

S UR P RISE

Tim Ramick

In this darken-breath of ordinary transcript, This shock of grace with its standard beck of verb to been, This full funnel into self, this blush of wait, now that waiting is this coolish call, our father-swirl, our mother-widowing, this noon holding its stance in sunny the sanctioned act, our spirits hunt insomnia sever us from sleep. We won't and we sheer, this wound sphere, this spun clock, Let's burn through the only night. Let's sleep together without twice touching. sure won't leave us future-stained. Let's heave the poet and her basket of words. Watch me go from slay our dreams by loving the drowsy father-body into the open field furnace. island to maelstrom. Steer clear of my outer influence. Let loose of my empirical bias. Above our drowning floats the old dawn's heavy raft. Out of the sea-land rise progenitors, out of the seams of our imaginations, our won't and sure won't causal dismay. traipse through time, our to-ing and fro-ing Across our quirks of space and Around the fair-height boundaries, houses tower above We still carry across every room-for-improvement, our lakes of flames, idea-fires of known spark, Uncloset those brute sounds alabaster bridge. Where my heroes slumber, awaiting that come-and-go passion to wake the patriarch experience, resonant in our skulls, fever spikes, my encore, or if not acknowledgement, need, for indifference, in the aural blood, the erect song, our noir loss, undereave sweat and attic brood, inimitable purpose for casual traits of momentary quiver, for melodies tame. our floodlight shame. stiffen and peer, to save the worthy honey-hoard, flare and scorch, Our pale projections wander Salvage Then we will hearken to our combed and uncombed selves. the tarnished vanes and the betraying sun and we will and won't and sure shall splay my every Father gone as strangled song, cancer-trill the burnished widow-walks, wave them awake. All our choices by choosing adam, our tiny sins, our untidy tree. and cradle baritone, we hear the pines exploding. efforts expended, how it is. My voice once without good end, ill-said in the dark my nostalgia cinders. all comprehension across cantilevered spans. Crucify our childhoods as no answer. Her surprise arrived long before mine, before braces or breasts, metal-twist and glass shards on adult totems. in a family wood-flanked wagon, tortoise-shell glasses shoebox bound, bracelet lost, sister-survived, boy-widower. Today's sun stays tall above pine whispers. Let's leave the poet to his fire-fangled birds. Before wet-dreams, before jaw-square I'll sad myself in the light, proof to the flaunt, angled Toward dire days of practicality and voice-fall, before vale-lust and kept castle, away from solution, bent toward bemusement and blunting, of disimagining, she was gone. I was caught unawares, quick-drained within disappointment, shadowed for the bitterness we row our barge of midlife wonder, of assurance, life-stunned into tears too I of the brightest afternoon. laden with the grand unknown. Let's dangle from every strong participated arm we know of. warm. spill out white, out of the blue, out of all black, into resolute language. From my tangle-corner I intuit a world of woven flesh, bruised We won't go silent. My voice doubles as a slumber-god, but resilient, vibrant before memorial, unreal beyond the last thought, unreal except in near-waking, that curve-triangle of twilight, that Our grandsires are the word-strands offered to Accommodate day-end thralldom, Her eyes weren't wallflowers, heaven and the void, sleeping lords of mute winds, our uphill unlikelihood, my purple fortune. her lips weren't petaled as anathema or oblation, arduous and oblique, our steep forgetfulness blown to Micolor our childhoods with cloves, her hands my bramble-wish skin twists of tufted nether, sky-shy, This selved horizon-birth. adult crayons. Grief never once touched me. strung along wires and wefted to bone. lone-treed. scrawl won't endear me to God, who doesn't come with instructions or warranty, won't go away when insulted, isn't invited to consequence, that which could be nursery-blind, orphaned and milkless and unincubated, might be drawn to what lives. storyphiles crave. this anti-memoir.

In those lumina-hearts of extraordinary broadcast, Here in our land-of-plenty, our Deposit of self into self's grail doesn't purify those who feel things more than those in need of cleansing, if any of us are What we thought was our coffers-overflowing locale, the common of us, in need of redemption, our path wasn't our path at all, neither straight nor narrow, so we duck meaning as Let's turn dirt as bird-dirt, what is felt as idea, She had owl-eyes, my girl of surprise, before we flaunt liberty. we backtrack our gaze to what is absorbed as form, our grime as we teened, although she didn't teen, never had flow, into vales unprotected, vernacular into caverns lit with private glow, blood shines. both pilgrimmed and parochial. never flew above my darker chest. hills, both pioneered and provincial. I sure and sure wouldn't fall for my tricks again, not as observer. our quest primitive and fierce. Follow along as we dauntless climb, as we doubtless ought, Our grand scheme Wending down to sea-shift, We floral our coffins, our love of wave-whites and blue-sharps, we amplify our cribs, toward cloud-maps and swifiting, to rethink thought as option into camelot snow and brigadoon mist, as self-calibration or paranoia, isn't new, won't coup convention. we peer for whale and sail, then Here's where the story ends, after our swoonings and vergings, fast gone to our lungs our logic and fears conjoined, our room insular and our grave flowered, father-hush and girl-call, freshened by outdoor make-believe, speak of faraway and trawl, one too soon and one too late, or omnidurate, our memory nets. our narrator and our judge. our minds overflown with upness. If I were allowed to tell them I'd loved them, love them still, their perfect timings postscripted, If I could ascend to cloudscape, to skies of textured sounds, their havens equidistant from mine. I'd end-of-summer maple them, a sad and angry consolation. I'd bungalow them as one. Father went where I will go, to listen as my thoughts scratched at heaven's foundation, The sea, as seen from chalk cliffs or twisty roads, looks hallway painted, I'd melody shame. Let's harmonize our shames, meandering the brambles. This life isn't structured around telling diminished octaves apart, tranquil and comprehensible. My sunlift shadow is fresh-fallen, mine as triply sorrowful as Our moonstretched shadow bends longingly, toward home, the difference between evil and forsaken, between moral and holy, the devil's fifth, darkest around the edges but coldest at its core, when ours blend together as introit, this singing of dawn into day. ours toward recursive points, my proof of living in light. The sea is one of God's favorite dreams. as a life of potential, one that is vanishing or kaleidoscopic, recrudescant or fake. I think Doubt and belief triangle with surprise, a winsome shimmy. I'll soon enough be blent, melded by amateurs, not professionals, those in love with life's stir. What she now knows I'll then know, While I fret and furrow and grind, membrane to nucleus, Along the escarpment strolls our loss, I'm weary of my epidermis to marrow, wrapping paper in the hearth, these leitmotifs, this staccato, this gazing out to sea for our homecoming, parlor symphony, appreciation expressed. brow setting, attitude to soul. longing for white, yet not wishing to speed our sails. the world's party progresses toward auld lang syne. White rivers curl toward bottomlands, yet I'm eager for my roof-lifting solo. Clatter through the yard-grave haunting, past father's lawn-dampened roses, or rise to cloud plateaux, My concision won't drought my helplessness under moist stars, their courses set by clausal clumps, aglow from the eerie entertaining flickers of indoor comfort, that helix remembrance of fabric-lands, the middle spindle, chains of dadly earner and master won't sober me with bookshelf yield, bedroom erect, the self-confessional, the unwheeled I, our long small durance deal, our unvanquished horseshpur, The timbering I almost fell to wrathful burgundy, that gradual reversion of tiny significance, swung from father's arms into tell-tale ghost-spurting. to rainy night sleep. It is and sure isn't necessary to retrace our steps all the way back to that spiral tower lust for aloof regard.

