

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a field. The upper portion is filled with a dense carpet of small, bright red flowers. In the foreground, several stalks of tall, thin grass with feathery, light-brown seed heads rise up, partially obscuring the red flowers. The lighting is soft, creating a gentle contrast between the red and the brownish-gold of the grass.

*Exquisitely
Small*

A Mad Monk's Haikus through the Seasons

PAUL QUENON

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By Paul Quenon

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Freely you have received; freely give to others.

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Robin's repertoire
revels in moist air rinsed by
soft rains, rinsed by song.

Little morning dove
has a yodel in her voice.
She's from Switzerland.

For Peewee that's all
needs be for now—himself
and his song—peewee.

First bird to speak up—
it's Robin scolding off night
before singing starts.

In this morning's fog
Mourning dove has sad muffled
fog tone while mourning.

Song sparrow's first sound—
a laugh at a dream he had,
then fall back to sleep.

Robin brothers play
chase, strut, follow, jump, flutter—
hatched from the same nest.

—

On the wet sidewalk
slugs are anything but what
I would call sluggers.

—

Flying duck tossed down
three remarks, three sturdy rocks.
Then silence descends.

—

God showed the Barn owl,
hooted with hands cupped on nose...
Now Go. Sound like that.

—

Night blew free with dream
of some house beside the sea
made of magic paint.

—

Roots on face of cliff
barely hold cedar hanging
years and years and years.

—

Rain is raining rain
Wind sweeps, tapping tin-tin roof
in constant refrain

Low, swift streak of blue—
fragment of spring sky blown loose,
turned into bluebird.

Warped times - what a heartbreak!
Never thought birds would come to this—
terror of bird flu!

Before buds come,
before the blush in bare twigs,
trees, with light, alert.

Warm wind all night long
swept away slumber from trees
peeping out with buds.

Uproar of night wind,
branches ratt'ling on rooftop—
ghost train in tree tops.

Wind, with no one by,
roars wild passion by moonlight,
lashing at cedars.

—

Buds came out after
wind's heated shake up—and rain,
moon-blessed rain

—

A wild goose flies by
pretending he's not alone,
talking to himself.

—

Coos rock to and fro,
older dove and younger dove
low tone, high tone.

—

Swish of push broom
across floor tiles, broken clock
cranking on the wall.

—

Like some ladies' club
down the street, geese enjoying
big round of laughter.

—

Blackbird's roosting sound:
spring water dripping into
a mossy stone bowl.

—

Like Tommy Tucker,
woodpecker—percussionist
drums for his supper.

—

Across the spruce grove
Starlings stretch and shiver nerves
with tweak! richet! stitch!

—

Precise—this sparrow's
nice particularity
picking at the ground!

—

Pay attention, please!
Woodpecker's making a point
on a hardwood tree.

—

Before it gets light,
Gobbler flings soft billiard balls
bouncing cobs off trees.

—

Shadows muzzling grass,
clumps of deer fade into weeds,
drift like random thoughts.

—

White blossoms on shrubs,
scented memory of snow past,
bees borrowing in.

—

Swatches of gold light
on dew-laden cherry leaves—
rising sun's largess.

—

Red bird on church roof
purifies the atmosphere
with one brief, bright song.

—

With slightest stirring
linden leaves exchange whispers
only breezes hear.

—

Lacy locust leaves
busy themselves with gossip
—but take it lightly.

—

Night calm was wakened
by bellows, brief and sudden
—cow had a nightmare.

—

Beginning of art:
to trim up the beard a bit
with nothing on mind.

—

Grey subdued morning
—not one to draw a comment,
just a bird or two.

—

Golden morning light—
along the road's double ruts
Monet-blue shadows.

—

Sun is peeking through
sleepy eyelids of low clouds,
taking in day—slow.

—

They want some more sleep,
but sun keeps looking around
checking on neighbors.

—

Geese cross the heavens
excited about something
—don't stop to tell what.

—

Geese come up on us,
lay on thick gabble and yak.
Once they're gone—quiet.

—

Of all fine odors
on this spring day, smell fine old
cedar bench I'm on.

—

Grackles make a sound
like Captain Queegue's worry-balls
rolling 'round the sky.

—

Real meditation:
vapor lifting off a lake
—done without trying.

—

Starling's roosting burr—
buckshot bounced over marble
—mean nerve vibrator!

—

Sun is held captive
in dew drop poised, tip-end
weighted on grass blade.

—

Pretty persistent
Crown Sparrow you work all day
at that one note song.

—

Before I arrived
at my bench, singing sparrow
purified the air.

—

Now that's the method!
Sparrow's meditation on
one, one note—on one!

—

Field Sparrow's chit-chit,
couldn't be smaller, chit-chit
passed from tree to tree.

—

Quiet testimony
of common white clover blooms
awake, unnoted.

—

Moth fell up-side down
in my slimy oatmeal bowl
—in death beautiful.

—

Moon, rounded towards earth
full face in darkness exclaims
a round, silent O!

—

Sun, not yet arrived
casts a rose pale filigree,
thin, worn to mildness.

—

Only a few left—
stars quenched softly, one by one
awash in rose-grey.

—

Evening rain drying,
fifty years in this court yard
tree frog still sings here.

—

Wood-smoke scented fog,
rising mist of water fall,
Rain-Dove calling rounds.

—

No one meditates.
Meditation meditates
the meditation.

—

Perched on power line,
wee bird enjoys the scenery,
dumb to high voltage.

—

Thunder rumbles south
last exchange of opinions
before end of night.

—

He brings, sets it down—
a peach, one third his own size.
Chipmunk takes breakfast.

—

Locust leaves are drenched.
Even when it hasn't rained
locust leaves look drenched.

—

Buzzing in the eaves,
mud-dauber's delivering
lengthy instructions.

—

Young deer at salt pile
looks up at me frequently:
What strange beasts—humans!

—

Young doe reverses,
steps forward, turns, learns well
of true elegance.

—

Heron watched me swim
yesterday. For today, left
a floating feather.

—

Much maligned cookoo—
apart from nesting ethics
he's a great songster

—

So long, narrow, grey,
you might well be a dead log!
—Heron on the shore.

—

Moon's over the lake,
trees outlined in fog. Two deer
graze along the road.

—

Sad gladiolas
languid with beauty-fatigue,
sprawl flat on the lawn.

—

What's the big joke
Robin must have remembered
and can't stop laughing?
Or laughs at my thoughts—
me, trying to be holy
and depressed with it.
Or is he scolding
my Abbot under shade tree
for being a slouch?

—

Bad gladiolas,
too desperate to make me glad,
prostrate at my feet.

—

Heartbreaking dove call:
This green world's foggy sunrise
—how perfect, how brief!

—

Air saturated,
blurred, dark, noiseless, until bells
made frogs and cows wake.

—

Raindrops on the eaves;
copper drums drum in my ears.
Grackles squeak cold squeak.

—

The Chad marks off time,
marks intervals of song with
intervals of thought.

—

Atop the silo
in canary yellow shirt
she scared off pigeons.

—

Does the flying bird
cry? or is the bird a cry
that flies where it will?

—

Such a small sparrow
to fling loops of melody
with such confidence!

—

Content to be here,
Robin sings. For Robin knows
song is content here.

—

Picture-perfect dawn—
swallows fly around to show
this picture is real.

—

Uproar of grackles
allied with robins. Big crow
flew off with dead chick.

—

Cedars topped with dew
white fairy castle towers
bristling crystal light.

—

As I swerved away,
fearless young skunk took three steps
at me and stomped hard.

—

Warbler first warbles,
listens awhile to silence,
then warbles some more.

—

Warm blurry ball—look!
The friendly sun wants to be
my warm blurry ball.

—

One coo at a time
is all the dove can do this
lazy foggy morn.

—

Coo-coo bird loves fog,
pulses with descending tone,
coddling out coo-coos.

—

Before I arrived
silence was already deep in
conference with itself.

—

"I love you, yes, you."
Lovebird, persevering, says,
"I love you, you, you..."

—

It's turned cool again,
but crows have constantly crowed
in heated banter.

—

Humid air heavy—
distant stench of deer decayed,
from Blue Tongue Disease.

—

Owl emphatically
announced the first day of Spring—
ancient, wooden tones.

—

Despite drab weather,
Mourning Dove persists in his
deep meditation.

—

Two love-geese have got
the whole sky to themselves, but
fly close, wing to wing.

