of labeling same sex  
Once again an umarriable mortal sin  
whose outcome will only crime hate?  
Think of the multitudes having spoken vows  
Hairshirted forced to cloister further away  
renewing regressive slam those closet door rights of way.  
Was it a response to last night's Grammy Awards  
Moons full screen fully bursting atwerking  
leaving little unsuggested, Elvis' lame  
hip shaking's shock factor's too tame for these  
amped up, let's do this, slit right up to your  
fabric tape worshipping level of liberation  
back your right face up, don't worry,  
if they object we'll shriek shaming.

The first damn daylight savings dark again morning  
There was a sandstorm reported blanketing Beijing  
The newsradio alarm switching to the blockbuster book tour in full swing  
Touting the surefire, have they lowered the bar for bestseller, biographical  
sensation  
on the developers of the breakthrough revolutionary discovery CRISPR  
Asking us to ponder if Clustered Regularly Interspersed  
Short Pallendromic Repeats have in a sense changed  
our world forever or forever world our changed senses.  
A duet of Pandora's, both newly Nobel Prize winners,  
have unboxed the building block leggos of our life  
bringing us right to the edge of what from one side of the ide  
is the conundrum dubbed The God Problem.  
From the other vista is Free Will's landscape,  
the eternal escape clause getaway destination,  
Was it our choice to render you to assassinate Caesar?  
It's no longer rabbits we fall down now we have wormholes

Believe in them we could unwrite every filthy damn pop song.  
But for now let's just stop listening, picket those promoting,  
just don't call it canceling- get outraged enough and fall to  
our knees and pray that our misguided world finds a way to reboot  
repenting's the way to reverting to making  
those hard sciences softly, safely, great again.

3/15/21

# FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS

"Fasten your seatbelts  
We are in for a bumpy night..."  
was surprisingly how I started  
a few of the new days at my first job  
fresh off the boat in Manhattan.

I had no idea I was hired by  
Bette Davis to sell overpriced  
imported Swiss chocolates,  
I am not even sure if at that time that I knew  
that Miss Davis was not just  
some ordinary with a Y Betty,  
or that tossing his curls to one side  
was this Eve now all abouting our  
garden of hand-crafted tissue flowers.

Teuscher Chocolates in those days  
were eighteen dollars a pound, flown  
in fresh each few days and well  
worth every handmade calorie  
to the Upper Eastside elites  
who loved their signature  
Champagne Truffles, an orgasm  
In your mouth explosion  
wrapped up in every day is  
Easter egg colored packaging.

"What a dump, what a dump"  
with the back of his palm touching forehead  
melodramaing for effect:  
"are you actually asking  
who said that? You've no  
Idea who, whom, who, and you want to be  
an actor? Under what stage have  
you been hiding?" This Bernhardt from  
Brooklyn's clutching as if a stage curtain,  
the draped carefully streamers  
of too many tulips and more than  
any October has ever fallen leaves,

the whole shop an overly, as if a set designed,  
Paradise's Garden, if seasonably swapped  
crepe was the focus not creation.  
Chiding "my poor Eliza, I forecast an  
awful lot of torrential rain will be  
falling before we ever get you to Spain..."

His name was Michael, and in my memory  
he has often asked if he could sing  
a little something from Company,  
taking me under his, I could swear  
he did wear some once for effect,  
wings to wise me up to the  
not in Kansas this is Oz, my sweet-  
"Attention must be paid, this parade  
never rests. You are with us now  
drafted, an ally, enlisted into the most  
dazzling thigh high heeled  
never touch ground boot  
(you have to become a connoisseur of) camp."

Lessons began without enrolling.  
Lose the trench coat, what were you thinking  
here fix that I'd kill to have your curly hair,  
you've no idea who'll walk through  
(that's why there's a bell on) the door.  
This is your Schrafts, Sugar, by way of  
Switzerland. You don't want to  
be like me sadly counting the best years  
(dinging the register open for stage business effect)  
of your life as a Madison Avenue Shop Girl.

I arrived right as Disco was not quite dying  
and Studio 54, Area, Palladium nightly sired,  
and his thick borough accent would disappear  
once the Pomeranian adorned dowagers  
beckoned with "may I have that same assortment  
you last so artfully chose? I adore you, dear man,  
you know my most true secret self,  
may I give Bootsy Russell here a taste?"

Customers, yes, but they were treated as family,  
a "how is your husband's colon, and ooh, look at that new hat."  
his graciousness was ever present until one day he  
left me waiting fifty five minutes outside the shop.  
even though he had an hour and two train commute,  
this was the first in my ten months he'd ever been late.

He did not say sorry as he silently unlocked the door,  
I began to count the till, and turn on the lights,  
before I realized he wouldn't even put on his pressed apron  
that he often used jokingly to curtsy, and walked over held me  
and wept. "Careful, you'll get the flowers all wet," eventually trying  
on his humor, and he said sniffing, "well it's about damn time  
someone watered the silly things," and like melted  
caramel we collapsed sliding down until sitting  
in the middle of the shop floor, the phone  
broke the unspoken soundlessness, and I took the call.

It was the other store manager, and reaching for the phone  
he stretched the cord behind the stockroom wall  
but I could hear, "Yes. In the middle of the night.  
I don't know how to call his mom. Oh, thank you,  
you dear. I appreciate that. Yes, I'm fine," he lied  
"He's been sick so long, it just is hard to make it feel right."  
And when he came back into view, he quipped  
"is my mascara running, I must look a fright."  
I suppose I'm just never going to be ready for my still waiting close up.  
My roommate Bill has finally passed, he's at peace  
and in his sleep, much better, dear sweet boy, he was at home."

Then: "We are dying!" he rightfully raged. "Some lovers aren't even  
in the room allowed to hold our hands. There are so many  
gone, we can't keep count of the memorials, let alone the life lost."  
His today has become our tomorrow, and I cannot thank him enough  
I have seen the Rocky Horror, I have sat with the silence equaling death.  
"I've so glad we've had this time together,"  
he'd sing each evening as the store's gate was pulled shut.  
And tossing his scarf defiantly, heading homeward uptown  
He added a bit too loudly: "the f\*cking sun better come out tomorrow."

3/16/21

# MORE THAN ONE MAGNUM OPUS?

Mountain ponds that invite you to plunge  
set into surroundings so picture postcard  
you must linger grateful to have discovered  
this vista to gaze upon and have it returned.

As if a breeze teases the air's fabric to tear open,  
movements unintentionally graceful genus feline,  
a folk song soft voice with just a hint of breathiness,  
all making their way vital into the concoction.

But it is her kindness with depth down hold your breath,  
the tenderheartedness that flickers and fills  
those deep can't reach to touch bottom eyes.  
Fiercely loyal and unable to let go of life's learning,  
yet yearns more for wrongs righted than recognition.

She has all of the palette that painter's tour de force,  
but what makes her the exhibit's must feature is  
the knack of her capturing the untamed entirety of existence,  
as if her mind's canvas repeatedly creates uncharted visions  
that would beg, and actually has, important curators ask kneeling:  
Can you have more than one magnum opus?

The love melody sings a bit different thanks to time's vocal changes,  
those magnificent high notes may no longer clarion,  
deeper breaths, jeez those chords dropped that low, are  
you sure that's the tempo that was once written?

But there is nothing like the dug deep into the soul of your heart  
song that knocked those shoes along with your socks off.  
From first blush of your hearing, right up to this now how many times  
there is no arguing, she's the sound that causes the  
crowding dancefloor of your being,  
the joyousness surrounding, here comes the best part  
the beat change that begs you to lift her right up  
so high she might chandelier-hit the damn ceiling.

3/17/21

# WE ARE LIVING THROUGH MONTHS WITH WEEKS OF DAYS LIKE THAT

I used to order the same breakfast sandwich from  
the deli called Delion next to NYU Drama each morning  
on the way into work and stepping out in a still warm  
September tracking the time before my first appointment  
and just after taken a bite with a roll not exactly fresh  
I looked up to see a downtown building on fire

Racing into work everyone was crowded  
around a TV set that had been pulled into  
the lobby and folks were saying it was a plane,  
I heard it was a jet that flew into the Trade Center.  
As it was being batted back and forth as too improbable  
the second aircraft flew into the Twin Tower, and there was  
no more need to debate. It may have been only a moment  
but it felt a full half hour before the next sound  
shattering, yanking us, pulling us from our  
deep underwater stunned silence, as if the walls  
themselves were wailing, you could hear it long before  
she entered, was a student's screams of unfettered sorrow:  
"I saw someone leap, I watched them falling" words catapulting  
atop of her gasping for breath, and we rushed to comfort her,  
administering what little care one can when  
the enormity of what was unfolding  
left us all wondering  
how do you  
minister  
to the  
inconsolable.

Multitudes of memories from that sky blue day  
Just a quarter mile from what became ground zero,  
The cloud of moving ash making its way uptown as  
vast as a deserted dust bowl sandstorm, followed by those  
already enveloped in the fog of still smoldering debris  
hacking with each trudge, engulfed with only the whites of their eyes  
ungreyed,



as they slowly marched, their pace as scattered as the Founding of Purgatory's parade  
The subways were screeched to a halt and like a blackout in broad daylight.  
Every street was pouring full with all trying to find a way still shaking home  
hoping all they loved were safe, no cell service, land lines ringing off the hook,  
are you there, please pick up, I just want to make sure, I am fine call me the  
minute-  
You could reach out and tangibly grasp the collective concern that we now  
were no longer in a place such stuff dreams are made on, but with blocks of  
buildings  
built to be knocked down,  
full of millions to be targeted,  
we lived  
in the  
most valuable  
bullseye  
was this  
disaster's ending  
episode or  
just the  
first season?

Of course there was even in the devastation  
of the then unimaginable, small acts of  
heroic humanity, and to have experienced  
the absence of selfishness, the vanquishing  
of vanity and vehemence that set  
in by the next day's dawning  
was something none of us will ever forget  
nor should, it was as if all that was possible  
in a daydream of a utopia had flowered  
but slowly the best of us  
found the way back to  
horns honking,  
bumping into  
strangers, get out  
of the way  
worst.

And now we are living through months with  
weeks of days just like that, how do you even begin  
to not lose count when there are hundreds upon thousands,  
yes once more there are daily those responding to the call  
whose bravery, sheer goodness, the best of who are  
are saving strangers, creating treatments, sharing food, building shelter

but there are still those crowding the beaches and bars,  
and have you heard, I just read that your Delion had to close,  
while our state, only the 24th in per capita deaths, and we never  
chose to shut down, we are booming, people are banging  
down the door to move here, and none of my friends are  
living fearful, I can show you science that says that masks  
don't even work.

And I hear that student  
Screaming out in the hall  
Full of sick beds  
overflowing  
And will the  
building's full  
casualties  
that were  
finally  
receding  
be allowed  
to one  
day stop  
before  
another  
bright blue  
Fall.

3/18/21

# MARCH MADNESS

A friend of mine does a March Madness bracket for Musicals,  
and of course it is great fun to see it whittle down each year.  
Oh, I can hear the purists on either side pontificating (as am I)  
It's not as if artists play an actual game to win or lose,  
That is the beauty of sport, you have to back it up, it isn't over till it's over.  
Then what makes art more wonderful than any game played?  
It is not meant to anoint winners who by next season are forgot  
but to speak to the ages about man's inability to have never  
been able to defeat all the hurt caused by the failure to accept loss.

But what is giving me pause and I hope you will consider  
Is our seemingly inbred need for competition's end-orphine.  
From the coliseum to the Olympics, jousting to the NCAA tournament,  
The Festival of Dionysus to the Golden Globes, Salome to So You Think You  
Can Dance  
We raise generation after back in my day which was better, to enter don't miss  
even one competition,  
wait, did you get that shot on video, it's a three day round robin, win is the only  
way to advance.

We have built our trophy rooms, even compete to decide who has won the  
debate,  
chronicle and catalogue all the stats, calculated the odds, bet the house.  
We elect our leaders, there are shows where they even biggest loser their  
mates,  
finally resolving the rigging of centuries of gender and race, but hardest to  
reconcile  
it can even when not careful (and let's face it, more often than its not) escalates  
to life or death.  
So when Hamilton duels to outlast Les Miserables, or the Blue Devils duke it  
out with Gonzaga  
let's watch party how we crave the distraction, the yin and yang of it just wasn't  
our day.

I can hear you now, how much less interesting without conflict's opposition,  
but I wouldn't mind, I don't think, not worrying once and for all who's G.O.A.T.  
Isn't that always decided by our own age amplifies greatness,  
yours had it much easier before the rule changes,  
look at the shoes, stronger is easier with steroids, you couldn't even dunk.  
I'd like to step forward to accept without any more of a speech,  
after being awarded an impossibly long life without struggle,

because in the end there will be only those who have come after,  
Let's all realize the worth and move Miss Congeniality to First Prize  
and having performed with magnificent humility  
find great consolation in peaceful resting on our  
Life's Achievement Honorary Laurels.

3/19/21

# CHILDHOOD SWEETHEARTS

My first and last love stories, if you listen you will hear  
often in their obit, 85 years we were together, my only sweet-one's kiss.  
Then there are some that since high school or sophomore year in college  
paid attention learning how not to lose them,  
if life's lottery lucky enough to have stumbled onto  
finding just the right one. Like those Shingle Back Skinks  
they instinctually knew even before the deed was over,  
we'll be mating for life, with us that'll be how its done.

And there are beautiful anecdotes of outlasting and forgiving,  
The bond that is earned, the prize reaped from perseverance.  
Weathered that storm, we often finish each other's sentence  
neither of us can imagine, our life without the other,  
songs sing us soulmates, the back of my hand knows  
when to just let him, she is my rock and foundation.

I on the other hand have been much more Fitzgerald than Ronald Reagan  
With the knack to be attracted to lovely, rare, take your breath orchids,  
who to survive in let's call it a perennial non-native climate  
required the building, not of cozy homes, more steamy hothouses.

Therapists would say (and have) there are patterns of poor judgement  
Long ago not worths, or why do you begin to strike the set just after the last  
show  
avoidance of any lasting happiness. But of course those of us prone to  
the Fosse Verdoning choreography, think of it as depending on the kindness  
of appreciating yet another misunderstood needing nurture stray underdog,  
even my rescued pets have fallen right into that problematically poetic pattern.

Once you reach the worry is this the final act of your life's drama  
It's a bit too much to hope for a tone shift that would feel wait a second  
was that dare I say maturing, or just a poor choice in the story-telling  
it would be jumping the dead shark for me to suddenly begin to play comedy.  
Best to settle in and ride it out with recognition, that you have  
lived and lost and loved and mourned more novelly than what might  
be found on the shelf of romances catalogued Childhood Sweethearts.

3/20/21

# CLOSING MATINEE

I used to think the only art form less appreciated than playwriting was poetry, but sadly that might have been yet another miscalculation. Let's just say I have a tenuous detente with forecasting, I often let hyper-hopeful desires obscure my if I only had better judgement. After all, at age twelve, I wore out, long past the landslide, my tee-shirt McGovern, and if I had my desires, we'd be reaping the benefits of a President Warren. That tells you how out of touch with realities percentages I file my life's taxes, and you'd have to laugh, having tried both, there has been greater time wasting than the reconciling the not so great debate of which art is the poorer life path.

But this afternoon marks the final of three performances of one of my plays, first staged almost forty years ago and only twice since. And some of my written word children- and I know there are countless other dramatists who if honest are right there with me- have grown up tucked away in drawerfulls of now digital folders with characters never entering or exiting, heard only on our imagination's lavish stage which is like having a really nice oven but never being able to light it to bake. For if typing end of play was its own epitaph that's as much a tragedy, some would lament farce as mournful as the scattered worldwide countless dark theatres with only charismatic and talented ghosts in their lights centerstage.

So you poets, though artistic minorities underserved, rejoice it could be worse, you could be in search of producers, a cast of performers, a theatre to rent, you just need a Cyrano to recite, or a Valentine to tuck away the song of your heart.

We playwrights, if we hit fortunes jackpot, will be soon be under contract with Hulu.

So I hope you will consider this plea on the day of my closing matinee, teach your children the incalculable return on their soul's investment by finding themselves onstage, or better yet ignore all above I've said, encourage them to change history's performance, illuminating by putting pen to yet even more screen time's paper.

3/21/21

# CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Do Your Research  
It is all in CodeMonkeyz  
Next Drop,  
Disclosure  
Don't Let Yourself  
Be Ruled By Fear  
Down the Rabbit Hole  
Ascension, Sovereignty  
Starseeded, Ten Days  
You are being sea lioned  
Trust the Plan, The Storm  
Save the Children  
The Satanic Elite, TPTB  
The Powers that Be  
The Sheepies, the Normies  
The MSM Mainstream  
Mockingbird Media  
Forcing Penetration  
Mole Children,  
Brainwashed Doctors  
Microchipped  
Pedogate, The Chads, Meeks  
And Femoids, Goolagged ,  
Wrongthink. Hypergamy  
Transtrenders The  
Clowns in America  
All False Flags part of  
The Five Eyes, Deep State  
Adrenochromed  
The Satanic Cabal  
Don't see the D5,  
Let's Correct the Record  
The Trumpire, GEOTUS  
God Emperor of the United States  
Red Pilled? Pill Black  
Q Sent Us  
Looking At All Viewpoints  
My Body My Choice  
The Great Awakening  
Enjoy the Show

Starseeded  
This Resonates With Me  
Watch This Before  
It is Taken Down Again  
WWG1WGA  
Where We Go One  
We Go All!

(All terms taken from the Q Anon Conspiracy)

3/22/21



# ONLY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS DO

Guns don't kill people,  
we have heard both sides  
of this life or death debate  
for decades, and I suppose  
you can make a case the shoot outs  
been around for centuries.  
Catapults don't kill people,  
yet give someone in Boulder  
a weapon and blood spilled.

They are coming for your guns  
It is your sacred right immortalized  
from an amendment which  
by definition means added,  
to protect against the original need  
to stop a dangerous standing army.  
And those clamoring loudest  
probably don't even know  
why it was drafted, pun intended.  
They would not, I dare them to say  
support the current militia movement,  
anti-tifa-government, and cross that  
sacrosanct blue line, disband those  
do not kneel and disrespect our armed services.  
So they keep parsing the Second's  
original intentions antimilitary  
to fit their desire to carry causing  
supermarkets to become battlefields,  
multiplex movies theatres of war.

Fake News, is their cry:  
armed we are safer!  
Ignoring every fact  
and figure from other  
civilized nations refuting.  
It is long past the semester  
to relegate active shooter  
drills to history class lessons  
as "do you remember when" foolish enough  
they learned Duck and Cover?

Words have power they say  
Too soon to turn this political,  
even as they point out the breaking news:  
Didn't you hear, he was an Arabic  
foreigner, this was an attack on all  
we true American patriots hold dear.  
Enough. Too early? When will it dawn on you?  
It is long past the morning of another morality heist.  
Laws need to be drawn made of words weaponized.  
Arm ourselves with unyielding assault verses,  
demand once and for all with rapid  
fire  
repeating  
large capacity  
verbiage.  
End-  
the sale of weapons of war for personal use  
Snuff out-  
the profiteers, make it illegal to lobby  
Target-  
the manufacturers who won't build in safety  
Kill-  
the filibuster if no choice to come together  
Finish-  
the careers at the ballot box of those opposing  
Slaughter-  
Nonsensical loopholes with sensible gun reform laws.

3/23/21

# TWO EARLY TALES OF I WISH THEY WERE PULP FICTION COWARDICE

## Episode One: The Phantom Menace

In first or second grade somehow I stumbled in our school library onto a book on shark attacks with extremely graphic photos of bites and bodies that I would hope would no longer be available to give others the Great White nightmares that it provided for me and of course I renewed it over and over studying each chapter, and you have to understand, I grew up in Miami so every single time I went into the salt water, I was certain it would be my last. To this day when I swim, I worry about what can't be certain of being seen below, and yes I have seen Jaws, I am old enough to remember the premiere my senior year of high school, newly armed with my permit to drive and it was my first date with a beautiful tragically unaware of what she was getting into short bobbed fresh faced coed. Now the movie of course was two hours of trauma for me, but I did my best to be a shoulder for her to be squeamish on. I do not recall her even once covering her eyes, while I was certain my heart would not hold out. Now here is where it veered into you cannot make this stuff up, and I do not think I had ever had this happen again, and I wonder what the version of this story is from her does she even recall point of view, but this doomed to never desire a second date with liver lacking me lived across the Rickenbacker Causeway and in that moment seemingly countless miles from my neighborhood who can remember how we even then met, but that meant crossing the Biscayne Bay, a long stretch of open water, and sure, we were in a car, not a boat or a raft, but I was a white knuckling new night-driver and add into the mix the recipe for disaster newly awakened galeophobia, I mean what would happen if we found ourselves tossed into the deep waters? "Are you kidding" my later on confided friend would laugh with the retelling, quoting Butch Cassidy not Spielberg, "the fall would have killed you." Well past a school-night bedtime she and I were saying a polite and friendly summer's goodnight, my mind more vexed by my solo trip back across those dark and choppy waters

than aching the post date chemistry test pass/fail is she wanting a good night kiss.

