

TELEPHONE

web edition

poems by Sean Tierney

*78 selected from
the original 86 poems
published by*

RA PRESS
100 Kennedy Drive #53
South Burlington, VT 05403
www.rapressrafilms.com

Copyright 2017
Sean Tierney
All rights reserved

Us + Swamp Hickory Forever

living so carefully
in the mist of early mornings
we try hard not to
involve ourselves
with the machine
and instead
remain nestled
in the pores
of the swamp hickory

It Ended With A Bee

I'll reconnect with you
in memory
like a switchboard
operator

*the bee takes
the flower
to the hive
in a hundred
tiny trips*

p.s.

the smell of oranges
in a truck bed-
Okeechobee

Living Wrong

settling for doom
hoping the doorbell
doesn't ring

*knowing well
one day
I'll answer it
and break*

doom
doorn
door n
door n

Whispers

the scrub jay
voice of the
myrtle oak

*more song
than flesh*

tracing time
in bony blue
whispers

Made In Vain

the mistake
of trusting
you'll understand

*handing you
a newsprint
from Japan*

My Favorite Word

telephone

a word I will never misuse

all my favorite poems
call me on the

telepone

dammit!

Termites

imagine me
a knotted log cut
3 foot long

imagine you
a tiny cardboard box
for holding toothpicks

*on quiet days
I am bench to butterfly
and are you really worth more
than butterfly?*

Bible Study

pick a word

manna

make sense
of it

manna / sense

namna / nesse

namnanesse

nnaesmenae

næsmenæ

Heracleion; Another Telephone Poem

like a quickly sinking
telephone
(through schools
of painted eye
mermaids
in gold lace)
ringing
all the way
to Heracleion

Florida

a bird fell into the ocean
just as a fish fell into the sky

Instability Arrives

instability arrives
like an ice cube
on a bowling ball
at 11 o clock
when your friends
are watching

they hold out their glasses
to catch the cube
and maybe rattle it
if they're feeling bored

Cowboy Curtis

I made up my mind
and lived there
with all the made up
things

The Elusive Ghost Brain

it walks through walls
and showers and beds
and right through
conversations
like they were mist
on a hillside

in the park-
a tree of birds in song
"there is no more future
the future is no more"

it walks through them too
and you
as well as
itself

Object

tall white tube of paint
and all the things a
tall white tube of paint
can do

you
return to
the void to
return to
the garden

I Live With The Evil

no use
in spilt milk
bottle
*never knowing the
long beauty of a
tapestry rug*

there are
fibers in
the glass
sowing two
sharp days
to three

**The Storms Here Pass
Like Three Wheeled
Shopping Carts**

a crass little lady
in isle 9
taps olive cans
like they were rooftops

Monarch 1110 Labeler

your love
is like
a soft
monarch
~~butterfly~~
price gun

confirming value
I can't confirm
alone

Napkin

a playful word
wants to be written

it jumps
up down
like a
caffeinated
cricket
until you
agree

napkin

Once Every 15 Days

happy as a dog
when the cogs
of the lock
line up
for the key

*aligned like
seven lonely stars
at a crosswalk*

Can't Relate

I've seen the days
on your skin
like boiling water
and I've tried, lord
like a hard boiled egg
to understand them

Bicycle

I know nothing at all
is a bicycle

ride it down every street
take every turn

The Hermit Stops To Wonder

I run towards you
like two heavy shoes
and nobody wearing them

*or dandelion seeds
on a sidewalk*

I run towards you
and I don't even really
like you that much

“Down So Long It Looks Like Up”

if you've lived your life
like a problematic pyramid

*or a long wet coat
on a warm summer day*

just know that I too
have chewed the gum
off a young lady's heel

The Urgent Marks Of A Disappearing Man

though not permanent
certainly not
marks take an awful lot
longer to disappear

*"here from here to here
and now I'm not"*

- a disappearing man

Nightcrawler

rainy days have always
brought me to the surface

*I suppose I
move through the world
like a worm
lodged in the tire tread
of a child's bicycle*