—

Under swelling moon,
cherry blossoms grow full, 'till
both will slowly fade.

—

Distant barking dog
carries on fierce arguments
with a heedless world.

—

One dew drop floating
on frail strand of spider's silk
weaves in rising dawn.

—

Slugs on a rock eat
lichens, but the rock itself—
that they never know.

—

How the new sun soothes
this head of anxiety—
calmed to oblivion.

—

Robins, before dawn,
make a great to-do about
what Robins they are.

—

Branches paw at air
because wind, pawing at trees,
provoked their fondness.

—

Shyly and goachly,
Grackles waddle to shade bush,
approaching myst'ry.

—

Out of character,
geese fly past without honking—
something must be wrong!

—

All's impermanence.
Everything will pass—even
the impermanence.

—

Poor kestrel wonders
why no birds like him. While he'd
love to eat them up.

—

Kestrels are concerned—
swoop and signal fierce distress—
helpless chick hides by.

—

Small Chipping Sparrow—
What's the dear thing chipping at?
Time's hard, uncarved block.

—

Unseen bird repeats
plaintive satisfaction at
being in being.

—

Two different sparrows
singing in rhythms of time
we don't know about.

—

Squeaky-hinge birds is
swinging out in passing breeze
its sweet, rusty tweek.

—

Adolescent goose
Flies noisily—neighborhood
belongs all to him.

—

March whirls round and round
with February, testing
which wind might prevail.

—

Artillery fire
sends ground rumbles from Fort Knox—
rumors of war.

—

What's the gigabites
in human brains? Mine's about
half a gigabite.

—

Commotion in sky
Grumbles and shouts—reminder
of thunder disputes.

—

Early daffodils
stand with yellow heads bowed low
to shed frost and snow.

—

Huge old Ginko tree
waiting for moon to grow full
for sap to fill buds.

—

Funny thing—bird song—
you notice it going on
but not that its gone.

—

Crescent, a sliver,
moon pared down. Far off shiver
of wild turkey call.

—

I step from church door
into id-curl-de-curl of
turkey calls—his world.

—

Dead spruce felled and laid
in large segments where purple
Grape Hyacinths peep.

—

Trees enjoying dance,
leafing out in April storm
letting new sap flow.

—

He hid in my shoe—
of all places, doomed by my foot
poor smashed beetle bug!

—

Grackle's great effort—
flares out wings, ruffles feathers,
strains out one small squeak.

—

Church chimes faintly mark
time from valley to these downs
where time eludes time.

—

Meister Mockingbird
perched on utmost pulpit roof
teaches birds their songs.

—

Angel, is today,
today? Or yesterday? Or
was it tomorrow?

—

It's too hard to sleep
While mockingbird keeps at noise
But at least I try.

—

Warblers warbling
warbles—their salutary
response to warfare.

—

What might Robin think?
That its shadow is its soul?
That the sun is God?

—

Middle of the night
quiet little bedtime talk
between bird and monk.

—

Demographics is
some people's study, mine here
is orthnographics.

—

Birds will live and die,
birdsong remains year by year
century on century.

—

May's exuberance
dampened down to cold, slow rain—
long introspection.

—

Air thick with scent of
cut grass—dove weights morning sky
with intimate tones.

—

Mule, with awful howls
deplores his miserable life
so bad my ears split.

—

Songbird states premise,
lays down middle term, then draws
silly conclusions.

—

Chad bird narrates
carefully arranged voices—
ancestral stories.

—

My mind dozed awhile,
when I woke, on distant slope
haze was slumbering.

—

Modern sparrows opt
to stand on pavement while they
forage on grass seed.

—

On morning's canvas
of silence, faint distant barks—
watercolor sound.

—

On this sultry noon
tower-bell strikes twelve in sad tones
—two cheerful monks chat.

—

Lazy monk prayed for
easy thing—perservance—
for our eldest monk.

—

Gate to God's kingdom,
narrow as the gap between
body and spirit.

—

Imitating quails,
Mockingbird at pinnacle—
silent snails on ground.

—

After the downpour,
twitter of sparrows chatting
about the weather.

—

Purple basil weed
growing through crack in sidewalk—
both saint and outlaw.

—

Cool morning silence
ends with soft rounds of dove coos—
mist slowly shifting.

—

Birds from south now come
express each their opinion—
sweetly, discreetly.

—

Barred Owl barks like dog,
then hilariously laughs.
Great imitation!

—

Through dark rain two skinks
across wet pavement don't slink
but squirm in quick jerks.

—

Spring has me confused—
are snow flurries falling or
white cherry petals?

—

Sunlight rises through
line of woods—see how swiftly
old earth is turning.

—

Facing sunrise, sit.
Very non-esoteric
meditation prayer.

—

Mixture of wood smoke
and skunk smell, purd-rur of toads
and cortle of frogs.

—

Gymnopedie
feet pace through cool, quiet grass
crescent moon pauses.

—

What is not yet slips
into what no longer is
not yet turned no more

—

Once more Mockingbird
out with new fandangled songs
singing fandangos.

—

Getting personal—
Have you had your nimbus read?
I ask the full moon.

—

Meadowlark's sweet song
cleanses air with pure prayer on
days of sun, of rain.

—

Rug of pink on grass,
petals washed down by night rain—
Washington Cherry.

—

With quiv'ring wattle,
Turkey quibbles at neighbors
about small quarrels

—

Fruit crepe, cream dollop,
when shared is just half a sin
but whole, complete joy.

—

Rain cloud heavily
dredges valley harvesting
fresh air from tree breath.

—

Such a prickly name
for so tender a green thing—
Purple Nettleworth.

—

Two brother sparrows,
remembering nesting days,
hop, flit, and chase.

—

Birds paint dull, grey fog
with broad, garish swaths of song
textures smooth and rough.

—

Before rising sun
we on turning earth bow to—
lie back as sun sets

—

I dozed off—came to.
Some angel stole a chunk of
my old grey matter.

—

Burning with green tongues
of life, bush says all summer:
I am what I am.

—

He definitely
prefers sidewalk expressway
to grass run—chipmonk.

—

Still acting baby—
fledgling flapping and squealing.
No food came—flew off.

—

Robin chick crouches,
hides from danger. Grackle chick
lies with head severed.

—

Moth on my desk lamp
waves long antennae around
smelling my strange breath.

—

Quivering grass blades
show hidden progress of what
wee thing might it be.

—

This solemn hour
is now—strikes its fullsome tone
in perfect silence.

—

Christ is prolific.
We are his work in progress,
poems unfinished.

—

Bluebird serenades
his wife nesting not far off
in wooden birdhouse.

—

What is life on earth?
By day, counting grains of sand,
counting stars by night.

—

Sudden flurry on
my foot. I jerk. Two chipmonks
run off, left and right.

—

One moon, one hay roll,
one seamless fog everywhere,
one awakened man.

—

White egg shell on ground
hatched and faced to pale hatched moon
where last month flew off.

—

Branches dazzled white—
thick lightning bolt upward shot—
frazzled heavenwards.

—

Elm tree peppered with
black buds shook out to season
springtime's savors.

—

Dim light of wristwatch
as bell ringer stands in dark,
waiting to start prayers.

—

Low life festival
where rain brought out slugs to slouch
around on wet stone.

—

Robin sings his name
in every bright syllable:
I'm Pope Celestine.

—
From furthest forest
Turkey warbles out quarrels:
girls don't bother me!

—
Mule puts on display,
shows passing cars how he
can honk much better.

—
Sharp fright and rebuke—
I'd encroached on his woodland—
Eagle's indignant.
New kid on the block.
Cripes! All I wanted to do
was find wild flowers.

—
Great chicken party—
farm roosters whooping it up—
all about sunrise.

—
Rabbit sits real still
trying to look like dry grass—
wonders if I'm fooled.

—

—

Thoughts race with house bees—
both buzz about my head.
I'm stung by neither one.

—

Expressing wonder
at how fresh he found the day,
dove's voice swells to full.

—

Peonies tumble
abundantly over garden wall
drunken on night air.

—

Lacy litters left—
white, thin filaments, drops of
long abandoned tears.

—

Swelling pods remain,
memory growing, hoping to
burst on distant days.

—

Peewee bird persists
in singing great importance
of being peewee.

—
All those cherry leaves
Spread through space, all alike,
All they have to say
About being, time, space, is
Well worth repeating.