Give care-credence to her conception, Don't badge excuses for our blundering. They were kind and of a kind, my father and my scouting our wrong turn turned not so long ago, curtsy by offering a smattering of applause, tears shed for a plucked wallflower, cameo, disinclined to friction, not undone in a day but not requiring an epoch of penance, our mishaps, our explorer's gaff, my needleless compassing, journey unremarkable in limelight, an appearance marked by my not having got her to the wishing well adjourned until tomorrow's morrow, Friendship stands mute below the snowy white peak, my life's love found below hell's kitchen to the treehouse of ingenuity or the carousel of regress, tall to the big questions until privacy with spring lemonade after shangri-la. keels toward soapboxing. to pickle-barrel player-piano respite, against hyperbole, against conflation, of earthy existential twiddling. to rock-candy coda. against platitudes of God-condemning obligation. We dislike maxims like we like maxims. My albescent urge jets into an oil-spill, black bile spread into birth-coves and nurse-waters of sperm and gray, marine silence in feverdream, waste-flow from my diction-hold, contained by self-dictum, by self-decorum, these words sticky with world energy, coating flight, land-bound. I won't sure my sky into Avoidances, when burred into friendship, fall onto Allusional time and unsure I won't sure my sea into ground receptive to apathy, storm-built updraft metaphors, those I scatter as seed, storm-surge tidal Expectations of ongoing change sprout in the thought-field, can't be disappointed without arrangement, patterns rooting under our carnal houses as bones in weeds, merged into time-stoppage, vining around our untended ideas which grow into dimension and nice-guy sophistry, boy-next-door wistfulness won't bloom alone. without written weather, into weather-wrote, When I'm surprised I hope I'm surprised outdoors, not if it can be avoided, not if the elements respond to doubt. and girl-next-door leverage, my unintended omnipresent omniscience or eternal iterations, supplication to sky. all in the neighborhood of fate. Father-told and mother-spent, we Value confusion as not Our dull, constant change as God-joke. Erotic philosophy hasn't come to air from water, We can't ravel time as our own shrouds, morality has caught on as the way we seek order and pleasure, as if monogrammed in our nurseries for safekeeping, our lungs yinned and yanged, mine ebbed toward utility, as a beach-lounging pastime, not yet, not in these days of our fruitful bewilderment. waxed from mount-talk, exotic fiction, moist from long-living, appended after fathermath, beyond his parallel conjunctions, I sure won't be inhalation and exhalation not my caparison double-monikered as division of labor, and thrives in fecund dung. when our gonads keep their distance from our frontal lobes. instituted or implemented, stallion and mule, across our empirical This, our primary path, self-sparing and sterile. not as artist or clerk, not while I travel my own plane. Our flatland won't save us From our poses to our apologies, our spiral realm, from trees of knowledge, from summation perspectives. From our opacities, our neat thicknesses inward and outward, the least resistant conduit, our widest river, flows to the lowest common denominator, the bottomless dominating sea. Every summer, all over, select boys and girls go family-vacationing and our lovers couldn't guise, we never come home. She wouldn't disney, not yet, not in those days of penetrate, we refuse tightening and the loose unroofing, refuse to comport ourselves. to midday-port ourselves. I'll allow for my thrift-suede erudition, my awkward quixotic cynicism, beasted maze. I could be one of those carpenters of song who hasn't any nails. not when I was a suburban set-piece, my side-house southpaw irregularity, This is my practive nod, my nice and too surely nice. What is integral is balanced by what is superfluous, by formal caprice, to laud and loathe our opulent imaginings, but I won't bow to difficulty if it isn't what is whim and what is superlative, inherent, if it isn't prodigiously bold. by the transparent and the resonant and the odd. my mother's forests and my father's trees.

In this twilight thought of common disposal, These coming nights of wander-wide This selfsame stretch of one toward none, my absent time won't revolve to bright. My very lack, will carry empty freight at breakneck speed. will end with our rush toward sea and loss of spirit. Let's just agree to in vivo and not in vitro probe, I'm a melancholic, not a depressive, and thus I won't insist upon truth. not know, to not lie down with outcome until our love for it has grown, my plunge into my viscosity, She wasn't the tawny tomboy, the racoon-eyed disaster, nor the neo-victorian pixie. She has matured into infinity, provides me insight, or if not insight, We'll soon I travel another labyrinth, around what has forgotten it exists. God's perspective. was the moon-spectacled shrinking violet, I thought imagination frightened the new men. thought I could be a doorless paradise. the unknowable girl gone. We don't want to be found missing omission, to be shy of absence. I might could doubt doubt into What we bandy as luck, what we poke as I court belief, but no, I needed to doubt belief into trust. I should faith us into the candy palace, but no, I lack fate, I designate the skeleton key. as cartography, the lay of the land, time-terrain. my father as popsy, not never have had never, should never have held nothing as something, anything as all, these positioning words, for company but Alone, as if site-specific, I'll stand on this spot As we pivot on our now and forever being announced, for paper as flesh, until I come for myself, Please don't pretend I'm hero, our triad hinge-days of my unpronounceable presentness, my exodus routine, a corner-of-the-mouth twitch, my savior-self sooty our sloth-swing toward next. my orchard-ripe and snow-woods, I entice without dimples or with forest-surprise coordinates. Cover me with gleam. and home-spark. Gaze up at cloud grids, our discipline natural, my star adrift. This our swallowing well. Cover us with our shared shroud, knowing this is our high-noon sun-easing respite, rain, and I'll be sabbath drowned with tears mid-page low-voiced second-guessing fog, not mine, won't hold our bones, won't register those water-crowds of white allure, our transformation, not as image on fabric, frame-collected, blue-walled, afloat upon renewable sorrow, our confusing jig of fore and aft, dodge and rescind, eternally temporal. I'll evaporate into idyll before sunk in salt-sacrifice. We live, not as posterity art. our risky inlet pole-and-row before our full-sea sail. and our emergent hopes thrive amid spectrum- and upper-watch, Our lives These wisps are only borrowed and must be my thoughts lost beyond their rigging. I Come honestly by brilliance and singular revere these intuitive noise-clusters of idea distortion, brought back to where we got them. It's not too early to scour ourselves with abstraction. emotional reticences and let them be misunderstood. our lives won't survive under hot lamps of impatient scrutiny. and thoughtful aggressions, ours to bury or burn. It's not too late to adorn ourselves with reality. I respect the darker nooks of mind, or at least I'm drawn to them, their murk and clut, their dour and spleen, feint and parry and prod and hide, potion-words as squid-ink in fathoms wrecked. This is my solo folly, These are our follies, our hearts in tutus doing the cancan, The auditory nerve balances our silent wake, my sphere-voyage in a balsa skiff, Innervate our storm on stage for the duration, perpetually motioned, sweat-bright Stimulate our equilibrium songs, along my reck and rod, and red-cheeked, We'll flounder in our mouthful of Telling it on the mountain would lightning-strike lies, and statics our expectancies. my sedulous tantrum toward our near-horizon, our change. the bottom of my nature, and thunder our concessions. our spicy tales of moist violence. Some dance-deal, our dealt dance. Wise folk don't fancy the soul. I won't hold my breath. so I'll salamander my ways. I'll breathe through my thin-skinned methods. discursive suns don't become planets. We're the levelling rodders, surveying the subteranneal The annual carve posts my father's gulch, That stance, girl-stare and lens-glint, melodies or stray lullabies. Reconsider all tendencies toward mimicry and homage.

