

THINGS STILL MOVING

by Sean Tierney

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AIM & ACTUALITY	1
THINGS STILL MOVING	2
RAINED OUT	3
BOULDER CHOKE	4
FRINGE THROW	5
THE PILING FEEL	6
WEATHERMEN	7
LOOKING FORWARD	8
NEPHROLITHIASIS	9
WHAT COMES FIRST	10
PRESERVATION	11
LOLLYGAG	12
WORKPLACE	13
A FLOATER	14
/ TŌ /	15
TWO SHOES BACKWARD ON THE FOOT	16
HORSE'S ASS	17
THE BRAMBLE BERRY	18
ORBITAL ALIGNMENT	19
DOOCOT	20
CONCENTRATE	21
A TLAS T	22
TEAM EATS TEA MEATS	23
IN THE WOOL	24
OF LIFE	25
DIALOGUE	26
PULSE DIALING	27
HALF A EUREKA	28
S O S	29
THE OIL CAN NEVER DIE	30
THE OIL CAN NEVER	31
THE OIL CAN	32

SI(BRIGHT)DE	42
IN HIS IMAGE	43
SNUG	44
HELIUM	45
FIND HOME	47
SEVENTHGRADE	48
STEVEDORE	49
CONTRASTED	50
DEEPDOWN	51
PENNY PRESS	52
PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #271	53
SEPALS	54
DAIRY	55
PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #332	56
FOXTROT	57
OTIOSE	58
ONION	59
A BLOCK OF DENSE MATERIAL	60
ASTROPHYSICS	61
ALL THROUGHOUT	62
NOT THE DEMETER	63
CALENDARS	64
GROCERIES	65
IF YOU WANT TO SEE	66
MUTESCERE	67
MALE PATTERN	68
UNKNOWN WISH	69
ACARPOUS	70
SWING SAW	71
BROWN LEAVES	72
EYE RELIEF	73
FORD TEMPO	74

GROUNDSKEEPING	75
SWEPT	76
PIGHEAD AND THE MULE	77
MOLE CRICKET	78
THIS IS A DOCTOR'S NOTE	79
PLINTH	80
COLLECTED	81
PICNIC	82
CHANCE MEDLEY	83
SKY-HIGH 2	84
PO-UHM	85
A WHOLE LIFE	86
TRANSLATED	87
M YOU E	88
A WALK IN THE PARK	89
UNIDENTIFIED CRITTER	90
JENSEN BEACH	91
FALSE KNOT	92
TWO CATS	93
DELICADO	94
TOUCANS	95
A HEX	96
VODOUISANT	97
SQU	98
FIELD GUIDE	99
OWNER'S MANUAL	100
PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #445	101
UNDER A ROCK	102
ELECTROGRAM	103
HULL LOSS	104
TRAMPING	105
PAIN	106

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY	107
THE SOFT BUT STEALING EAR...	108
SPORE	109
EARTHQUAKED	110
POLLEN	111
FROTHINGS < (0+1)th	112
LAND!	113
THE FOLIATE HEAD	114
JARGON	115
HIT BY A CANNON	116
3 DAYS ON THE LAKE	117
SHAMPOO	118
HYPNIC JERK	119
A SPEAR THROUGH WATER	120
SANDSTORM	121
MULCHED	122
SPRINGING	123
CALLING ALL CURS	124
THERE'S MUCK, THERE'S BRASS	125
GUIDING LIGHT	126
TREES & BIRDS	127
ONE WAY UP SHORT	128
EVERYTHING IS CATCHING ON FIRE	129
FINGERTIPS	130
I HEAR THE WIND BLOW	131
HEY NOW EVERYBODY, NOW	132
WHO IS THAT STANDING OUT THE WINDOW?	133
I'VE FOUND A NEW FRIEND	134
COME ON AND WRECK MY CAR	135
AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO HIT ME IN THE EYE?	136
PLEASE PASS THE MILK, PLEASE	137
LEAVE ME ALONE	138

WHO'S KNOCKING ON THE WALL?	139
ALL ALONE, ALL ALONE	140
WHAT'S THAT BLUE THING DOING HERE?	141
SOMETHING GRABBED AHOLD OF MY HAND	142
I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU	143
I HEARD A SOUND	144
MYSTERIOUS WHISPER	145
THE DAY THAT LOVE CAME TO PLAY	146
I'M HAVING A HEART ATTACK	147
FINGERTIPS II	148
I WALK ALONG DARKENED CORRIDORS	149

AIM & ACTUALITY

Two knives' tales told
in the sunny shine of sink bottom, one
always fighting for a turn to chop
and spread

THINGS STILL MOVING

Her crocodilian mosey
was *breakneck*-ish
to his ceramic duck's
moored-waddle
down a particle's garden
path *from*
and towards
the dock where his
words were thrown in
a ripple
of
glan
 lanc
 ances