The drive home was as uneventful as that polite but a bit chilly for July driveway encounter, and this same lack of emotional support friend concluded his biting back commentary

with a much more accurate allusion:

I think next time you're going to need a bigger boat.

## **Episode Two: Past Tenderfoot Was Second Class Anyway**

It seems my greatest moments of get a grip dorkiness are to be blamed on the lack of smart curatorship of reading materials in public spaces, especially those misadventures that begged the question is there really a right place in the wild if your time always seems to end up being wrong,

and sure now they have multiple cable channels capitalizing on this extreme sporting cathartic craze, but I was in the analog age devouring a simple Reader's Digest firsthand account of Grizzly Bear Yellowstone attacks in the waiting room of my before there were pediatric dentists on the Thursday before leaving Friday, meaning the eve of my first overnight Scout camping trip.

We were deep in the swamp of the state forest, remember this is Florida, more everglades than evergreen, which meant our heart of darkness was but a short middle school mosquitoed hike from the parking lot, but I knew that as night fell and we were zipped up in our tent, this was not the natural habitat of the North American Grizzly, no, of course not, earlier the troopers chided as we told campfire stories, and I had foolishly confided, "but there are Florida Black Bears" chiming in, why did he have to, was the Scout Master.

"They can grow to be very large, though usually not aggressive,"

and I remember the pause for (and it had) effect

"unless provoked, so give them their space."

We might as well be ringing the dinner bell for them

I thought as I listened to the other four boys now loudly snoring.

And then sure enough, there was the first footfall, was I dreaming?

No, shh, there's another... Should I whisper wake up, or play dead

Might as well start rehearsing... then right outside the canvas came the breathing.

Is it possible to choke on a lump in your throat, that's my blood,

I can feel it leaving my feet- and then at least four more steps cracked the brush  
It was a pack, or a family, or a cubby, or whatever a group of them hungry...

Nothing to do but shrink down in my used bag, bought at a thrift store

to hold me over while I decided if I liked camping, fat chance, I almost yelled-

But that was when what I could swear was laughing began- a high pitched cackle and then the first clang of some kind of loud metal. Then bumping

into the tent began at least two or three of them fighting. I'm from a state where the climate will never cause shivering, but my entire twelve years slowly now were parading right in front of me to the sound of not being able to control my teeth chattering. The long night of just waiting for the claws to tear through and like those poor sods in Wyoming have limb ripped from limb which has never made anatomical sense, arm plucked would be more accurate. And somehow around four thirty I realized I would live to see five, and the slept right through the apocalypse snoring, and now some sort of birds chirping lulled me finally asleep. The others were already finished breakfast when I unzipped and ran to the latrines and saw the garbage strewn about and realized that was what had saved us. It was some wily raccoons, I was told later as we gathered the plants we needed to fill our merit badge assignment. It wasn't bears, though a raccoon can be trouble, the poor boy who was supposed to make sure the garbage was carefully locked and I never made it past that weekend, For though my brother became an Eagle, I wasted no time checking back in my sash, cap and uniform, and gladly ended my scouting career joking that past Tenderfoot was Second Class anyway.

3/24/21

# DIVORCE DAY

I had no idea there was a National Divorce Day, fittingly there's little agreement on the exact date for the festivities, some decree the first Monday in January because right after the Holidays, lawyers always see a sad surge in separations. Other's pinpoint January 5- for in 1643, Anne Clarke was awarded the Colony's first legal divorce in Boston after her husband Denis admitted to desertion and fathering a few children with another woman. Only after he refused unwilling to return, did the court have the right to grant the divorce, and wouldn't you know there was an earlier Plymouth separation sought in 1636 for bigamy by Mrs. James Luxford, her given name not noted in history's recording. Mr. James was fined and spent an hour in the stocks before being shipped back to England where one assumes the original Mrs. James Luxford resided.

There is also a national Ex-Spouse day on April 14 exactly two months after celebrating your Valentine is the best time to appreciate the positive moments you shared with your previous partners, with I surmise only dark chocolates but no dying, maybe dried, flowers. There are multiple Break Up Days vying for consensus Dec. 11, the first Wednesday in May, and Feb. 13- the latter seems a bit convenient or cruel, or both, and has even been renamed Breakup With Your Carrier Day to commercialize the need to be torn from your cell phone.

All of these more millstone than mile markers I discovered while ruminating on the retrogradation of romance. Certainly we are long past time for the respect finally being given to the victims of relationship violence with some bravely refusing to remain voiceless or to settle with society's labeling of damaged and now your life's been ruined. But what of the countless other love stories concluding without crossing the not so fine line to crime or abuse, Shouting matches, broken dishes, now social media doxing, how many vehicles have been late night packed garbage bags full of all owned possessions? The knelt on top of the mountain, or worse yet Jumbo-tron proposals rejected, how many jewelers have returned rings, no money back guarantees from event center alters?

I implore, if Eros' bargain with you is paying off with dividends,  
Rejoice-  
and never take for granted those quiet moments  
of agreement, the glance sweetly returned, the smile  
complete with contentment. Find your way  
back to that remember when we embraced under  
that blanket of the incomprehensible infinity of  
that clear across the sky's whole horizon,  
an entire universe of immortality's stars.

But if you are lost, or locked in, the reading of  
your story's tone is telling more Tolstoy than Rumi,  
if wars keep raging outpacing precious inner peace,  
there is a soul's celebration on the other shore  
no longer drowning in this current undertowing,  
the riptide of your trying to make wrong anguishingly right.  
Go ahead and unravel the tattered emotions encircling  
unbound by bravely, difficultly, despite sorrow, unbinding.  
The myths do not regale Cupid's farsighted inaccuracies in his archery,  
And though history is full of many Cleopatras and Madame Boverys,  
thankfully we're now liberated by women's voices rewriting heroic  
stirred by the Jo Marches, the Celies, Katness Everdeens, and Orlandos.  
All of us, binary, dual, third, how about wherever on the spectrum of genders  
take hold tightly of the tenderest of hopes that will carry and sustain you  
released into the years and the months and the weeks that will sweetly  
dividend  
past the brutal breaking apart of this one day you will later label Divorce.

3/25/21

# GOP HAIKUS

Protect Second rights  
They are coming for your guns  
Gets you lots of votes.

Government's too big  
It's not the solution it's  
The problem. Flood, shit!

Bi-partisanship  
Is a whole damn line itself  
End it. Just not now.

Count every vote (oops)  
If legal and not suspect  
To fraud we create.

We don't need mandates  
We trust folks to make choices  
They have been dead right.

Cancel culture kills  
Free speech like Trump on Twitter  
Blocking his Big Lie.

Where is the outrage  
When Biden puts kids in cages?  
Its right when we're wrong.

The Green New Deal is  
A Socialist wish list of  
Pies in the dead sky.

Abortions kill kids  
Who have the right to grow up  
And own guns that don't.



Racism is over  
We had a black president  
Not even born here.

The future is clear  
Gerrymandering, Suppression  
Less votes will be wins

3/26/21

# NOT SO FUNNY LIMERICKS (A FAILED REQUEST FOR HUMOR)

There once was a Senator named Cruz  
who's very name made some abuse booze,  
every speech was sanctimoniously self righteous,  
yet he backed those revolting enough to spite us,  
spreading lies, bigger than Cancun, our election was rigged to lose.

In Georgia they had a Governor (barely elected) named Kemp,  
who passed laws illegal to give voter's water in hot temps,  
claiming first there were no problems with prior elections,  
but when his party demanded allegiance, to suppress all selection  
lickity split its now more difficult for voters to attempt.

There is a Hawley from Mizzo name Josh,  
young enough to have partied in a concert pit mosh,  
he fist pumped and rallied helping keep the Big in the Lie,  
like a bad ass rebel more home in tailored suit and tie,  
ambition blinding him to the many norms he gladly will squash.

There have been few less squeaky clean Vice President's than Mike Pence,  
the head of the Corona Virus Task Force, months too late and seldom seen  
since,  
he did warp speed vaccines, but gaslighted the nation, refusing to go out  
masked,  
for one who couldn't dodge a house fly, he ducked almost every hard  
question's asked,  
yet almost hung sacrificed, regaining religion, nakedly embraced his own killer  
hence.

Which leaves us with Donald J., who of much too much has been written,  
after four years of his attacks, we'd rather have all been pit-bull bitten,  
still spewing on Fox last night claiming that his election was third world stolen,  
never having met a loss he could face or a hurt healed humanely by consoling,  
and all those running 2022 , Mara-Logoing to him, genuflecting, pretending to  
be smitten.

3/27/21

# TOUCHED BUT NOT FELT

There is a video memeing  
A mother black bear  
And four of her cubs  
As if in answer to an old jest  
Why did the bear cross the road  
To get to the other side  
In a town called Winchester

But her cubs keep darting back  
Onto the wrong side of the road  
And she keeps crossing back over  
To bring them to safety.  
One cub obeys dutifully striding with her  
The others not so easy, have  
To be carried one by one, and  
Young and foolishly dart back  
Not knowing which side best to remain on.

A caravan of many cars stopped in both  
Directions for the almost  
Ten minutes it took for her  
She only has one mouth  
To gather them into the woods  
And go on with their black bear life

I think of that determination and fierce  
Mother love, but what is even  
More striking is the patience  
Of the long line of those humans,  
Collective compassion their care  
Unplanned on candid camera display

In only the way that irony algorithms  
In our world's wide web, what was  
Next on this thing we call news feed  
Was a young fisherman's glee after  
Wrestling with great skill at his  
Monstrous catch, who after being  
Lured, was wrestling one on one  
A fight to the death to remain

In the water and swim home  
But he was hooked, took the bait  
This was to be his days reckoning  
No denying the skill and sport  
On one side of this morality play  
Every trick taught, all those hours  
Spent mastering, this was the go  
For the kill it.

Once pulled from the deep  
Gasping convulsive last breaths  
On this ocean's roadside  
Lined with fishermen applauding,  
A magnificent creature's  
Lifetime was turned into a trophy  
Almost as big as the lumbering  
Mother who just a moment  
That might have been a lifetime  
Ago, survived her encounter  
With our species with an almost  
Jovial cubs will be cubs reverie

And yes, that fish didn't get huge  
By not eating other fish and  
If on the trail and meeting up  
With the mother bear might  
Feel more disaster than Disney  
But some Sunday's it just seems  
That the playing out of life's slideshow  
Feels a bit too rollercoaster random.  
I've never liked those rides that pull  
Your guts into your mouth and  
Allow death's danger  
To be touched but not felt.

3/28/21

# MAKE ACCEPTABLE GLUTTONY AGAIN

The closest I get to waxing back to those were the days  
knowing that nostalgia forgives many faults, some grievous,  
when young our yardsticks are understandably short-  
just ask one of those prize winning prodigies bursting  
at the seams claiming their award won makes this  
the best day of my life! And we all lip-biting  
reminded they are only in their meaning's morning,  
isn't each days dawn when that new darn neat?  
But I do have to admit when I look back  
from this wish I had evermore experience's it's now late evening  
the City I grew up in had some pretty darn great,  
if not particularly good for you, eating.

Just on US I (then known tone deafly as highway South Dixie)  
We had Sweden House Smorgasbord- which taught us  
If not how to spell, the proper gorging involved in buffet eating,  
prime rib, mountains of meatballs and hot dishes  
as Scandinavian as you get translated into Southern Floridian

Farm Stores- a child's dream in a drive thru  
"We need milk Mom and theirs is the freshest"  
chirping our bait but the switch was the long list of ice creams  
many more than any you call that famous puny 31 flavored Baskin Robbins.  
Chocolate Marshmallow- the nectar of the Gods, if you ask me,  
I sampled some others, all the way to Pistachio, I did not want  
to seem close minded, too in my ways frozen, after all a budding liberal,  
but none were remotely doesn't get better than this,  
and speaking of selection , I see they've remained in business, good for them,  
though their diversification offering groceries from tobacco to coffee  
has grown the Farm in the Stores quite a few acres,  
less on earth's dairy heaven the fittest  
have survived by replicating Seven Eleven.

Just up the road there was Shorty's BBQ since 1951  
Damn, I'd almost move back and fight traffic infinity and sweat even more  
just for their legendary rack of ribs, buttered corn, and sweet bread.  
You sat country style back then some saucy lick your finger forty to a table.  
And though I became a vegetarian for almost thirty years,  
It might have been the memories of such smells strong enough  
you can taste knocking me off my there goes wellness wagon.  
Shorty's, named after a transplanted, I assume tiny, Georgian named Allen,

was so iconic that after a fire then hurricane destroyed it,  
twice rose from the bricquetted ashes reborn  
and it is no pulled pork to say, some of my most  
memorable pounds were there piled on.  
Sure there was always a line, but happiness awaited once plopped down  
at those long shiny shellacked picnic at a cabin style tables.

Delivered was the Tin causing you to wait  
like a dog panting at the front door for.  
It's a wonder that I never cheated and ordered some myself,  
since all you had to pick up was your kitchen wall phone and call for  
the best thing that was ever packaged in a souvenir light brown barrel,  
a can of were these made fresh today tasting Charles Chips.  
Sure they had pretzels, not bad, but it was those mouth melting  
just salty enough, sliced see through thin potatoes  
that elevated after school eating long past that Debbie,  
she was let's face it Little, no Charles the first, last,  
and no close second raised afternoon snacking,  
hey, leave some for tomorrow, to an art form.

But what sent my memory back to these far from Michelin star sites  
was recalling the smell of fresh bread from the bakery called Holsum.  
You could be a mile away and all of sudden it was if the highway  
had become your with the cookies in the oven home kitchen,  
and sure it wasn't much better than Wonder, we actually hardly ever bought  
some  
no wonder, sorry- surprise  
they shut down in the not so wholesome 2,000's.  
But that aroma made you feel equal parts happy and hungry,  
no bus fumes, no car air conditioner's humming, could stop that  
sweet just baked air freshening more potent than any ever Glade,  
here we come, getting close, open the windows, yum,  
we're driving though South Miami's consider the spot hitten.

We had famous Cuban joints and fabulous flan sure,  
fresh seafood, stone crabs from Joe, even  
the home of where the Burger King was first throned  
But it was those above mentioned no more risky as potatoes to meat  
Let's face it I'm as foodie as the Monster named Cookie.  
My sunburnt because we actually still copper toned back then self  
Fondly recalls with a zeal that makes any modern day  
MAGA sound as if should be translated to mean  
Make Acceptable Gluttony Again.

3/29/21

# THE GRAND TOUR

Word coroners say that tourist was just a hop skip from tour,  
to turn on a lathe, to make a circular pattern in wood.

This impermanence of place, it is no longer travel if we stay  
is the key unlocking this idea that opens with:

“Do they grow anything there

but coconuts and spring break vacations?”

See every time when I said I was from Miami

the response was “wow, I thought folks grew old

there not grew up.” This was long before the

Cuban migration and Miami Vice, and buckets of drug money.

“Nice place to visit, my Nanaw loves the weather,” they’d add

and who can blame them, the Fontainebleau, Jackie Gleason

glory days were long gone, the fabulous deco hotels

had yellowed into retirement homes steps from the

still warm and beautiful tropical waters lined with wheelchairs

before the Beach Is Back now bottled water au fresco Euro style cafes.

This was the time of the last gasp of the must see single owner

do it yourself, if you dream it, someone will build tourist traps.

There was a nothing like it anywhere else spot for you to snap

your own picture postcards,

Barnum meets Berlitz,

Triple A meet AARP.

A cavalcade for the golden age of the middle-class station wagoners

five miles ahead,

then three,

turn here,

go back you just missed it.

We lived minutes away from Parrot Jungle,

blandly rebranded now as Jungle Island,

but in it’s hey day featuring a bird circus, flock of flamingos

which would have been a much better new wave band

Pinky the bicycle riding cockatiel, who had performed

for Winston Churchill, and now ninety long retired but still riding.

Over towards the highway was Serpentarium with it’s huge

35 foot Hooded Snake statue, tongue you could swear hissing.

Cookie the crocodile, who “left” after eating a small visitor,

and countless Mambas, Vipers, and spitting King Cobras

milked for their life-saving venom by the often bitten,

Bill Haast who outlived their poison to see 100.

Head just down the road to Monkey Jungle still  
caging the humans while the monkeys run wild.  
Since 1935, 30 acres with 300 primates all swinging  
and swimming in a wild monkey pool, this  
is after all South Florida, a favorite for fieldtrips  
with the Javas screaming, jumping, brachiations

There were also Castles of Coral, Tropical  
Gardens and the Mediterranean mansion Vizcaya.  
Some have faded away, but many still star major attractions  
like Se aquarium, once home of Flipper offering bottle nose encounters,  
a one stop underwater wonderway at the foot of Biscayne Bay.

My hometown was a major travel destination long before  
the explosion of Orlando and mega-parks became themed.  
So it is no surprise that I wonder about this thing called tourism.  
Humans have always thirsted for the journey, to sail off exploring,  
there was an age where it was nobility's rite of passage,  
a visit to the continent gave clout, cachet and experience  
to taste the many lives outside our stone walled courts and castles,  
this Grand Tour was meant to be an eye opener, but  
it is my humble opinion, though obviously evolutionary,  
witness the vogue for vacationing, the carnival of cruises, the now  
niches for tourism, but ask me it's inbred deep inside us, traveler  
stamped passports, all taking our turn in our life's  
coming back to the start,  
each no matter our rung,  
its a ritual rite to find our place  
on parade some with pomp many more with mere circumstance.  
Because though we may have a hometown, an address with a house  
it's all just a stop on our never ending even grander, turn life's lathe, tour.

3/30/21



# THREE WITNESSES

What confluence of coincidences would have to converge  
for an off duty firefighter, a mixed martial arts combatant,  
and a brave black teenager savvy in the ways of social media cellphoning,  
for these three just to happen to stance bear witness  
as a life was being taken at 38th and Chicago,  
never knowing they were standing at  
a sharp turn in history's corner?

Imagine having trained for years to use tactical brute force  
and restraining yourself caged by society says right rules knowing  
you have the ability to tap into this struggle and reek some havoc.  
Still you exercise restraint and remain on the sidewalk as ordered  
but all of your skill and fighter's instincts will not let you do nothing.  
You curse at these men whom you believe are murdering, and when you testify  
are painted as an angry black man. How many times this unsanctioned  
struggle has played in your mind's fury with you knocking k'bang this officer  
tumbling backward off of his victim, risking arrest, or worse being shot,  
to come to the rescue before the fight's last round's over.  
Then all at once it is, and there you are, and now here again, and tomorrow still  
will be.

How does a fighter brave enough ever reconcile not fighting?

Rookie year as firefighter and emergency medical technician  
you're off duty walk's from a garden's interrupted  
circling back to a scuffle in your neighborhood unfolding,  
and you recognize an officer recently encountered,  
but blood begins pulsing because a handcuffed man has lost consciousness  
and you know the danger of knee to neck  
and the full weight of three to one bearing down.  
You are a saver of lives, and here is a man begging for his  
crying for his mother and no medical help is responding  
and though identifying yourself as someone trained to assist  
"Get back in line" you are mocked "if actually a member of Minneapolis Fire  
the threat now follows: you will know better than to get involved.  
When you do call 9-11 and report your emergency  
even though long ago these colleagues of yours should have,  
they asked you on the stand, why you got upset, seemed angry?  
I don't know if you've seen anybody get killed but it's upsetting...  
And the judge will even admonish you, but that is a year off  
affirming what you realized then your life has changed forever as you

are for all time intertwined with his which has now just been taken.  
He's a load and go already gone.

Worried enough to escort your nine year old cousin inside  
To pick out the snacks she and you were about to shop for,  
but now your phone is in hand and you are recording.  
This doesn't feel right, you see your father, brothers, in this black man begging  
that white hand is staying in that pocket, nonchalantly kneeling, pressing  
harder,  
you could hear the gasping, pleading, you and the others arguing until it went  
quiet.  
I am so sorry I didn't do more, you will lament for many years and then after,  
the journalist's conundrum, why did you point and shoot not intervene,  
you are not even seventeen and now centerstage in your race's story.  
As your cousin disobeys and walks out  
you make sure she stays safe still filming.  
but you cannot help but feel your first tears  
she is watching what for you both,  
and now thanks to you the whole world,  
can never go unseen.  
How do you make sense of little Judeah  
bearing witness wearing a favorite  
bright green long sleeve tee shirt  
emblazoned across the front with  
the single word  
Love.

3/31/21

# WHO YOU MAY NEVER GET TO BE

Who we are when we work is often not who we are,  
some more polite, friendly, patient, efficient, disciplined  
better coifed, following protocol, decorum dictating.

Others are much less, at worst none of the above.

Is what we have decided to do a magnifier of our best  
or a doorway into our lesserness. Or given a different or  
long enough day, both.