—
Sparrow atop cross
merrily chatters away:
this vacant Cross shows
He'll not die again—
I'm here to tell everyone:
never die again.
Cheeroo, cheeroo, chee —
Robin and his neighbor
heartily agree.

—
Sky crackles with alarm—
Grackles as a gang pursue
predatory Hawk.

—
Yellow butterfly
its curves of flight traces out—
Such brief destiny!

—

Bunny nibbles grass,
ears enlightened like stained glass.
Sparrow lands then flees.
He stopped nib'bling
to join my meditation.
At that he's better.

—

Over and over
baby bird asserts: hear me,
here I am, hear me.
So jaybird has joined
Existentialists like us,
worried all the time.

—

Mourning doves' discourse:
each one takes a different pitch
on the same sweet theme.

—

Dove's season to coo.
Despite cold and darkness, dove
coos his way through, from
winter into spring's
coming-in, soft
ululations, persistent—
all love, all love, love.

—

Here is what I hear—
a peewee going peewee
as sweet peewees will.

Brave dove is carving
round furrow through foggy air,
dense with traffic noise.

To crow I yelled back.
That rude crook just perched close up
to mete out judgment.
Yells could not the least
discourage the likes of him:
“Son, this was our world
before yours. Our lineage goes
back to dinosaurs.
What’s your business here?”

Long, steady, soft rain—
falling with such ease ! That’s how
constant prayer should be.

Spring’s brought sticky
wet snows. Spring’s all decked out,
pretending winter.

Crow flaps across sky
Pumping out persistent cries:
“Cold front arriving!”

—

Mad Monk sits by graves
awaiting Resurrection,
while Morning Dove prays.
He closely watches
how weather is changing. Yes,
someone should keep track.
Without that, the great
General Order of things
Must come unraveled.

—

Yellow points of light,
ablaze on tips of grass blades—
prisms of sunrise.

—

Comes from heaven bread —
savory smell of yeast drifts south
from distilleries.

—

God hears every small,
grateful, chirp rising from beak,
breast, heart, of sparrow.

—

Geese flying over
say: Checkov, Checkov. Maybe
I should read Checkov.

Mild, round, orange, sun
rises. Blue Jay crosses sky,
cries: Vide, Watch out!
Schree, schree, cries the Hawk,
claiming ownership of woods,
terrifying bitty mice.

Of course! Mockingbird
must perch atop church steeple
preaching to angels.

Purple Martins swirl
round my head—they wish I'd join
their fun and freedom.
Eager old monk says:
I can hardly wait until
I get my next nap.

Up from behind clouds,
sun rose proud and warm,
hailing mad monk perched on roof.

Cottonwood fluff floats
across asphalt, pretense at
summertime snowflakes.

—

Robin is making
correctional statements with
wifely insistence.

—

Compliant rabbit
posed long for photograph with
cool self-assurance.

—

Poor bird sweetly calls
on Phoebe—can't understand
she's Phoebe herself.

—

Kentucky morning—
Humidity so bad it
tests humility.

—

Robin's morning song
remains all afternoon.
never all worn out.

—

Baby robin waits
atop chair he's streaked white, slow—
-ly growing feathers.

—

In vast screen of fog
faint edges of trees stand out.
Dove answers to dove.

—

Put hand in my wounds.
How astonishing! Jesus
touched where it most hurts!

Part II: Summer



Dove dredges up deep
ancestor songs, songs of old
from eons ago.

—

Neighborhood patrol
of grackles drives off thief crow—
they're faster, fiercer.

—

Geese scatter echoes.
You'd guess a crowd of them.
No, it's only two.

—

Grackle croaks aloud
to frighten insects to run.
Then sees and eats one.

—

With fierce, brief madness
Peonies bloom their heads off,
shattered to petals.

—

Robin makes our world
better—melodies his work,
doing a good job.

—

Over and over
Whippoorwill exclaims quickly,
Can you believe it?

Annoyed by dew drops,
rabbit vigorously shook
wet paws and licked them.

Two Cardinals rail
tree to tree--sound arrows sail,
long, sharp, metallic.

Whole family of hawks
flap and screech. Frightened, smaller
birds mostly hold still.

Tibetan's long horns,
ancient sounds from distant
age of dinosaurs.

Her hair is deftly
arranged to say my life is
a total shambles.

Mockingbird plays with
my half-asleep mind. Each call
speaks some oracle.

—

He likes to get off
on bright moonlight. Goes at it
two, three, four hours.

—

Pure love of music—
audience all asleep
that doesn't stop him.

—

In the latter days
when all else have passed away
monks will sing in choir.

—

He's gained great advance
in his bright career—sings high on
sweet gum avenue.

—

Gang way, Bluejay says,
Out of my path—I'm so bad
I lead sin astray.

—

With itself Redbird
argues: do, do, do, do, do
don't, don't, don't, don't, don't.

Chipmunk with throat pouch
full of groceries slips down
hole to feed her kits.

Two bullfrogs echo:
one's named Ec, Co the other.
Two bullfrogs shooting bull.

Monks shave their heads to
save them from getting into
one another's hair.

Summer's dry cut grass
softened the sidewalk's straight edge
—sharp minds hold old thoughts.

Swarm of dancing gnats,
rejoice—angelic—above
my warm smelly head.

—

Medley of frogs.
Sky rockets in the distance.
Fragrant night blossoms.

—

With such lovely deer
who needs a unicorn
stepping on the lawn?

—

Dead lizard—sorry!
When I laid on this mattress
you were under it.

—

Why does a lizard
wiggle its tail when it stops?
Stops wiggle at run?

—

Church-cricket singing,
suddenly falls silent when
Isaiah is read.

—

Cicada begins
with growing intensity—
winds down liquidly.

Sunrise so humid
Venus rising from the sea
wrapped in gossamer.

—

—as for being dead—
can't say until I get there,
wouldn't say when I am.

—

Such humble study,
Rabbit quietly samples
every smallest herb.

—

Black skunk with white cap
probing the grass with her nose—
Have you lost a jewel?

—

I fold my bed-roll—
Skunk comes by. Mind your business,
Rosy, I'll mind mine.

—

Moon rides through swift clouds
while standing still—something just
goddesses can do.

—

Two stroke, one, two stroke—
Katydid buzz theme—two stroke.
Variation—one.

Moon, you've grown so thin!
Wand'ring later every night,
Take a few days rest.

Tick, you may be tiny
but you're not cute. Mosquito,
go suck on a tick!

Spruce—with head lifted,
strange above a forest now
vanished in fog.

Love machines, Crickets,
running not quite smoothly,
now and then a glitch.

Well, at least this once
bad grammar is higher truth:
“I don't have nothing.”

On the horizon
a distant thump, thump, heart-beat
the world's and mine, one.

—

Day of burial:
—took that monk all these years to
finally get grounded.

—

Crows already up
re-living last night's ball game
—sure was a holler!

—

I felt a nibble
reeled in my line and found there
only this minnow.

—

Shrubs and all grasses
dance in greeting of the wind
cooling us all down.

—

All is at rest—Look!
Even the heron in flight
is cushioned by air.

—

Grackles gather 'round,
sewing up quite precisely
plans for the autumn.

—

Fog had a notion
to lie on that slope of trees,
but its mood drifted.

—

Over the sunrise
loose-knit woolen coverlet
with some holes and tears.

—

Three or four roosters
having a round of crowing.
Which of us sounds best?

—

That young rooster has
just gone silly with crowing
—likes doing it too much.

—

Hens quietly think:
Are we really all that much for
boys to crow about?

—

Through the distant fog
a great heaving and sighing
—a truck shifting gears.

—

Perfect oval moon
over hospice—windows lit
where pilgrims awake.

—

Dawn of heavy clouds,
sun, embarrassed, peeking through
—uninvited guest.

—

The joy of barking:
best when riding a truck bed
—clears the road of deer.

—

Lonely night barking—
he punctuates the darkness
with a secret code.

—

Dog, why bark all night?
Did you detect fearful tread
of angels passing?

—

How did all things know,
keeping silence all night long,
that rain was coming?

—

Deer merged with darkness.
When dusk lifted it dusted
dun the winter deer.

—

Listening to thunder,
he tracked the paths of lightning
to nearby counties.

—

Though it's still dark,
Mockingbird and monk exchange
greetings as he sits.

—

Reflected in sun
silver slick of slime—slugs left
their marks on the world.

—

Ruffled head feathers
show Robin hears this world,
sees in ways I can't.