RAINED OUT

Early morning on the 4th of July
with a scary ship sailing towards me

Not a British one

One passing through the subject's predicate
and pointed every way so where
it's coming from it goes too if I could fall anywhere
in the world it would have to be
on the moss of a stone near Catbells

The British one

BOULDER CHOKE

Her silent goings-on're the holes
just wide enough for troglobites
that squirm through arm
and torso, not her fault I've
no tools; just finger-raking
in the cave of love

FRINGE THROW

You're sleeping on the couch
and the cats are bothering you
so I shoo them off
so happy to do
so delighted to be
this unlegendary also your toe
is poking through a worn sock under
the cheese colored blanket
so I tickle the toe
but I don't want to
wake you and stop

The cats keep pawing your braids

I shoo them away
so here I don't
care what's out there

THE PILING FEEL

Some days I pray for the piling feel
of rain on my shoulders there
to push me indoors
to the sheets pushing me to the bed
as sleep to the dream's
imaginary floor that you can push right
through, some say, and some
don't know
that

feeling

WEATHERMEN

Pips in the new zone fruit pigheaded under nets of rain
that fall short
of an assigned target like how
most misses
take so long to produce anything of value

t h e n d o

u

l i l a c

i

p a i n t e d d a i s y

LOOKING FORWARD

I was always, once,

arriving, even when life played
yo-yo with the rope bridge, afraid to, I'd arrive,
now I say there's always

tomorrow and tomorrow

has a treasure buried in the sunrise,
where too is headed the osprey letting go some
crumpled thing of great value,

one that lingers

in the looseness of strings bowed
but can barely thrum the window the faces shore
up with dense reflection

NEPHROLITHIASIS

Paeans'll come and go
but a stone'll scuff time's
marble wall

*And it is always
something I ate*

WHAT COMES FIRST

With an osprey claw's worth of lumber
on a floodlight, the female, and this is contrary to
everything, sows the hat
of a very large
and glowing egg

PRESERVATION

A pole at tilted max may pull a
shadow center stage before the plate spins out,
but once broken'll hemostasize the sliding
path *with vinegar and dill* till suddenly so aware
it's jarring

LOLLYGAG

I can't make space here where
time is on the table so I push it off like

this.

WORKPLACE

A heavy foot today
or fawn leap? Or can we top
the latter with a former?
And will it wiggle or is someone
down there
holding you steady?

I find it's better
to go alone into a gully
of tall grass and
cut it out

A FLOATER

After so many days on the wind'll grasp
the ground's true strength's in the dropping
of a height, up there until the rains
chip it flat

as a place to dig in and, rooted, safely
express greenage

/ TŌ /

A rescue's bright searching'll
warm the face /ôr/ burn
by with no regard

or

on occasion

/THen/

tan·gl/ee

your ropes for

dragg

gging

so

you can't so

much as breathe without

singing your rescuer's song

TWO SHOES BACKWARD ON THE FOOT

What on the pages of time
has been written by bats and flies in their lines
and which were warnings and
which hellos and if
the former of what could they be?
To quit spraying that stuff
whose purposes never last like the consequences?
Knock it off but in cursive
so we don't go off the track this time

HORSE'S ASS

Trailing scope's end in a myopic
fog finding
only the glass's painted backside
which to pin your tale and hang
your hat

THE BRAMBLE BERRY

*Grown mainly for throwing at trees to see
the stains of action in real time:* a bitter rubus
will lose itself in sweet red release when too
gone to share with
any but the long-toothed
aspen

Poisonous look-alikes: none

ORBITAL ALIGNMENT

Relax in the struggle where/what holds gravity's
cruel wall to space's crueller stretch and

aberrate at the point of observation, so not just taken
in her hands but turned over and set
spinning any/where you can stick a little flag

DOOCOT

Those pied doves
on the columbarium's highest
niche'll, with gentle efforts, tamp
any old graves
her rebuilding might
exhume

CONCENTRATE

eight shelf-ready and squeezed for
supping not a pulp or rind nor
solitary slip with sturdy base each
sip'll stack and slide through with
watery eases forgot
when
something good ends somethingood
ends somethingoodends

A TLAS T

Flutter down into /aftər's flat/ **n.** *the place without space to ripple or light to define what has just come whooshing in*

TEAM EATS TEA MEATS

If you ever feel the four walls think how
the farmer climbs the ladder rather easy
with a donut and two teas or how
when the trees're trim n' neat he'll always
find the fruit with less once more
from the top

stay above this line

t o r o ! t o r o
a r e y o u h a
v i n g f u n ?
o r o t ! o r o t

IN THE WOOL

Through nothing's long-draw little's upped in
a pull much pleasanter *and may even sproing g*
n ew
c o l o r s

OF LIFE

The oft blown slices (unin-
sculpted and groovelessly slop-
ing) in time grave
all that can make a dream
come true but
won't

DIALOGUE

The only true talk's a bird
in a cloud to peck and splatter
the blue with your thought

1. bubble
2. bub·pop·ble
3. b·p·ub·o·bl·p·e
4. *b ub bl e*

better in bits to the side or
mending an osprey nest

b u
e b
l b

See how
nice?