toward premature canon-blossoms. totem-tall and wood-banged, unruddy flush, that pallor, that bargain-trench for sinking dreams, her collarbones never sunned, she before he, first-fallen. our instruments sanitary. Wherever we land, our glass globes won't disturb seahorse or starfish, I remember her ears unpierced. I searched the strange quad for her in those september days, but Do try to stay in the current, swimming in her dreampool, in my skull or treasure. she hadn't made the summer's leap, that elementary span, These underwater dreams of her dreaming, in the flow of my apology, and I heard about her surprise across administration Stream eddies and rapids, my neighbor's balustrades with their vagabond curves won't show my father's steps. my sleep fantasy, formica, where I found her other life intact. humming into my bed, all the way to the laden delta. my boy-heart incapable of that grasp. We atlantis our childhoods. We need happy endings like we need unfamiliar melodies. half-idle strains of easy listening. I won't albino my slate, not as coast-retrospective, not felt-wiped in evening violet, words smudged before obliteration, night's approaching blackout as ocular penance for under-squint, for beauty boredom, shadows banished to candleland, our silhouettes sledged and supergray in our sentences stretched toward almighty. Father saw the sea beyond our mother's shoulders, Skin Our future, what isn't written, what will finish the blood, water the flesh, surf-swell and tumble, our cultural grave and womb, Oppose inherent opposites and forget our storage-locker for gem of jewel, knot the bone and purge the brain. Kill the all-in-all forgettable, It's us but hasn't yet finished the stiff myths. I'm the curious boy, the furious time with impossibility, the express train to solution, past solvency, for jewel of us, with our engine unscratched by the fool, handcuffed to history, quarantined in self, gem, boy-girl spins through our nodes. My torn fingernails of bohemian poverty. I cater to obviousness. and I'll destroy my imagined sequence. Our gush, their solidarity. cranks and obsessives. Let's ignore my stuttering kiosk, my spectra wasn't buzz fodder, was confetti-bound, tossed in My sleep, my parades for shepherd-dads, for cloak-lords, my sheepish dad, Let's disregard my flickering mind's animation. That's where she'll slumber, my cloaked girl. Sound the depths of that heart's confession, my cornered display. stay, swaddled in crayoned images. I'll stand beside this wishing well, its answered waters won't grant me refreshment, leg-thrash and treading consciousness, Take this friendship, and its endearing echoes. Here are our unfinished dreams that clutch my hand and climb that hill, Evergreen shade God shall keep our leaving trees twined, this rest-of-life miracle, match and tinder, walk and see. enduring ruins, our nostalgia. sharded magnificence. I want our rooftops supple, our fingers locked. She doesn't speak through memory or convention. He doesn't speak through my daydreams or our chimneys cool. doesn't speak through his father's clock. I don't want recognition for books or organ-flutter. for brains or book-shale. Be My witness, the one who would coin my eyes, Goodness gracious, try long-staring, from a far-and-wide peer. Astute armchair exploration, will find in my drawers my forest and tree, wall and stone, carvings, my striated clasts, hand and bluish veins. Let's go idea-traversing, diggers Crawl out from under the charnel clubs and grant imagination dominion. not my girl-moraine of glacial shift. ply only breath and vision, pry into folds of surface, into our knowing admiration will last. We eldorado our talents as if they were lungs in ricks of needles, Constraint holds sway over whim, our rhythm and pattern accentuate the key. This is our amber, our sighs petrified. She wasn't mute but she rubbed My exhaustive fingers thimble and our minds split to gather. Encourage the moody river, twisting and dredging and exhausted up against it, her doodlings, neither entire nor finished, Incidentally, and altering our landscape, Too meek to revolt, silence a trait to be envied. I don't have the nerve to stain our sheets with muse. What were golden from the sky These many galaxies collide to defy their

across my self-shine. Precarious is the flowering world at noon, my secondary troublesome inheritance, that earthen plight. Remnants of my intent and unquestionable subtexts across my fragments will peel from my amethyst at dusk. boyhood ceiling. wallpaper twilight. Shred my discipline and clutter the floor. My industry and context are swept under the rug. Room tones are failures. sagacity don't a triumphant shibboleth make. I don't work amid flattish oblongs, Believe me now my stable-rails, my side-long bannisters. when I say I'm not lingual-confident, not when paper ambience is undetectable. We haven't yet heard what I sound like enthroned, my syntax stacked for this night's bonfire. Christen and vertigo our pasts into fetal submission. I won't be embalmed and entombed, crowned atop an interior hill, Father wouldn't launch a luxury lexicon, one for our inner passage, Let's speak ill of his executioner, my kingdom ever smalling. arrange and augment an argot of tides and escarpments. not if my ghost can close doors, not if my spirit can make flame. If asked to take the sword, I wouldn't stand for bad feelings. Let's trust ourselves Reclamation isn't for those who won't kneel. We shun Girl-smite, car accordion, factual intuition. for broad purposes of cultural centrality even as we fortitude. Strangers witness family-winnowed, boy-crush. They never would deem themselves sovereign. God saw it coming. We seldom see it coming. Let us navel our ambition. Love Lifting heralds my imagination, lets it stroll along, lets it happen, lets go of father-lean, We're not holding hands the only day I walk her home. One isn't a three-letter word. isn't by-gones be by-gones, I was often caught napping. They, those striped youths, ought not watch it shine. let go of one's scouts. tragedy unfolding without gratitude. Darkness isn't unconditional. happiness hinged with irreparable time. won't come again. delves into the day's doings as the light of dawn illumines our nether-minds, our scant-hopes and under-stares, our secrets clad in stairsteps and box-mold, mothballs and angle-depths, we hidden children of carpet-must, our whisperings amid slats and wainscoting, woolen coats with holiday dust, that cavern led from fantast to schooldesks, from make-believe to hands raised, from flank-touch to chalkmarks, these Sins don't accrue in the ledgers of classmates or fathers, Our miracles extend from survival to son-birth, these stretches of contentment, dimming memories unreeled. Here are our bouquets of mothers or siblings. Shelf my successes. I value everything from empirical seems to existential seams, Take time to stride astonished and there are our meadows, Append around every tall tree, keeping all knives pocketed. from conception to surprise. Sustain our blooming appeals. I've a million seasons conceived or concocted or carved, We sure and sure trust in accident and intent, not with cancerous ease but with all or almost everything, onto this winter's coverlet, They, those paisley elders, would condense our risks into evidence and abandon. I pat absolutes. my beckoning our swirls into fashion-fare, this warming culture-scene. Let's resist the thaw or let's willingly flood my mistakes to pit's edge. We should as soon squander our lowlands. into pattern-surge. Scatolize our process, scandalize our reverie as paint disoriented seers into cubbyholes, Hurry and empyrean our surprised and our ideals after they're Tolloed in time or buried or conflagrated, cover the glassed-bodies with atomic dots. structure the world into winking markets. Forgive my smoke signals Done with picnic cloths from our trunks, rocketing our notions of essence into the vast unknown, lifted from space, Kiss the father-shell all for sense-sake and good form, and done unto, we reel. old photos, if necessary, and refractions, our lives for hope-sense and transitive peace. if they hold my disarming word-ways. They were ever only idea, with vigil sheet Goodbye from toes to memory, if flesh is divinely imagined to fathers and gone-girls, These were never meant to frustrate. I'm soon to be quieted mind. forgotten. allusions flirt and resist and speed and yield. to selves and strangers. We won't mind. absent. energy.

Rise, out of mire and matter and choir and steam, out of conduit memory into this brighten-choose, this lung-and-mind signal-static, transposed to bewilder and pneumatize, these clouds of unknowing, this mill-heart, and usurp oneself with everyself, blossom to blooming, cell to thought, what roundabout blood might drown the mind, adequate or imperfect, tainted or oxygen-ripe, one's father or mother expired, that perishable boy or girl down the block, one's daughters or sons unhappened, the neighborhood decay, the cultural skew, tight-joint nonsense-buds of tyrl-cres and trel-mott, rafe-sted and brem-coss, frame-language two-by-fours, the I missing, that risen-weed of God. Scaffold the conscience of art. The grave of this architect reaches down to the styx-bank. Now rise, now resist rising, now rise again, this ridiculous mass of indecision, façade-collapse or foundation sunk, knees bruised not from contrition but from ant-watch, from poet-fake, prayers spent on periphery and shame, notice and thanks. All options available, none held. To wake is to unsleep, to stop dreaming and not be dreamt. Wake is interstitial to dream. Rise out of dream into dream. Science the people without mercy. Then, apple, air, shine and ponder. Thought made spen-mosk and coll-trem, early in blueprints, margined as stone-corners, as savior-clutch, the girl's fuzz, the father's rasp. New houses of their anonymity, of fresh carpet-slumber, thick-draped endearment, white-noise evenings, rose-tidy yards, or, hill-roads rising into sky past dirtblown slatted night-kitchens, past sea-summer bungalows and moon-infested fields, castle-in-the-sky pie-in-the-air whitewash switcheroos, suburb to mantle, picket to patio, time-crimps and prosings. She couldn't remember what was never told her by that brisk boy of twelve. He might have known what prodigal hand sponged water onto his lips those final falling nights. If it matters, it matters not, not in this world, not as language. The choir sang for them and are long done singing for them. The earth aspirates and heavenly bodies plummet elsewhere. So rise out of meaning and memory into moment, not into the now but the ever, into some ever-ever land where unique sameness is normal, polt-moll and root-raft and roof-lilt, not the double-selved or triangular self, not the private coinings, the everself as everyself, that quality of equality assured, reigning as the unsovereign all, to go from any point to every other point simultaneously, whenever to wherever, the temporal fold, the taste in the mouth of hogwash, red saliva, the red-eyed exhaustion of existential dread, the red knowledge of femininity, the privilege of loss, whit-clip and flim-list, building blocks for bereavement, these ruins of discursion, dad's day and sweetheart's day defanged. The stag is devoured by and the doe is devoured by and the fawn is devoured by. These bys are unsubjected. Visitation comes without the will of visitor or visited, without precedent, without cajolery. She won't come. He won't advise. Flimsy. Listing. These structures were hastily built. This house will fall. Red nucleus. Red giant. Infant crawl. Luminous span. Culture teeters on the brink of control, what petrified risk. If creation is gratuitous, so might be destruction. The ur-apocalypse originated with profane stability. Relinquish trust in consequence and chaos, order and chance, and red herring language into substitutional charity, the pose of definition struck for sake of the fox, the chase gone askance, off into rosebushes and greenbriers, into beauty-tropes and unbloody scratches, this portrait of truth, as hunt, trophyless, this detour, as detour, impermanent, that alluring tail gone beyond the hill's shape, that mischievous tod someone else's father, the logical sequence someone else's trenchwork, the disarray someone's else's conquest, this grace can't accident and won't stretch to posterity, this complexity isn't simply complex and art is seldom dumb but often stupid, and all this wordy tender won't happiness buy, and all this tiptoe anticipation won't resolution bring, and all this skeptical will won't deliver purpose, not in the here-time, not in the now-space, rest-bare and lorm-wull, standard issue, commonplace, triple-spaced and equilateral and double-stood, rise to rise at last, the setting heart in the darken-chest, the chosen breath, this fortune-failure fringed with self.