—

Weather close, they say—
humid, grey air in repose—
everything's inward.
Kept by moods remote,
with sweet discretion—
a rare bird twitters.

—

With tail flip, wing twitch,
Robin inspects, twists and checks,
hears, sights, then takes flight.

—

Lined up in a row,
fourteen bare feet on the porch
rest upon one mind.

—

Alarm calls go up
among Grackles—Crow is near—
Great public hazard!

—

So frail, delicate,
striped, long legged, winged, whining,
blood-suckers are back.

—

Comes that Great Day when
ink will run out of my pen
while I'm yet writing.

—

Dove feels contentment—
his song as good for today
as 'twas yesterday.

—

I wish Mockingbird
with its variety show
would just go away.

—

Nothing penetrates
this fog except Woodpecker's
distant percussions.

—

First came just a thought,
then growing complaints—thunder
growling at distance.

—

Ginko's thousand leaves
lean green ears to hear daughter
sing her mother's tale.

—

Mockingbird misnamed!
Better—fameous Mimicbird,
all-round Memorybird.

“Narrow is the way.”
How narrow? Tight as the vent
a babe gets squeezed through.

Sleeping on the job!
I did some meditation
then slept on the job.

My mark on the world—
just another scrambled scrawl
of poor graffiti.

One large woman stands,
one large woman sits—each day
two Buddhas at Mass.

Like King David’s foes,
gladiolas at my feet
fall down and lose heart.

Robin's melodies
make the world much better place
while waiting for dawn.

—

Signs of blight show on
magnificent sycamore—
Ah, the world's changing!

—

Cool weather returned,
songbird can't contain himself,
themes all tumbling out.

—

Love one another.
That's how much love? Enough to
spring back from the dead.

—

Robin keeps chuckling
at some story he found so
wickedly funny.

—

Silent birds take respite,
Chipping Sparrow has his day,
tiny, rapid clips.

—

So silent these days!
Mockingbird sang his head off,
now's had quite enough.

Peewee takes repast
on tent caterpillars, so
few and choice this year.

My comfort blanket
day's heat and humidity.
I snuggle and drowse.

I pray drowsily,
or drowse prayerfully—neither
gets me very far.

Mosquitos visit
my ear, first seeming to ask
to take my blood.

No man can see God
and live, for God alone is
drop-dead beautiful.

Billows of thunder
fill dim cavern of vast church—
solemn companions.

—

On the sleepy air
Cardinal smears its red song-swath—
sound-graffiti bright.

—

Buzz and cluck from bush,
strutting, lifting of wings at
snake sneaking through grass.

—

As a neighbor said
of Conrad: “He’s as mean
as a sett’n hen!”

—

Not loud neighbor’s dog—
I blame the full moon keeping
me awake all night.

—

OK, Moon, you win!
—got me awake and worried—
our country’s been robbed.

—

—the gnat I just killed—
regarding mortality,
we two are equal.

—

Imperiously,
before other sounds, Robin
commands sun to rise.

—

Bossy little thing,
impatient of dead silence
lasted all night long.

—

Dove bows its head low,
swells its shoulders to emit
spacious, inward cooooo.

—

Swallows bravely ride
wave of on-coming windstorm
thrilled at fierce thunder.

—

I sleep below stars—
silent audience watching
my silent being.

—

Stretches of fog lie
across treetops—earth rests in
quiet morning prayer.

—

Noiselessly, sun rose.
Geese bring great proclamations.
Distant sun~soundless.

—

How delightful~O
to flap and soar, trill and sink,
bounce on air with song.

—

Honey bee buzzed me
sleeve, hand, armpit—flew off. Much
curiosity.

—

All was silent 'till
Dove sang morning homage to
sun on earth's far rim.

—

Clouds are Lilly pads
spread on night sky, where moon is
one perfect blossom.

—

Bird's urgent signal:
Look! Our sun has appeared—
tip of fire on rim,
birds mostly gone,
things quieted down here like
kids have left for school.

—

Tribute to new sun
rises from silence when wrens
catch its first small glance.

—

Wooden footbridge spans
waterless creek. Steps sound dry—
dim marimba strokes.

—

Each shrub in this yard
bright with the green flame of life
might hide the I Am.

—

Beetle inside spruce
gnaws away—anxiety
eats away a life.

—

Snowflake bug—
not seen one in twenty years!
Don't touch—it will melt.

—

Fog's slow behavior:
forms, thickens, lingers on air,
vanishes, re-forms.

—

Puppy trailing Moon—
Jupiter dogs her footsteps,
Soon he'll go astray.

—

Deep green magnolia
sways heavily in warm wind
gently lifting skirts.

—

Old monk mimics bird.
Bird regards it an offence
to nature—flies off.

—

Breeze brushes ankles
like kitten getting friendly.
Fickle—off she goes.

—

Tractor growl approached,
purred slow into distance—so
patient in progress.

—

Last thing he told me:
I must have dropsy. Next day
saw his final drop.

—

Bier returned empty
from graveside, surface rumpled,
eased by subtraction.

—

Stepping stones of time
are wave—we walk on water
till ocean is gone.

—

Squeaky-hinge birds is
swinging out in passing breeze
its sweet, rusty tweek.

—

Adolescent goose
flies noisily—neighborhood
belongs all to him.

—

March whirls round and round
with February, testing
which wind might prevail.

—

Artillery fire
sends ground rumbles from Fort Knox—
rumors of war.

—

Lightning bugs under
flairs of lightning know at last
God truly exists.

—

Clumsy Weaver Bug,
legs triple its body length
—not made for this world.

—

Pink-nosed lizard loves
Peonies. Suns in their scent,
hides in their pink shade

—

Even through night hours
Orthnophonetic scholar,
Mockingbird, works hard.

—

He can't be all bad!
Bishop in gold chain, fine clothes,
stooped to smell roses.

Distraction really
good for monks: watching slugs move—
but one should take care...

My mantra for today:
My heart is a sad affair, but
I can dream, can't I?

I die daily till
Raphael comes—heals me
of this earthly life.

Patches of fog shape
Chinese landscape paintings here
in Kentucky hills.

Swarming in a cloud—
thin, light insects, as if
evening were all theirs.

My stagnant mind is
a lake with scum on the top
—till the next storm comes.

—

O blessed quarrel!
Brother monks in shouting match
over names of birds.

—

Pretty quiet morn—
so hot even the birds are
taking it easy.

—

Moon's orbit withdraws
From earth, earth will slowly drift
from its safe orbit.

—

Clump of weeds seemed but
rabbit-like clump of weeds, 'till
weed clump hopped away.

—

That little inert
pebble spins at high speed with
Earth orbiting sun.

—

Morning suffused with fog—
Dove song rises and descends,
soothed by memories.

What's my precious pearl?
Sun suspended beyond fog,
round, perfect, priceless.

Saddest thing for now:
To rise from this bench feeling
I've not been quiet.

How does brown rabbit,
sitting long and still on grass,
make meditation?

I've nothing to do,
so I'll get down to nothing—
expeditiously.

Weeds aren't ugly if
you select, arrange, and
fertilize them.

If I were really
being chased, I doubt I'd be
altogether chaste.

—

Earth, like a sleeper
in bed, rolls slowly over,
greeted sun with big smiles.

—

Really such a gift—
to sleep in an empty bed
and still be content.

—

Feeding on high grass,
young rabbit stretches upward,
proud—he's so, so tall.

—

Beavers chew tree trunk
To its precise balance point
Then watch when wind blows.

—

Some simple sparrow
sowing and scattering chirps
over fields and streams.

—

Maybe wee chirps will
fall on wet ground and spring up
Autumn wildflowers.

Mockingbird wants to
mess with sparrow's chirping act—
same chirp, twice as loud.

Twin fawns at salt lick:
She tongues her brother's soft ear,
he nuzzles her neck.

Carolina Wren,
Song finished, let silence fall,
made all the riper.

Flight of small insects,
watched studiously track
untraceable ways.

In tones of longing
dove instructs me in desire,
but my heart sits numb.

Widow with two mites,
I have less than that to give—
just one coin—myself.

—

Brief flurry of wings—
territorial dispute
flared, then quit in flight.

—

Lacy heads, tilted
round, white, all towards morning sun,
black dot at center.

—

You can almost hear
particles of photons drench
dry, heat-stressed maples.

—

Soundlessly—the sun
rising—presents high honor,
and asks no return.