PULSE DIALING

The rotary days of touch *whir-clack* when
you knew you'd hit the spot
cause there was an
mmm hello

HALF A EUREKA

It'll come to me, just not this
minute, *not now*, that minute is waiting
in the wing with a rainbow

I wonder how it feels ahead of time

Is it quiet there? Is the floor wood and
the curtain black?

Does it bug you when a poem
asks questions and you were looking
for answers?

S O S

A stick and some stones won't do, it
helps to know what'll fly
over your predicament, or like, when
from scratch comes
a long white itch'll scratch

THE OIL CAN NEVER DIE

There isn't a soap for it,
that slippy-on-the-hands gunk,
it will take the light of any day and wave
so now you're looking at the
pavement again

THE OIL CAN NEVER

I have no (new) idea(s) clearly
I am a spot of
oil on your driveway
and
when you go I'll
be here

moving colors around

THE OIL CAN

Oil from down on the street
will reach through my window on hot days
when the sun puts itself out
there like where
the rainwaters drain it tries to follow
but there are places it cannot go
that the oil can

Another odd poem that will mean nothing to no one ever. And I actually wrote it down. On paper. In the stifling still air of my apartment. Seven floors up by a screenless window with chipping white paint and swollen jambs. Across from me is another building like mine with a woman by her swollen window like me. I'm sure she can see me because I can see her. And in the way her tiny far away frame hunches I'm also sure, though I have no reason to be, that she has at some point known the same feeling I know in my stomach on a day like this. When life feels close enough to nod. And far enough away not to really say anything.

Tonight the window will shudder in a gust that carries more of the oil with it and none of the sun that is going away. Because light cannot go through things that are thick. Like the planet. Or a wall. It's why the sewers are dark and certain thoughts swim like eels in a jar. All these days behind walls have stolen something from me. Too many important veins have crinkled shut forever.

I think this only now, as the knob to my front door has broken off and I'm stuck waiting for the superintendent to free me. It's been nearly an hour.

There is nowhere I need to be, but that I am stuck makes me itch. Like someone has tied the sleeves of my sweater. I want to rip and tear. I want to jump through my window and fly to the other building and the woman hunching there. But alas. I have regular arms that don't flap and a heavy brass knob on my kitchen counter. One without even the courtesy to ask about my day.

“How was your day?” read the sign in the window of the building across from his.

It was taped in place. In large letters easy enough to read if Ryan squinted. He had been daydreaming and when he snapped out of it the woman was gone and the sign was there. It took up the entire bottom pane of glass so only the top remained free through which he saw part of a refrigerator. A freezer door with magnets in colorful patterns. A panel in the comic book of her. A spot she'll look less intensely at in all her years there than he is now. Wishing he could fly there. Open the freezer door and steal a popsicle.

Ryan could hear the voice in his head. Her voice. Familiar and completely foreign. Asking about his day. About the bowl he dropped on the floor and spent nearly ten minutes cleaning. And the feeling in his stomach like a turd wanting to exit him from any place but the back. Currently the rib below his heart.

He rifled through drawers until he found a marker. Taped two sheets from his drawing pad together and wrote his reply. “Not bad. Yours?” Then he framed it in his window's lower panel with blue painter's tape.

I am the definition of insanity. I do the same things that don't work. I catalog it all in poems. For who? I used to sneeze always twice in a row. Now it's three times. Like something is trying to push my head in a certain direction. I like to think that if no one reads

the poems now they still exist in a further dimension. You can visit them after death. Never truly forgotten because they can always be found. While flipping through old days like pages in a book. It wouldn't matter if the world is blown apart by a comet. The pages have been written and so they'll always be. When I go to bed at night I feel the sun on my neck even though it has set.

Two hours and no superintendent. Ryan was reading a paperback copy of Legion on his toilet with a big blue Florida sky in the window to his left. The tip of the building where the woman lived was like the hat of a Peeping Tom. He thought about writing that down and didn't. A fluffy white cloud went over the building's hat east. It was shaped like a cigar. *Like a turd.*

With his business done, he stood at the small bathroom window where, from this position, the building was much more than a hat. It was a bonafide complex with dozens of windows for dozens, maybe hundreds, of occupants. But there was only one he was interested in. Her sign had not changed. The same simple question. *How is my day?* He thought he might re-write the answer when something caught his eye. Three stories down to a different window with a different sign. In the lower panel again. But this one was harder to read.

Ryan went to the kitchen and pulled open the drawer for miscellaneous things. By the rubber bands and batteries was a small binocular set with a thin leather strap spooled around the middle. He brought it with him to the mainroom window, where he had taped his reply, and set his sights on the building. The writing was thin but clear enough.

“It's good now, thank you.”

He lowered the binoculars with a chuckle. Unwound the leather strap and hung the set from around his neck. He peeled the painters tape, crumpled his note and threw it in the kitchen trash. Then he pulled two new sheets from the pad and wrote.