Do we interface, or sequester, is it our calling or a paycheck,  
does it define us or ensnare us, entangled in need,  
will we wake up having worn a where did this come from career's uniform  
or nourish us with ssh, I'd have done it for free, purpose providing?

There was a conductor on the number one local train  
Upper West Side leaving the station with thousands of fixed  
stops starts made on his route each day jovially greeting  
riders with an aria sung enthusiastic hel-lo and watch the close-ing doors  
adding a fun factoid if you like canals but are not a big fan of water  
this is the stop for you. If you are leaving us here, you get a canal with a street  
not a bridge.

He had quite the repertoire never in my twenty years heard him repeat,  
and with an all aboard, the doors would I swear shut as if on the downbeat  
and my fellow riders and I enjoyed a performance not a dull daily commute  
thanks to his infectious joy we had turnstyled  
onto the subway philharmonic conductor's train.

If you were going to sign up for a class on world religions  
to gather credits in the liberal arts what are the chances  
it would be taught by a doctor named John Priest? I suppose  
he could have become a cleric given his love for the Passion  
but he used to laugh at the notion who would follow Father Priest?  
His calling was teaching each class with a flock of a few hundred  
each lecture paced perfectly, nothing short of breath taking.  
Never was he late and I have no idea how at the moment  
the class was to be ending he had just finished summarizing  
even if there had been as often a wide ranging discussion,  
on material that had been presented as though a thrilling who done it.  
Nothing pleased him more than our minds having been cracked wide open  
and he smiled just that bit and his eyes would I swear wink as he  
served up another idea of eats, another faith's what if, with the certainty of a  
master chef

about to sit you down at his five course all you can eat, handed down  
From family to family favorite recipe, faith's feast.

May you find your way to that nourishing undertaking, even if yes, undertaker  
Your evenings rest will be sweeter if day's dream, your own shop, has opened  
for baking

It may take almost all of your road's journey, but once you have felt  
that kick open wide door you've found your calling's home feeling  
Move on in, never away, no matter your age  
it may not come with a salary, or enough, no matter  
who you are is much better than  
who you may never get to be.

4/1/21

# WHAT IS WORSE THAN CRIMINAL?

I've been privileged to have been in the room with death now three times.  
Please understand I am not at all implying entitled.  
I am in no hurry for the certain to be fourth.  
I am trying to convey the honor, the trust  
the permission in this most private of moments,  
the letting go of self.  
To have been allowed into the miraculously mysterious  
there is no greater love possible for either side to have conferred.

I have seen the sense of calm, the release from the struggle that even the  
simple act of breath can come to, once we cease to begin our not being end.  
But in each of these monumental, the immediately tumbling freefalling into the  
bottomless grief of personal loss, impossible as it was to prepare for, the will  
you ever be able to comprehend, was somehow fathomable.

Now witnessed by the entire world's eyes this smiting,  
the callous disregard, dignity extinguished,  
what is worse than criminal  
is that Mr. Floyd was denied any peace or grace or love,  
in the gutter he was executed.

There are no words, evil is too banal,  
our vocabulary should not have a more terrible than torture,  
a more depraved than murder.  
But there it was happening  
and as if Rashomon was now a bodycam snuff film,  
played four times from each vantage variations,  
the same cries for his loved ones,  
the same legs kicking until stillness  
the same pleading from the crowd,  
the same chilling killer's indifference.

The first time you are sickened,  
the second time you somehow cannot seem  
to believe it won't be different,  
the third every bit of the depravity becoming  
nightmarishly too familiar, and  
the final time it becomes so deeply imprinted  
indelible, never to be erasable.  
And yet, there the defendant sits,  
making notes upon his legal pad,

plotting his indefensible cross examinations.  
In our legal system, there are two sides,  
the crimeless and the criminal,  
but this is one of those  
past all humanity's hopeful righteousness  
our innocence has been overruled  
and the universe's jury would find  
each of us in some way guilty.

4/2/21

## WHO WAS TO REMEMBER WHEN AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET TO WHERE'S STARTING

Birdsong filling the frost free backyard with the frolicking joy of first Spring morning flights  
The cold nose bumping playfully against you begging for a four paws extended belly rub  
A dish of of still cold just softening ice cream ready to sacrifice all, ministering with a lifetime  
of efficacy trials tested, the expert diagnosis for a hard to swallow sore throat  
A family feast with friends invited, table topped with what those with little culinary training call a damn nice spread, and you take all in, eyes darting to embrace each of the others closed in prayer just before the command never needed to dig in.

These gentle kisses, gifted graces. should be taken out once collected and spread about  
On your memories blanket to be admired, dusted off, re-valued your Muse's dividends have returned.  
And yes there are some that are more big sloppy unfettered embraces, tests coming back after what took so long, nights of no sleep, did you say negative,  
The car you should have seen completely totaled, yet all safely somehow survived  
So significant they must be marked in the book as becoming chapter divides.

But today it's the tide ebbing as with with arms reaching out offering up it's treasure chest of shells still scattered all the way up past the corners of this coast's horizon  
The misting water Joni Mitchelling downriver, skipping over this rock and then that, and though bending here just a bit almost seems to press pause before rushing wherever it seems in no hurry to have to go  
The blueberries that have sacrificed their sweetness to this plate of warm scones, I will remember you each, buttering this one, you, and now you, ever thanks one and all  
A walk to wherever, the days of destination having gone elsewhere, and its all in the ambling with who was to remember when and how long will it take to get back to where's starting.

4/3/21

# STOP EXISTING TO THEM TO COWER

For every Huckabee there is a Abrams

For every Gaetz a Buttigieg

An abolitionist named Senator Sumner was once beaten minutes from death

By the slave loving Representative Brooks, caning him with righteous fury

There nakedly on the floor of Congress. Both, by the way, were fellow South Carolinians.

I listened in all my years of history and civics, this was never taught nor tested.

For every Graham there is a Clyburn.

Demand the truth and access to information,

But it is on us to use it.

For every Kemp there is a Warnock.

Be best be damned, be Bernies refusing to rest until things shift.

We have lived through a pandemic and an insurrection.

Our democracy was a Raffensberger away from being toppled.

As you read this in Myanmar protesters are being round up,

bullet to the head to silence them. Right now, today.

How's your soapbox? Please, dust it off, and hop up on it.

Until we have the world your heart longs for the beloved family you've brought them into

It is either rise up and be counted, or shamefully bow to those

For whom power pocket lines and fattens

Stop existing to them to cower.

4/4/21



# ADAM'S DEBATE TEAM

We finished our family holiday Zoom, you know how they do  
with the stragglers still Hollywood Squared  
needing to finish or not ready to leave, it's one and the same,  
though in our it runs in the DNA it's usually not niceties  
but an idea that has stuck in one or the other's craw.  
It is really an odd cousin to Deja Vu when as you almost argue  
you sense you have recently been on the divide's other side.  
It might be the gas gauge feels fuller or the mountain steeper  
or the discussion's destination you cannot believe from this changed vista  
has somehow snuck up on you too close to home.  
But there you are taking in the landscape of your own ideas' painting  
it's east versus west when it was just the other day north battling south.

My nephew was a little lip biting head back and forth whatever is close to rage,  
let's call it fuming,  
that we are loathe to fight those that future elections are stealing  
with the language and fury of action more diametrical, proportional apposed.  
(Welcome to Happy Easter, and wasn't that great on Netflix, who in our house  
tends to say thank you the pie was great and leaves early)  
Sunday, just a week past, he'd just turned thirty-seven, and all these years that  
I've known him,  
he has had little to are you kidding me appetite for injustice,  
God bless him.  
And even though possibly his Achilles, it's why I adore him.  
It has always been true and as I told, he smiled and said Superman was his first  
crush when not even four, and before I could even bring up the really, not  
Marvel  
he said a bit too loudly, unhappy to have been slowed by that don't try to  
sidetrack me with feeling, see you just proved me right.  
You want me to play fair, worry about not alienating, well it's been decades of  
decorum,  
how's that been working? I say screw them!  
Even as I thought, if I just proved you right, your need to lunge back just rested  
my case- but the more interesting angle was he was me and I him,  
because earlier that same day I had just written a verse that said rise up, be  
heard.

It's now four in the morning- no, now five, and all I can say is that perhaps the  
rest will come  
when we all have been right recognizing that what makes struggle's our need

is we have heard the same desires, in our own words, from our own mouths twisted right way then around.

But there he was in rebuttal without even appearing with his slam dunk - it has always been and it takes almost forever to change just that much which is not even almost because you won't say never again and call it, they don't want what we do, enough!

It's not important which side you agree with, though it is, but may I leave you with this:

His name is Adam, and it must be tough to be on his debate team.

He has been in the struggle for many an age after all.

4/5/21

## ONE OUT OF THREE

Covid was sadly, in its rookie season, the third cause of death last year, after fuck you cancer just a beat behind coronary disease, both perineal dictators.

Just sitting down to a homemade blueberry muffin and a Diet Coke I wondered hmmm my anti-lockdown Libertarian friends Christian and Ooana would scoff,

after I've spent months Facebook feed battling as heartless their strategy to combat by wide-opening.

Well all right, I copped out, as I washed down the last bite because I have always said it's not just about me

I was in the battle sure,  
at least fighting one out of three

4/5/21

# HERE WE ARE WAS YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW

We used to worry about waste,  
they warned us, our demise's  
save the date is past post haste,  
bitch slapped you've been  
warned your end's about to be erased.  
That was before, the when back then  
What led to the great about face

Look outside, we can now see the forest for the trees,  
we've unwrapped the plastic coated ocean's coasts,  
the dead of night's no longer dark and sightless,  
the river's flooded red rancid waters parted before receding

Everything that has ever been created  
all ideas, the how what when and why have  
been implanted, at our fingertips is now  
in our mind's eye. I had this inspiration before  
it dawned that of course it was once someone else's,  
that story I wanted to tell was far from novel,  
the melody newly softly sung soothing  
was long ago hummed by many others.

The dream of a one day wished for blissful Shangra La  
except once built some dys was added to the utopia.  
Even in this new simulated to be with no not  
there was a need for a built in hackable back door.  
For if you build a perfect tomorrow some fail was safely needed  
how else to gauge how good to have so little sorrow

Does any of this make sense, this where we were headed?  
Of course, since here we are was yesterday's tomorrow.  
It will be much clearer once your conception  
if not today, in time you too will think it. Until then  
remember to forget not having heard it.

4/6/21

# A DOG'S LIFE

I am old and my hips lock sometimes  
but that is to be expected since  
I am probably past seventeen,  
I was almost over when about two.  
Like my human, I am terrible with dates  
I just remember being taken to the cage home  
because the explosion of the banging machines  
terrified me and the rest of my pack  
did not understand why I would not run with them  
and chase down the bleeding birds that fell from the sky.

That was in some place I heard was Carolina,  
to this day it trembles me all over and when the overhead  
explodes or those sharp booms that come over, over, and over  
I seek cover, please let it end, they will yell at me, so loud  
will they put me in that cage home again?  
Then I was in the metal machine and bump, bumped until I got to this  
what a weird name to call a place, like a duck call, Yonkers.  
My human tries to guilt me into doing things I sometimes  
don't really want to by saying he saved me two days  
from the never waking in what he calls a killing shelter.  
Now I do not speak these sounds, they are not my species  
but how are those two of what you call words  
that should ever belong together?

Speaking of not wanting to sometimes do as told  
I did love to run when they let go of my string and once a while  
though I knew I was being called by what must be me, Augie  
I would look up, think it over, realize no string, I am free, and run another way  
in that park by the river in that big city, I loved how we began our day.  
I miss my friend Neville, he was so much fun, curly brown and goofy  
we'd tumble and roll and cover a lot of ground in no time  
I hope he is still darting and dashing and as my human  
says cavorting, but we just called it hey there, hey there,  
hi, hi, okay, okay, yes, yes, hey there, let's get going.

One day we were all at once in a much bigger park in a Brook Land  
where I swear there were more than I have ever seen,  
from silly small ones to great big giants, all free, no strings  
and hey there, hey there, hey there, too many, and you  
and you and you, okay you the new one, here we go, let's get going.

It was scary at first, but once I realized I had not gone to sleep and woke up in the after place, but it was just a regular start of my new day good morning I would run and run and run until I had to stop, panting and panting, drink more drink.

Oh boy, that may have been the most best time in all my years now going gone.

Then we landed in this place of more colder, and I had dirt tracks and climbs and all at once a brother. He sometimes hops up on me and shakes back and forth until my human yells leave him alone, stop that.

And a couple of times when we tussled, he tore off some of my ear, but mostly he just is there during the long times when the humans go back and then finally forth through the gate and we can jump up and say you came back!

I suppose its good to have him, because sometimes they don't come back until it is very dark and every so often a few light and then dark and light and then

dark times go without them coming back at all, and once they even brought us to the cage home place again.

I did care for that at all. At all. I dug up a hole to show it.

But most of the time now, it is the rest time and the dreaming and I can run so fast without moving, and laugh and talk with Neville and those you there, you there and you too in Brook Land.

Plus I still have my job, no one can take that away, licking my humans legs clean when he comes out from that steamy soap place.

I have seen many light and dark times, and been to many new home places.

It is harder now to climb up the stepladder to the resting room, but all in all I can't growl,

though when I want more of those dish cubes, or I need to go out of the homeplace, or else or my brother is taking up all of the soft resting place,

I will open my mouth and let them know the call of the wild,

this is how a hound sounds

only times some,

my humans still laugh,

but there is a right place

for a righteous

low

here  
it  
comes  
up  
bellowing  
hhhhhhhhoooooowwlllll!

For August  
4/7/21



# HARD COPY

If you don't make a hard copy  
you will lose things.  
Cloud storage is not nimbus  
These servers sometimes stop serving.  
So we transfer one external  
hard drive russian dolling into another  
racing to avoid the inevitable crashing  
or worse than fatal the format obseletion.  
The streets are littered with free file cabinets,  
no one papercuts to store anymore,  
sending Staples scurrying, rebranding to survive.

When the great fire burned in Alexandria  
think of all that was lost to time's embers.  
One good hack could outflame history.  
I worry for our libraries, those battlements  
of our humanities socialistic dewey decimalmallng.  
Unthinkable to us to budget cutting shutter them  
but we are possibly the last print generation.  
When was the last time you inked your Epson?  
Xerox will be dodoed like Kodak who watched  
Ma Bell phoned to say goodbye to Western Union  
until it rises baptized with the feels so familiar  
becoming the Soviet social media giant Telegram.

The forests are not weeping that one ream  
will most of us suffice, though how large  
has our footprint grown feeding never satiated  
battered charging or, aren't you retro, you still  
wallplug to a but I have a standing desktop.  
Are we making strides with our progression  
or is Paul robin hooding to pay Peter  
and where the heck was Mary?

Those fears are so last week scoff the seers,  
when we have all knowledge nanoteched  
within us, and we auto-update to next next.  
What happens to the statuary, the iluminated  
texts, the museums begging to be visited, can  
we get a witness, documenting  
our existence's experience.

How will we create and copyright, and more  
pressing to the powerful, commodity,  
when ownership is instant  
what decorates the bookshelves  
or is hung upon the walls,  
Will words never having drunken ink  
still be written to define permanent?  
You and I most certainly no more need worry  
unless reborn rebooted  
since those who see past science  
insist soon the time's upon us  
when our years will outlive ages  
a beyond exists past our own present  
need for this hard copy.

4/8/21



# DANCING ON THIS MOMENT'S CEILING (FOR KATHY)

How does one comprehend  
yet alone confront,  
I'm sorry it's cancer?  
The engulfing catastrophe of emotions  
fear and terror rush roaring past  
in waves of rage banging into disbelief  
breaking off despair's debris,  
blindsided by the sharp stabbing  
self doubt and bluntforce blame.

Prevailing once stepping  
onto this now it all comes  
immediately to this landmine  
begins with grasping  
tight hold of survival's  
percentages, enduring  
that initial onslaught  
then slowly, ever so  
after week-long nights  
biopsies of reality itself  
taken apart, fate sent  
to time's lab for testing,  
then mapping the strategy  
of best beating back  
this opponent intent on its  
fight to the death's invasion  
refusing definition diseased  
summoning first gasps of the  
deepest depth breaths  
of human endurance  
gathering up bravery's  
finest weaponing.

Latest results returned  
negative meaning inversely

as good as it gets.  
Though once you have  
tripped the wire  
crossing the border  
one is never  
forever liberated.  
Cancer free  
does not come  
with a lifetime  
no fault guarantee  
but despite the concern  
that it will taunt  
your adversary  
the all you  
have been  
focused on  
reaching  
remission  
feels soul  
sobbingly  
all encompassing  
victorious  
if you want to  
reach me  
look up,  
I am dancing  
on this moment's  
ceiling.

4/9/21

# HUMAN NATURE

Human Nature are two words  
often seeming diametrically  
opposed in our current red tide dawns  
yet by our better day's evening,  
if coaxed to perform, some say learned,  
we somehow manage to crawl  
toward more respectfully realigned.

We are after all a subspecies  
part of, however quickly vaulting  
dictatorial, conquerers, except for cats.  
Some greatly benevolent, others  
who make Pol Pot seem quaint,  
we may fool ourselves labeling deviant,  
no escaping they were part of us.

Some sapiens know not wisdom  
yet that is what it actually means  
wise humans. Well we all know a  
few that failed to live up to that  
not even home schooled. Seems  
the pop quiz we aren't studying  
enough for, may I steal your notes,  
I wasn't listening well, hoping you were:  
What makes us so so?

Why do some bow reverently,  
others crush beneath their thumb?  
Easy enough to spot those alphas,  
never merging as they cut the line  
do they think the rest besides their  
needed best bud wingmen, are all zeds?  
Recognition, though it ought to  
lead to understanding,  
never reaps modification,  
Rather repeating infers its, duh, instinct.

Females sigh it all points to patriarchy  
all of history won't come to aide you  
if foolish to mansplain it any other way.  
Yet somehow (there you go, poor man)

past the nurture versus  
there goes that nature thing again,  
will we have to reckon with  
look what we have wrought  
the Matriarchy has created multiple  
Marjorie Taylor Greenes.  
In other words, centuries ahead  
will we find that it was always power  
and its keeping that will make  
Amazons out of even Etsys  
So are we back to gender aside  
to that full circle Human Nature?

Those that ponder behavior  
as theirs primary label  
it animalistic tendencies,  
but isn't the Mother pachyderm  
as loyal, devoted, tenacious as Theresa?  
Hummingbirds live protected by hawks  
is that merely anthromorphoexpialdotious?  
Who would aspire to be like us, the only  
family willing to holocaust our own.

It is at this point that faith is often thrust  
into to solution the unanswerable,  
sing a Disney tune circle of life created  
for we, the chosen, lord over all the others  
provided and, here comes the key change,  
we have the choice to tend the garden  
thriving thankful or destroy what was given  
if we fail to worship and revere in an unholy backslide

So, then, because I hear you saying  
I can't believe you went there, I was with you  
until, enough. I will just bookend  
by offering what has  
all having come before  
added to human nature,  
was there evolution,  
when many call that  
scientific hogwash,  
are things worse,  
we certainly haven't

cleaned the planet's burning oven,  
are we no worse off better  
than the apes who  
soon won't even  
exist to factor into  
the equation.  
It might all  
come down to  
leaving off  
the human.  
Let's focus,  
once before it is all  
on the sapiens  
from the latin  
meaning  
wisdom.

4/10/21

# CALL ME BEFORE YOU COME OVER

Fame and celebrity create cache  
even in glitterati'd gothams literally  
littered with Seinfeld's on the subway.  
Brunches with A listers next table over  
buttering they had better be Zabars bagels  
or sunglass grazing at the Beverly Hills Farm.

We eschew invasive selfies and sign this  
for the gawkers, after all our neighbors  
even if four stops over and doorman guarded.  
Sure we still go isn't that Whoopi on the corner  
and it was such a pinch me surprise when elbow to elbow  
clinking drinks were Fosse, Nichols and Diane Sawyer  
over there Susan Sarandon she was laughing with,  
were they ever married, she was then still with  
and yes he is tall, Tim Robbins.

I was not bartending, the usual reason,  
to be in such a who's who room, just working.  
A new friend had invited to  
my dad has this like one party  
on New Year's, nice of her, not a night you want alone  
but she could have warned me, when  
I showed up to one of those elevator opens  
right into coatrack now full foyers.  
I was so out of my zone, underdressed miles from comfort,  
thankfully she was haughty, after no long this was  
new years ho hummed hiding us  
in some velvet bedroom, then let's high tail it  
the year is young and so were we, let's go  
bumping into a fashionably late Christopher Walken.

Now I drop these names knowing many are  
who are they even or whatever happened to,  
not meant to impress, they are meant to preface,  
set the stage for what my nerdy self believes may  
be one of the great, remembering how many  
have been told and will be long after,  
only in New York City could this happen stories.