—

No blue like the blue
of chicory under sun
sailing blue heavens.

—

Mockingbird mimics
cricket frogs who mimic boys
rolling marble balls.

Sun stood aloft with
golden weapons arrayed—for
what severity?

Melancholy tone
of doves fills dry, rainless yard—
Weeds and grass languish

Monk lived long enough
to tell tree moved a few feet
from here to there.

A mean red it comes,
Sun means read—make no mistake,
just nothing but red.

Sun in golden robe
Stepped out—with due discretion.
slipped behind curtains.

Dancing on Bible's
open page, see how moth
loves the word of God.

—

Tiny fly scurries
edge to edge on Psalter page
"covering" the text.

—

Thunder pounds the roof,
pounds my chest, shocks swift air,
nearly stops my breath.

—

Level volleys of lightning
thunders off, rolling its way
down to Florida.

—

Muted cow bellows
to relieve the usual
ache of existence.

—

Dove, mild and mellow
as Gregorian Chant, once sang
in Pope Gregory's ear.

—

Sun with gold-orange mein
paces morning horizon
with soft, soundless paws.

—

Old monk on walker
opened creaky, achy door—
arthritic complaints.

—

Sun slipped golden hand
into white, cotton mist—gloves
grope through meadows.

—

Sun, that tawny cat—
even geese fly silently—
what's he hunting for?

—

Mists, before my eyes,
faded away—what was it
I was thinking of?

—

Unabashed rouge face
of sun leers over east wall
old rake pour le jour.

—

Hung as vast curtains,
dramatic clouds ponder on
far thunder rumbles.

—

Dialogue of breeze:
each whiff brings scent from
afar of strange life elsewhere.

—

King snake guarding road
with head lifted surmises
our right to pass by.

—

Trumpeting cow voice
beyond horizon proclaims
grandeur...cow at prayer.

—

Hill town so lonely
where dog passed a new stranger—
that made the dog's day.

—

Two rain doves invoke
rain under lowing, gray sky;
warm air grows thicker.

—

Tree branches begin
subtle lifting with cool air—
premonition—rain.

—

Mockingbird puts on
talent show with such aplomb
you'd like to kill him.

—

Every bit of bird
gossip Mockingbird has heard he
spits out precisely.

—

Rain is slaking ground
grown stubborn, long unyielding
to soft wiles of spring.

—

Daybreak bows deeply.
Humidity moistens my
parched humility.

—

Bells from church tower
broke into my drifting thoughts—
said it's time to go.

—

Warm sun takes me back
to when I was once a plant
basking happily.

—

Such stillness makes clear
grass in wind cannot be stilled—
nor my weedy mind.

—

Doves are cooing at
fuzz of fog, after weeks of
unrelenting drought.

—

Bohemian crows
wrestle with resistance of
mute, raw existence.

—

White grave crosses stand,
spread out chubby hands and shout,
"Hi!" at rising sun.

—

Fog today so thick
I feel fog particles bump
against my forehead.

—

Katydids smartly
command each to each other—
not one takes orders.

Barn owl sent up yelp
of indignation. It seems
his barn had been robbed.

Crows communicate
in code—numbered units of
long, short, sometimes both.

Lazy, young lizard
seeks next sunspots when leaf shade
crawls on his comfort.

Wooden sound in trees
when nightfall has settled in—
woody katydids.

Wee lights fade in grass,
glow worms share in glory too
however briefly.

June's first cicadas
answer to June's lawn mower.
Stopped just when he stopped.

Persistent sparrow
perseveres in her petite
pronunciations.

Brother Greg on bike
breezes down the slope with shirt
flapping in the wind.

But for gross diet
buzzards are beautiful guys,
drifting on updrafts.

Shrill scattering cries
are salting distant forest—
bluejays getting wild.

Big rattle and clap
on road to woods—white hunter
sneaking up on deer.

Red man softly treads
on moccasins, laughing
at headlights and clatter.

From darkened courtyard,
crickets sing to distant stars.
Sing on cloudy nights
in this small corner
given to them by the Lord
for encouragement.

Bursting out of Tierce,
monks rumble down the cloister.
Horses off to work.

Hover flies, sweat bees,
black flies, all feasting on hot,
bare, skin of my feet.

His brow creased, his beard
pendulous, no doubt a monk
of ponderous paws.

Glow worms in the grass
search with their little lanterns
which are their bodies.

—

Sparrow and I walk
side by side on the walkway
with his little song
of one pitch—all notes
make a string of five. He moves,
stops and sings again.
He leads, I keep pace
slowed down to a sparrow's stroll.
A fine thing to learn.

—

Something in the grass
nibbles at my toes, reminds
me I'm not alone.
Takes a bigger bite.
reminds me I'm less alone
than I'd like to be.

—

Garcon Mockingbird
needs to entertain himself—
audience of one.
Gaston, his brother,
occupies another yard—
they're a bit at odds.

—

We bring our offerings
in silence. And silence is
our offering.

Part III: Autumn



“How is it pansies get
such a bad rap? They’re so tough
they bear autumn frost.

—

To hear wood hammered
is to know its nature—its
only kind of sound.

—

Triumphant little
songster raises head and neck—
cheerful bounce and trill.

—

Cricket pumping out
earnest, bright cricket calls—born
his first day on earth.

—

Yellow autumn tones
in his skin indicated
death was approaching.

—

Rabbits have removed
days of loud construction work—
hurt their poor, long ears.

—

Butterflies on turd—
one creature's waste, fortunate
finest nourishment.

—

I stand to attend
arrival of day's high, bright
aristocrat sun.

—

In blurred morning haze
locust tree lost its own
separate existence.

—

Low on horizon
moon, cloaked in fog, paused—took
stealthy departure.

—

Up the horizon
barking dog's knock, knock, knocking
on heaven's door.

—

Hay roll sags sideways,
dead tired from growing so hard,
all season as hay.

—

Monday he was here
singing the same song—Tuesday,
same cricket—same song.

—

Owls call out good-night,
one to another, before
first dim glow of dawn.

—

Light takes eight minutes
travel from sun. Sun got up
before dawn showed it.

—

Killdeer in low light
fly about while trilling
to wake day sleeping in.

—

Linden's thin, dry leaves
chatter of departure soon
with stirring of air.

—

Sycamore trunks etched
white upon char-dark forest.
Cold haze fades colors.

—

Too much silence—crows
can't stand any more of it,
all burst out crowing.

—

Hunter's car, through dark,
crunched along rocky dirt road.
Deer know they're coming.

—

On my sleeping bag
frost forms warming me at sleep—
nature's tender care.

—

Arcturus fading
in dawning light—Arctic
Vortex approaching.

—

Along the road beds
moldering leaves. Tree shadows
cross from bed to bed.

—

Round my head hood
a slight breeze pokes and fumbles,
“Anyone in there?”

—

Sudden stir of breeze.
Fog creeped in, ate up the world,
all soundlessly gone.

—

Through the barren trees
a ghost of a bird-song stopped
—too shy to repeat.

—

On the wet, dirt road,
mudslick sunlight silhouettes
caused by swaying branches.

—

Wind set in its ways
provoked trees to rioting.
Next day they'd forgot.

—

Gauze crested the trees—
haze of old dreams drifting up
from deep cold slumber.

—

Cedars, like old wives
nod with gentle agreement
on an opinion.

—

Those guns at Fort Knox?
Nope. Grouse thump'n out love songs.
Some Ladykiller!

Sun up, ground fog
noiselessly drifts up valley,
herded by sun rays.

White petals on dark shale,
ancient, worn with slow seepage,
brief petals soon gone.

Fermentation from
bourbon distilleries is
pollution sublime.

Sunk in the fog,
morning bell rings—
rings not very far.

Summer now gone,
crickets sing in memory
of old cricket songs.

Random winds sounded
through trees, then cedar spoke out,
sudden and urgent.

—

A dull muggy morn
when no creature wants to sound,
just a cow or two.

—

Drone of an airplane
across the grey chilly sky
—Little Hour bell rings.

—

At night, troubadours
travel through woods and fields
—hounds singing hound songs.

—

It comes down to this—
the humility to take
one breath at a time.

—

Small quiet corner
out of wind, dripping water
slowly pats dead leaves.

—

Rain turns to cold, cold
turns to dim, dim sinks to bare,
flattened silent days.

—

This precious silence
got hacked by the sharp *chack-chack*
of a Mockingbird!