“My doorknob broke. I’m stuck in here,” with a frowny face at the bottom.

A small strip of the painter’s tape. Just enough to hold it there, but not long term. With the binoculars back up, he saw that both signs were gone. And a third had appeared. This time one story up from him and the woman.

“Try the window,” it said.

Ryan chuckled again but this time with more confusion than amusement.

Are there many people watching me? Reading my signs? Are they communicating with each other? That’s possible, I suppose. Or maybe it’s one person with access to three rooms. Like a superintendent. Jesus, how long has it been? Almost three hours. Where is this guy?

At the front door, he tried pushing a screwdriver through the borehole where the knob had been. He thought if he could force the other knob off then he could remove the latch and free himself. It didn’t work. The knob wouldn’t budge, and with the knob on, the latch also wouldn’t budge. He twisted the screwdriver every which way to see if he could get it to turn, but nothing worked. It was like chiseling marble with a number two pencil. Through the peephole was an empty hallway and the neighbor’s front door. No super. No anybody.

This fucking guy.

Back at the window. Binoculars up. He gagged a little when he saw now three new signs in the windows of three separate floors. He read them from the top down.

“The sun has put itself out.” read the first.

And they were right. The sun had finally set. The building and the city were now lit by street lamps and flood lights.

“There are places it cannot go.”

“That the oil can.” was the last.

Growing dizzy now, he let the binoculars fall and swing like from the gallows around his neck.

I'm tired. In fact, I'm sleeping. I. Am. Asleep. I am on the couch with Legion on my chest. My chest that's rising and falling as I snore. I was reading it and I fell asleep. Like I always do... Only I'm standing. The couch is behind me. I'm standing and waiting for the superintendent to come do his damn job. What am I paying all this money for? Why do I always put up with this shit? What shit? What shit do I always put up with? THE shit. Or am I the building's shit?

The dizziness faded. Ryan was standing with the couch behind him. He took a deep breath and turned and saw that only the one sign was there. The one telling him to try the window.

Maybe I should. Step out onto seven stories of warm breeze. Fall like the building's turd.

“Can't fly. Come save me,” was Ryan's reply via drawing pad paper.

He had relaxed some. The dizzy spell was over. *It was a weird thing that happened, but that's all it was. A weird meshing of thoughts. The poem I had spent too long staring at so that the letters burned in my brain. A sunspot on the retinas. A person, or maybe multiple people, are writing to me from across the*

street. No big deal. Ryan trained his binoculars on the one remaining sign. He wanted to see them change it. To catch them in the act of their reply. Then he sort of did.

Small fingers came and peeled the sheet from its frame in the window. A child of about seven, Ryan guessed. A blonde mop of hair, slightly lighter than his own receding locks, bobbed on the shoulders of the child as he crumpled the note and threw it on the floor before running out of sight.

Kids! Or kid. Solo maybe. On three different floors though? He's gotta have friends. Look for the string connecting their soup can telephones.

The child returned with a new sign in hand. He was writing. Or drawing. Long unbroken lines. Too long to be letters. Ryan felt the warm wave of nostalgia taking him to a time in the mid 1990s when he would draw by the sunny light of their kitchen window. Pictures of boats on the ocean. His mother and father on deck waving hello. Or goodbye. His favorite color was always blue. So he drew the sky overhead and the water below. The same shade of blue. Loose lines for the wind in the sky and sharper lines for the waves. Exactly like the drawing of the boat the child across the street was now taping to his kitchen window. With the familiar mop of blonde hair. The leather string necklace his mother gave him with the metal pendant of the pagan Green Man.

It's Easter morning. My grandparents' house in Rhode Island. The smells of the coffee pot and the lilacs will fuse into a memory. I see it still. In the window above this one. The coffee and the flowers side by side on the cow-colored marble counter. Black with white swirls. I'll write a poem about it when I'm nineteen. A terrible poem. And hundreds will follow.

Mostly bad, but they're mine. There are memories attached to them. Sad days surrounding them. Brought into the light by this silly shit I do. Holding on for dear life. Long shriveled leaves on the tree. Unable to let go.

A few stories down I see the woman. No sign. Just hunched at her swollen window. Chin in one hand. A shy little wave with the other. A hello that will one day be a goodbye. I want to lift this heavy window pane and go to her. If I can't go out the front I'll go through the back. Like a turd. And I will fly to her. Set a ribbon in this day with her. She's THE ribbon.

Ryan is shaken from his trance by a knock at the front door. He pulls the binoculars from his neck and leaves them on the kitchen table as he crosses to the short and narrow hallway.

"Y-Yes?" he calls.

"Yea, hi. It's Mr. Holmes with Longshore. Um, it sounds like you got an issue with your doorknob?"

Quiet for a long three seconds as Ryan clicked back into reality.

"Yes. Yea, it fell off. I can't open the door."