Ivar The Boneless

seven seconds of your passive aggression
and I snap like pencil lead

Doubly Strange For The Sweet

I've concluded
that sweetest
are the losers

left lost to find it
in a mine with leaning beams

resurface 20 later
with a diamond only we can see

The Same As Ever

I'm alive, sliding along
by knee skin
and tips of fingers
with butter on them

One Bird

porcelain doors swing
they never stay closed

which's why the bugs come in
milk spilling
and the birds, alone, sing
for each other-
another, in a different tree

Good Morning Is Beautiful

good morning is beautiful-
sky colors and the natural music
of bark humping cicadas

First There Was Nothing

a light appeared
in the sky
and spread
until there were corners
and birds entered the light
and water formed

*I told her
I was sorry*

but there was no her

and I had done nothing

Head Over Heels

the curve of her back-
a 140 degree angle
turned to 20
in an instant
of pure romance

I picked her up at eight
and dropped her off
the bridge

No Two People

no two people
overlap completely

that's a long lesson learned

even the closest teeter
on the edges of each other

always falling
back into
themselves

The Camera Obscura

hanging-
like a photograph
of all the ideal lovers
since the invention of
the camera obscura
-from your blouse
by the stained tips
of my fingers

you watch me from the mattress
and wonder
why I don't simply stand

No Habla

no matter what old shit
I write here
there is this one
final message
I can never translate

and it keeps me going
keeps me alive
and miserable
to uncover its meaning

one final thing
to say
written in a language
7 galaxies away

Living Crisis

when I was twelve
I asked myself two questions
that would become an obsession
to this day - (27 yrs old)

“how does my body move
when I want it to?

and for Christ’s sake

how does it stay still?”

Daniel

*can't tell the funeral cross
from the wedding*

dad remarried
mom buried
Sandy on the street
gave me everything
when I was fifteen

Some Things Last A Short Time

it was one of those
clear cog evenings
drawing breath
from heaven
holding everything
like a basket
in my arms

knowing well
it'd be gone
in the morning
like steam
from a cup

Fog Around My Boat

my dreams tell
a much older story

older than corn cans
yellow lights
and organic aisles

*just last night
I held a glass cube
filled with hornets*

Ruminations

making crosses out of belly lint
leaving cold commandments
on the table like a shaker
shaking

Invisible Ink

there's a loneliness written
pretty it may be
in the blue between tree limbs

Summer Red

on those hot little days when-
he knows he's wrong
and brings the mallet down
heavy on her skull
for daring to
point it out
-the leaves turn summer red

Spine Like A Question Mark

bent inward
as if the world
were accelerating
crumbling like a
sandstone
tree house

she looks at me
with a sideways curiosity
like "I've never met
a man as
strangely fragile
as you."

Uncooperative

don't take the time
let it slip
on the rocks
in the sea
let it go easy
gentle into
the night

bloom, wither
in a day

what else is there?
rage?

Stadium

to fill the empty seat
by you
you
enter a
world that was
made exactly without
you

Accurate Nonsense

birds squabble
wonderfully
like those words
you know
but can't spell
and
like life itself
it's often the most
accurate nonsense

The Farm

the harvest this year
has been like

- mirror
- rain
- skin

etcetera etcetera

*if only they weren't so
perfect
I'd switch to
words like saltpeter
for originality's sake*

the saltpeter
danced
on her
skin
as she stared
in the
toilet

Miami

Miami is like
417,650 eyes
staring right at
my mustard stain

how did I get it?
is it one of those
genetic mustard stains?