—

The moon is lonely,
coming around, looking in,
but not entering.

—

Trees, their stories told,
shed all their words—laying bare
stark, skeletal truth.

—

Dark, damp leaves sink
between blades of grass—speechless
and without regrets.

—

A pack of crows chase
an owl—white, self-composed owl
unruffled by noise.

—

The top of the hill
reddened by the rising sun,
I climb into fire.

—

All your years of search,
you will find nothing. Nothings
unembraceable.

—

When fog is resting
among trees, trees are resting
within soundless fog.

—

Mockingbird repeats,
at half pitch, all those bird songs
he heard in his dreams.

—

First light—flying crows
were making much of their life
in this world—much noise.

—

A solo cricket
plays his one-string violin—
stroke, pause, stroke, pause, stroke.

—

In mild, soft rainfall,
the forest's private places
held untold secrets.

—

Day is under wraps.
Birds do not announce; colors
hold back autumn tones.

—

Crows commute early
noisy on their way nowhere—
busy with nothing.

—

After such high winds,
morning too quiet—must be
mockingbird blown off.

—

Something's on the wind,
its mind to get here quickly
leaves us here guessing.

—

Frosted field, brown grass—
deer nowhere discernable—
no, brown grass just moved.

—

Fields have gone fallow,
leaves have fallen, turkey hens
to their young ones call.

—

Orange and yellow leaves,
happy summer all over,
chase one another.

—

On the black asphalt,
leaves like kids in a schoolyard
run wild in the wind.

—

Leaves come down in groups,
seldom one at a time—thrilled
with wind's carnival.

—

One leaf dropped, dryly
tapped my shoulder—bidding me
a friendly farewell.

—

Smells at Grandmother's:
linoleum, iron, dry lace,
gas cooking roast beef.

—

Pale with heavy frost,
trees crowd, an army of ghosts—
some still flush with blood.

—

Grass tassels wind whipped
yesterday, today hang stiff
frosted and stirless.

—

Frost forms soundlessly.
You wake, sleeping bags gone white
without slightest touch.

—

Owl lets out one yell.
Some hoe-down call he saved up
from summer's square-dance.

—

Through mist, boy calls dog.
Rising sun, smelling like fog,
cooks up a new day.

—

Poor, exhausted monk,
worn down to sleep by efforts
to think grand thoughts.

—

My prayer at a loss,
wren sensed my distress, drew near,
and sang his heart out.

—

No bird, no crickets,
no crows—silence opens up
distances of space.

—

Sharp and emphatic,
mockingbird breaks night's silence
with rousing nonsense.

—

Poor dog remembered
one of his sins and let out
long, far, lonely wail.

—

How is it birds who
come in plain jackets sing so
extravagantly?

—

I'm a man in bed
dreaming he's away from home
seeking where to sleep.

—

All my learned thoughts
are just a form of dozing—
including this thought.

Birds and everything
have to make their own queer sounds
—so I write Haiku.

Rabbit fiercely runs,
stops short—stands stock still,
curious of me.

What does the moon need?
Searching grounds with her pale light,
wayward with longing.

Tires crunch on gravel,
tail lights fade into forest,
early deer hunter.

Maybe God will see
if I sit long on cold bench
a forlorn orphan.

Smell of silence fills
gaps between talk and laughter—
no wind cares to stir.

—

After stars faded,
before sun suffuses sky,
how illegible!

—

Spare and tiny drops
visit my forehead shyly
lest I take cover.

—

One leaf, dropping late,
joins many leaves lying like
fish in shallows.

—

—quite the contrary,
time's long, eternity's short—
comprehensively.

—

Empty of their leaves
Elm branches reach to low clouds
just beyond their touch.

—

My staff holds me up
if I hold up my staff—fine
mutuality !

—

Behind cloudy veil
Venus and the crescent Moon
keep their Moslem rite.

—

Fog cloaks the valley,
timeless in dim morning light,
drifting into time.

—

Highway traffic with
rude incursion rips at space
mis-defining day.

—

Fog lingers, deep in
passing memories of eons
unwitnessed, unknown.

—

White nightcaps cover
wooly Knobs, a-nod with dreams
of long summer days.

—

This litl txt ms
2 u fm silenc: wondrg
y u'r not silent?

Noiselessly through gloom,
fast streak of black—ran so quick
eye could not follow.

Sagging clouds run south,
long legs of mist leap from hills,
joining the stampede.

Lost with head in clouds,
hill forgot his loftiness
for something better.

Quibbling gusts of
cold, northern rain—fits invade
my secluded nook.

Devout souls leave shoes
at door upon entrance. Mine
I leave on exit.

Grackles get kicks by
flying over black asphalt
dropping white speckle scat.

—

Cricket practices
perseverance in night prayer
'till dawn's showers fall.

—

Fog lifted broad band
stretched against dark bank of trees,
grimly forbidding.

—

I did what they said:
Go into your mind—and there
found a loose marble.

—

My most valid word,
the one that clinches all else:
"I have no idea."

—

Leaf-shadow on ground
briefly a-flutter with bird
shade balanced and gone.

—

On page where Bible said:
"Behold, I send My angel,"
a tiny moth dropped.

—

Ninety-nine bows to
the ninety-nine faces of
the vanishing God.

—

Bare feet in wet grass—
Ah, what luxury of that!
What cautions of pain.

—

Wind in trees bid Hush
to leave. Leaves to wind reply:
"We'd rather whisper."

—

Perched on my shoulder,
parakeet made tones that near
tickled me to death.

—

Catholics want it all—
plenary indulgences,
plaine aire indulgences.

—

Sudden outbreak of
bird enthusiasm yelled:
“Let’s do it today!”

Trunk of old Banjion,
all sinews and arteries,
almost animal.

Studios Ibis
carefully pacing out thoughts,
sensitive and deep.

Drowsy trees let slip
tired leaves, then stand in sleep
‘till winter is done.

First windfall of leaves
like flock of brown finches blown,
land, no more to fly.

Such true tone of it
worth repeating all night long
cricket’s got it right.

Though not far away
dove enfolds distance—its voice,
lonely in desire.

—

Leaf on dark sidewalk
might be frog. Leaf hops off like
frog faking blown leaves.

—

On pre-dawn silence,
single, sharp bird call strikes like
exclamation mark.

—

Jay when he's pipe'ng
is something of a piker
acting like something.

—

Birds snick back and forth
at earliest hint of day:
Hey you little jerk!

—

Fog draws thick curtain
around our enclosure grounds
holy Dwelling Tent.

—

After long-night rain
lonely cricket sang solos,
others sleeping in.

—

Rain falls gently,
hits soundless grass. They whisper:
"Without you I'm mute."

—

Dim, quiet morning—
mockingbird starts the day
swearing a blue streak.

—

Two feet tenderly
tread by; slow steps, heavy man
in meditation.

—

Much I do to fix
myself in time and space—such
dead, frozen projects!

—

After night rainfall
between drop after slow drop
scent of trumpet plant.

—

Sitting on high ledge
gazing deeply into depths,
same old shallow thoughts.

—

He walks on dark path
whistling, to scare away
racoons, deer, spooks.

—

Nose to darkened ground,
slow, short movements, stop and start,
done lost his skunk stink.

—

Sun's been sleeping in—
coming up late—pastel clouds—
show sweet, fading dreams.

—

Golden coins of leaves
fall from cherry tree to strew
path of passing monks.

—

Into late season
with few birdsongs comes Mockbird's
complete recordings.

—

Crows crowd into green
Agora to wage long, loud,
fierce controversies.

—

Trees tired of old green
stand in red, auburn, yellow—
woodland's final fling.

—

Gray cobblestone clouds
crowd heaven's vault—Fleet Street where
urchin angels run.

—

Nearly blotted out
by earth's shadow, moon softly
sighs how time must end.

—

Kortle and twurtle
somewhere in the dark—young coon
gone out moonlighting.

—

Peeper frog sings of
second spring—late autumn,
with warm rain falling.

—

Big extrovert all
summer, winter Mockingbird
snaps: Don't bother me.

—

Surfboarder enters
dangerous tunnel-vortex
with light at far end.

—

Light dusting of snow
lingers on green shade-slope—
early come, soon gone.

—

Like fresh raindrops on
hot pavement, the name of GOD
vanishes when seen.

—

Roaring wind races
through barren trees—dark rider
in turbulent night.

—

Brief lyricism
of leaf lifted, flipped and dropped
by gypsy wind.