"Ok. I'll get you out of there in a sec. I'm just gonna pull the whole mechanism and replace it. Stand by."

In no more than forty seconds he had the outer knob off and was able to turn the latch and free the door. The superintendent was tall. Had a blue cap on his head, but that's all Ryan noticed before pushing past him and running for the stairs. The man said something to him, but he wasn't listening. Ryan went down the spiral well two steps at a time until he was at the main floor. Then he ran through the lobby and on through the entrance. He was lucid enough to check for cars on his way across the street. At the

neighboring building's door, he stopped to read the names next to the intercom call buttons.

Lindman. Coghlan. Forte. Paige. Mancini. The names go on. But only one I know. The woman's name is Paige. Something Paige. 712.

With his focus on the intercom and its spread of surnames and silver buttons, he hadn't noticed the door opening or the elderly gentleman asking for Ryan to excuse him. Not until the door touched his shoulder.

"Sorry," muttered Ryan as he took the door by its handle and held it open. The old man shuffled down the single stone step and on down the sidewalk. Ryan went in. Casually. Not with the rushed demeanor he had arrived with.

The room is 712. Paige. She's in the book. All I have to do is flip to her. Skip the lonely chapters for the good stuff. Maybe I am to meet her months from now at the grocers. Both reaching for the same Granny Smith. But why wait? She's here in this building. At this moment. A place the sun can't go but the oil can. Who says there's no nostalgia for the future?

The door to 712 was open. Inside, a woman he knew well was dropping angel hair into a pot of boiling water on the stove. She smiled at him. He hugged her from behind and whispered, "How was your day?"

"Oh just fine," said Erin Paige as she craned her neck to offer a sideways kiss. Her free fingers tenderly raked his forearm as she stirred the sauce in the smaller pot next to the boiling spaghetti, "Yours?"

"It's good now, thank you," and he squeezed her a little tighter before letting go and pulling a popsicle from the freezer.

“I need to get rid of that cactus,” said Erin, “I think I overwatered it,” and she turned to face him, “Gonna be a pain to drag down the stairs all by myself though. Hm. If only there was someone...”

Erin laughed. The playful sarcasm she often used with him. And he would give it back to her.

“Try the window,” said Ryan, smiling.

Erin laughed again. A little sharper. More genuine.

“Always looking for the easy way out.”

Ryan stood before the four foot cactus plant in its red ceramic pot. Mostly green still, but there were clear signs that it was drowning. Brown circles of rot here and there. He put his finger through one. It was soft like the filling of a pumpkin pie. He wiped the rotten juice on his pant leg.

“Just don’t water it for a while,” he said, “See if it comes back.”

She didn’t reply. He was about to repeat himself when he saw that she was gone. The stovetop was cleared. No pot of boiling water. No bubbling red sauce. And the kitchen was his own. He was in his apartment seven stories up on his side of the street. The brass knob taunting him from its place on the counter. He ran to the front door, but it wouldn’t budge. He grabbed the binoculars on his way back to the window. There were no signs. *Only a woman. Hunched. With her elbows on the sill. She is watching the street below. The bicycles going by. The cars speeding to each other’s bumpers impatiently before hitting the brakes. The procession of a long metal caterpillar. Crawling down every street in the city. A puddle with every color inside of it slips into the sewer.*

Oil from down on the street reaches
through her window on a hot day when the sun
puts itself out there like where
the rainwaters drain and it tries to follow
but there are places it cannot go
that the oil can

SI(BRIGHT)DE

Wonders go so, when
come, the return's elevated'n bursting with
flavor, *with* layers incom-
municable, like some de(tur(*pomegranate*))tle)ad in
the mouth of a cr(des-
perate)ow
am-
azed with the sud-
den luster of pieces and pla-
ces piece-shaped, like eyes'n the bermudagrass
like eyes'eye's'ey'es

IN HIS IMAGE

Be sure it's
there before you go out get
home check it hasn't fallen --*set n rise*
adored-- from counter's edge
where all the fragile
things live one mistake away one
wrong turn ever wake up
and wonder why houseplants won't
even pretend dewy?

SNUG

He pulls a string to start
the motor in a machine, hoping the noise'll blanket
what came up
at breakfast, tuck it all the way in-
to lunch

HELIUM

The plum at thoughts' ending
has such pull Earth hangs from it, ripe
with all the things you hid there

Pawed by grieving hands
who now and for a time might
smell the juices and thirst

Until the green again
turns high green with sunned yellow
tips and a boat comes

cutting the blue to strips
that thin, thin, flat, as with less
one's more inclined to

LISBON

Buildings lean like young drunks
to whisper through the music

FIND HOME

On the underside of a leaf high above you
in the sunbeam sweater
of a summer day in the yard staring up
at the pea green
and sort of flickery for the ones
even higher
who don't know how or where
to fly
with all that gold

SEVENTHGRADE

A tree's leafy jaw drops
when *whoosh* the wind's a bit ab-
horrent 'n *in the gust goes*
we, I mean, the trees' breathing's in
us us in the trees' according
to Mrs. Malone