I, or I and I, or my I of multitudes, or just I, in this leisure of romantic skepticism, this constant webstering of assessments, these unanswerable questions that should be unaskable, that should go unasked, our nobility in the not asking, our dignity in the still tongue, this impossible silence, my knowing my salvation lies not in things or science or prayer, my mortal imperfection peering into God's visceral cellar, this I, my only I, will undo the gate, will totem the lot, will bring the sky down upon the firmament of my brow, will damp the hollow, will scorch the copse, will watch the cosmos brought down upon my torso's yard, and will assist in the raising of that quirky lad's barn, that subsequent boy, that new man with wider fields to tend, his God less clenched. I'll peer into the interior gloom and stare at God's lewd sketches of me, those dark scrawls strewn about the poorly lit space. Frustration. Resolve. Impatience. Surrender. Compromise. Mortal imperfection. Then, I'll diminish until I'm done in by hospice kindness, undone and doneless, yet doubtless done. Time sands down. I'm not surprised, I'm undone, outshone and outloved, those lonesome hills awaiting, craggy and wind-bothered. Allow me to wander them under my watery star, mine from birth, its light able to penetrate my bones, to illumine my half-escarped hourglass spirit, to light the everyway until time stands down. I, this near-catalytic I, this I of primary impetus and tertiary action, this I of delegation and relegation, of thoughtful reclusivity, of thoughtless nativity, of word-wend, will tributary myself to the salty mouth, will wind and surge my way to immersion and envelopment, this steep and gradual decline from trickle to swells, this alpine body of brine, this self of long ago and far from now, this not like myself, this too myself, this self of two minds, this landlubbing sea-child, this cloud-down and sky-vault, this singular also-self, primordial and young, worn-out and indefatigable, conjunctioned to blather, unwound to hang laundry, strung with road-found charms, I, this fond navel-gazer, this near-paralytic I. All of this sounds discomfitingly familiar, as if told before, as if on display in my soul's back-alley museum, moldy under glass, quaint and patently self-contradictory. If this text were to attempt to resemble that museum, I'd volunteer to dust and mop on sundays and holidays, vanquishing disregard. Still, tongue wagging or hand scribbling, there's always more to be said, once the saying gets going, once the sayer commences to try to deliver the world via language, a world apprehended or imagined or inferred, a mad endeavor, a spreading virus, our tell-all culture in these front-alley days, our unreliable monikers and our allusional tics, my subconscious grime, my gnawed edges, this strategic artifice of sacramental art, these museums of miscellany that grow ever more cluttered by the season, these shoulder-sagging hand-scrubbing concertos of clatter, my thrash-ditty, my productless jingle, my agnostic requiem, this tongue of unbaptised alkali. Someday I'll sew my lips shut with thick ideas. I'll disable my southernmost hand with condescension. I'll stop my thoughts cold by petitioning for evidence. I'll cease enslaving metaphors when the twig-girl sings, when the laughing willows come home, when my father lifts me from beyond. I'll broker peace in those strife-torn regions of my psyche. I'll feed my starving empiricists. I'll provide opportunity for my ghetto-whims. I'll educate my midland simpletons and convert my pagan brunettes. I'll absolve myself of all pretensions and banalities, every white lie of omission, every paltry effort and hard-hearted response, all smirk-mouthed cynicisms and straight-mouthed shutdowns, every wince of envy, every in-the-heart lusting, every gloss-over and each blow-off, each bullshit nod of collusion and every chickenshit glance-the-other-way, all of my ulterioriors and smarms, my elitisms and low blows, my mealy complaints, my ingratitude and blindspots, hypocrisies and gluttonies, knee-jerks and flinchings, pulled punches and false modesties, under-breath cursings and morals of convenience, gross assumptions and grotesque centricities, sentimentality without gutwrench and philanthropy without risk, hyperbolic self-floggings and lettings-off-the-hook, this absolution delivered self to self, with witnesses, before God throws my

surprise party, a bedsheet soiree, sober and unadorned, to which you're invited, whenever it may be, whoever you might be, if one can invite all of humanity across all of time to one's own surprise party, an absurd notion, as you'll doubtless agree, you who now partake of this without need to RSVP, whether you please or don't please, you with the sun in your eyes, you of the we and you of the they, you witness, you windblown, pony-tailed, pig-tailed, crew-cut, slick-backed, naturally-curled, nappy, natty, self-barbered, braided, balding, graying, permed beauty you, you of my vanishing point and you of my day-to-day, you of my infancy and adolescence and apotheosis and abatement, you with your hand over your heart, you with your head in your hands, you who would lie down as my bedrock and you who would rise up as my betrayer, you of my middling laze, you who would stare down tanks and you who would slaughter farm-girls, you who throw bricks at your loves and borrow pencils from them and ride them on your handlebars and immortalize them in stained glass, you of the higher ground and the cloying velvet eyes, you of superior intellect and broader scope, of stratospheric emotions and brutal handicaps (or vice versa), you of more influence and lesser neuroses, of clearer vision and undeniable purpose, of smoother skin and longer legs and fatter wallet and purer pedigree, of atrophied limbs and battered home and deep debts and lousy luck, of oceanic vocabulary and dagger wit, of good guy comfort and bad guy swarth, of sequoia confidence with saguaro thrall, of orchid allure with daffodil cheer, of choice words and charming banter, you of my nightmares and you of my astral projections, you of my pity, you of my envy, for your normalcy and brokenness, for your charisma and bumbling, you who would survive at all cost and you who would lay down your life for ugly neighbors, you hero, you punk, you saint, you lowlife, you sadist, you masochist, you marvel, you glob of muck, come to my party, peruse my autobiography, have some sugar with your water and leave early enough to catch life's action elsewhere, you who would give those eyes to science and you who suffer a phobia of hiccups, you who would mustardseed the mountains into the sea, you who would paint over perfection to protect it from the world, you who are more afraid of success than failure, you who have never orgasmed and you who can't seem to stop, you who adore snowglobes and you who break everything, you king of the hill, you dunce in the corner, you parallel one and you parallax other, you crease in the linen spine, you tight light switch, you fleck of paint from three tenants ago, you fleck of glitter from God knows where, you who would reserve judgment till inconsequence and you who catapult your pebble fate into every disaster, you flat spare tire, you handy picnic cloth, you last swig of champagne, you spider's egg, you plaintive chord, you earache, forgive my strident blare, my sweeping march to the sea, this laying waste of propriety, these dry lips rough on your worthwhile, your keep to yourself, your special in half-doze, you who simply trust my intent and you who won't ever let me rifle your sock drawer, won't marquee me in your diary, won't memorize my epitaph, won't watch me with fondness from across the happening room, you who were born into sin and you who virgined a birth, you of my embarrassment and triumph and pedantry and demise, you with your heart up your sleeve and you with your head in the sand, you who would bullet me in my sleep and you who would fondle me in yours, you sunny day matinee, you hairline fracture, you church-sneeze, you indecent resplendence, you sliding scale and slippery slope, you whom I adore and you whom I loathe and you whom I could take or leave, come one, come everyone, come none at all, you who won't speak to me unparabled, you who provide our life-mates and life's work, you who breathed upon the deep, you who would pluck a plain youth in her early spring and you who robbed a gentle father of his mellow voice, you gog and magog, you alpha, you omega, you choice and not-choice, you party giver, you party crasher, you forbidden fruit, you corridor of light, you sight for sore selves, gone today but here tomorrow, you one and only all.