—

God is still alive—
I saw her soft, old face
leaving the clinic.

—

Weary of high wind,
wren hides within my alcove,
happy I'm there, too.

—

Silence itself is
sufficient eloquence for
wild cries of the heart.

—

As I approached home,
sliver of moon shyly slid
behind roof corner.

—

Night inquired of me:
"How are you?" Well, I'm almost
never and not quite.

—

Dark night with low clouds—
glow spots on horizons where
small country towns crouch.

—

A mule cried at night:
I-I am the only mule!
Then from a distance
another mule cried:
I am the only mule—I!
Then night went mute.

—

Huge, busy wind-front—
eyes closed, I can trace wind gusts
—great, white, speedy ghosts.
All noise-making beasts
all night lay in deep silence—
It will snow today.

—

A whole mile away
a carnival of roosters
at morning revels.

—

Gold leaves in light breeze
flip willfully here and there,
then, at one, all rest.
In moderate wind—
children playing in a street.
In big gusts of wind
demonstrating crowds in flight
from clouds of tear gas.

—

Shorn of leaves, oaks etched
upon morning's orange sky
filigree tracings.

Leonard's Final Moment

Snow bank of bed sheets
held him as he watched snow drops,
even smiling children.

Wind frisked at foliage
like mother's hand at fabrics,
no leaves to be found,
wind grabs other fun—
ghost-moans through bone bare branches—
quick frisks at my hood.

Nothing about me
is so perfect as is my
perfectionism.
Nothing is so warped
as my stubborn resistance
to getting in a warp.
Nothing's so normal
as my sovereign disdain
of looking normal.

Part IV: Winter



Winds feather snow on
black asphalt. Patterns shift while
mind elsewhere drifts.

—

Snow melts in cold rain—
lost dreams of Siberia
and long, sad novels.

—

Of snow, all that's left—
small white trash bags here and there—
ball field vacated.

—

Bare branches softened
by fog—silk screen tinted with
uncertain colors.

—

Steady Capella
holds its own, bright between moon
and dawn's quenching light.

—

Wayward wind roars through
bare branches, random traffic
runs along asphalt.

—

Frost under moonlight,
a magic carpet of stars
where grave crosses stand.

—

Spirits stand vested
in diaphanous frost—trees
ceremonious.

—

Commander Dog barks
in deep, private night, answered
by Crooner Dog bark.

—

In heated exchange
Pip Squeak and Commander bark
under the cold moon.

—

Alone, Capella
standing in dawn's growing light,
sings a-capella.

—

Pick-up truck went by.
Dog on the bed barked, warning
deer and other strays.

—

Defeated by cold,
overdose of sugar, sleep,
Mighty Monk quits prayer.

—

Silence crowds in soft
smothering the wedge of noise
when that motor stopped.

—

Being—a tiny word—
Thin, nasal, unattractive,
almost nothing—Being.

—

Winter sun at noon
hangs low—all the gett'n-up
he is gonna get.

—

This warm winter breeze
sneaking 'round at night. Watch out!
Cold creeps in behind!

—

When wind gets pushy,
that elm stands up to the brute,
argues in deep tones.

—

Crow, from quiet tree
bursts shouting upon the air
—big arena champ.

—

Wind bore no message—
curved around the wall and left
dripping roofs puzzled.

—

Cold, with no effort
edged into every crease.
—uninvited guest.

—

Scant remains of snow,
Spanish lace thrown across grass
Old style discarded.

—

Tired of bareness,
forests overnight sprouted
full foliage of snow.

—

Silent snowfall made
wind chimes, with frail suggestions,
coax more snowfall.

—

All's at rest in snow.
One crow's hard at making sure
things aren't too quiet.

Faint outline of hills
through climate close, grey, lonely—
as when Time once died.

Shingle on the grass,
memory of fierce night wind
that raged—all that's left.

Nothing left of snow
but one crumbled bone nestled
where sunlight missed it.

Cow's descending tone,
lowing at the distance, plods
across frosted hill.

Five searching, stray dogs,
snooping in every corner,
heard that Christ was born.

On the noiseless air
comes big billows of skunk scent
—poignant new year.

—

I sit in the cold,
though the worlds in such a state
I'm cooking in hell.

—

Clouds weave webs of dreams
across the moon's serene face,
sleeping—half smiling.

—

Village, called New Haven—
two churches, four bars—one called:
Your Last Chance Liquors.

—

Rain drumming on copper,
bongo, base, tin can racket
—all the old boys here.

—

Please don't interrupt
patter of rock and water
full of rapid talk.

—

Wet pavement, wet grass
cold air, dark sky. Wet pavement,
wet grass, sky grown lighter.

—

Today's Groundhog Day.
Yesterday I liked better—
Sleeping Groundhog Day.

—

No sound of wildlife
this night of snow-melt, except
skunk's clamorous smell.

—

Voices thawed out now
after February freeze
—dogs, cows, sound all night.

—

Softly recovering
his old songs, Mockingbird sings
about fog and frost.

—

I heard turkey calls,
caught sighting of Scorpio
—cold edge of springs here.

—

How briefly winds tell
short tales of speed and change,
skating through tree-tops.

—

Birds balked hoarfrost,
fog, cold, pale, stubborn gloom
with great song debuts.

—

Moon silently poured
medicine where I dreamt tales
she showed unto me.

—

In dull, grey darkness
all shades of silence lay numb.
Haiku are sleeping.

—

Haiku, like snowflakes,
live briefly, no two alike.
Touch them and they'll crush.

—

One drop at a time,
rain tap-taps gutter. Old year
patiently ending.

—

I wait in silence
while silence waits in me with
love in the balance.

—

Black starlings forage
in shallow snow. Well, they know
more snow will return.

—

Barely audible,
wind stirs in fir-tree—great beast
breathing in deep sleep.

—

Crimson, deep brooding
dawn, bodes news of Hatiquake,
intent, sinister.

—

Murky distances,
half light sluggishly comes—
day will sleep in late.

—

Long, dim, tired rainfall—
from this dry little alcove
attending sorrow.

—

Earth above, below,
wrapped about in shawl of grey,
mourns for children—crushed.

—

No silence is so
silent as silence of snow.
None but slow wind knows.

—

Contour of bed sheets
laid at my feet by snow drifts.
Clouds veil oval moon.

—

Fuzzy waning moon—
somewhat of an old mind gone
forgetful, adrift.

—

Remains of snowdrift
sprawled across gravesites—remains
sinking to remains.

—

Poor little Haiku
given to celebrate joys
unremarkable.

—

Lumbering schoolbus
swiftly speeds flashing through dusk—
angel on patrol.

Dogs very vocal
this cold, quiet night—neighbors
with such strange, rude ways.

Snowy wooded hills
where silence nestles, etched by
pointed, crisp crow calls.

After freezing nights,
dogs are catching up on their
neighborhood gossip.

Words eluded me,
like lifted tails of White Deer
fleeing through the trees.

They revel on winds,
circle and cross, raucous crows
early morning spin.

Singing soprano
comes easy in cold weather—
high note coyote!

Far horizon hides
the sun like a curtain, then
drops for unveiling.

Long, dark slabs of cloud
advance, cutting slabs of sky,
edging light from light.

Dark swirls of wood grain
advance across my choir desk
etching a dreamscape.

A child once, I dreamed
clouds were Snow White's Seven Dwarfs
on march in the north.

Shrub overhangs cliff,
reaches down into thick fog
seeking something lost.

Two geese cross the sky,
complaining quite crossly, yet
they remain a pair.

—

Echos hollering,
geese charge through Sleepy Hollow—
or it was sleepy.

—

Drifting off to sleep—
do I lose my mind, or is
my mind losing me?

—

Each with its secret,
snowflakes descend to whisper
soft intimacies.

—

Eddies of snowmelt,
wave patterns around inlet
of smooth, shallow snow.

—

One crystal of snow
reflects growing light of dawn—
single scintilla.

—

Ice crunch under tires,
bright exchange of voices as
dawn workers arrive.

—

Bare feet under black ice,
so slick I can hardly stand
long enough to pee.

—

Angels are hinges
on gates to meaning, swung on
silver-bolts of silence

—

New-born boy-child smelled
straw, wool, cow dung, ox's breath,
sweet, warm mother's milk.

—

Unused Christmas trees
lying in snow, living—slain,
undecorated.

—

Light skitting about
on church ceiling—reflection
from golden paten.