STEVEDORE

When it comes
and looks nothing like
you imagined
don't embarrass it

Smile

It wasn't expecting
you either

Thinning hair

Sunburn

No course
and no cargo

CONTRASTED

Between symbolic and the concrete is a pretty
picture we've been painting of horizons haloing the
phone lines and little lights over long days so they
really *pop* on the drive home

DEEPCDOWN

oneataime

the bu
bbles sud to not be held, to take's to be
drunk on seawater's mocking barm's not
the end of the world you know

one/one

the re
al stuff climbs you and goes up up
inchmealing up inplainsight to surface
and aim the waves' knock

PENNY PRESS

Why does one's two cents embody
the breeze when the far aways're raucous *and versa*
vice? a horse in the snow / *a you-shaped puff*

PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #271

It's up to me, in the crest of
the city, to keep myths a stain
on Autumn's crisp linen

Beware, I say, of alligator, so entranced
by the magic of moving trees that, in the many
combinations of their dance, they might
draw me a picture

But no one really knows what I
see or what I do for them
here

Not the racquetball hobbyists
or the dog walkers
or the dogs for that matter, busy sniffing
the wet paint of a shamrock
green picnic table

It's my job, without a song, to keep
things of the wood in the
wood

And even you have only my word, sugary
and loose, what I do is, and
I know this is a lot, like love completely
erasing the past, to
drop you
on the other side of some-
where faded some-
where new

SEPALS

In shadow on a white wall blooming
flowers in the garden bed type an r one way
then the other then
two in a sleepy m touch while one i imitates
a petalless poppy

DAIRY

Mothered on the herringbone
parlor and poured
in glass bottles that climb

the steps of porches
after school finding notes like
clean the refrigerator
and
*always check the expiry in absolute
hysterics*

PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #332

Stay close to things bayoneted like the palm
fronds back-lit by a rising sun
so they burn white hot and pierce any gray nets
that would have you caught
in the rain

FOXTROT

The warbler's score is the secret blood of paws
tamping grass toward the investigating
of a whistle in the flowers' secret blood of breezes

OTIOSE

Points don't come across bridges
They're liquid as a dream

moving low

Some collect in the palm and
some a hole

In fact, bridges were made
to cross points but some erode

ONION

Between symbol and the literal word(s) fill like
with concrete until they split into such fine parts *at a
time* I hardly notice the mutationion

A BLOCK OF DENSE MATERIAL

With light at the margin lets me
know I'm still in the room
and that the room is [*somewhere*] with
sunwarm curbs and petrichor

to hint at but lately reading
less like the word than the white at a
letter's edge

ASTROPHYSICS

The sun goes
down bitter, flicking ash so far
up the curtain rain can't extinguish, since
the world first turned
its back, upped the eiderdown with cloudy
huff and said *goodnight*

ALL THROUGHOUT

The bronzing of a stone
irons flat
new letters in the broader age's cipher; u and i
comfy in the pages
of a history no one ever cracks or thumbs
through, we walk
each only ever one foot in this world; u and i or u
and i

NOT THE DEMETER

Maybe one day this'll be
in a slip between boats and you'll come
rifling through its barrels for the thing
you want

A thing that calls from the shadow
behind the shower curtain and you'll find
this and be hungry later on

CALENDARS

Mark a day and watch it heal
in the self-erasing white
walls of there, where I go, and how I see it
I say so little
can be done from here where
I am

on the verge of where it all goes
kaput, that
being over there

GROCERIES

People you don't want to talk to talk to
you and you
talk to people that don't want to talk to
you

IF YOU WANT TO SEE

On the pond's what's really going
on all fanned out in
the kneading of a breeze some days gentler but
never not there like God

going this way and that with the plates
all spinning the palms
of sunshine on your face the wind on your hair
the urge in time some days
gentler'll offer just enough challenge to keep it
fun

MUTESCERE

Wind's the word on fluted lip
all rosy for
the shush to fall it down

MALE PATTERN

Less now the sled and more the tree
who hides its loss under knitted white flakes

*Turn red / Shake / Then return to such stillness
you seem hardly there at all*

Somedays I wonder if life only knows
how to slam things together

UNKNOWN WISH

For the harbor's ode to what
should be, life

as a clear sky and not a string
of clouds too soggy to waft so they pile
in against a crag and climb
each other
some close to summiting some clung
to a definition
the way tongues dew, speaking

of vernal shapes
the bees came unexpected again
going to show
how wet my years behind
the ear

ACARPOUS

What the jay
chirps gainsays the whooping
verdict of
leaves all nodding in
agreement

SWING SAW

You get there in time
to see it being prettied by sunlight,
similar but oppositely approaching, then a car horns
you through the middle, and
wouldn't you know it, the sky in tandem
on a silver bicycle