They never met, father and girl, at school or supermarket or church or home or amusement park, unless in surprise, or in my unsurprised mind, or as soldiers or washerwomen in another lifetime, baritone and wallflower, progenitor and revenant, this life's entanglements and distillations, this life's disappointments. Awareness tells me I have having—I still have having. But what do I know of having? For that matter, what do I know of *not* having? Is there a space—veil or vale—between having and *not* having? Should I say I *had* a father but no longer *have* a father? Is there anyone—taking into account sperm banks and immaculate ejaculations and every genus of surprise—who has ever been able to incontrovertibly say 'I have no father'? I have a father—I just don't know where in all our unparticipled creation he has got to. His ashes sit on the shelf by my weaker shoulder. From my stronger bicep, imaginatively, my self dangles as playful child. The girl is there, too, her colorless fingernails still gripping my muscle while her shoes are full of glass. I tasted some of my father's ash. Why do I make a father out of paper and diminish a girl of my childhood to transmorfification? What are we saying when we say we meet ourselves coming and going? How would I answer—if a loved one's well-being were endangered by my response—when asked what tyrl-cres and trel-mott, rafe-sted and brem-coss mean? Where is my mother in all my wordiness, in all my unworldliness? Is widowment her only role? Can I say the snowy woods are hers and always were? To whom belongs the wooden apple? Should I look for mother among the stacks of my crayola drawings under my too-far-down-the-hallway bed? What would it take—other than God's or Fate's own sweet time—to be struck down by a lightning-swift blow? What sure and shining night shall find me gone? Father, before I knew him, sang as if he had discovered the way of gladness. Or will I watch the sun go out? The girl, after I knew her, went wandering through my overwoods and understars, across my whole confusion. What do we know of havingness? When will I comprehend the internal infinite or the mortal exquisite? I was the one who removed his wedding ring. What did she not know of happiness? Defy my solitude with advocacy, and would I be grateful? Advocate my solitude, and let me prove worthy. If I could fail at what I was put here to do, why would I have been put here to fail? Father. Towheaded girl from a tall-chimneyed house. Stranger coming over the hill. Bent spectacles on asphalt. Triangle moments. These are substantive, these are restitutorial. Whatever I usher from mind to language—sensate or remembered or imaginary—confirms my divinity, or if not godhood, immortality, or if not fatalism, optimism. Watch my feature and wary-thrill to my subtext. The world isn't peopled by gods or temporary spirits. What were mother's thoughts when she found herself pregnant? Did her consciousness hover above the wreckage? Could father recall the auspicious spurt? Had she shed her white canvas shoes to comfort the ride in the backseat proximity of her sister? Why were my favorite of father's roses colored pale amethyst and why can't I recall their name? First something or other—first kiss, first breath, first surprise. Are there sister-children in the world today? Could our reverence—beyond all likelihood—fall for an unaunted daughter? The lavender floated above a silvery-gray pallor and the curl of the petals always made me weak whenever I shifted the hose to or from the flanking reds. Mother, undaunted, brought me forth as sacrifice to the existential beast. What do we know of individual perpetuation? Girl showers outside the bungalow. I drift in oriel sunlight. What do I know of private cessation? Biology seizes my organs. Sky solaces my eyes. Shouldn't I have set them to unique tasks? Couldn't I have set them on different shelves or buried them in separate drawers? Everything I've ever tried to say, every nub of every notion, every squiggle and clambering mark, every stretch for secure holds, every ledged thought, every dislodged word, every sound, has arisen from glorification and defiance and denial of my self-maker, not my father, not my nation or soil, not my tradition of innovation, not someone else's God. Why? Spen-mosk and coll-trem. More slant, please. White

won't black and black won't gray, not in this matter, this solipsistic mattering muttered in the dark, or near enough to dark to be called dark, this gone today and still gone tomorrow, this unknowable mind as locus. Here flows thought as liquid rust, as whale-spew, as house-sap and apple-blood, this girl-juice and boy-sweat, these fluids of envisioning and imagining, boy-juice and girl-sweat, tree-milk and liquid glass, paper-tears and mind-mercury, tiding lee shore to settlement, down-delta to open sea. Grand-by the swell and surge, the firmament spray. Shove off into wavering, fingers and surface-drip, nature loquacious and God mute, the fatal hasp, the prayerful yonder, the horizon as the consummation of two infatuations. I can't whistle myself to sleep. There's no middle of the ocean. I've not dreamt of her in a hundred and a half seasons. Trees are helpless to come to one another's aid in some ax or saw massacre. We touched elbows, once, inadvertently, and I know she hasn't thought of it ever since, as I have. There's but one sea and no middle point on the surface of a sphere. Gloss-of the curious pry, the peerage and frayings. Shred my sails with an amorous wind, that lust-howl determinant, nature's voice in imitation of its making, the critical sway, the yestering strain, this afterlife of gradual assessment. I can't sudden myself from my scapa flow. Next time I'll be the one in my socks on the pavement under the stranger's picnic cloth. Father won't need to come as girl or son to remove a ring I've never worn. Mother tended to me and knew me not. I sure and sure didn't and don't deserve life's luminous love, yet I've stood in its shine. My gratitude won't be well-worded into these self-valorizing waters, but my bewilderment will burn to river's edge, coloring my skies angry, chasing my beasts far underground. I asked her straight and she answered me straight. All-terrain metaphors scar my countryside, scratch my sky, muddy my waters. When I'm someday seduced or cornered or browbeaten into saying what I mean and meaning what I say, I'll do so without language, without nuance, without conviction or trust or joy. My mind is a jumble, admit it, as is yours, a constant swirl of collage, fixed and unglued, and reality abides in our confusions, our juxtapositions and attachments, our splatter and weave, our construction and decay, this cursed and blessed haze, our dust ideas and our mote memories, our settle and stir, updraft and stillness, wanhope and smatterings, our sequences of chance, our histories and anecdotal sciences, fractured syntax and entertaining lies, our trajectories and falls, prattles and dotings, ebbs and roils, these art things, these wringings, these whisks and endurances, this cutting pendulum, this mortal wound. I can't suspect and investigate and apprehend and accuse and try and condemn and incarcerate and execute or banish or pardon or spring myself one murky night as if life were a one-and-other game of self. Does recognition ever mollify ambition? I won't story being and I won't unstory God. Could gideon distribution possibly satiate or quench, and would global ingestion and response—even without coercion or inquisition—unwoozy any dimming star? I won't be seen until I can't be seen. Father said he saw a ghost in those latter days, twice, tucking him into bed before night-swoon. The girl haunts me not. Were I to acknowledge littoral lilt as my finest proof of effort and worth and fortune, would you be able to infer my living sense? I neither believe nor disbelieve in ghosts, my noncommittal unknowing. What transitional power guides our thought-traversings, our subconscious ventures? Horizons, like oxygens. What meaning could there be in saying 'I'm done wondering' or 'I'm done-in by wondering'? You one and only, you whoever. Grace-to the lift and shore, the sexual water. Shift attention surf to silt, stroll to plunge, that natural homing, that reflexive tug, my freckled lake-girl of long-abide and our outcropping. I'll evaporate before I'll ever flood. You other-dream, you recipient. I'll lap and erode. There'll be passages and gaps, frontals and leapfrogs, blunders and adjustments, throughout this compounded telling, this confounded telling, this scrotarama, this protoramic hum, my very core, you perfect noise, whisper and shout, his aria beyond her wilt, their mother-may-I advance and recede, my rearranging selves, my