Have you done any filing, she inquired.  
Well sure, I replied, thinking not a demanding skill set

required. How to avoid paper cuts, know that x and y  
can settle right on in with Z, staple removal, I think I got this.  
Good, she said with unbridled peppiness.  
Here is the address, see you tomorrow.  
A friend reasoned I could use extra money,  
I was a young would be actor in Manhattan,  
hardly a Holmesian deduction. Know an  
elderly woman looking for, but then let's be honest  
who among us isn't, searching for some help sorting.  
So there I was back on Central Park West saying hello to  
another lobby staff, a servant class now relabeled service  
just an everyday elevator ride to the upstairs for us downstairs peasants.

Hello there I'm Eddie, entrée vous, just throw your coat wherever,  
the first of many clues I was Harold  
meeting my very own Maude.  
Wasting no time with niceties,  
let's get right to it, when my age,  
it's a crime to waste time.  
Do you need some water, good,  
we may not have any,  
no wonder the hallway felt musty,  
almost mothballed,  
here we are,  
Into a closet sized office  
full of steel cabinets pile high  
almost floor to ceiling crammed  
with bankers boxes, two tiny chairs  
and little other space  
to bend down to sit in them.  
Get comfy, and I thank you,  
sensing sorrow, wish me luck  
we are about to attempt to organize  
a lifetime of glorious incoherence.

Two highlights as I tried my best  
not to reveal my desire to just ask  
who in the heck of a beck are you?  
Not wanting to seem intrusive  
I wouldn't even read the folder headings  
as I handed them over  
after an hour of this chill  
formality as if an autopsy  
she halted holding a small photo  
and her eyes filled

before she just turned  
and offering isn't this something?  
On Ed Wynn's Yacht  
was scribbled across the horizon,  
four men sitting on the deck,  
Russel Crouse with the only unnamed arm around him,  
Harold Arlen next to Howard Lindsey.  
Now I'm in theatre and these are demi-gods  
albeit of their era,  
the greatest of writers  
some sitting in shorts  
and before I could uncatch my breath  
she said here, you keep that one.  
You should have it.

Now time out, remember  
I still did not even know that Eddie  
would be Edelaine  
and only now just read today years later  
she was a silent screen actress  
who had been married to one her long time husband's  
writing partners, so there was theft of the heart involved.  
Only clear was the man in white on that boat's deck  
was the heart of this file cabinet filled detective story.  
Thanking her, we went on for at least another hour  
until she held up a piece of onion skin long faded paper  
With what seemed a poem typed upon it.

Do you want to hear a story, she said as if I wouldn't  
have paid front row top dollar orchestra seat good money.  
We were driving to the Hearst Mansion for some such thing,  
and they had already started filming and the studio was so upset  
the hit song they knew this ought to be had not yet been written.  
And my husband said stop the car, why he yelled I've no idea  
I think, yes, I'm sure, he was doing the driving, and pulled over.  
Now you know if you've ever traveled that road there's not much shoulder,  
and he pointed to a beautiful, but not worth dying for, color filled arc  
just visible past the edge of the cliff we were inches from tumbling off of,  
and he said that's it. Over that damn rainbow, somewhere over that!  
And so he sat there on that highway  
and wrote almost all of his biggest hit.

And sure enough those were the lyrics  
typed out, right in front of me, and I wept.  
Then so did she.



She placed them back, a masterpiece  
enshrined in a simple manila file folder,  
Scribbled with what I gave permission  
now to read, Wizard of Oz,  
alphabetically after Cabin In The Sky  
and Finian's (he had a thing for) Rainbow.  
Here she was newly widowed, her husband Yip  
E.Y. Harburg had died a year or so earlier  
at eight four driving once more in California,  
his glorious uncatagorical life  
with periods of blacklisting  
outspoken political activism,  
champagne popping accolades,  
highly creative, and sometimes,  
like meeting his wife, file that one under fraught collaborations  
now being archived and sorted  
through aided by a stranger.

The work went on with much more  
minutiae than miraculous,  
and when just about dusk  
she said well, that should do it.  
You've been so kind,  
thank you ever so much,  
one of those when gratitude  
seemed unable to grasp  
the borderlessness of the  
opportunity to have held  
a moment of was that the  
meaning of life's definition.  
And then she hugged me,  
leading me down the  
forever if it was  
almost as long a hallway  
with me please  
let me know if you need  
anything.  
I will she said,  
maybe very soon,  
but call me before  
you come over,  
I might have gone,  
and dropped dead.



4/11/21

# THE CALIBER CONJECTURE

There are 7 major problems seeking solution  
such as the Twin Prime, proved  
only in 2019 in a parallel  
universe not ours.  
Solve them and you can win  
the offered one million.  
I would add to the unsolveable  
the Caliber Conjecture  
which can use both the  
quality of one's character  
in direct correlation to  
the internal diameter of the barrel

15 gun deaths today  
4 dead in Ohio May 1970  
1 nuclear site explosion in Iran  
Threatens restarting treaty left in 2015  
226,000 lost 1945 in Nagasaki  
80,000 Russian troops at Ukrainian border  
70,000 invaded Georgia 2008  
80 protesters murdered in Myanmar  
700 have died since 2-1-21

You can spend a lifetime  
scribbling across history's chalkboard,  
this one gets even more complicated  
because arguably is ever expanding  
and no matter how hard you try  
once written down the next  
examples called contradictions  
are proofs not erasable.

4/12/21

# YOUR CASE WILL COME TO REST

Sometimes the defense accuses  
and the prosecution protects  
the judge may act as jury  
the jurors will pass judgement  
If the glove doesn't fit you must acquit  
I know it when I see it  
you can't handle the truth.  
Come now, and let us reason together,  
though your sins be as scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow,  
are you trying to show contempt  
no, I'm doing my best to hide it.

Judge not that ye be not  
never seems to work now does it  
one day you may be sworn in  
to use your lifetime of experience

To have formed an opinion daily  
may be self sorrow wanting relief  
lesser rungs wanting much greater  
worry that our world needs rightening  
sometimes sadly why should they if we can't.  
So we weigh in asked or not, four reasons:  
allows us better than by the grace go  
purpose provided, how we just might fit in  
illuminating mistakes with an unforgiving mirror  
weakly joining the pack forming concurring agreement

Be sure the evidence isn't tainted  
and your justice isn't based on who,  
like Robert Frost concluded,  
had the best lawyers

All justice must be personal,  
Plato coined it virtue.  
Your case will come down to  
one day swearing truth  
was not falsely provided  
either by you or self tolerated.  
When that gavel bangs

and the courtroom clears  
you argued not just doing your job,  
but you took the case because  
you believed the prosecution  
should not be defended or  
though the defense has its day  
you recognized the need for redress.

One verdict awaits us all  
those free or under arrest  
no matter how many  
exhibits on record  
or expert witnesses  
under oath, time will step  
down from the stand and  
your case will come to rest.

4/13/21

# DRAWING LINES

Lines are drawn in the sands for generations,  
most have descendants at least one border having crossed,  
families from danger fled in desperate caravans  
cargoes, some shackled in ships factoring costs  
of the many lives on this passage certain to be lost.

Building barriers deep, long, wide, high, kilos, meters, miles,  
where are you, on which side, not your home- now exiles.

Pay dues work hard, you may be kept if a need, just not for sure right now,  
after all we've a tradition of other cultures, first vilified but all is fine if  
assimilation.

Sovereign is the word used to justify, the fortunate have rights to others we can  
not allow.

History is geography mapping over time the building of mighty nations.

We have sailed and flown built empires across each corner of all continents,  
penguins lament they will even conquer this end of the world's crag  
another arctic expedition arriving to stake their country's claiming flag.

First peoples watched their shores invaded, if not poked, making treaties  
trading,

sacred lands became battlefields once ever-encroaching building of promise  
breaking fortifications.

North marched south, brother slaughtered brother, battling on their own  
plantations.

I think of all the many dashes drawn, the lines surveyed, the maps revised,  
the lawyers paid, the claims legitimized, the contracts inked, the earth  
itself excavated into estates, declarations signed authoring constitutions  
in cities centered around marble cathedraled capital coronations.

These demarcations though often invisible, divide more than nations,  
never has there been a time we weren't willing to die over borders.

Tribal, territorial, ancestral, national, homesteading, staking, deeded, claimed  
what is ours is worth fighting for, so what if it was yours, not anymore.

You want a world without land owning, just unlock the front door,  
let anybody in where you live's no longer your home, that'll work, of course not.  
Communism tried it conquering every territory near and far to build union.  
Armies march, castles are stormed, conquerors stay in one place not for very  
long.

Thousands of yesterdays until forever and a day's tomorrow inevitable.  
Our we wants your we's whatever,  
and we will invade your we with reason's credible.  
Or your we wants our we's whatever  
and we will defend our we, neverending, struggles regrettable.

They say that to live free open's all barriers, it's life's unlocking key.  
Why then are we ever anchored just off the coast of our truest liberty?  
We have forged a democratic republic, at what cost, are we able to keep it?  
I can write these words, with latitude, grateful no fear my voice will be  
imprisoned,  
but others suffer just driving never to reach home reasonably inquisitioned.

Back to boundaries, borders we cross under, around and up then over,  
we call some norms, or laws, amendments, rules, manners, regulations.  
What was right today was once wrong sometimes thankfully progressing,  
other times redrawn, redistricted to cripple change by retaining power.  
Here we are drawing lines in our own nation's sand,  
taking sides on the sharp edge of a divide too deep to withstand

4/14/21

# RELAY

We are over it. Enough.  
Our liberties are being taken away.  
It's been a year, you don't think our  
first amendment rights to gather have been  
violated? School, Churches, Businesses  
They have all been shuttered, Attacked.  
Let me scream loudly to seem strong,  
my supporters love it when I yell and interrupt,  
they want to see me pushing you up against  
our argument for freedom's, that always works, wall.

When our school bully threw a football  
like a bullet to my groin from two feet away  
because I thought he had asked something of me  
were you talking to me, I'm sorry, didn't hear you  
bang, doubled over in pain he stood over me  
when I want something from you, you will know it

Well Dr. Fauci, what standards what objective measures,  
tell me what will it take? I'm am waiting, just need an answer  
How much more until you decide (how's that for projected  
arrogance) we can gather in our own house?

Seventy five thousand new cases,  
nine hundred deaths on a Wednesday  
from a disease that will, has, is spreading  
once again, exponentially.  
Forty two percent of one party refuses  
under no circumstances, to get that jab,  
you will never, here we go again with liberty  
be able to make us, and a passport, are you kidding me?

And you wonder screaming how much longer?  
We had a curfew in Ohio, and after 10 o'clock  
you couldn't even gather, in your own house  
your right to assembly, to worship in your own  
church, fifty percent, is that religious freedom? So when  
is it, that is what I am asking you, what will it take?

The same browbeater that threw that football, tossed  
a teargas bomb into it was called junior high back then

he went on to be the heavyweight state wrestling  
champion and then a major Columbian cartel  
cocaine smuggler, but not even sixteen, a little fun,  
our school was evacuated students rushed to the  
to the hospital gasping

Overcrowded emergency rooms  
once again, and if not careful we will be back  
to a full shutdown. Congressmen berating health  
officials his mask slipped down uncovering his  
arrogance. It is said we are in a  
race between the variants and the vaccines.  
It feels more a one team relay  
batoning back and forth  
between ineptitude and imbecility.

4/15/21



# RED BEFORE WAGNER

An actor in Manhattan, I naturally  
had a rite of passage waiting tables.  
One of my regulars in the cafe  
across from Lincoln Center sat  
down in my mind's corner booth  
the other day, his raspy, soft, cinched  
perfectly Windsor knot voice  
still clear though I haven't heard  
it for decades, Manley, Otto party of two.  
If I saw his name reserved table  
twelve on the sheet for the tonight's  
pre-opera rush my mood shifted to buoyant.  
He and his wife Marguerite loved their  
espressos two twists please, and they'd giggle  
when ordering a pastry if time allowed which I  
made sure always did, a bottle of wine,  
Cotes Du Rhone was to be waiting.

I never in the many times serving them  
once heard an uplesantry or cross word.  
Certainly this could be because their class  
seemed upper, but his clipped Austrian accent  
was proof of at least one major life journey.  
always asked how I was doing and meant it  
are you auditioning, wonderful, we cant wait  
to come see you. He always left the same  
gratuity, much more than enough,  
even if they only had time for wine, dessert, and coffee  
when you should have seen the traffic was not friendly.  
He wore a modest, but well pressed suit and tie  
and she looked never flashy, styled simple,  
elegant grace. I think we'll have another if you  
don't mind, Lee, red of course, tonight is Wagner.

Once in my reverie appearing as if never leaving  
to sip their coffees it seemed only fitting  
for me to inquire after all this time  
since I last saw them how they were doing.  
I read that Margurite had passed peacefully in 2004  
and dear Otto preceded her but no exact  
year was provided. No obituary was online for him.

What was so fitting, given their profound  
and honest generosity, was hearing  
she and her husband had bequeathed  
two Egon Schile's masterworks to museums  
so that they could be enjoyed by others.  
I see his eyes I swear smiling, and her easy going  
hand lifted so she could slip with out sliding  
into that rounded corner raised banquet with  
a nod of thank you ever so much darling.  
And he is leaning in to her sharing some sort  
of little witty reparte and she is laughing  
as I pour them just a bit more red, of course,  
before Wagner.

4/16/21

# CREATION

I understand gardeners best when I'm working onstage.  
Hands and knees digging, in the muck of it just to make ready,  
waiting until just so for the start, the roots have their time to take hold.  
Don't think on the too many days tending, nourishing, weeding out pests,  
it is the heart's bounty when the blooming begins, out of your  
tilling and toiling feeds families, world's conjured awash with breathtaking  
scenic beauty.

I understand great chefs best when I'm rehearsing a play.  
The years of trial and error, master's mentoring, the intricacies of soufflé,  
start with a great recipe, the desire for others to never this good taste wonder,  
use the finest ingredients, hunt them down if you have to, hope for the right  
kitchen  
don't chinch on the pots and pans, do your test tasting, more than enough  
beforehand.  
With great patience employed, commit to each step, then wait for it, let it  
happen, it will become ready just right, usually mere moments before the  
invited big feast of a meal's first serving.

It's taken awhile, but I realize my relationship to  
if there is a creator feels truest in a theater.  
Sad you say?  
Not to many of us who have walked arm and arm  
embraced by artists of all the ages  
I have felt the holy in cathedrals,  
the same awe at the edge of canyons,  
but I can sit in great halls among rows of seats,  
so sadly for now all empty,  
staring up at the heart of the space  
it was created for centerstage.  
Feel the lives enriched, the dreams fulfilled,  
the young child's visit to neverlands,  
the lonely seated row B on the aisle feeling  
love and acceptance not just for the first time  
in awhile but possibly ever  
the beginning as if always existing notes of Mozart,  
the Pas de Deux of Giselle, the comedienne all alone  
up there stalking to and fro, killing it-  
Once you have been privileged enough to have stood under lights,  
or at the middle of an outdoor arena in the shining bright sun's basking

singing from your heart, or speaking a poet's words with the trusting belief as  
if yours, and becoming all that is no longer impossible  
listen to the telling of our story  
well, is that not touching all that it means to be holy,  
and the closest save actually mothering a tender child,  
to creation?

4/17/21

# BOOK TOUR

Today's guest is another politician coming clean  
written a memoir, making a poker faced place at history's table  
I raise you I tried my best to your why didn't you at least  
I'll see your anger and frustration with we all can do better, can't we?  
How is it always inside straight flush, paid a sweetheart advance's pot  
instead of yes, I pocketed aces, welcome to comic con,  
this interview's one right now.

How many of us would nitty gritty in our tell all,  
hang our dirty laundry in Peeping Tom's you are  
never going to believe this yard?  
If we can pray away all sins,  
ask Jerry Falwell Junior and Senior,  
if actuary accountability is in the employ  
of hire better break the rules bean counters,  
why do we let them cut our deck  
play house rules, go ahead and shuffle  
right be we fold our mortal coil?

I suppose it is all a bit of sham this book tour  
we are on, better to edit ourselves, guard the proof  
have your publicist social media speed-dial mine,  
I had a nightmare the other night that all of our Feed's  
were blocked to only our deepest no more denial truths,  
talk about doom scrolling  
which one would you lose quiz:  
depression, abuse, debt, loneliness, self-loathing, snickers  
we wanted to remind you of a past most liked post-  
things haven't gotten much better have they, share

And yes upon waking this morning the sun was much brighter  
beautiful, but two more mass shootings were followed by  
now the Minnesota Twins have Covid.  
So never fear, even non fiction has one distinct point of view,  
you are the author, and we are happy to have you today,  
tell us and don't worry, even last week's now a tale twisted  
to turn a new much more hopeful, somehow endurable way.  
It's not as if the Renaissance was one big haughty fair.

4/18/21

# SHE MAKES THINGS BETTER

I owe my elder sister a huge apology  
not for all the years I wasn't a great friend  
let alone supportive and loving relative,  
but research shows that those with an older sister  
are far more successful than those with an older brother.  
If that is true, I have skewed the statistics south,  
and for that I offer my most humble regrets,  
perhaps it was the confusion of having both,  
blame my older brother.

They say firstborns are reliable, conscientious, structured,  
cautious, controlling, achievers- wow- makes them  
sound like scout master from hell oathkeepers.  
I am ever grateful to have never felt sibling rivalry with  
any of my kin, and we have had the can't be valued  
great fortune to have weathered thick and thin,  
remaining, and now growing even more meaningfully, close.

But that reliable is hard to ignore. My sister has always  
shown up, and took on the yeoman's care of our aging  
parents, after our father passed early, decades tending to  
our mother with such grace and dignity  
coupled with fierce, listen to me I am her daughter, protectivity,  
all the while raising two children of her own.

Is that not also the definition of conscientious as well?  
I suppose the splitting hair there is that she understood  
this role and, you can't call it effortlessly because it was damn hard work,  
selflessly, stepped right into the child now mothering,  
you take it on, you complete it.

(My gratitude for this is boundless)  
Which leads to structured, a list maker, a deadline hitter,  
a never later. If she has once missed a flight  
or a tax deadline, don't bet on it.

And here is where we start to wander a bit from  
the trusted eldest traits with Michelle.  
While not exactly a maverick, she took off  
and traveled thousands of miles to school choosing  
to start her family way up north- many a caution sign driven past.  
Back to achieving. Okay, no deviation.

Two exceptional sons, a devoted and successful marriage of over forty years and counting, two careers, and all the while giving back to her community, her faith and social causes.

Which leaves controlling, okay, sometimes we have butted heads it would be simple to point that out as even the experts say's a good reason, until you realize two of the crackerjack agreed upon youngest child traits: manipulative and self-centered. Not a recipe for baking cupcakes, now is it?

She is much more complicated composition than boil it down to first born daughter. A role model, the go-to, in the dictionary next to compassionate, caring, fiercely loyal and whip smart honest. But if I had to sum up my sister, and this has always, since we were small seemed true- she desires and will do whatever it takes, to make things better.

When on the way to school, we three walking don't get so close I can't believe we have to do this every day together, I tripped and fell and cut my palm on glass, she wrapped it, held my hand to stop the bleeding, rushed me quickly to a nurse, trying to wish away my crying. She was seven.

Last year she marched and grass roots organized for equality. She was- much more than seven.

We can do better.

Their birthday could be more joyful, that dinner table more beautiful, our world should have more justice.

Better.

She is respected and profoundly loved she has made our lives better

in her community,

for her family,

and don't forget me,

I am the puffed up,

but I was not crying,

she has a terrible memory,

very thankful

youngest brother.

04/19/21 Happy Birthday

# NEVER ENOUGH AMALFI

Pop quiz, which I failed, and I have  
toe dipped and dozed in the gleam of it:  
Where is the Tyrrhenian Sea, and can you  
even pronounce it? Between Italy and Greece  
and it's the northern half if you sliced,  
off the top of the Mediterranean, I bet that border's tough  
to paint dash marks on, but it will be important to you  
as the deep azure waters that kiss the Coast Amalfi.

It is hard to describe the luminescence of Audrey Hepburn,  
or when standing in front of the Pieta, the magnificence,  
or the strummed as if the Muses made melody of Beethoven's Emperor,  
think of the exquisiteness of all of these sprinkled upon a single space.  
Imagine terraced cliffs of winding centuries-old streets chock full  
the entire pleasing palate of pastel weathered wall villas,  
an architecturally impossible mosaic turned  
on its edge and cascading down  
without tumbling one on top of another  
until the seas slaps against its bottom playfully.

Positano, Amalfi, Ravello, each town not to be believed  
even when you see it, Ibsen arrived ill and was cured there  
and once you spent the evening you too will swear  
the word seductive that those ancient mermaids  
employing must have slinked out of this night's licking these same rocky  
waters.