—

World all but silent—
distant throb on horizon
—no- it's my heart beat!

—

Above large Linden,
solitary point of light,
Venus, stands present.

—

Barn dreams in stillness
how a barge just its size can
strangely float along.

—

Trees pass the wind song,
here, there, around, beyond, there,
here, along again.

—

When creek flow runs from
you thought flowed towards, you should know
you're the one turned round.

—

All is so quiet.
Wind-blown leaf flapping on porch
sounds like a ruckus.

—

Monks speak of the dead
cautiously, as cars on snow
move with hush. And slow.

Old snow smells dry like
smoke grown cold, with accents rye
of life's swift demise.

Hill town so sleepy
Dog walking down Main Street marks
A major event.

Silence so watchful
to come here and sit down stirs
heightened attention.

Dream-talk overheard
asked: Do you work on this page?
—blank, unused dream-page.

Hush-a-by snow rests
on sleeping ground, blanketed,
softly innocent.

With its big flash light
moon is making its night round
asking: Who are you?

—

Snow under my steps
decidedly declares that
it means to stay snow.

—

Snow-laden morn is
brightened by whistling monk
early off to work.

—

Crow thaws out its voice.
Brother comes out, shakes dust mop
onto melting snow.

—

Two crows on a branch
call in turns. On branch below
Venus perched—silent.

—

Shape of distant knob,
called A Tent Knob. Who encamps there?
Angel of the Lord.

—

School bus rumbles by
on dark road, beacon flashing—
vanquishing angel.

Sharp dog says: What? What?
Complaining cat meows: Why? Why?
Wise owl asks: Who? Who?

Wind overnight stripped
trees. Last brown vesture gone. They
stand like naked ghosts.

God, loyal servant
in my house, welcomes me home,
washes my tired feet.

Time to get down to
living one breath at a time,
forgetful of time.

November put up
its umbrella, walked slowly
with dark, frowning face.

Light tap of raindrops
and far, subtle rush of brook
racing down valley.

—

Copper oxide drops
green on pavement—long night rain
rinsed roof's patina.

—

Even clouds are tired
of such gloom, hurrying off
to warm sunny south.

—

Sharp click—copper aches
contracting when hoarfrost
lays on ground and roof.

—

Frost lays like manna
your forbearers gathered up
bowed low on their knees.

—

Chickadees steal by
in dark wearing their night cloaks,
robbing precious specks.

—

At night dog hollers
at me. I holler him back.
He leaves hollering.

—

Bare branches of trees
comb passing wind, which purrs in
low-contented tones.

—

Unused Christmas trees
lying in snow, living—slain,
undecorated.

—

Light skitting about
on church ceiling—reflection
from golden paten.

—

World all but silent—
distant throb on horizon
—no, it's my heart beat!

—

Above large Linden
solitary point of light—
Venus stands present.

—

Barn dreams in stillness
how a barge just its size can
strangely float along.

—

Above dim snowfields
lone light of Venus, lone wail—
lone goose pleads for Spring

—

Faint drumming on eaves
of rain's soft fingertips for
unborn Jesus boy.

—

Morning keeps silent,
its eyes opened from blindness,
tells this to no one.

—

Night rain subsided
from long, quiet palaver,
awaiting morning.

—

Best gifts of this year:
precious moments of silence,
briefly come and gone.

—

Breathing this cold air
is my only offering,
rising like incense.

In this bare season
wind fluffs pine branche—only
fuzzy thing around.

Brief flare of headlights
between buildings, as workers
arrive one by one.

No great efforts made
by casual night clouds to rain,
just some careless riffs.

Ice crunch under tires
slows to a stop, lights go out,
door softly thumps closed.

Forgive my antics.
Without them I start to feel
I'm growing antique.

Early birds gather
for bread that has not been cast
on bare frozen ground.

—

From not enough
to less than not enough it goes—
my concentration.

—

The least I can do
is sleep. The next to least is
try by not trying.

—

Two-thousand Fourteen—
a kestrel glides noiselessly,
swift as time itself.

—

Ear to sycamore
pressed—what's there to hear?
Silence and my own heartbeat?

—

Hypnos the Opaque,
crowds into my mind
at prayer smothers me with shade.

—

Downey comforter
spreads above dark sleeping earth
during remains of night.

Snowy cat in dark
pranced by and stopped for a look,
wond'ring what I am.

What's it about air
that makes bare elm branches raise
great, ample embrace?

Best not to import
into your meditation
thoughts of importance.

Thin cry of bluejay
from distant valley knifes through
pale frigid sunlight.

Faint, fine, falling snow
draws sheer, thin veil between here
and pale world beyond.

Silence fluffed and shrunk
down in such severe cold with
soft, downy feathers.

—

...soft as slow footstep
on fresh fallen snow—sloppy
as slush shoved from curb...

—

Snow with icy crust—
footfall collapses caverns—
booms deep histories.

—

Ice slid off roof edge
like the very heavens had
threatened my frail life.

—

Snow-monster tramped on,
crunching thin ice bones, gloating
on every footfall.

—

Jeweled moonlight glints
through icicles hanging from roof—
Orion beyond.

—

Fine tracks across snow,
tight stitches of seamstress mouse
sewed embroidery.

—

Moon wore cloud jailsuit,
stood behind icicle bars—
gone from this world's life.

—

Jupiter and moon
rule in a winter palace,
icicles hang guard.

—

Teakwood drum beat sounds
from frozen horizon, dog
bark defies harsh cold.

—

Eventually snow
gets tired of itself and sinks
with crusty complaints.

—

Softly, small, cold Robin
speaks sotto voce—same
tune as its fierce calls

—

Somehow I'm happy
when a single snowdrop drifts
into my window.

Running in moonlight
after nights of snow cover,
skunk pursues ground smells.

Ice daggers dangle,
glaring dangerously at
stealthy intruders.

Distant creek trickles
with ice melt, tickled at talk
locked up—O! so long.

Brief movement of life
when flung towel becomes white
bird then drops to hamper.

First warm day this year,
song sparrow is back, singing
“Blessed are the meek...”

Through a forest stand
headlights blink along highway
far light melody.

Voicing urgency,
crow hurries across valley,
then forgets what for.

Huge, rippled goiter
on trunk of juniper tree—
frustration's archive.

From corner of barn
blown snow sweeps down and upward—
all smoke and no fire.

Snow drift slope defines
whimsey of wandering wind—
drafty swift ranging.

Fog freezes on trees pale,
ghostly patina of snow—
last night's witch haunting.

Ruins of war—ice
felled by sun's attack on roof—
shattered slabs scattered.

—

Drab winter days hold
something elemental that
tames and simplifies.

—

First tint of rose touches
night clouds gone grey. Headlights crawl
'round corners and stop.

—

Frost lay on brown grass.
In the air silence hangs frozen.
In the sky, Venus.

—

Dark morning clouds wear
purple veil hugging darkness
where it hid last night.

—

Unsteady dawn light
rising then fading—that's my
dim meditation.

—

Red Hawk rides updrafts,
turns in tight circles unlike
languorous buzzards.

—

Leaves— a few at a time—
blow along, rest, and start up
impulsively.

—

Stray, random, snow drops
promise nothing dramatic—
drift past and vanish.

—

Past the window—dawn.
In the windowpane, a ghost—
watching me watch out.

—

After Arctic freeze
bouncing spruce branches shake hands
with jolly, warm, wind.

—

Tabernacle lamp
dims, flutters, flairs, struggles through
flailing existence.

—

Entrance procession
has no music except tread
of passing footsteps.

—

Lowing, mournful clouds,
gloomier than lowing cows
old woes bemoaning.

—

Bell tower rails mad
at weather, at tired fog
too lazy to lift.

—

Incense smells at best—
when lingering later hours
in still, empty, church.

—

Grateful to be in
a place so quiet I can
hear my own heartbeat.

—

Peace came to my door
without luggage or sandals,
with just its name—peace.

—

Night before Christmas—
no bells, no angel choirs,
just coyotes wail,
lone dogs bark all night—
Why? Do they hear fearful tread
of passing angels?

—

Slow, long, night rainfall—
their business: sky and earth—while
I'm uninvited.
Giving rain a rest,
wind returns, refining its
mute point—with snowfall.

—

Groundhogs underground
party all night, then crawl out
sleepy—Groundhog day.

—

Snow crunch underfoot
groans up through leg bones to ears,
complaining of cold.