Remember When

all it took
was a colorful scene
like dewgrass dripping-or
tickling the ears of earth-while
listening, cold eyed,
to the whisper of wind
but at some point you
needed more

Was Eternal Once And Will Be

*the fence is wet
the grass is wet
the anole is dry
beneath the
traveler's palm*

born I die
just the way
I was

From Here

she's beautiful
(physically)

I don't know her
non-physically

Fear Like The Endless Buzz Of A Noiseless Forest

a furnace stoked
all summer long
then
out of fuel
when the snow
falls

that's the way
a funny mind
expires

I'm too tired
to say
any more

It's Absurd

merely
two loose stones
between you and
you falling
forever

For The Mug

the coffee filled him
with quiet elation

in turn
he filled the mug
with more than
coffee

The Green Things

every clear and
perfect moment
has occurred
not raging
or constructing
just sitting
with the green things

they breathe on me
and I breathe on them
and I'm never worried
if I did it right

The Red Things

this long rain
has been on for
three days now
*feeding the arteries
of city and town*

one day we'll give it all back
from blue to red
like we're raining on the clouds

The Gospel Of Sod

me and the
leaves
drop to
our knees
and proceed
surrounded by
the many pages
of lawn
to read
what so
few bother
to read

**The Vast Waters Of Your
Not Thinking Much Of Me**

with seaweed for hair
and twenty eight miles
of uncharted ocean
for body
you have a way of looking at me
like this moment
is just a drop
in the vast waters
of your not thinking much
of me

*I look at you
and drown*

Slosh

you say one thing
I say two

and our views
bob together
like three apples
in a bucket of water

Dead

*getting candy
from the sky*

getting back
to where
I was

The loneliest Monk

*gathering pine cones
in the park of
some day
soon*

"I've seen you here
before

you were stepping
over the trees
like tomorrow's
forecast"

Acting Wise

reality is
what *it made*
of you
make it
to the finish line
half alive
wondering

what happened?

Kentucky Ribbon

*like the fibers
of a well woven
mitt*

we catch
all the flying
horse dreams
and reward them
for participation

*they gave
our lives meaning
but little else*

You Know My Number

you've figured
it out
my single minded
frequency
and
I raise
my arms
in protest
or to best catch
your accurate
call

Switchhook

I call when I know
I'll find the machine

*find it
rusting
in a dream*

reflecting nothing
in its red desert

Train

“you sit there
and stay there
while I go
out the window
to use the
telephone”

hello, ballast?

*you are the beginning
and end of freedom*

*I simply must meet you
face to face*

Creators

*get me
to enact
for you made
me I made
you*

and we both stand there
like faces in the mud

From Behind The Scenes

through blinds of black lines
you see the wizard limping

*a look of embarrassment
on his pale face*

all he has left
is to tell you
about it

Cold Call

there was a time when
dimes and telephones
knew each other as well
as allied nations
once fighting
the same enemy
before becoming
enemies
themselves

In The Service Of Customers

I will not be coming in tomorrow
or any morrow

I'm not feeling well
ever again

1,000,000 B.C.

bird eats seed
then
later lays
tree egg

The Hermit In His Field

I know that truly
my mind is a field
of golden grass
and silver ants
that pinch the blades
like guitar strings

but every now and then
some passerby tosses
a cigarette that
burns it all up

Lawn Memorial

she stood beyond
the cemetery gate
crying
like all the stones
had vandalized
her memory of grass

Light ly

this time
the keys
type my
fingers

t i
gh l

y
l

Bride Of Frankenstein

I needed you
like the roses
on a grave

not the grave
itself

The Timely Red Hearse

a shiny red hearse
arrived this morning
like cold weather
and as fast as it came
the day went

*sometimes I can feel it
when it's not here
and sometimes 28 years
go by*

Cloudy Half Sad

when the sky reflects you-
cloudy half sad
half not entirely sure
what to do

The Aesthetic Of Hosomi In America

it's quite a
feeling to be
so deeply involved
with a bowl
of almonds

*sorry for all
the I and me
and more
Basho
but it is
what it is
right?*

"I American"
-two halves of a melon