into the shallow might, wade into the deeper possibles, my swim among the bottomless nevers. my perishing There, where unimagined I'm content to self-explore with time, in erasable forgetfulness, or unexplore self in godless depths I'll pursue the unsought self. as flesh, I survived twelve and twenty and thirty-three and forty these testimonials, but I won't outlast immortal, not because my telling is heart but because my language is obliterated. will hush before my innocence Resurrected will surprise even its loves. forgive me Mother, my inattentions, internal and external these indeterminacies, selfish my pursuits, sudden reproaches and incriminations, my too aloof way this private spiritual of mine, this leverage, intricate these fulcrums of emoted lift. forgive and be forgiven— will Father, too, sat another at the wheel, father of another family, another sacrifice of some accidental intent. wasn't She the you. wasn't She anybody's you. wasn't She only begotten. her father's and mother's True perspective, it is whatever and it shows itself, whenever tragedy is simultaneously egalitarian and spartan, come my periphery or comedy or romance or banality, to inform my too blurred stroll or plunge into tomorrow, mental my grid, my cubby-realms, my contrivances. compartmentalized syntax, This fog and phony show, this won't grant me favor-keep, corner-peace, won't castle me toward a last harbor, there's never kingdom come. there's never storied-reefs or love-on-the-rocks, The reader's frigate won't find a bounty-laced strait, won't sink in that promise-cave of gleam and birth, won't shelter in copper-sound, my telling not gold-spun, my consciousness scattershot. before Now, I take my leave and out of curiosity, come back till I attend to my apology, mother-like say I'm worth trees, pat my hand and lover-like think upon my orchard, lie awake and ponder my old-world forest, my stand of ocean pines. consider in other histories Girls married and mated for the sake of femininity, as early as twelve, all of us as children, thank goodness, but not in many places anymore, for the sake of too young, now often even twice-twelve skipping that whole chain-brutal to female independence, my bespectacled girl mess. still petrified of anything not me, I'm still some-boy, was never woman. but she taught Father to uninfantalize me and unobjectify my desires, fair and square. to work hard and self-deprecate, to treat days as if they were lifetimes. retrospectively through texts I'll wander my psychology— Insights into my thought-yard and not my civilization— not my neighborhood, won't be found by weeding, my spare lot ungardened. my weeds not weeds, capital to period, I'm brambled skull to womb-water, with berries tart, lyric-thorned innocence unripe for picking, my prophecy, not portent-poisoned. Compendium experience into every valhallan splendor, chart all theories of surprise and every heavenly yawn, ours to relish and fear, our fated instants these turnings toward new incohesion or integrity, the stop-hearted. get folded back into clay. our galleries of Lives and bodies, not minds, were quarried long ago from the God-cliffs, or Minds by spirits plucked as gifts for souls, from the lowest tide-pools, as self-actualizing markers of time, from the unindividuated depths, as self-amplified takers-of-space. of unlimited interiors, I want subjunctive reality, if spontaneous and suggestive, but I'll take imagination, if fond-bended and elusive, actual wisfulness wed to curiosity, their offspring purgatorial, this waystation to supposed, with its platform for traveling coulds, my cloud-gaze for locomotion musts, all in the accidental future and middle-ground squint, of my wind-where-it-blows, those tracks of my dismantling, my quell-anthology. my half-glue, whether cohesive or self-affixing, Still, it won't satisfy, patchworked or exhaustive, this rough pointilism, this monochromatic fauvism, what isn't mine to have, this suprematist graffiti. this adaptable constructivism, but What I desire— is every fork of every road, is mine to dream of having— to take every river, every tributary into every breath ever breathed.

I'm aware of gulfs between theory and knowledge. If God were to someday meet me, if me there be, let the conversation be neither dubbed nor subtitled—let it not fall to certainty, and it won't be absolute. If I'm never to meet God, if God there never were, let imagination as creation revivify my thoughts and line breaks—let it rumble and blow and roil and strike—let it breathe itself across a landscape of wend and scurl and bend—let it tend to my broken heart, if only for my span, my brief flicker out of darkness into darker darkness. My failure to sing along shouldn't be mended by silence. Suppose in some crop-circling I were to find myself a god, an unstraightened god, a brash minor angel primed to fault me forever, if you must, this crack in time, my split vision, variate to distraction, my wish to lattice contrasting edges and not consign what I say to sideshow coughs, shouldn't condemn my song to trampled hay, straw-tough though it is, placed to absorb the plunge, self-hurled into fascination, dead-weary of bliss, desiring to usher choice and mystery back into the world, quite unwilling to plow the middle field. Suppose I were heroic and not ordinary, saintly and not common, allowed to individually ascend above the mud and dung of our human circus, neither a simpleton's fodder nor a scholar's grist, broken bales of stray shine, grown not to seduce utter prayer, or just not the only prayer, what would be my reward? Suppose I were to speak plain, to say only what must be said, our contemporary standards, the sleek thriving clique, torn by the wish to be wise and the need to be happy, not predisposed to cajole or impress but to nourish, or if not sustain, challenge, or if not seat, burn, the conflagrated carnival outside of town, our old enigmatic love of ornamentation set aside, our desire to accessorize curtailed, my tongue bent to its purpose, not forked to lie or implore my kind family or friends for approval, what would show as my fatal flaw? Suppose at the moment of my leaving I were to regret my foolhardy patterns of living, revel and destroy and repose, recover to ruin, our uncomfortable anglings from fall to flood to rapture to praising Surprises haunt battlefields and playgrounds, parlors and attics, vales and shorelines alike, our beds trundled into our crypts, our wills to revolt, my fellow smiths enjoying inconsequential revolutions around the poem, my words as sweat-kilned bricks or local quarried sleepwalks into white tornados, my stumblings into rash effort, my lonely experiments of self-aggression, my naive wrestlings with God. Suppose creation weren't to praise creating—our active love, our imitation of good, our homage to everything, our rare bequeathals folded into our christenings, conception-shock to shroud-relief, now that we see things as they are, now that our very truths are hewn granite, what would constitute my benediction? What if I were to word God out of my beginning and far from my mortality, goading myself as injured opponent, wishing I had fought with pure confidence in either fake reality or realistic fakery, my surprise insurance long-lasting and afforded, penetrating and wide, unconditional and singular, all in the mode of maker or making, all gifts delivered into our delicate codes, our pretty shifts, our permanent evolutions. This full funnel into self, this midday reckoning, won't soon pour myself into animal awareness, consciousness a nifty trick developed over eons of accidents or inevitabilities, our sense of ourselves bought with time, my victory as the understudy for my loss, what would be my plea? Suppose in some revelational by-and-by I give to grandchildren of posterity, every new gene honed into functionality and pragmatic beauty, infusing quality and satisfaction and understanding into my telling, into my told. This diasporic gash won't hamper exchange, won't prevent conductivity or tranquil flow. as self-organizing and elegant, awkward and self-developed, my godlessness a condition of thought and not mind or spirit or soul. myself sacrificial choice or favored status, what would I do if I were to reject my offer, if I were to refuse my place, my love, my grace? substance into my song—what will become of us if our own imaginations aren't upheld?

Orchid mouths Unmoisten Sea-self to land-self, I shed My father-choke Air-self to rooted self, Shift Cliffside, bluffed and blown  
bloodspeed and heartswift I'm whim from skin timeward, unsalted tears for my girl-splay, won't confound me. Weathered  
as arid fear and regressively content, instances of Act-self to idea-self, sanction my collapse into thoughtfulness, I stood angled  
as if withstanding suicide. my abiding mummified chance. played into the moonlight shade of our farewell as if motion breeds  
introspection, I surfside motels. I'll defy memory's God. My mortal caring won't mitigate abandonment, This sense of universal  
drift. won't move my diary-nights spent upon whatever convention structures shrouded shock, this conceived relief, My skills  
mend my finite gash. shelter divinity. indoors and outdoors. rescind immediate community. I'll soon harbor boardwalk tasks  
along shores, along promontories. not the angel-plunge, transcend sin. myself as recumbent soul. moth-balled. Orchard moths  
companion me. At dusk—or within the dusk of one's dreams—the one ocean knows dawn elsewhere but not time's God, not any tiding  
mind. Don't Ask Why we adapt, why I persist in my bob-and-weave, Crawlspace to below-the-pier, Astonished by sequence,  
my brain objects. crossing the stream on stones, I cower into choice. we've evolved Beyond telling about my Childhood  
from simpler contention, Most lurking is fold-private, one ambition and I'll dodge or deflect, those Stories that can be written  
by one who is unknown to us. fearful of all futures. duration wasn't lived. is language-proof. Bungalow solitude won't rift my  
thought-planes. rises to the evening star, but won't be told, won't submit to My inconsequential body until I reach the far bank.  
Speak to self of self, What unravels won't withstand scrutiny. let's lullaby narcoleptics and prod All who Sing of self to self,  
succumb to imaginative loss. as if it were a beloved cloak. As somnambulists. we shrug off aura-melodies, marrow-words,  
lauds and admonishments, songs of autonomy and codependence, as too mystical, we propaganda romantics, as the day wanes,  
They'll have my sympathy tonight. we prepare dirges for bones. elegies for concepts. bury ourselves in plots, Here is where I  
innervate Whatever we exhibit in allegories and tombs. always Rousing ourselves for star-show, for Rainbow-violence didn't ruin  
light from distant heat, doesn't still the clan, those that hang from the same branch of consciousness, here among the spiders and  
barnacles, knowing favored lumps of shepherd-clay make me melancholy, or rabble my remembrance. I'll tread beyond the surf  
and origin-blood. in water too cold to cherish me. my mind won't be easy. Love still doesn't make me muse, it'll be time-snuffed.  
Free-will seeks itself. makes me twice-alone. If change is real, freedom is real. I'll sit knitting elsewheres into The very world  
I value that knows nothing of this composition of under-life. I recall What I've always felt to be genuine at the edge of any abyss  
which is what I take to be freely imagined. Contentment is the world I then forget. if the view is Fabricated by destiny's tricks.  
I find Boredom spectacular. I can't circumscribe. my perspective, and satisfaction and joy aren't friendly cousins. Curl-sleep  
elevates fantasy in solitude and I stay dustless in my box. We molder when out of the wind. Lunar months never concerned her.  
Orbital thoughts degrade attention But our peripheral quietude can't authenticate itself. Our enemies pervade our lowlands,  
Providing for us what can't be found in moment-to-moment momentum while our comrades hide in the enlightened mind. are  
in the phrenetic. Cruel humor I find twists our center support. Know our living. isn't this planet's responsibility. See the beasts  
in our mountain vales. Revel in company and cheer the limits of habits. Faith resides outside These dull ramifications of  
irony. Kind critique induces in me what can't be found in induction. in God or the divine days of self-absorption. Joining us  
in the pristine. Imagination never eliminates dread. thrives within the deepest mysteries, the strangest ease-writes and rut-reads