Maybe it's the Lemoncello, it couldn't hurt, or the sweet frutti de mare,  
after all if you can't get good food you must not be in Italy,  
the sky dives right into the ocean swimming along soft smiling currents  
then every so often slaps the sea wall basta with a don't underestimate wave  
as if that seventh day rest for creation's bounty was earned  
from having painted a more perfect paradise a snake free Eden.

My late wife heard from a friend of a friend we should visit,  
so granted a brief few weeks of her illness's remission, we were off  
quicker than you can say I hope we can afford, who cares, charge it.  
I cannot say for certain there aren't other sites more breathtaking,  
but if you are pulling into a port wondering is that music underscoring,  
and shake your head swearing this is more romantic than Capri, you aren't  
slumming



She loved sitting porch gazing out upon is there a gem richer than this  
glistening,  
and I in turn was watching her taking in what might be catching  
sight of the seeing just this side of eternity.

I would like to coin a new noun  
which can become a verb,  
and when needed go ahead adjective it.  
It is a synthesis of beauty, joy, calm, peace, and love.  
Doesn't that sound, okay, a bit hippy dippy, but helpful and nice?  
It is near the shore of contentment  
but go ahead offer it up to more than the singular,  
pepper it to the multitudes whenever possible.  
Amalfi.  
As in whenever you despair instead, amalfi,  
your heart will float, or you cannot get to me today,  
I am so amalfi my cheeks and chin are grinning,  
or an amalfi came over me just when I most  
needed it. There is no such thing as  
never enough amalfi,  
trust me.

4/20/21

# ALWAYS A WINNER JUST NOT EVER A PRIZE

Half machine all protector  
no emotion necessary  
fearless, morality no factor  
the body count mounting  
one assignment guardian  
the targets taken out never  
have enough to cry for dimensions  
there is an endless supply of  
storm troopers target practice marching.  
The word consumer implies feeding  
the threshold we've gorged and fed on's been crossing  
ever since RoboCop has become Terminator.

I am no Tipper, could she have  
a more ironic name than Gore,  
labeling with censor causes only cache  
beckoning, provocatively come hither forbidden.  
So reprehensible the profiting off mayhem  
rushing home to kiss your kids before dinner and bedtime tucking  
after the risk analysis strategy sessions of releasing Saw Seven,  
carnage lines a nice bottom better than sex for shareholders,  
all studying at the electoral college with a doctorate in the Second,  
weaponizing their pockets with NRA blessed 12 gauge ammunition.

Do we really wonder why, who are we kidding  
our First Blood has heard the Call of Duty  
Boogalooing on the corner of Smith and Wesson?

The world watched fingers crossed boarded up windows,  
you can't be, unless the sixth of January, nowadays too prepared  
Lady Justice, are you kidding me, you'd have to be blind  
she came back with three guilties but pulled a knife  
earlier the same day in Chicago. Gotten so judgmental our  
judiciary department is police investigating Minneapolis.  
Have we turned a corner, is this progress or pretend  
just liberals gone wild, trying to cancel calling a killing field culture  
Elmer Fudd killed the wabbit, Wilma named her son Bam-Bam

there wasn't this much ruckus when they shot a couple of Kennedys, or a King,  
Lennon, Malcom- that one asked for it, what kind of man labels himself with an  
X,  
and who would ever wanted to shoot that champion of the right to pack one  
Reagan?

It's as old and bloody as lions being thrown a few Christians,  
we've just upped our slings and arrows to outrageous assaulting.  
Are we ever doomed to be conned or can we walk away from  
the beckoning barking look what has pulled into and become our town and  
the next one over, and then that one- one long row of no chance games with a  
oh, so sorry, there's always next time on this step right up and hit me with your  
best shot there's always  
a winner just not ever a prize at the look what we grown into  
a seedy carnival midway complete with a spot for anyone to compete in our  
main street attraction shooting gallery.

4/21/21

# THE END OF EARTH DAY

Every rising and setting from here on out  
must be recognized, revered as Earth Day.  
The purple mountains made monarchs  
the Falls so heavenly named Angel  
canyons Grand and peaks Everest  
understand well their own pricelessness,  
they grieve overwhelmed with revulsion.  
Why are you traveling, photographing,  
inventing this category called landscape,  
writing us into song and symphony,  
only to slaughter us, your own mother?  
1970 was just our yesterday, but you've  
had decades, and a holiday created to reverse it.

How would you ever define blue without  
the perfection of our curved sky dome?  
Freshwater rushing rivers sent pristine to sustain you,  
rain forests breathing mouth to your mouth providing  
the soil so fertile, plentiful, bountiful, vital that  
our planet's name is unseparably synonymous.

Today is as difficult for the mountains to celebrate,  
as those asked to endure having been raped,  
How can oceans assaulted, saltwater eyes  
sobbing with blackened petroleum leaks dripping  
proud forests garroted as disposable like some drive-by hitman.  
Mass shootings don't target just human, ask the wildlife,  
but hurry, they are already howling being driven to extinction.  
We are justifiably horrified by those without shelter, forced to  
live out in the open, but the poverty and desperation that will proliferate  
once we find ourselves universally homeless,  
once clear water is worth warfare,  
soil still able to raise and plant sustenance so scarce  
not yet toxically seepage-full from needing to bury landfills.

Our President just proclaimed fifty percent fewer emissions by the end of the  
decade,  
hear those cries of impossible, foolish, this is infinitely more critical than any  
moon landing.  
So the next time you hear that Green New Deal spat upon like manure,  
you just remember that today and tomorrow every day before and after that,

must be spent doing all we can, much better than half, and not just for the  
profit,  
time's a wasted, long past, our due date's expired  
don't rip the pages off outlook's calendar but add them back onto  
so you'll never have to hold tight those you loved and brought into this world  
to say I am so sorry with the greatest of guilt drenched dismay  
We waited too long, we could have, should have, would have but,  
though we were warned, even gave it it's own genre dystopia,  
we somehow grew numb enough, let it slip away, through the caused cracks,  
and now we are here, close your eyes, this is the night we will not wake up  
from,  
the End of Earth Day

4/22/21

# POEM\*

When things are but might not be\*  
you want to say sh\*t but can't quite  
provide more information cited later\*  
coding repetition, \*\*\* repetition, wild\* card  
not just the best selling French cartoon  
X spelled not icks, or editor's \*\*\*\*\*  
placeholder for information to be added later

The asterisk's been found on ancient walls indigenous  
cultures from the far east to civilization's western,  
even religious testament texts, but somehow the  
most critical modern usage, sport's statistics  
settling arguments and bet the farm wagers.

That little star however came to mind  
as what might be needed next to names  
such as mine, we artists never fame known  
will our lives be recorded, performer\*  
like Roger Maris, it no longer matters, there  
are other record breakers and their \*\*\*\* are on steroids

I was leading workshops at an Apple store  
between teaching jobs\* so technically still instructing,  
called Creatives not as well known as the bar Genuises.  
I was halfway through a Final Cut Pro demo  
when Steve Jobs walked right out onto the floor,  
minions scurried all aflutter, the eagle has landed.  
He raised his by then pencil thin arm beckoning retreat,  
he just want to take in his new retail temple space,  
bleached banquet long product tables, marbled walls  
thirty foot cathedral high ceilings, can there be such  
a thing as maximum minimum? He stood there, and I swear  
through those three story carted all the way from Italy  
windows refracted the New York City sun so he  
had a light beam shaft illuminating like an anorexic, anointed prophet  
He might have weighed 80 pounds, black tee, jeans, running sneakers,  
As I was teaching how to add transitions, I remember thinking  
someone should bring him a stool, so frail he might just topple over.  
None of the twenty or so determined to be the next Hollywood filmmakers  
seemed to notice, eyes were darting from their macbook airs to my example,  
click and drag lets use a cross fade, next it is important to decide the timing.

Not more than twenty feet from one of my most respected idols,  
why I took the job, no pun intended. He changed creativity forever  
but even his greatness would not offer actual immortality.

I wanted to tell him how much he meant to me and so many others,  
that I was so honored to be doing what I could to share his inventions,  
but it was time to end the class and take questions, and an older woman  
raised her hand, do I hit the space bar to watch how we've changed it?  
He walked toward the front of the store, slowly taking in his creation  
never once even turning for me to at least acknowledge him smiling.  
Here I was doing my best to embody his own core mission  
leading these artists to humanities and technology's intersection.  
Yes, here try this, I continued, move your cursor to the end of your timeline,  
you can then add a fade out, and I kid you not, as if it was cut and printed,  
though not one of his handlers seemed to have predicted, he walked  
right out of the front door, leaving them in shock to hurry after his great escape  
into their earpiece exclaiming I was watching, he just left.  
That is so wonderful, so easy, my student said, I was wondering how to end it,  
as I noted with a sigh and well, that wasn't quite how I would have scripted,  
he was gone disappearing around the corner of 68th and Broadway.\*

\*Steve Jobs died of pancreatic cancer eleven months later

4/23/21

# FLUKE INDEX

The term Bucket List, created by the screenwriter who's desires began with a major movie, atop his things you hope to achieve before you kick the... Nice to have goals to aspire even if the entries seems to grow as that bucket looms larger.

I'd like to coin a term, maybe I too will get a film deal, your Fluke Index, a sort of gratitude list, but those have always seemed so platitudinal, not the flatfish- more the good fortune by chance- closer to a great pool shot pocketed, add to that the ever thankful to have had the chance to randomness, the things you are fortunate to have lived in the same age as. Not your children, family or friends, those you've carefully built and cultivated, Janis Joplin's voice is on mine, I think you get the gist, and remember these are meant to be personal, you may not and might not share any or all of mine:

Music is an easy place to start,  
we fluked through the sixties and seventies,  
each week it seemed the world would crack open to new rock or pop  
greatness  
from the Beatles to Elton John, Joni Mitchell to Neil Young,  
Marvin, Aretha, Prince, and the Wonder named Stevie,  
Simon with and without Garfunkel all the way to Adele,  
onstage Kander and Ebb, and Stephen Sondheim, the films of Morricone and  
John Williams.  
Speaking of movies, we got to see on the big screen the Graduate and The  
Godfather,  
and then could stay home watching All In The Family becoming Game of  
Thrones, which might be the same story.  
LGTBQ rights have become what they always were human, and civil rights are  
being reckoned with for all races and First Nations,  
The entire I Have A Dream speech's beauty seems to have baton passed to  
next generations of activists including the global firebrand Greta Turnberg,  
here I am on an April Saturday, remembering I got to read the latest Toni  
Morrison,  
heard spoken for the first time the language of Stoppard, Williams, and  
Kushner,  
the decisions of the landmark Justice named Ginsberg,  
invention of Steve Jobs and they had the nerve from his own company to fire  
him,  
led by a black president with the dignity and wisdom of Barack Obama, and  
the international peace work post holding office quiet decency of Jimmy  
Carter,



Jane Goodall who demands us to be one with all of nature through  
recognizing our debt to our closest cousins,  
science which seems to be vaulting with each day overtop its own  
accomplishments,  
from moon landings to Mars, from DNA to CRISPR,  
we call them Fauci Ouchies, but they are changing history,  
small shots of miraculous life saving.

The thing about this indexing is that the great privilege of existing  
is better appreciated when instead of focusing on the dread and destruction  
the worst that we have become so adept at evolving,  
we can reconcile by cataloguing how we better responded to the depravity.  
Ever present adversity does seem to forge the need for even greater beauty.  
So go ahead do your own fluking,  
it will carry you past struggling weekdays  
right into sun filled hikes within the deep woods of your weekend.

3/24/21

# THRILL RIDE

A case of Sugar Babies,  
maybe that was the cause  
of my addiction to sweets.  
Tossing a few dimes on a plate  
a thirteen year old had died  
and gone to chocolate caramel heaven.  
I think it took me most of the year  
I'd given away so many,  
okay, at least twenty.  
All these years later that is  
my finest moment of many  
at the losing sleep just waiting  
can we go opening weekend?  
How many generation's  
rites of passage, cotton candied  
first tunnel of love kisses  
could be radius drawn from  
the annual carnival county fair?

The Himalaya was about as daring  
as I could suffer on that Midway.  
It went whisking forward and back,  
Faster, fools would scream  
You want to go faster?  
Is there a job description: sadistic operators?  
Yes- please- not me, silently begging  
Please I'd like to get off, let me go, no  
Why do you build me up buttercup  
playing loudly, over and over  
Just to let me down  
Mess me around  
I need you, more than anyone darling  
I could hear the cracking of my back  
and the crunching of the was this thing  
ever inspected for safety gearing.  
What is this song about anyway,  
I thought trying out thinking the nausea  
You never call when you say you will,  
Faster? Did you want to go backwards?  
But I love you still, if I lived long enough  
they would one day label it co-dependent.

Have you ridden the barrel that basically  
dropped the floor out from under you,  
some deranged physicists eureka revenge  
for being labeled by classmates as updatable nerdy  
spin drying you so fast you were glued  
to the wall of what was it, shag carpeting?

I know I will date myself,  
back then I could still find one,  
to wonder why in the world right next to  
the sideshow Half Lizard, Half Lady,  
was the real freak show  
The Unspeakable Horrors of 'Nam,  
a never before lift the curtain truthful  
depiction of our soldier's torture.  
A trailer of terror that I thankfully never entered,  
but you couldn't miss the giant frightening paintings  
pits with spikes and soilders spearheaded,  
all of the booby traps, one after another  
that the 'Cong have created, right inside,  
you must see it and don't forget to pledge allegiance.

I would watch that Zipper throwing folks midair  
the fifty foot drop of the swings having turned  
a playground ride into a nope, not me, I'll hold  
your purses once dared. I like a nice Ferris Wheel,  
the world seen on high as you make your  
way slowly upstairs, but why do they think  
we should be twisted and turned  
lurch your lunch Into your hands,  
to make you feel like you have paid  
to cause your own life's ending.  
Take my extra tickets,  
go right ahead, have at it.  
I'm over sixty,  
the midway's behind me,  
I've even against my better nature  
ridden more than once Coney Islands'  
rickety wooden roller coaster.  
They call them thrill rides,  
I find them not even close to  
My life has never felt so boring  
that I had lost count of or  
needed to assault any  
one of my five senses.                      4/25/21

# YOUR YESTERDAY

No words will comfort  
no music can embrace  
once you have tumbled  
the falling feels forever  
but if you are reading this  
know I wrote it yesterday.

There is an alone even  
happily married, pony tailed  
children, an old hounddog,  
the funniest friend  
had it so together  
places to be, people to  
you just now want to be unseen,  
it may all just have to be tomorrow.

Sometimes you know you're  
heading there, sometimes  
as if you've never been, lost  
no matter it's a one more time  
and here you are again today.

You understand the reasons  
talked it over, got some help  
found your way, felt stronger  
so why now, I worked so hard  
built all that was to be a future

Yet you are here and it  
will all come down to this  
moment, which will be the  
one that is right before  
you feel no matter what  
you must finally, forgive me.

You can and will endure this.  
Or not.  
Either way I am with you,  
I will always be,  
holding you.

Please remember,  
this is the thing,  
that when I wrote this  
it was your yesterday.

4/26/21

# AN ART WITH A MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Is there a more exhilarating moment  
than when the house lights dim and  
there you sit anticipating all a momentary blackout  
limitless life altering once a bit of light added to darkness.  
Twentieth century American actors  
could sense memory with Strasberg,  
imaginary if with Adler yelling Stella,  
repeat Meisner, who Sanford, did you say Meisner,  
yes Sanford, Meisner, Sanford, yes Meisner,  
or R, E, S, P, E, C, T for acting with Uta Hagen.

There will never be another confluence  
of artists enlightening as influential.  
If Yale, Harvard, Princeton and Dartmouth  
all opened in New York City within the same  
decade, having worked or studied  
with each other, each truly believing their  
Method was the Technique that using  
the Memory of Stanislavsky made the most Sense,  
their Objective was the Action both Inner and Outer,  
all wanting one thing, real truth in the imaginary.  
Passing through the door of each studio,  
transformed, heart beating, the holy of holies,  
were Brando was born, Al became Pacino,  
just to be near De Niro, Tandy, Geraldine Page,  
Marilyn wanting more than Monroe.  
James became a Dean, Hackman and Hoffman  
were Duvall room-mated, oh to be a fly on that wall.  
This was the same sofa used in that scene study,  
the table, those chairs, the hallowed classroom that was  
the hot tin roof the cat was on top of  
Or the dump that Virginia Woolfe was afraid of.

You can't recreate magic, the tricky  
slight of hand was here now gone.  
But those of us fortunate to have  
lived in the time of Tennessee and

Arthur Miller, when Beckett gave birth  
to Albee and Pinter who begat Tom Stoppard,  
Wilson's August, Kushner a Tony,  
Squaring the Circle or Rep, at the Cafe Cino  
La Mama, the Public visited a Playwright's Horizons.  
The ghosts have been our only lights lately,  
but it is about to all come up center curtain lifted.  
Our role is to remember, to impart, to inspire  
as they learned their lines and held their time's mirror.  
What will ever be better than a roomful of treasures  
To be part of an art with a measure for measure.

4/27/21

# DEMOCRACY FOR DUMMIES

Do you think those neanderthals  
I don't mean to be judgmental,  
Ancient Eurasians, sat around wondering  
if they should limit representation?  
Think of how rare, democracies  
have been, not even all  
the Greek City-states,  
not the scholars in Rhodes,  
certainly never Syracuse,  
it took an advancement in Athens  
to finally say, alright except for  
you women, slaves and illegal Romans,  
any others, if of warring age,  
you may all weigh in.  
Some cultures used the loudest voice vote,  
the start of each one truly matters,  
then came tallying the vote,  
carefully place in the right urns your round pebbles,  
Maricopa County's current recounting method.

One person, one vote is a miracle  
of an idea constantly worth aspiring  
may we one day reach true power to  
all of the people, right on, but first  
between three or four out of ten are  
Fox and friends being force fed their great lies.  
You do understand they will say in a tone  
lifting their not so thinly veiled condescension,  
not all are created equal breeding, don't  
even think for a moment I will be  
a sheep being led to micro-chip vaccination.  
We elect representatives, we are a Republic,  
not everyone is capable of creating policy.  
These are the direct descendants of  
the godfather of modern republicanism, Machiavelli,  
who, like all life's complexities, defies easy categorization.  
It is better to be feared than loved,  
Politics has no relation to morals.  
no wonder his name's a rhyming synonym for villain.  
So much for life, liberty, you keep trying  
you were pledged the pursuit of



the always just out of reach  
it was Peanuts, not us  
that warm puppy  
promised you happiness.

Bringing us full circle  
to that Cro Magnon homoerectus  
ages ago squatted pondering by the fire  
where did this flame come from  
and will we be able to make another one.  
The same question ought to  
be posed as we fan  
the flame of our democracy  
because this longest lived  
great experiment in self government,  
no matter how fully unrealized  
still struggling, worth the fight for,  
needs to be tended too, stoked, rekindled  
or it will be snuffed out quicker than  
you can say saber tooth tiger.

4/28/21

# ONE NIGHT

Arousal entered unannounced  
the biting of the lip, the look  
away, too much, then halfway  
back, watercolor eyes confirming  
a curtain of hair half hiding  
exposing. enough, an offering.

Next, calling into question  
has fortune drawn up a plan  
Seated side by beside as if it had to.  
Not even a touch, a slight brush  
too much, excess, the sensation, the  
knowing, just how it would, an already  
somehow unspoken sharing.

Then again, one more glance  
and this time full on, daring, engulfing  
a curving of cheek from the shape  
of the just almost of a small smile,  
a hint, they call it fainting, of unexpected pleasure.  
There was a program and a crowd, but only two  
were giving audience. How long the  
performance lasted would be hard  
to say exactly, there was music,  
but it only underscored the how would  
they one day explain, the sweet contentment  
of having experienced already a together.

It was ending audience applauding  
and to return home standing, but  
still seated the need to take in  
what had transpired more fully  
until finally as if it had to be said  
was it about the program, doubtful,  
came a pure and perfect:  
that was lovely  
followed by an entirety of being  
and therefore simple,  
yes, it was.

4/29/21

# THE LANGUAGE OF JUSTICE

Bipartisanship  
please explain  
it to me  
I want this so badly  
I am certain this is how  
it must happen  
I care deeply  
Partisan.  
I want this terribly  
Equally sure I am right  
it ought to be  
this way will work  
and all will benefit  
Partisan.  
We must find common  
ground.  
Both unhappy  
Compromised  
It is not  
this or that  
It must be  
Bipartisan.

Solomon offered  
to cut the child in  
half, the point of the  
story was not to  
go ahead and  
wishbone the baby  
sending both mothers  
home with half  
a child is not  
a solution- think  
about it, one of  
the Mothers is  
willing to lie and  
then have another  
child die right then  
and there hers  
having already  
recklessly perished

But that is  
partisanship  
gone so wrong  
it ought not  
be rewarded.  
Think of how  
many times  
recently our second  
mother, willing  
to walk away  
with nothing to  
save the child  
rather than have  
it suffer unjustly  
has compromised.