Funny how fast we can go
from cauterizing nerve ends to
wetting a dry lip

BROWN LEAVES

I too flutter to sway
all near
to this hollow
trunk

EYE RELIEF

A reduction in size
to help scope, see? Pin down a cluster
of symbols, store them in a cupboard so what
was baffling spells a word, then two,
then you are in a field where the daisies grow
in neat rows

FORD TEMPO

When the light is slow,
they trumpet, a note that is sure
to move me

Steered

to a faith in their way, I pray,
go freely on
this thing I live and go so
hesitantly

on

GROUNDSKEEPING

Naturally
the one thing in your life
that does any growing does it
in left field
when day breaks on the weed
you chopped and has it beaming like Bermuda
grass where what
the rest are passing over like clouds
the crabs the birds drop
go stunned for

SWEPT

To settle a bank, rip the current so unwavery,
bonk and clog with
shoulder and limb, sub-
merge, catch a heel and release, catch
and release, then apolo-
gize, then go away for now and stay later
for much much
later

PIGHEAD AND THE MULE

Eyeballing
cracks in the pavement and
its two sides that can't agree or argue even over
which side u are on
or whether an r precedes
the g

MOLE CRICKET

Use your words, don't throw
your shovel on the shop floor and leap
around

Hard ground won't soften on account of
you want to be buried, try
building on top, like a person, let
your walls do the
hiding, in a showy way

THIS IS A DOCTOR'S NOTE

An inkling of what is actually here,
no causal factors and no amount of healing
sharing it provides

PLINTH

While the weeks' water ballooned
the gap and down
the efface with no arms and anywhere else,
I lost you

walking through the wheat, we both
had our eyes kind of down
or away

We were both sort of
waiting

to be plucked from
there

COLLECTED

The very little you give's enough
to pin a moth mid-flight to a flame that's blue
in the face *he was the shovel the coal and*
the steam

PICNIC

b r e a d
ant ant ant ant ant

CHANCE MEDLEY

A hi heard like a stick
through the algae on the surface of a pond is
sweet on the whispers *that*
we don't deserve that we don't deserve
it

SKY-HIGH 2

That tree with the round belly
full of birds *you remember*
the one? If you run to him now
he will sing his heart completely
out

PO·UHM

One thing's intensely
studied to a pulp, then
pulverized to match
the flatness of
delivery

*with letters like
bee aye are and dee*

A WHOLE LIFE

It can be a whole life to learn one thing
and you take it to the next
place and drop it
on the table by the dip. They'll say
you didn't have to but
what else were you going to do?

TRANSLATED

They met and talked and are apart now like
the Japanese cherry petals
that flit when they were meant to
flutter

M YOU E

Where will I go
when you've heard enough?
when the work won't save me any longer?
when there's too much here that isn't me; you
 maybe cancel renovations
 mid-gutting?

When buds bloom in the concrete think
wh then *en* of where I am and lay
the first flowers of my life
at my grave

A WALK IN THE PARK

a
w p
p a r k
p a r l k
p a r k
r

UNIDENTIFIED CRITTER

With your light* in its eye**
and feeding on whatever the moon's
version of photosynthesis

**All the gold of your living room
with the sliding glass*

***A round sack for stealing*

JENSEN BEACH

I toss a bid of stones, pending
my lot, when *here*, he says, *a lady*
made of glass comes ashore

FALSE KNOT

When a goodbye goes somewhere
it cannot go
anywhere there's room
it fills any time it
spends

TWO CATS

one on one
chair
the other the other

both tucked below
a table
watching feet
forget
something in
the kitchen twice

DELICADO

There's a meaning inside
to reveal if you pull hard enough
but too-hard's line is easier
to cross and may unravel it all

TOUCANS

With a squeaky wheel shop
for frogs on a shelf so bowed
it's nearly vertical

A HEX

Unenthusiastically
given strikes the bag of oranges
your heart and its major plumbings
pump to deliver quite
enthusiastically

Now there are oranges on
the floor

VODOUISANT

Clutching her pearls at the sight of
him his
tongue twists completely around

SQU
ARE

Playfully at first then
the rules
apply it happens every
time rolling
toys go square at the s
ides

FIELD GUIDE

With all
consideration for her quickness
of flight: *i*

n

c

f o r t h

lest the startle of approach break
the spell

OWNER'S MANUAL

Here's (the world)
and here's (the window) roll (the w(indow))
down to n()thing and sit
there for the light (any light) to turn

PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #445

I tell him the bobcat's white
paw is falling ice
cream in fuzzy little dream drops
and well things
can really run away from you he
tells me if when
holding on you crush
the cone

It'll be thirty years for him
next July

UNDER A ROCK
for the solar system

A big berth to moor t(he wais)t *erminal*

n

always

i

d

e

ELECTROGRAM

A AA

*V*alley
is drawn to fire pulse
into your flat line

To run the sun a bath

and maybe chuck it at
the sky in a
stab of lightning

HULL LOSS

Water striders flock
to feed on little things
I can't see *on little steps*
I can't hear through a
ripple of defeat bitter
enough to tamp sedge
and purl