will end as contradictions. I could not compromise. I could not comprehend Competence arrives at the station of mediocrity. Plan uncertainty. Father said everything must. Revolve around my mother's nonchalance. My ordinary semen stains genius. I went life-making—a son for every contingency, Grieve for the only sun or the better sun. Care little to nothing about anything. hold pity only for the poor of imagination, those of indeterminate consequence, but don't weep over anomalies. My spleen aches for the unsurprised. of horizon-might. who have never grieved. for theirs is our naught-kingdom. whenever We participate in The melancholia of all On too-clear days, someone entertains loneliness outdoors. Let's annul our own Conceptions—those of dystopic or utopian worlds— we consider By-products of betrayals. Nowadays, in our commons, our union with art isn't worth going overboard, our forgotten stars, we null the void with any emptied room. our affinities cling to empiricism. We too easily think too atmospherically of ourselves. I went awalk in the sunshine of incidentals. Unsung bodies never know the form of love. This is my faux-country, Rich with obsessions, hers to be found. If she were the surviving sister, would I Grasp when to quit. My father's rutted roads of metaphor, I choke on my opportunity to parole my fears, or not mine, what it means to know her littered history, accept my wealth. Let's refuse to die in suburban closets. time has come to speak with confidence about today? I won't mock the rises and falls of cessation. I pray to be allowed to sing the unexpected. I'll get caught With my defenses tiptoeing around scattered fate, fashioning me a lullaby or one last look. way down, I'll strive to assume the shaman's skills. I'll succumb to my memorial hymn. I'll fall into my stride fresh with windfall. structure's intent. our humility. of meaning. a ramble, this God-smitten prosing of remark and wander, my God-bruised fondness for infinite transitions, those between dapple-stark and shade-blight, between falling and fell and fallen, between self and selves and selved, between twelve and thirteen, her sure-drift from warmth, his final words of descent, my portending drawl and storm-plea, our crowd-huddling, that sky-crack wish to unfocus my heart. Ocean-comedy can't resolve or reverse or renew time. This soul won't reveal time. These are still the Surprises in our lives That can't escape Or subsume end times. I'd like to hang around long enough to see what Only timelessness Does with judgment. maybe I fawn over an illusion. Nothing ends time. fawns be *the* surprise which bucks convention into land-sorrow. I understand fear more than I'll ever understand absence. The muddy experimentation of our lives, can end time. We eulogize that definitional singularity. shed those without. collaged language. God's spoken body will shrug off its smells of stallion-play. power. Light arrives with triangular zeal, the dreams of the congenitally blind lack visual imagery, not virtual imagery, space is known as duration, duration as *seen*, verb-to-see as vision-quest, and I saw the light as linguistic necessity and metaphorical joy, my sounded spirit. Here, hold my hand, I'll Become more than I thought I could phantom Into the trees— More than advocacy, I want what is necessary and different than white-space expectations. now that there's regress I'll bestir myself internally as if I were mortal, my will fresh snow—I'll go beyond as if I were to be disimagined to my twelfth summer, robust, what is Clearly insisted upon. I have issues around new memory. I'm mother-proofed. oblivious toward cloud-gaps. Let's go night- sleighing. from existential reality. Let's beg to be allowed to Gather night into the sea. People are all too happy to share linear aggression. That boy wasn't ready to mourn any loss, As perpetual fawn, she'll never spread those spindles under my father's blankets. mine to coddle. Thus I'll burn her warmth much less the house, to stoke the hearth. This isn't cultural suicide or our strangled planet before either is confirmed. my boy-lust into my love. past her stag-dreams. into day-dark. my father still telling me about another. eternal loss.

God as man, my very bed, what isn't or wasn't or won't be, narrower than plank, wider than pick, God and man untwined, taut from unspent tensions, things as they are and not as they appear, Man as god, the lust for fury given way to breadth and span, breath and spin, this caution-crest, that furious sex, lip-spill gone to bliss. Tell me of ruined cities, of civilized plight, of hero-fall, the fate of one word or the transitive will of one's own word. Here my hand is held, spiritfule and phantom-wrest, twisted-sleep from other-kind, complicit as anthology. Here is where I grant sensation, petal-flair to stick-wash, my wish to be the lyric ridge, the undone flowerbox. I arrange pods, not peas, limbs, not leaves, my gathered thoughts drama-free, gracious-bound to fortunes-fell, lost twice-over, skin-taste past freckle-count, all in the kitchen cozy, as if language were energy and force were name. My couplings, those fledgling autonomies, groan at their joints, girl as open-day sound, father as drowned song, her hand cupped over my mouth, his voice under my seas. When mother approaches, never arriving, her footfalls distancing the corridor, my covers weighted snowscape to escarpment, treescape and rugdust, I make the ceiling mine. God as child, susceptible to forgotten, children of God, vulnerable to beheld, what is interventional and what is observational, the correlative living glare. Time's grist or paradise's bane, my cunning-tree, God as god and man as Man, my double-disaster cakes, as if matter and memory divest meaning of self. Tell me of temperature change, of animal rage, of saint-choice, the trick of the turn or the flip of our yield. When mother recedes, never disappearing, her footfalls divulge the causative world, as if substance and identity divert meaning to self. I lie in bed as imagined boy of eleven, my God as imagery, and I won't be taken at twelve, nor nineteen, not at thirty nor forty-seven, my good life of genetic health and found love, our creative intelligence stunned with ease. Here is where her fingers felt and here is where his singing staged. Here is what I allow as dream, apple-hope to hip-lift, my want to be the pyrrhic edge, the winning blade. God as myth, that simple default, the empirical as godly, or if not holy, only, what we see as all we get, or if not visible, apprehensible, the rites of probability, the rituals of proof, the cooler side of my pillow, testable and corroborated. My words constantly list toward wordless harbors. This overt skew will someday freshen the overly stood. I've failed to know everything and I've failed to know nothing, as does everyone in these lifetimes, our ordinary somethings indistinguishable, polymath to comatose, savior to waker to warrior to fool, our knowledge archival as grafted, ever ripening, perpetually unripe. I think, as he thought—he who wasn't my father, long without his own father, father and son surprised earlier than I can now be, he who would be a father himself, eyes asquint, half-drunk on darkness, oceanic and cavernous—that in the white light a keener whiteness sparkles. Still, I wouldn't slip away at the height of my influence, love-broke and private-slept in a locked room or drowned in a gay midday gulf. I feel, as he felt—he who wasn't my brother, he who had no brother, chosen or of blood, his heroes my heroes, his appetites, banal and fatal, not my appetites, not beyond imagination—that the tune of night won't be switched off nor seasons discarded. Lonely isn't lonely without effort. Comfort isn't comfort without release. Soon, as I incline toward my cessation—as ever since childhood I've been peeking round the bend—satisfied and unsatisfied, suspect of my satisfaction, object of my discontent, autumn in my hinges and russet on my hill, coat pockets rock-free, spring beyond ken, I'll cross the estuary as the oldest snowflakes land, my mind undwelling itself of structure and obsession, seeking watery grace, some natural flow from the mind of God or the beginning of time, something to take with me to my isolated bungalow at the edge of the world, not for quilt-company but for stranger-self, not as difficulty but as discovery, before winter closes without a floral exit, as I join the forgotten or the never known, the unbloomed or the unsown, my promontory chair or my crawlspace clothes mine to unoccupy, tide pools to aquifer, sun-loved or shadow-sexed, this one-way threshold out of