The leader asked  
to be shown right  
from wrong to  
how best to judge  
And because he  
did not ask for  
great wealth  
and riches he  
was given the gift  
he most sought.  
So then where  
are our wise rulers  
willing to see  
the ones crying  
loudest for what  
they want yelling  
go ahead do it,  
whatever it takes,  
If I can't have it  
know one should  
are not righteous  
have never learned  
the language  
of justice.

4/30/21

# THIS IS THE WAY THINGS ARE

Half submerged having toppled  
to the lake shore and a good four to five  
feet round and probably twenty or  
so tall, was a tree trunk beginning  
to dry out, rot, turning ashen white  
though it hadn't been long since it was  
majestic and from the looks of it  
had seen many a year before it  
fell to earth. I thought of those  
collectors of old wood that forage  
and turn their bounty into furniture,  
lawn ornaments, and I sat by it for  
a few moments and wept, this great  
noble being that had sheltered  
so many, had found this one spot  
in all the world, calling it home  
provided limbs for nesting or  
leaves for children to jump into  
now half drowned in the water  
and one day maybe becoming a fence  
or humiliated into one of those wizards  
or bear chainsaw wood carvings.

As I was sitting there wondering  
if tree weeper was more pathetic  
than hugger, a small egret shocking  
white walked out from under one  
of the fingers clinched forever branches.  
It was feeding along the edge of the shore  
and turned and looked at me as if  
to say, you okay? Anything I can do?  
It walked a few steps and cocked his head  
hopped up onto the rough craggy trunk  
spread its wings and shook off the wet.

This is how it all is, isn't it,  
you may have once been proud and tall,  
but a day will come when a bird will rest  
atop of you, not even wondering  
how or why it became time for your great fall.  
I do hope that when I become driftwood

someone will happen along  
and sit on the shore  
and say a kind word for me  
is there a moment that nature recognizes?  
Then gathers up and we go on our way  
with a, hey, it's alright, this is the way things are.

5/01/21

# YESTERDAY'S MAYDAY

Yesterday was May Day,  
a holiday that scholars  
argue if began pagan,  
most agree it celebrates  
the budding of Spring.  
It has nothing to  
do with the call  
for help Mayday,  
Mayday, but you  
have to worry what  
would happen if  
an emergency broke out  
while dancing around  
a maypole, a single  
space between words  
and folks might not  
save themselves.

Not quite a contronym,  
imagine that idea:  
almost a paradox,  
doesn't that sum  
up last year,  
but I digress.  
These Autoantonyms  
do exist and seem  
a transparent reflection  
for our ability to argue  
and be spliced over anything  
especially woke meaning.

Apology, are you sorry  
or stating contrition?  
Bound are you homeward  
or traditionally entrapped?  
Cleave have we come together  
or been ripped apart?  
Are these customs special, cultural,  
or everyday behaviors  
Dusting can be to remove  
or to add small amounts

as in trouble.

I can help because you need it,  
Give out to assist or to end it.

These confusions might be  
all that is left or departed,  
and if mean are we average  
or just plain excellent?

No wonder we can't seem to agree,  
did our off sound the alarm or cease,  
this puzzle needs solving or is it one,  
overlook, the verb or the noun,  
no with this one it doesn't matter,  
you can watch and still neglect.

And some are not earth shattering  
like rock, we can get around them,  
but if you screen these you aren't concealing  
you are revealing, so let me throw out  
without disposing a simple idea:  
We can all be unbending  
as in relax not rigid, and accept  
that our variety is  
not always particular

Do not let this get you down  
believe you will wear as in endure this,  
or go ahead, the same with weather.  
You will find that you will wind up  
by not starting all wound up.  
Just remember to add the space or not  
as you reflect on yesterday's mayday.



# ONE TRIP AROUND TWO LAKES

On my ride around both lakes  
bartering a bit more with  
eternity so I religiously each day take,  
two things happened that had  
me pinpoint inventorying my most  
fundamental beliefs.

There is a woman I had not yet  
encountered, who in our town  
has become a one person hate crime  
controversy, known for wearing her  
hand printed swastika tee shirt  
as she all but goosestep fast strides  
defiantly along the bike path.  
Should she be allowed  
to so blatantly wear her cruelty  
in public has created much online  
commentary, and as I rounded the turn  
near the cherry blossom tree garden  
gifted by our Japanese Sister City Masato,  
she looked right at me, this time with  
only a faded blank short sleeved shirt with  
a touch of bleached out green, her eyes  
crazed with more than reason fixed upon  
me, and then she raised her arm across her  
heart to her chest and lifted it Sieg Heil high  
in the air saluting without even stopping.

Now I have lived in cities and encountered  
many that would be labeled as in need of  
medical intervention. I remember  
well my first walk down Broadway,  
having moved just the day before,  
like Jon Voight walking wow wide eyed,  
before the midnight and the cowboy,  
feeling my new home's frenetic  
not in Kansas any more energy.  
I thought I heard someone ask me something  
and turned and Golden Labrador woofed,  
I'm sorry were you asking me?  
This wild haired wrinkled woman starting raving

in what might be considered raging in tongues.  
I learned quickly that to navigate Manhattan  
you do not engage strangers,  
even a smile could be suspect.  
Ripping into me was a brutal language spoken  
when you hear it, you understand it defies translation.  
But here where everyone knows everybody's  
business, and a quick hello or hey there might  
lead to a hours parking lot life summation,  
this who knows what her oath-keeping has  
led to, caused me to wonder is this a speed walking  
mass shooting event just waiting to happen.

I continued on listening to my music which  
you can't make this up, was  
For What It's Worth-  
those haunting chords crying  
There's something happening here  
What it is ain't exactly clear,  
As I got near the new Lion's Club Every Child's Dream  
all inclusive playground there was a group of  
about twenty or twenty five Amish,  
a flock or more were young kids  
racing right past me to skip some stones,  
None had masks- not even their parents  
isn't that odd that even wearing their culture's  
timeless clothing, that is the first thing that stood out,  
well, they were outdoors,  
and might be from the same family,  
and right across the yard  
were soccer games with some on both teams  
running without their's on,  
You better stop children  
What's that sound...

It was the first hot day of bright sunny spring,  
all still wearing long sleeves, the boy's trousers,  
the ladies and girls dresses and head coverings.  
I immediately thought of the stampede  
last night of over forty four Orthodox trampled on  
their pilgrimage having just payed devoted homage,  
I just rode a bit further and then stopped to sit  
on a bench in memory of one's loving mother  
wondering what is the list, or is their even one,  
of the things I would be as fervently sure I believed in?

Starting at the top, I can't even claim steadfast faith in a creator. I have always believed that we will know when we most need to, but that a healthy dose of agnostic uncertainty feels more of an honest panoramic view of a world with such unmistakable vast majesty, goodness and look at this bluff's beauty, but unmatched devastation and sometime long periods, just ask our local Nazi, or any of us when we will try to tell the story of this year's unspeakable cruelty.

Blame it on being a child of the late sixties, seventies, witness my Buffalo Springfield workout playlist, I still tucked away in a drawer next to some Nixon/Agnew campaign Now More Than Ever (how did that work out) memorabilia, a button that says in black and white Question Authority. I believe without any need for equivocation that we must leave our life's journey having done as little harm as possible, but even that killing is hard to reconcile when it comes to eating animals, which is why I was vegetarian well over twenty years until I lost the battle as a picky eating hater of most produce who succumbed one day to the selfish craving of bacon, speaking of war and not wanting to murder, I am certain of liberty's preciousness, worth fighting for, it just is harder to think of which modern battles are for freedom and not profit.

I got back on my bike, certain I was purely a collection of best intentions gone hypocritical (perhaps hypercritical too) to finish my riding realizing that when it comes right down to it there is little in my life that I am rock solid certain of, that might be what I most put my faith in, for me it has been live that rule that all cultures, religions, even as they battled and still do, believe in, I get on up and keep trying to explore, understand, follow that and finish the ride knowing there will be much more than today's wonder and worries to take in, this is just one trip out of many around both of these two lakes.

5/3/21

# UNCIVIL WAR LETTER

Dearest One,

I wanted to take a moment  
to write telling you  
that this culture war raging  
seems to have no end in sight.  
I do not wish to alarm you,  
but the fronts seem to  
be multiplying so fast that by  
the time you are reading this  
there might be struggles in  
our own town square.

Have you heard the good news  
our Right to Life regiment  
has steeled their resolve  
and will be taking the struggle  
all the way to the Supreme Court  
who have bolstered their ranks  
our quarrel's a blazing wildfire  
burning state to state,  
sometimes house to house.  
We had no alternative,  
these moments choose us ,  
please tell our children  
this fight's for their future.  
First they came after our Christmas  
now religion itself is under attack.  
Even our President proclaimed  
a church going god fearing man  
still doesn't understand.  
Some whisper him a CINO,  
Catholic in name only.  
I have heard rumors  
His own church's considering to refuse  
Him rites to communion.

Am I speaking tyranny, so be it.  
Dearest, I have never been surer  
that our struggle is for the very  
future of our own way of life.  
Our fathers and theirs before them

did not shed blood to have those  
who decry they are not fully free  
kneeling disrespect for Old Glory,  
Patriots would sacrifice all to keep flying.  
If the races are all to be respected  
Then they why do they refuse to act  
With dignity, they were the ones marching  
Setting fires, looting, leaving no choice  
Dear one, but respond.  
Now they are coming  
For our police, what will they do  
when they call for help to no one?  
And how can we have a republic  
If allowed to steal our sacred vote?

They are after our liberties my love,  
if we do nothing, what's remains is less than little.  
They want to sequester our speech,  
steal away our weapons,  
unseat the sanctity of marriage,  
they even want our ranchers  
no longer to ranch beef.  
Coal, natural gas, they are  
after it all, imagine my sweet one  
if our power just died in the winter.  
Force all to go to college or be sorry,  
allow men to compete as a woman  
and women to try to better a man.  
Teach everyone our land is hateful  
our history is a trail of pain and misery.

Our struggle's need is sharply focused  
made clearer thanks to your support and devotion.  
Our nation must be returned to its greatness,  
no longer draw battle lines north to south,  
red versus blue, we are almost everywhere soon  
winning back control of both houses benefitted restrictions  
the numbers no longer always add up to mean power.  
They may be pulling us out of wars unfinished  
and surrendering our borders to criminal interests,  
the fight that they will never win is for our culture  
and this war we are bringing is far from civil.

With all the heart that I have already given you,  
Your Devoted One.            5/4/21

# SONNET NO NUMBER

Our lyric's song tracks a sweet sonnet's rhyme  
words unfolding, dance coupleting fev'rish  
next line awaits 'til just shy a lifetime  
traveling toward a longed for first kiss wish

Second quatrain watches fall in lovers  
birdsong waking sunlit late day basking  
sharing all the I never knew discovers  
answers exist to heart's questions asking

Last stanzas work wonders or cause sorrow  
if right no need for manufacturing  
words align each picture paints tomorrow  
your sunset's rare beauty's worth capturing

Took long enough's the perfect time to start  
no number can value a work of such art

5/5/21

# FOUR FAMILIES

Four families were reunited  
over a thousand  
    are  
        still  
            apart  
guilty of trying to  
    cross a border  
separated to deter this menacing danger

zero tolerance should have been  
the no chance this policy existed  
hundreds are nowhere to be found  
meaning parents deported with no-  
kids who are now orphaned- who are-  
we to have caused such torment  
biblical in its cruelty. Just ask Jacob.

Let anyone who venomously spits  
it was their fault they should not have paid coyotes to smuggle them illegally or  
brought their children thinking it would be easier to be let in we have rules and  
they shouldn't be broken be

d  
  r  
    o  
      p  
      p  
      e  
      d

a few thousand  
miles into Honduras and told  
to walk back home but not  
before taking their children and  
leave them somewhere  
    else and  
        not tell  
            them

where.

These are human beings not aliens the illegal  
is causing the many endless nights a mother  
spent worrying her child will not remember some  
things are just not fair is an argument for not  
getting your latte with enough foam not  
the trauma of a young girl's murdered trust

If you can witness the grip of the  
teenager  
not letting  
go of his  
mother  
sobbing  
terrified  
she will be taken away again still  
believing your nation is more important

then how  
about living  
your family  
values starting  
with caring  
as vehemently  
about these  
one, two, three, four  
out of well over  
a 1,000,000  
families.

5/6/21



# LOVE POEM FOR LIZ

Some things are best left unsaid  
the bond cannot be constrained  
by something so temporal as one's word.  
In such moments, sacred trust seems  
so vital, all that separates one from  
the true cruelty residing close by.

Take for example the shis kabobbing  
of our dear Liz, who normally does  
all her own barbecuing. The quietus  
displayed by almost all of her colleagues  
who could be counted on for fealty  
is so much more meaningful than any  
actual loyalty which ought to have  
been afforded her but now costs  
too much to purchase favor from  
her price to pay for guessing second  
place finishing would have value  
when her party's market has  
laid bare what's never fair is fair.

How fickle is what passes for romantic  
comedy when we have so damaged  
an understanding of what was once  
now is no longer sleepless we all are  
and far from Seattle.

How naive you are to vow outspoken  
weeks ago you were worthy  
still allowed within, safe, now  
they have broken inside and  
you will be the first out voted

Your credentials for cruelty when it  
came to rights for all, for choosing  
peace over conflict, for providing  
rather than bottom lining are all  
at odds for one tying herself to now  
the name of honor and righteousness  
hoping that history will be kinder  
than any McCarthy who has grown  
weary of your bothersomeness.

Will there be a Romney unbooing  
rather than a crossing Jordan,  
or is it all a short Cruz to  
doesn't matter that I'm a damn  
Cheney for Christsakes and  
that one isn't even fully grown,  
sorry sweet Liz you are about to be  
Stefaniked.

5/7/21

# MOZART'S MOTHER

What is the chemistry that creates creativity?  
Is it practice makes delightfully imperfect,  
or the muses wheezing whew that took a bit longer than didn't it,  
can we coolly chalk it up to it's in the blood's the solution  
all can now be charted in that spiral coding doubling helix?  
A good friend of mine has a daughter whose work deepens  
each day a new dazzle, a poet vaulter, not yet thirty, who long ago  
cleared the bar. Proof you say to the broken all down to chromosome  
hypothesis  
since her mother has for years been guiding all who will into the  
deep woods of weren't those words a panorama,  
you now have learned the language of remarkable.

Mozart had a mother. I had never thought of her until today.  
Much is made of his father pushing and prodding him into prodigy,  
Ana Maria was beloved, devoted, almost died birthing him her last,  
five other children not surviving, and while accompanying  
the not quite young man to Paris to invite others to appreciate  
his greatness, imagine a job interview with Mozart, we were looking for  
someone not so great- she took ill and was gone suddenly at fifty eight.  
Did she ever wonder, my daughter's a virtuoso, but there doesn't exist  
the means to describe my own son, do not mistake this for the fiercest  
form of nepotism, a mother's blinded bias  
Can you not hear it?  
It is beyond life's reason  
to measure  
living immortality.

Much more has been made of Van Gogh's brother Theo,  
still would you bet on the odds of having excellence as an art dealer  
in the same family as the master of emotion's modern artistry,  
a brother as mother who could mentor, you must meet and get to know,  
let me introduce to both you and all the world,  
meet Gauguin, Cézanne, Lautrec, Seurat and don't forget Rousseau.  
Oh, and this here's Vincent,  
he is on to something so exciting, get to know him too.  
How fortunate is time to have forged a bond so vital  
that not only will you keep him alive until at 37  
you can no longer, but you name your own son after him,  
months before you too go mad, gone five years younger.  
He tossed out most of your letters,

you saved every one of his, oh,  
and nine hundred of his paintings  
Starry Night, those sunflowers,  
the self portraits, preserved by you,  
for all of us, forever defining appreciation.

I had forgotten that Alberta Williams King,  
Martin Luther's mother, was also assassinated,  
shot at her beloved organ while leading her choir at Ebenezer Baptist  
she had given up her teaching career since  
once married she could no longer legally,  
Endured the death of two of her sons,  
her youngest mysteriously drowning just  
over a year after losing her Martin,  
her instilling kindness by example to her children,  
growing up segregated, society spitting on them as less than,  
fearful of the violence met if they carried  
with them any hope of equality, Alberta  
insisted they believed  
they were not only somebody,  
profoundly loved,  
but destined for the  
greatness of the ages.

The next time you hear free at last, free at last  
please remember who gifted that dream's permission,  
or attending the blockbuster auction,  
hundreds of millions bidding,  
recall the only art school that was attended  
was personally, passionately impasto,  
or when you Rondo Alla Turca,  
you will hear the beauty  
understood best as devotion,  
but a measure more a coda  
would have fallen within the intro,  
sit back and let it surround you  
this composition Amadeus Mozart  
and all the complex musicality  
merely to mother him.

5/8/21

# WE LOVE, WE WORRY

They say every one is Mother's Day  
but ours got to be Sunday,  
I'd pick up the phone and call her  
religiously by noon so she wouldn't call  
me fretting that something had happened,  
I'd then refuse to answer because back then  
long distance was costly, I was not going  
to have her pay, but if the answering machine  
picked up, the charges started, so I'd say  
Mom, don't call me I will call you, I promise.  
I don't want you to always have to pay,  
she'd reply, I can afford it, which was her  
way to prove she was Jewish by guilting  
the out of work actor and proving love both  
In the same sentence, the chance to  
use the quiet of what many others call  
God's day to connect was for me always holy.

It took me years not to reach for the phone  
after her passing, still do talk to her  
at least to ask how in the heck are ya,  
every once in awhile she'll say I'm concerned  
about you, which was Lenore speak for I'm  
a Capricorn, this is how we love, we worry.

Those who knew her best called her Eeyore,  
she came by it honestly her parents split when  
she was still a girl giving personal meaning to  
The Great Depression, raised by her father  
while her mother spent a few years Blanche Dubois  
in a state home recovering after their divorce, so  
much for paper dolls and teach me baking.  
Mom graduated with honors from Florida State College  
still a girl's school and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek  
was a visiting student, they took classes together,  
she was a very nice lady, Mom said, liked me because I  
understood her wanting to go for walks without being  
all fussed over, she was not fond of all the attention.

During the War, my mother became a Wave in the Navy,  
a code breaker, one of her bunk mates was

Nancy Kulp, who played Jane Hathaway on the Beverly Hillbillies, we used to ask my mother later on, you know she was a lesbian – yes, we understood she was, it wasn't important, she was Nancy, how's that for some ground breaking don't ask, don't telling, speaking of- I used to beg her to tell me stories of what it was like to have all those national security secrets, she said I took an oath not to talk to a soul about it, why would I start breaking it now?

Mom was a buyer for Rich's Department store, Ladies Foundations, brought her to New York twice a year, she loved that, what young lady wouldn't, but she and my grandmother-who by now had called once released- and this will tell you all you need to know about my mother's ability to forgive and compartmentalize all in the same gesture, agreed to have her come live with her all these years later, she was still my mother, of course I was to take care of her, together they were leaving a fair when the car got a flat and my soon to be father stopped to help change the tire, one thing quite literally led to another, we became a family with my mother rewriting a new path teaching in Florida.

Her classroom was in the same high school for well over three decades, the one we ended up each going to, which was reason enough for therapy, what was so Lenore Cohen Gundersheimer about this career started long before the working woman's rights movement was how proudly she fought and organized for her union even bringing us kids along when in solidarity we all protested In front of Publix for Chavez and migrant farm workers.

I asked her once what it was like to be at these moments of greatness and history being written and she said with Madame Kai-Shek reticence you do what needs to be done, that's called living, after all the closest Mom came to bra burning was when on a family vacation after driving her screaming kids halfway home from Williamsburg Virginia she accidentally took off her blouse with her sweater in the Hornes restaurant parking lot trying for relief from the heat all of us laughing at her folly joking the rest of her life, now long after, about our mother who was a stripper at Horny's.

I know for some this holiday of celebration of motherhood  
Is difficult, especially for those recently grieving,  
if the complexity of their childhood  
rivaled the shadings of my own mother's,  
or if they are caught longing another year gone by  
without the chance to have raised their own family,  
please forgive me if these words of love and remembrance  
add to your heavy heartedness.  
See, here I am also a Capricorn,  
who went into birth's labor while  
she was getting a permanent,  
that's how we love, we worry,  
don't we Mom?

5/9/21



# 110 MILES

I was amazed that just across the street  
from my late wife's parents was a military base  
armed with missiles at the ready, the question  
was not if but when the attack against their island's  
right to be free would begin. It is no game of chess  
but her entire proud nation, complete with their  
own indigenous race overrun, whose ancient dialects  
one day may be forgotten, in the struggle between  
super powers for territory, not even rooks, though  
as castles, would seem to represent the battle for land,  
instead how do you survive as the continual pawns?

It is called Taiwan, for centuries Formosa, though  
technically it is a main part of the ROC, Republic of China,  
not to be confused ever with the Peoples Republic of China  
(PROC), you'd think with the choice of the word People's  
that would be the democracy, at least an attempt at Republic,  
but it is the ROC that is a true democracy, why if  
it wasn't from our protection, more importantly the  
economic benefits of its unfettered capitalistic opportunities  
in the never ending game of follow the money, there is a  
reason that so many tags proclaimed made in Taiwan.

But the decades have decided that trade with a communist  
China is no longer an issue, and just like Taipei, their capital, we  
are thick as thieves with corporations on the both lands, who have  
offices and customers on the mainland and vice versa, so  
that any actual conflict would be an economic tsunami,  
almost unthinkable, you see at some point this political  
ponzi scheme will pull the wrong string unravelling,  
either the red or black or both will allow their pawn  
to be taken, a necessary sacrifice, to win checkmate.  
Cassey came back home to hospice in these  
mountains and shores with waves crashing  
to be in the arms of her family,  
though all she dreamed as a girl was to one day  
be an American, she would cross over and above  
free of this nation state identity in the place  
that was home if not even a recognized country.

We visited the sea,  
I pushed her along in her wheelchair



breathing in the salt, she said  
I am not such a fan of the ocean,  
laughing, not good for a girl from an island,  
the first time I heard Paul sing  
The Long And Winding Road,  
all I wished for you have given me,  
He was British, my sweet,  
I know that, you goof,  
I had to settled for your New York,  
look it is only 180 kilometers away,  
She could have been talking about eternity,  
I honestly did not know,  
America seemed a bigger ocean further,  
China, husband, I am talking about  
the mainland, 110 of your miles  
That seems ridiculously close,  
It is, I worry for my family, please  
do what you can if ever it happens.

She was placed in an urn  
in a high-rise mausoleum  
on one of many floors, a plot that is  
about the size of a cube refrigerator,  
it's an island after all,  
the soil's too precious for more cemeteries,  
yesterday the Economist warned her home  
was the most dangerous place on Earth,  
giving it just a matter of years  
before an unthinkable skirmish  
it may not be tomorrow, there is  
the upcoming Olympics plus  
Hong Kong's recent unsolved unrest  
thankfully making the immediate unfortunate

I wonder what she would make of it all,  
the latest military muscle flexing exercises  
in that small Straits that create her  
not quite a recognized country,  
one of the songs she asked  
me to play at her service,  
comes to mind, I have grown to love it,  
back then I chided her  
The Bee Gees? Really, my love?  
It's a good song. Please. Words.  
"It's only words and words are all I have."

It is so uncomplicated when it all comes down to it,  
soon her people's struggle to remain  
free may become all of ours,  
who knows, at our rate,  
we may lose freedom first.

She picked up a rock and threw it  
as far as she could that day  
It made a faint thump as it was swallowed,  
then a wave splashed high up and over  
the seawall taunting this is how it is done,  
"This world has lost its glory"  
I realized just now she was hoping  
she had the strength  
to hurl it those 110 miles.

5/10/21

# LIFE AS WE DON'T KNOW IT

One of the NASA team  
Perseverance predicted  
it is only a matter of time  
before we discover that  
we need to conceive of  
life as we don't know it.

I beg to differ, not that we may  
not find new forms of life  
on Mars or elsewhere,  
but it is my contention that  
we already have crossed  
over to life point two point O

I remember Dolly which  
is not the sequel to the  
musical Hello, but the cloned  
sheep back in 1996, and  
now we have stem cells,  
CRISPER, and uploading  
consciousness, That's a  
lot for the religious right  
to process, no wonder  
we are warring cultures.

Two years ago, not a typo  
Hemimastix kukwesjijk,  
go ahead google,  
in Nova Scotia, which  
can be as desolate,  
a new form of eukaryote  
that "flails its hair-like tendrils  
wildly, curling them around prey  
and sucking out their juices"  
you were worried about aliens?

Three years ago also not much  
of a blip, we were after all living  
in the Twitterstorm of Trump,  
two researchers created a new form  
of life, a fittingly undesirable bacterium  
that not only uses the four natural bases,

but also a pair of synthetic ones  
known as X and Y, of course,  
how unimaginatively named and  
unimaginable both at the same time.

As we move through this period  
of jumping species never before  
obscene viruses, I think of monster  
eukaryotes and having meet and  
greet with I'm a new form of life,  
nice to meet you, maybe not  
should we or is that question  
long past obsolete, welcome  
to a Russian Doll reality,  
a version of concentric Pandoras,  
open one box of you don't want to  
only to reach another, brace yourself,  
the Greeks had a goddess to blame  
our never ending foolish ability  
to what in the good lord have we done  
must be that Eris' love of chaos?

I understand that Elon Musk  
having if nothing else an exotic species  
name, can be funny live on Saturday Night,  
even without paying his fare share  
of taxes, but can we see the line  
that doesn't ever seem so fine  
from truly visionary to bad Bond villain?  
Why do we continue worship  
long past well compensated,  
never fearing what drives some  
to greatness is often an inflated  
ego centric power madness?

Mindboggling sure, but what will happen  
the day that drone Ingenuity discovers  
will it be another dark origin story  
or the dawn of overcoming our star's  
now too much brightness?  
Do we need to unearth there  
what we won't even agree to here?  
We are already well into season five  
living with life as we didn't  
know we already knew it.

5/11/21

# A GARAGE CALLED PARADISE

It started in a garage called Paradise  
but we couldn't even do Disco  
without Heaven Knows screwing that up.  
There were riots at the '79 White Sox  
game where folks were invited to  
burn baby burn their disco records before it  
destroyed music as we know it,  
with all the wrap around hatred of its suspect  
black uptown free love gay club hedonistic roots.

Others just plain thought it sucked,  
there was even a country song  
needing two parts to cover all the  
hating how much sucking  
(did they not hear the snickering)  
in that damn disco there was.

But if you were lucky  
enough to be let in  
past the doormen  
bass line thumping  
after dropping  
your coat  
sliding down  
as if disrobing,  
check it the  
girls all flirting  
now start your strut  
the hall a runway  
first a touch up  
the hair,  
tuck in that  
Nik Nik shirt

The music intro  
telling you not yet  
because the force  
has a lot of power, wait for it  
wham, the beat drops  
go right ahead  
make your entrance

as if high diving  
waves parting  
washing over  
four on the floor  
strings backing,  
vocals soaring  
sound and scene  
no separation  
the room was  
built for now full  
tilt nonstop grooving  
even without the  
first drink ordered  
lude dropped  
popper popped  
skirts twirling  
bells bottoming  
free styling 'til  
donna summer  
starts her hustle  
like soul train  
slept with fred  
and ginger,  
strangers partner  
spin, fast, faster, and again  
then like that  
stop  
now slowly  
lean low lunge  
the air thick  
enough to lick  
erotic with desire  
this night's  
inviting itself  
you own me.

D.J. sets it  
all in motion  
tracks tumbling  
worth repeating  
songs end at  
the beginning  
old school  
meets newly minted  
I used to love

that one  
reinvented  
artists you grew  
up Dorian Greying  
how does that happen  
you and they  
magically feeling  
forever young  
floors lit neon  
the sky above  
bumping left  
then sliding right  
darkness cuts open  
bursting wide apart  
as if each song's chorus  
and the room itself  
are moving somehow  
to the speed of light  
free for all  
yet all as one  
until  
stop  
syncopations  
here it comes,  
the mirror ball's  
exploding the entire  
crowd arms above them  
YEAH  
is chanted  
louder than  
any church's  
hallelujah.

It came and went  
within one decade  
but those who 54'd  
Palladiumed, or Sanctuaried  
From Sylvester, Gloria  
Gaynor, Summer the queen  
those Bee Gees cashing in  
Le Freak sez Chic  
We Turned The Beat  
Don't Leave Me This  
Billie Jeaned, Don't Stop 'Til  
Got to Give It Up Part One

Fly, Robin Fly, TSOP, like  
A Native New Yorker  
with a Heart Of Glass,  
I Loved The Nightlife,  
Got to Be Real, Shame,  
Ring My Bell, Hot Stuff  
you're in Funkytown.

The fifties had sockhops  
Heard they were bitchin  
The sixties had Woodstock  
British Invasions, and  
LSD love ins.  
The Eighties New Waved  
until Heavy Metal got Punked  
By the time it was the  
nineties the only Alternative  
was to discover Hip Hop.

Ain't No Stoppin Us  
The seventies were a  
More, More, More  
Boogie Wonderland  
went out clubbing like  
we were in our roaring  
twenties, and all those  
who were elated disco  
flamed out and died  
missed the Last Dance  
to someone left your cake  
out in the rain, these  
were Boogie Nights, and  
The Music Played Funky  
It was Raining Men,  
the plague would come after  
Our Young Hearts Ran Free  
and you lived to Shake Your  
Groove Thing, it was a  
Celebration, We Were  
Family, boy or girl  
didn't matter  
clear the floor  
always and one  
night more  
than a women



Everlasting Love  
no better scene  
dig in the Dancing Queen.

5/12/21

# TRIBAL PROBLEMS

The lake waters ripple a calm wind  
yesterday there was a pretty bad storm  
south of here they got golf ball hail  
north a few feet of not again snow late Spring

A friend lost his new dog not even a year old, cancer,  
another had a relative at Mayo for successful hip surgery,  
so and so got hired in Milwaukee, wait, did you hear  
they are building a new Burger King in the Target parking.

If asked that is what some would say most is happening  
on this day this twelfth of May twenty twenty one.  
Why worry over in Jerusalem there are rockets  
Gaza's apartment building, high rise homes flattened,  
over thirty souls have no tomorrow, here we go again  
a hatred hundreds of thousands of days what's old is news again

They are hoarding gas in long lines, we can't blame Carter,  
Stocks fell 600 points, claiming unemployment payments  
are killing the job market, caught their murder suspect,  
can't find his tiger, how do you lose a baby Bengal, Houston?

But what ought to get written in the chronicle of these times  
in the very same Congress targeted testifying sorrow for the death draped  
In our American flag of the veteran breaking and entering  
to overthrow the government she had sworn an oath  
to keep protecting, hers was a sacrifice worth mourning,  
then walking outside to reporters stating the need to have ousted their  
own caucus leader in sixteen minutes for not agreeing to an alternative  
reality, she's no martyr, we must call out every danger to democracy.

Is taking sides important in a world where even the weather can no longer  
remain small talk, too dicey, a rolling random crap shoot daily disaster movie?  
Is this not just as one former security official had the temerity to compare  
that non-violent capital insurrection's a modern version of the Kent State  
uprising  
Groundhog day's no longer a comedy, it's dystopian  
starring candidate Katelynn Jenner who also votes lying.

Will there ever be a way to transcend our deepest dependency on tribes,  
early evolution's banded together science teaches as essential to survival,

but our addiction to a system based on castes, has divided half of us  
proclaiming Darwin the devil, the other labeling the use of tribal is  
appropriation.  
our fealty to our own at the expense of creating you as an other,  
has brought us to the brink more than once defending the indefensible.

If history doesn't repeat (ask Liz Cheney) but it often rhymes,  
what should the end of the song about nothing's worse than loyalty  
not treason, which it really always used to be,  
what couplets when the next to last line  
ponders if we are quicksand sliding down a spiral of toxic societies?

5/13/21

# HOW THINGS DON'T WORK

I've lived a long time without being positive how electricity works, baffles me. I learned there are charged particles involved but that light bulb moment never pops on overhead, which reminds me, do you understand the whole speed of light, squared or not, I don't see it, and illumination seems so essential to gathering of knowledge, I worry if left to me, we'd still be in the dark ages, speaking of dark, see how these things pile up one on top of each other, they are sure now it is much more than the absence of light, our whole universe is thick with it though can't be seen being black, might be more important than anything else, why they call it dark matter.

I lie with my head on your heart, for the life of me I have no idea how it beats. That is not a statement of your warmth and love, I'm speaking mechanics not metaphor. I understand the electrical pulse pumps the muscle that never seems to run out of battery, until it does, but who jump starts it and how? If I reach for my cell phone to Google it, what in the hell even is an algorithm and who sets the pattern, this damn thing does things that would have had folks burned once as witches, I should have kept my head on your chest where it was, you remind me when we were little they flew to the moon with a spaceship with less of a computer than in my hand hoping now to find answers, don't even get me started with how did they understand orbiting and the way back to earth, and now we have pictures of Mars? What would Orville and Wilbur think? They have hop-skipped all the way onto and then flying around another planet. And all of these things work and there are rooms full of people that know how, here I am just a willful ignoramus.

There is a website, which should first explain itself, what a site is, and the web that it is woven into, all about how things work. So much for miraculous, or is it? How does a bird soar? Water not float? It's all there explained for you, encyclopedic, even as it doesn't actually exist. You could spend a lifetime learning what living is and isn't and how it all started or did it? Which brings me to my point using language, in itself extraordinary, not my words, that's self evident, but that we have such a tool to try and grasp what we are thinking, which somehow itself becomes ideas, neurons firing forming reason. They have tried to explain all of this as borne out of consciousness, which is in itself, oh, I just defined it, didn't I? There I go again. We, meaning you and I are aware of our same but unique selfness. How, though the thing we more struggle with on our long day's journey is the Why?

Multiverses, not a collection of stanzas or poems, though it might be, if you are now speaking figuratively, is the explanation there are many realities: consider there is this dimension and then that, then that universe plus this, and however

many more you think you might need, it's the new opposite rationalization if you aren't into Intelligent Design, which is not a decorative taste judgement, but the explanation of the God problem or solution depending on what side your free will falls on.

The problem with believing that there is a solution to everything we can't really understand by just multiplying the chances for the solving until you find a right one, is that the simple but elegant answer of all you need is one Deity, a creator, versus there are a many ways to make possibilities, doesn't in the end matter, they both leave us never really knowing, until we do, if we will, but before then there is only faith to hang our hat on.

There was a philosopher in the 1930's, a perfect time for this sort of thinking, who eureka'd a concept known as falsifiability. Nothing, in theory, can be ever proved true, we can only agree on what we all know is wrong. Turn the clock's hands forward, in one of those insert time passing montages, we can't even come to consensus today on what's not right. We are unmoored in a world that seems post viability,

So when it comes down to it, which, if still with me, I am certain you are thrilled to hear it, sounding like there might be, even if a paradox, a sort of conclusion, it's really quite simple, said with more than a trace of irony, if that is still a thing possible: more critical than learning how we think things do work, is grasping the idea that maybe they just don't.

5/14/21

# PRAYER

Inside a cathedral canopy of trees  
vaulting branches, arching high,  
newly anointed with leaves  
spring's perennial ritual restoration,  
gifting shade sacred their calling  
receive their offering consecrated  
embracing with their entire beautiful being,  
enveloped enclosing, mother nature's benediction

The river's ripple meandering,  
bends as if it written to round that corner,  
gathering itself spirit flowing  
melody growing louder,  
cascade crescendos,  
sheer wall of falling  
slapping stony ground  
a rush of fervor's frenzy  
washing whirlpool all at once  
slowly current calmly  
continuing faintly first  
begins the humming  
choir of hymns shimmering  
lifting this traveling liquid  
pilgrim, tributaries gathering  
long ago destined off the coast  
of the same eternal estuary.

Valley gazed upon from atop  
peaks after a winding paths climb  
teems with its many still wild things  
asks for nothing but to be remembered  
turn in time slowly taking in entire vistas  
one of few spots having escaped desecration,  
If you are privileged to attend any of these  
pristine promised lands do not cross over  
until you add yours to the prayer breathing  
deep inside first spoken when each  
became forever blessed as temples.

5/15/21

# HOW MUCH TIME IS SPENT HOPING

Thirty three years of your life will be spent sleeping  
If you live to be the average, seventy three.  
That is an awful lot of time to spend dreaming  
Not to go ahead and live at least a few of them.

We will spend one hundred fifteen days laughing,  
seems nowhere near enough, considering  
thirteen years and three days we will be at work  
so if a comedian that should add up to be about right.

We spend four years and six months eating,  
which becomes challenged by the sixty six percent  
who at one time are on a diet, this was a British report  
by the way, so take that with a grain of chips and vinegar  
eleven years and four months screen timing,  
I suppose was reading and homing pigeoning  
or Morse coding in the before times.  
Since only one one year and three days of your life will be socializing  
and thirty days and one year will be spent being romantic  
there might be a good argument for taking your love making  
more out in the open. Perhaps best to factor in here the French.

It is interesting to think of your life as only so much of this, and  
should be less of that, but one year and four months of exercising seems  
nothing to shake a leg at. Binge watching seems like it will soon have it's own  
category, two hundred thirty five days will be spent in line waiting,  
the DMV could be that on its own in America.  
I think of the things not listed that I wonder how they would add up  
Tooth brushing, and flossing, would be at least a year for sure  
our dentists certainly hope so- even the English.  
One hundred and twelve days women spend getting ready,  
to forty six days for men, argument enough for equalities liberation  
and in the States that number drops to thirty eight for most men.

Left out of this study but essential to life's equation  
was the commitment to appreciating, contentment, and spirituality.  
Could it be that it is less than a few days not even a week total?  
If so, we should take the time to consider our to do list seems  
too much more clocked in than our ought to have done desires  
which can't be tacked on, once forgotten,  
We ought to consider how much time is spent hoping. 5/16/21

# DIGITAL REAR VIEW MIRROR

Ask those in Gaza, then Tel Aviv, who's at fault  
they call it thorny, complex, a brutal, awful, no win situation.  
If two are wronged won't leave a right,  
an eye for an eye is not just blinding,  
this never ending failure to turn around  
and understand the signs left carved, in neon, behind us,  
what's worse than stubbornly ignoring hindsight?

Wherever you are on the food chain  
it matters just enough to not be eaten.  
So if the top is us, why do we constantly  
forget to remember what history has shown  
press repeat, it's never over before it's once again begun,  
I will conquer you for dirt, we are our own, deadly, worst enemy.

We make all sorts of progress, think of those very dark ages,  
each day someone reinvents what was just yesterday look at that amazing  
I'm leasing a new car, I kid you not, with a digital rear view mirror,  
not just for parking, or in reverse, I am talking forward for the entire journey  
Is it because we couldn't trust our own reflection for safeties sake  
we needed better, wider, bells sell whistles, backwards vision?

The road ahead must be turned around, we must not be afraid  
to go back home and start out slower, sometimes it rains or snows  
and it won't matter how fast or if the car wants to take us there itself,  
that digital rear view mirror is no better or worse once we have lost our signal.

5/17/21



## ANOTHER STILL THIRSTY DAY TO DRINK UP

I think of each day as a vessel to fill,  
having watched death sneak in, stealing away  
more than once, has aroused a more commonsense  
desire to craft then make use of every earthenware opportunity.

Once my art form was placed on along with almost everything else lockdown  
I chose grateful for the chance to challenge myself to handmake  
at least one of these word holders with the same harmonious  
zeal on par as my old foxhound's fondness of his seems just  
about the most exquisite use of an afternoon I can come up with naps.

Though he can no longer run as freely as when a rescued rambunctious pup,  
mornings spent tearing through Riverside Park ears flapping,  
there is always the chance to dream away, muffled bark wistfully romping,  
wiry once strong legs aquiver, covering boundless miles escaping in place.

One hundred days straight felt like the right amount to wager on  
This makes sixteen win, show or sometimes just place bets left,  
you would think that we'd both be out of destinations to dream away on,  
but this is the thing about imaginations, they will keep pouring out  
as long as they have another grateful still thirsty day to drink up.

5/18/21

# NARROW WINDOW

We now have to come up with best practices to describe what's worse than destroying a planet so global warming's manicured into climate changing natural climate variance arm wrestles with human causal but when your nights are warming faster than your days and towns in Siberia are registering temps over one hundred and you've begun bleaching your coral seas, it might be time to consider your already narrow windows are now cracking open.

It is all about how can we conceive of the inconceivable they have us think tanking things like a global wealth gap meaning we will soon be killing over air fit for breathing, who will own and how can we get some water worth the risk to drink it. forget fossil fuels, those will soon be so last offshore Gulf War

There's a Global Climate Risk Index which is a sort of misFortune five hundred ratings for the Armageddon if your neighborhood is hot, that is so no longer cool, look out, it might be time for you to consider relocating, get in line, for the ever growing not so magical, it was never a mystery tour, step right up, rolling out for the just around the next's flood's corner, dying to take you away, welcome to the great human migration

Nothing like a little threat of enhanced interpersonal violence ticks and pests and the spread of would you look at that infectious diseases, throw in a little food crisis, all decades back were warned inconvenient as might be now no longer possible, not even probable, welcome to our beyond a shadow of those still casting their doubt's certainty.

Goal posts are twenty thirty, now twenty fifty, notice most don't even chart much after our fourth quarter's time is no longer a waisting, we are factoring how much battery life's remaining so the next time you hear someone scoff at that socialist democrat green new deal remind them you really don't wish to live in a world locked in, you just did a lockdown, there is still a sliver of a chance for the outdoors to be let in through their already very narrow window

5/19/21

# RAPE SCENE

It was all about power, his wanting what he wanted,  
he was the director, very marginally famous,  
Come up and let's talk schedule,  
I was his assistant, last semester of college,  
so to his room I went, you can't make this up  
the play we were working on was Born Yesterday.