self-coherence. Rise and unrise, cloud and tempest and clear and weep, in and out of dank and shown, salt in my heart and snow on my seas, whiter than breasted blame, gone before going, father in my throat and mother in my lungs, girl-God in my loins with thought-dowry in her eyes, frontier-kiss out misting the poke while shipwrecks in the science-heights bring scribblers to our shores, all for restitutorial glee, harmony in our engines right-hot with sheer, this steep vortice of voice, my individual pose bless-sounded for love, scree for ankles and scrim for gaze, landslides in our vales. Stand before God in the agony of unrecognition. Stood there asweat. Then I'll then if not now or here or soon, these politics of said, these rendings of spoke. I traveled most every summer in the back of our family car across half of this country and home again, not once being killed. I've rendered song into father-chaff. I've out-sat mother in the near dark. Now here soon I'll pray for next and then I'll rent the never. Alone with one or none or everybody, I could yet be gone before I make half a century, old-forested in a crown-blaze, ungrassed with a shovel-thrust. Regermination out-flanks me, the willing wait done, ancestral influence to heir's confidence, a life's summation underscored by two, this world perpetuating without my say, without my sleeved heart or my remembrance, all past in a wink, all frail in my form. Leave me to my wist and long, dreams spent on individuality, days spent in relief. Rise, as if risen, as if a rose were romantic as the moon, as if either could outshine the sun, as if the real doesn't envy the imagined and the imagined doesn't idolize the real, our mortalities as antidotes for endless poisons, our lives as anecdotes of denial. Arise and be tallied before winter's dominion. Claim sovereignty of self. Watch the sun go down and pretend the sun goes down. Tell me all about the nothing else like me. Tell me what I've done to merit eternal life or why I don't deserve life everlasting. Show me the meaning of meaningless. Watch the sun fall behind a hill and pretend hills can be eroded at will. Then imagine dissolving horizons. Or envision the sun as aware. Forgive me everything, all of the time. Girls aren't fathers and mothers aren't boys, not as a rule, not in this telling, and life won't diminish, not in my experience, won't distill into anything less than itself, won't inflate to all-importance, not in my understanding, not in my making. There will come a day—a day when I'll be as far from language as I was before conception—that these words will have to speak for me, not to me and possibly to no one else, not as validation or justification, not as consolation or approbation, yet on my behalf nonetheless, language as legacy, or if not of import, residual, the temporary stain of an indelible life, or if not permanent, as worthwhile as any, as considered as most. Tell me I'm unregretted, or if not remembered, unforgotten, or if not famously valued, if not infamously ignored, modestly seen. Tell me of the tiniest ripples in the cosmic pond, or if not of these, of holiday time in some old world neighborhood, or if not of this, of every beauty at its peak, every evil in its lair, every selfless maneuver, every selfish gesture, every blur of every sped heart, every clutching at straws, every taffying of the truth and every false hope and locked cabinet, every loathsome act and brutal flail, every cherished locket, or if not of these, if not of heroes or saviors or lovers or selves, if not of bodies or God or facts, then of potent rituals, survival mechanisms, idle past-times, or if not of these, if not of the day-to-day or once-in-a-generation or sui generis, speak to me of tender nothings, of crem-stad and flor-miln, brev-loff and nure-deye, of anything intrinsically unknowable, beyond the recondite or cabalistic, outside the neural pathways of the mystical self or the aura of the reason, what can't be mapped and won't be standardized, what shouldn't be culled into dim corners of artistry, my ivory flaw, my tragic bounds, now that I work toward silence, or if failing purity, a philanthropic quiet, one last go at sublime static, one last stab at a moveable buffet, culled from a life's imagination, a fractured faith, a fly's eye trust in assemblage, a wealth of potential spilled from cracked chronologies, my compound mask scratched on my father's crib, my son's

In these blood-disseminative kaleidoscopings, These fallopian sharp wanderings, I'm drawn toward the peripheral grayed edge. Don't go crying over some hushed-girl's shattered glasses. Our glints and not the bull's-eye, these diminutive trails of thought, all that isn't the target and yet still shines. motile versions of abstract loss, mobile inclinations that We retire between self-sheets, restless within their natural fragmentations and The texts I most value resemble travelogues, Solo quests, not if the imagination is undamaged, that explore under our skin. those that range the intricate feminine landscapes, These distributions, of mine Cross familiar terrain, territories of the mind, not if tearful confessions haven't been written. won't lead to Whatever we see won't be that bridge when the subjunctive heals. a new being. won't sog creation's flint. we do So seldom discover secret time. This is what it's come to, the city of God. when left alone isn't God-watched. my Structures aren't cartographically of use, not fantasies of heaven-bound. My taste succumbs to over-sense and to a culture that has heard The devil's interval, but for now, this splitting of that mystery-space isn't protecting her into womanhood As I cede it all, not to a generation that's outer-nonsense, I sequence paths between this inductive been everywhere and one horse of my faith. Structures long to resemble her father's, done everything. may attempt my sounding and another, but he failed first, or God fails last, shows us to time, rest in ruin. and she won't mother. sorrows me good. I press association. what won't come. some far day to unify sensibility and sensation. or soon range-land, or I might open-sea, girl-harvest or father-box, self-stave or mother-etch, this lope under the stars, these citrus doldrums, all as overture to renewable chaos, fair-play reconstitution, in-kind God-renovation, one woman's love adjusting me, then presents me out of my past into my future, now-gifts for what's left of forever, my wilderness under-stairs deep, my ambition attic-sure, the getting from one place to another misunderstood, every palace of the heart and every vapor-plane idea cloud-bent, or I might side-yard or cliff-shop or pray-tell, or I may pantry-plea, but I won't ascend to the lamp-house or descend into the flame-hole, I won't burn with fervor or shame, I couldn't bear chairs of honor or sparks from kings and spit from angels, I shouldn't rely upon rope when thread will do, I needn't out-think my vision, I'll miss but not mourn father, the girl, and the self-spirit, I'll gratitude my offerings into those who are among the lucky, by chance everyone, her son-bright womb, her unbeknownst hallow-allure, my under-the-bed bewilderment, our atop-the-bed splendor, every rose-rotten spring, whoever or whatever deserves my praise, whenever and wherever it flees my lips, vague-evening storm-brew, rage-noon sun-stare, nostalgic compositions of room-tones, his double-testament narrations, his deepest dancing away, the swallowing soil, my memories of feasting at the breast, the rising ocean, the crested wave, my athlete's thirst slaked by innocent water, the angle of fortune in morning haze, the changing colors of a passion-bruise, secure sleep, or the illusion of said security, her hand cradling my soften-stones, forgotten sprinklers spraying under a peculiar milky way, the weariness of his reading-voice at night, the vanishing ether, her flavor at the advent of the coda, the suffocating zeitgeist, the strangulating ethos, her cold feet in clean socks, my life-long fears of falling just short, the striations at the corners of her stiff mouth in smile-avoidance, severe mercy, or the allusion of said severity, the rooflines of my winterless suburbs, dying rivers or dying suns, the flarings of my nostrils as a shield from self-laughter, her sensational knothole insights, the sudden billow of summer's curtain, the tamped-down years of falling short, smoke from heartfires in bespoke eyes, my memories of ease-besting the beast, the flaw in the auctioned god, the gradual sweep of autumn's lot, my mother's sustenance, my father's substance, the girl's accident-fate, droplets of her sweat on the playground slide, the fantastic scope of any life, of any death, my final sonwise words, what a pleasant