As he came on to me, I was taller but terrified,  
I'm straight, they all are, he scoffed, ask my wife.  
I froze not knowing what was best to do, this was years  
ago, these things weren't talked about, though what was  
happening was even older than Tamar, daughter of King David.  
You work for him, he was in movies, just get up and leave,  
thousands of could have tumbling past each other as  
he yanked down my pants, I thought it's okay, this will be over  
since it was hardly erotic, I remember, just stay on your back  
he soon stopped his fumbling and groping,  
Well too bad, you would have enjoyed it  
I got up, pulled up my pants, said I'm sorry, apologizing  
for my own assault, when I try to explain to myself years later  
saying remember he was your boss, you were an apprentice.

He died a few years later, talk about  
complicated feelings once I heard of his passing,  
sorry and sad for him really,  
to prey for the sex he could not have the way  
he preferred it, because it was more important in those  
days to remain in Hollywood, keep it hushed, very closeted.  
I am in no way apologizing for those who harm others  
leaving behind so much guilt, pain, and anger,  
I am also aware my privilege being male  
allows me not to each day be reminded  
that to move through this life one can never be too careful,  
helped provide me the grace to not let my me-too moments,  
twice more harassed by agents promising to sign me,  
define me with any overwhelming marrow-deep damage.

But really Men, friggin shame on us.  
It must, but never seems to, nor will it ever, stop.  
Seventy three seconds, since you began reading this,  
an American was just sexually assaulted.  
One can only imagine how many are

being hurt worldwide, trafficked, enslaved.  
We need an eleventh commandment,  
though we are failing so miserably with  
the ten already given. I never did report it,  
did not want to be known as the one who made trouble,  
my career so new, my silence reprehensible,  
though sadly nowhere near uncommon.

Man of La Mancha, Streetcar, South Pacific,  
there is even a Rape Song in the musical comedy The Fantasticks.  
Both Testaments, Old and New, Titus Andronicus, Clockwork Orange  
and don't even get me started it could have it's own category on Netflix  
but these are all just grotesque plot points, there are very real rape scenes,  
ask those who have tried to come forward bravely  
reporting even Puff the Magic Dragon's Pete Yarrow.  
All the innocence lost, the self-worth damaged, devalued,  
the powerful who defend those who they know if protected  
will do their bidding, it's an entire system built on centuries of  
just ask Absalom, Oh Absalom, violation.

5/20/21

# RANDOM THOUGHT GENERATOR

History literally can be defined as  
events that really had us worried,  
but our forefathers taught us not to rush,  
things are always best taken care of tomorrow,  
when they will become the things that  
have already had us worried,  
but history has taught,  
haven't you been listening,  
they will be best solved tomorrow  
which is the definition of the future,  
the time when things need to be solved  
that history has hoped we will  
one day have a solution for.

Patience may be a virtue, but she's awfully slutty after caffeine

Justice sees best blind, but lately feels more deaf and dumb.

Platitudes oversimplify, complexity's too nuanced to sell tee shirts.

There is really little that can't be learned, just stay away from expert beginners

Keep asking why, until it can't be asked further, if the answer is money, it will  
cost you.

If a politician postulates wait let's play longball, tell them life is short, and vote.

Actual progress is always driven by doers  
who listen but refuse to hear that's undoable,  
and who have the farsighted ability to see  
things clearly keeping focused  
on what's right in front of them,  
but the nearsightedness that allows  
what's far away to never seem too distant.

They say there is yin for every yang, why is that? Is it knowable? Oh, I get it.

A rose's thorns are actually prickles,  
most think the purpose is to protect  
from those attracted to their tea flower's aroma,  
but they are actually to claw

and climb over other plants,  
which makes the wild rose,  
the actual predator.

Some think there is a plan  
for your life's unfolding  
Others are sure just as  
in the elegant physics  
of all things quantum  
there is a built in  
randomness  
which is in  
itself then  
impossible  
how can chance  
be assurable  
though the  
thought itself  
is as you can see  
generatorable.

5/21/21

# MEMENTO MORI

Yorick's skull, alas,  
never remains buried  
all ought Memento Mori,  
fittingly universal  
(would have said) as birth  
yet sorrowfully there are  
those who only receive the one  
stillborn robbed they are of the other.

Act Five Scene One  
so late in the game  
clowns working the graveyard  
jesting about self slaughterk  
and then the most famous  
of not quite walk ons  
more like dug ups.  
The jester never appears  
yet we feel we knew him well.  
Tchaikovsky, how's that  
for greatness that one  
day became worm's wood folly  
bequeathed his skull for use  
as a prop, so it was,  
how infinite that jest

The plague years  
popularized clocks  
engraved with this hour  
perhaps is your last.  
Still Lives, that name  
defying logic's reason,  
became all the rage  
bony artifacts became subjects  
next to fruit or flowers  
artists find the oddest  
coping mechanisms,  
ask the Vanitas painters.  
Shake spinning skeletal  
partners timestepping  
the music of our marrow  
even in those looney tunes

gallivanting cartoons  
no secret the enduring  
popularity of the  
Dance Macabre.

Why should we recount  
what we all know will be  
as the master of melancholy  
Hamlet himself laments:  
the base uses we may return-  
just like the hesitating Or Not To  
it's all in that use of "may"

See, Socrates put forth four  
of the greatest ideas why,  
in a sort of final argument  
for our souls' immortality,  
his dialogue Phaedo.  
But would it be quarreling  
against forever to remember  
that it was Plato speaking  
in a fiction not the great  
philosopher, but as and named  
as one of his students  
penned long after the hemlock  
so whose ideas are these  
anyway and more to the point  
who will be our Plato's Phaedo?

Is it truly cyclical,  
will opposites agree,  
our body is mortal  
our soul must then  
not be, a magnet  
has no force to pull  
without both poles  
being contradictory

Or is the recollection of  
things that we seem always  
to have had knowledge of,  
the secret to understanding  
everything is that we already  
do, it's just up to our remembering



How about the divine affinity  
our soul being one with faith,  
all things never sighted still  
somehow seem certain enough  
that we use the copula verb with  
many forms (remember that) of be.

Finally, used intentionally,  
we can count on patterns to justify  
for there are ideals and systems  
throughout nature, why wouldn't we  
be contained by the single most important,

it has been evermore and ever will  
what takes away gives our life  
its most essential aspect: form.  
Therefore go ahead,  
memento mori.

5/22/21

# SKILL SET

Steph Curry shooting from anywhere in America  
Aretha Franklin started slow look out there go the rafters  
Roger Federer slicing from deep backcourt you'd swear the net was lower  
Barak Obama redefining what it means to be a for the ages orator

Viola Davis stealing scenes from Denzel or Meryl blindfolded  
Misty Copeland soaring to ABT's first principal dancer of color  
Jane Goodall's long life reminding of all species' interconnectivity  
Simone Biles, is gravity even aware she is effortlessly defying it?

Hard work yes, years of it, but they were each blessed with a certain skill set,  
that enlarged heart, quickness, vocal prowess, an ear pitched perfect  
the secret was in finding the shape if their gift then fitting it to unparalleled  
determination, no end to effort, locked in on their to be earned greatness.

No matter if artists, leaders, athletes, entrepreneurs, or scientists, brilliance  
is in the devouring of each day's learning, then sleep each evening dreaming  
oh, that's the way, must try that, can't wait, you know it always can be done  
better.

Fame is never the be all of such accomplishments, there are parents,  
educators,  
shop owners, doctors, even hair stylists who rival the shine of an aurora  
borealis

Sallie Walters, gifting years of students, don't give up, nothing finer than that  
moment when it clicks, hot damn, I've got it

Uta Hagen, screw the ovation, you fell back on your tired bag of tricks,  
throw them out, you want to perform, the secret is to not,  
onstage truthful's always better, let them sit unable to move and weep first,  
then comes the real standing to applaud.

The hospice nurse, one of many who watched over my wife, rubbed her softly  
with oils, whenever she could, a balm, saint-like, never once giving in to the  
room's filling to the ceiling, almost unbearable with grief.

May you make the most of ain't nobody else with your skill set  
Take it out each day and use it, even if it's been years and you  
are worried, you can never lose it, don't let those concern  
who have perfected being shameful, you rock the how can I  
leave behind so much wonderful it's disgraceful.

5/23/21

## THE CREATION CYCLE: THE BEGINNING LIGHT

This moment has come out of all before it  
all that will follow is born from now's this,  
so each is a beginning of the continuum,  
even as all is, this minute or epochally,  
the end of an era.

In the beginning takes on a deeper meaning  
if we think of the renewal of morning's light,  
gifting each noon, with its after until evening  
before we settle in, close up, reflect on the night.

Is it the promise of the next in the cycle  
that offers so much chance for hope's possibility?  
Was the seven day story created for just this,  
to kindle the fire, spark alight, deepen desire  
there is no time worth a waste, if all was built  
for us in a week, who are we not to be  
even more useful.

It all starts with a dawn, the illumination  
ennobling us with a new day's now I can see it.  
Give no power to those who will defy, their cloudy storms,  
dooming darkness will pass, trust in the restorative  
truth, knowledge's let there be light.

5/24/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: THE GASP BEFORE LAST

She carries us in her great womb  
protective, life giving, dependent.  
For centuries treated with reverence,  
the God's own dome-shaped cloud-built home,  
borne from the separation of the great waters  
a wonder so miraculous some even  
called it thus, observe the heavens.

The firmament, expanse, the sky's horizon  
deep and endlessly taller, layers thick, it gives  
to life its atmosphere, our paintings depth,  
we have climbed mountains to sit with her higher  
laid on our backs in fields wonder gazing  
marveled at her nimbus cloud sculptures,  
dreams of flying until into her arms she offered to carry us.  
She has watered our fields, colored wild blue yonders,  
cooled our breezes, kissed us with sweet breath  
like a lover for so long we have for granted taken  
having been left more than generously surfeited.

Only to then assault her. Raping over and over.  
She cried out, begging to recede our selfishness,  
no profit in paying attention to her anguish,  
the signs offered, swept away, left to languish  
now rage at our treatment of her great bounty  
battered and bruised she lashes out vigilante  
the storm's blackened eye kicks back blinding  
the floods of so much sorrow crash over us drowning,  
the choking in our chests cutting into suffocating.

Is it any wonder what was once so essential  
it was before all else except time's creation,  
for our own good's survival will soon leave us  
with no choice fighting over the gasp before last.

5/25/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: THE GEOLOGY OF THINGS

Your kneecap's floating keeps a lot of you moving  
At our core we are tectonic plates fused into a body  
The forming of layers of land that kept spreading  
Into gaps that allowed for oceans of providing sea waters  
All you need to know about how history keeps quaking  
Is reflected in the above and below bore it down to the core  
geology of things.

At our center's a ball of molten are you kidding me nickel-iron alloy  
Bowing to such pressure that it cannot cool, explosively combustible  
Beneath all of our deep waters and lush lands we consider life-giving  
lies a heat that measures the same temperature as the sun's surface.  
All the lands we have battled over, purchased, sold off, once were joined  
together  
ancient porcelain or earthenware pottery before it is cracked open,  
broken, shattered, then picked up, make the most of repurposing  
as my country 'tis of thee, mountains majesty rising, ice flows melting,  
valleys fed from rivered arteries crisscross circulating the heartland  
rainforests equatorially centered breathing out,  
our earth's lungs lace branched with trees teeming

Those beach housed in Malibu understand day three's gifts of creation,  
they feel the land and sea's never fully at rest emotionally unstable motion,  
the worth of their beach-front property doubles with the same frequency  
as the risk it will one day topple with a drop skip seismic shift sliding  
called back to its once upon an origin story Pacific.  
So the next time peace seems a far off utopia, think on the millennia  
It took to yank our world apart so far that ships had to sail years to do battle,  
colonize, build empires, plant flags in these ancient new worlds  
so few left to be conquered, then freed, only to be retaken  
perhaps it's time to reverse the shifting mantle,  
to consider a continental drifting  
back together.

5/26/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: MORE THAN ONE INFINITY

Imagine firing up, popping open the window, leaning forward peering at the cosmos with a building size curved glass to discover the next super nova, think of the folks whose day job is the mapping of the night sky's red giants smoldering, the vast furnace forgers of life's metal made millenniums ago just now becoming visible feels like it took forever but is in fact faster than the speed of star light.

It must never be just another Monday when you'd have done this for nothing like when young doing fieldwork on your back panoramaring the heavens you will soon be adjusting the focus, beaming an electron flash gazing down at the universe within, particles that make up all we know's everything

Blame all that tele and micro scoping  
that we are more certain now all life elemental  
is the byproduct of one form of a star's dying or another.  
Our sun will one day fizzle folding in on  
itself like a too cheap umbrella,  
adding arguably almost uncountable  
amounts of that same celestial dust,  
most of it hydrogen, the alpha of elements  
until those pesky protons lie down,  
fusing one on top of each other  
becoming another thing altogether  
and we go from oxygen down not up  
the charts to gold or platinum quicker  
than you can say the Beatles made another record,  
nope, we are talking it takes all of time so far recorded.

Don't even get started with the moon,  
that's a different explosive story  
A runaway planet's sideswiping early earth  
leaving a piece of its heart behind to orbit  
inspiring not only dark side serenades,  
Lady Luna exerts a climatory force tidal.

The Renaissance believed in the sphere's music  
vibrating with the precision of a celestial major concerto  
navigators depended on the familiar patterned constellations  
planetariums hope to replicate indoors the enormity

of the outdoor sky's wide open vastness.

It's understandable why these spiraling wonder of wonders  
our entire monumental Milky Way just one of maybe billions of galaxies  
how's that for a measure of in the grand scheme perspective  
what it means to be universal which is itself expanding outward  
the entire thing is somehow growing is not the most boggling idea  
to shooting star wish your future upon,  
the latest reconciliation of all that is micro and macro,  
the physics of back to those building blocks quantum,  
is that all we know, the sun, moon, those stars  
there may be others in more dimensions  
multiple universes, many everythings,  
meaning more than one infinity.

5/27/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: THE OPPOSITE OF CREATION

It seems odd to have separated out the fish and the fowl to be the first beasts on Genesis' day five originated, after all the birds have to land nesting somewhere were the bees but not the fleas, what about the bats, flying squirrels those schools of fish are quite different than dolphins, those penguins, they mess the whole equation up, let alone those flightless dodos. which brings me to the more critical point than which species of the hundreds of thousands that in one day were given life provided, why quibble if this, then were these when the thing that should be upsetting us all is how many each day are leaving us, there is an opposite of creation.

The Splendid Poison Frog which for its name alone should have lived forever  
The Baiji, the Yangtze River freshwater dolphin,  
Passenger Pigeons whose demise led to the conservation movement  
Smooth Handfish, Jalpa False Brook Salamander, the Lost Shark.  
could there ever be a more apt poster child for our carelessness at least thirty-one species counted 2021 their last, and the fear is that over one hundred and sixty animals and plants disappeared alone in the decade just past.

We have celebrated our creatures great and small marveling at all they've added to our lives by appreciating theirs,  
The Undersea World of Jaques Cousteau, Wild Kingdom, even Disney's Wide World, led to Jack Hanna and the entire channel Animal Planet, the work of Darwin, Leaky, Goodall, even Fossey. All started of course what wasn't with Aristotle's History of Animals, the first known recording of the recent Academy Award-winning teacher,  
the color-changing crafty off the coast of Lesbos' octopus.

May we find a way to do more than research and categorize truly revere and respect the holiness of a smokey grey Goshawk in mid-flight, or a blue whale's powerfully huge high into the air crashing down breaching find a way to live in more synchronicity, all are our natural brothers and sisters before they too become the next to be no more Dodos.

5/28/21



# THE CREATION CYCLE: FROM WHERE I SIT

From where I sit atop my tree things  
are a bit scratch my head confusing  
I have lived and loved, watched an awful  
lot of things, I remember when if you  
saw a tree person it was not often,  
maybe one or two in an entire rainy season.  
We were many in this place, when I was  
young you could not even count us  
But I am only one of a few now,  
they have killed off most of my family  
our gathered grouping, our trees are only so many,  
cut down, burned some even with us still clinging  
to our branches. I have been able to live a long full life,  
but I have watched many, some my own tiny ones,  
so I beat my chest and cry shake the limbs of my own tree  
as they are sent traveling on to their better journey.

There was a time I remember  
one of the almost tree people but different  
washed out color like you,  
who was here all of a sudden not having grown  
as the tree people do from very little,  
He appeared and would gather them  
singing and speak stories of the ways  
of what he called his Creator,  
calling the peoples of our tree lands together,  
have then sit next to one another  
his crying out was for them to change  
their ways or they would not have  
a better journey but burn in what he called hellfire.  
He said that all of us, he pointed around  
were called the creatures of the earth,  
made in what he called a single day,  
which seems to have something to do  
with the light times in our skies,  
the eye closing and opening, but here is the  
real head-scratcher, ever since I heard this  
I have done what you call learned  
I understood this new tearing down of our trees,

such sadness overcame I did not eat for many  
light times, this one of them but not quite alike,  
said that what he called humans were made  
the same day as us creatures but some time after  
so that they would have dominion over us.

It took me almost forever to figure out  
this thing dominion, from watching the tree people  
who had all of sudden decided to gather around  
him in a way I have seen before with us that brings  
teeth-baring, my mother showed me could lead to being bitten,  
they were moving all together as one around him,  
he was surrounded they got slowly closer and closer  
then all at once one after another they struck him with  
sharpened sticks, he became covered in his own  
insides bursting open until he no longer moved,  
he was now a cold still one, so they dragged  
him deeper into the taller tree lands.

That was many rains ago, but I do believe  
that must be this thing called dominion.  
I do not mind telling you that it is a thing  
that I wish I never had heard of, here I sit  
watching more trees being knocked down  
now by those big claw things as if they all  
were grown up out of the ground just for your  
light color peoples to carry them off and away  
doing whatever they do leaving us so little left to live on.

I sit with you the one who has slept here alone  
calling out to us, and I have seen help others from  
being harmed, it took me many rains  
before I would come down let you  
give me sweet fruits, doing that noise  
where you think you sound like us but don't,  
which makes me laugh that makes you laugh too.  
We have grown weaker both of us together,  
you call me a name Greybeard  
so I let you, but for all that we have seen  
sat down with together, you have felt the same  
sadness I watched your eyes water,  
is it because we both know dark times  
are ahead of us the light ends it seems  
sooner, caused by that threatening  
thing I wish I had never heard of  
known as dominion.

5/29/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: KEEP THEM HOLY

We can even muck up the Sabbath  
which day was it meant to be  
should you do anything but rest  
that would make going to service  
for some hopeful the reason to be suspect  
then there is don't even think of taking away  
our football, though I don't believe there  
was a single mention, even in Deuteronomy.

Perhaps it is best to use the time no worry  
the day press pause and ruminate, take in  
the enormity of all we have been given  
that deep inside our heart's constant beating  
are tiny bits that decided to make themselves muscle  
others that went with the flow becoming corpuscle  
this such stuff that really does, we call matter  
miracles abound without asking our blessing  
music is written, the sky is another beautiful day's end painting,  
feel how deeply your spirit is mending upon simple reflection.

We share memes of babies running to hug  
cats doing anything, animals emotional  
look they can just like us express love  
but the busyness of all we do to find worth  
sometimes, no often these days, at the expense  
of many others, the slack we cut ourselves in the  
complexity of this modern life's let's make a deal,  
needs to be contemplated by wait,  
stop right now,  
or at least take a wood's walking  
the sacred power of peace is rarely found  
in fervor or zeal even religiously  
but rather in regular sabbaths  
simple, and keeping them holy.

5/30/21

# THE CREATION CYCLE: OF COURSE A CODA

Of course I'd want to leave a coda  
one more after the cycle's conclusion  
one person's afterthought is another's  
epilogue, I don't understand those who seem  
to have no worry about all that still needs to be said,  
things go on even as we don't, I've never  
believed that it won't matter once no more.  
How's that for an epitaph: he will never not care.  
Twain had some time after his greatly exaggerated  
not quite dead yet, how wonderful would it be  
to be given an extended warrantee, the gift of  
resurrection, which I suppose is what, as Beckett moaned  
I can't go on, I can't, I will go on, each morning is.  
I envy those who'll find this maudlin, though I don't,  
imagine not being able to care about all that  
happened just last week let alone a year from now,  
tomorrow's great new songs, ideas, works of art,  
political movements, attempts to right  
those never ending worldly wrongs,  
None will be important after, maybe for you,  
but I will haunt, muse, find a way to influence  
even if it kills me.  
It may be the heart of who I am,  
have been the heart of who I was,  
the one who would of course  
include a coda.

5/31/21