TRAMPING

*They round my ankles in
leaping swarm
to rest with the ever-red
curls and the ropes of
spinybacked weavers I'd stolen
along the way*

and though I've
made friends with the idea
of the dust and the webs being
my only company
"you never did join me on that trail"
is what I
pray'll not be carved
in the closing stone

PAIN

Held in a basket
with the spinach and the beans
will split
digestibly into twelve easy
egg shapes
ggg

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

But not until
the official recount did he discover
another card was missing
from the deck

And that it was this, the mashed
paper wad, he'd seen at the bottom
of the laundry with her jeans'
lolling pocket:
the soft but stealing ear of the
divine rabbit

THE SOFT BUT STEALING EAR OF THE DIVINE RABBIT

y()ear

y()ear

y()ear

y()ear

year

ear

SPORE

Uneases steam the ceiling seeding
sore eggs that seldom hatch

but *if* then *poof*

then *if* not breathed on all the furniture
you are free

EARTHQUAKED

neither can achieve even the
minorest function solo; my head in the wall
with the electric, thumping, while my body who
knew better ran out

POLLEN

Another minor accumulation
of letters to clump a bee's thigh
maybe nostril hair but never'll get
me any closer to you than
a sneeze

FROTHINGS < (0+1)th

Casted bobbers bob in wait
for oneth's reeling plunk

LAND!

At once, clear of fog and sailing to a love that can draw
my spinning compass
umbilically by its needle, like for jumping the battery
or kicking the start
or pumping fluids life-affirmingly in

It's here

Where I'm dry and sure of foot
beside a very
cute lady tying spring lines

THE FOLIATE HEAD

A susurrus bloom in the chatter and vroom'll
turn *this* (with
no eye) into

t h a

h a

a t

t

JARGON

Sleep loosens the inelastic
in acts of health
and wellness to free from mental traffic
toward the end of being
confined or
restrained by other
unrelated conditions such as
bummed

HIT BY A CANNON

On a cool day mowing
with no music so
the thoughts
have a turn leaving no wonder
why one
might fill their head
with junk

or

shade their eyes and seek
aromatic
obstructions

3 DAYS ON THE LAKE

y a d a y s

a d a y s

d a y s

a y s

y s

s

SHAMPOO

The sweet smell
of 76 degrees

Cars swimming
through the empty
spaces in a fence
*like hair through
a comb*

How smoothly
time flows
*yet tangles
in the mind*

HYPNIC JERK

You settle
in the darkening
sky with the far rumbles of thunder
(a nest and some eggs)
when gravity takes a curious
interest
in
 you

A SPEAR THROUGH WATER

To surface the thing that sees
from a still muck now seared with spots
 cataract, a meteor's
healing steam'll patch
any holes left
burning
in the
sky

like

a hand (over
your eyes) and to
the sun'll say, *let me have this*

SANDSTORM

An overcast of wading
birds' yellow legs strike
sand / soft bolts / I count
the seconds between a landing
and the thunderous little
chirps that follow

MULCHED

Even the felled pine'll don
his glasses in the morning *one mushy*
ear at a time to see the knots
of standing oak

who with the fungus
and the bugs unite to consume
his grand vision

SPRINGING

Now it's that time of life for
widening the bowl to
apples
and oranges bananas
et cetera
when a long winter passes
by a little
better late *for the gratitude* then never
follows it out

CALLING ALL CURS

Sorta how cup up fills cup
down covers giving your best
not the so so
is leaving so much so
much on the
table

THERE'S MUCK, THERE'S BRASS

Nature's every perfect
angle (*rhinocerosing puddles*
to sip when little) steps
can change
a life at any size or
rate

GUIDING LIGHT

When *up high on the mango fly*
can lead even a sense-
less man but he'll wave it
away won't he

TREES & BIRDS

The same
subjects appear
often because
they exist
here and speak
the language where
as we have to
arrive to speak and
when we get
here they're wait-
ing

ONE WAY UP SHORT

A cart
is pulling a horse writing a poem by a candle
and neither four can deliver
the light

The following 21 poems
are a sort of tribute to

They Might Be Giants

EVERYTHING IS CATCHING ON FIRE

From the roof down to the beams
on the edge of the roof down
to the wood around the windows
down the wall to the door
and the bricks redder now down
to the street as it goes down
and out
in that order

and finally the horizon
goes way

out

FINGERTIPS

Was opening some mail when
the knife closed
on my finger through the tip
so the print split

now any crimes
I commit get
double the sentence

and any crimes
I commit get
double the sentence

I HEAR THE WIND BLOW

Like in a daydream when the laundry buzzes tether
so your float won't spin out

HEY NOW EVERYBODY, NOW

Standing around making gestures
to a problem
that's been standing around making news

WHO IS THAT STANDING OUT THE WINDOW?

Like a sea beaten piling, eyes
barely there in the rain of a second story
window in late evening with
my very sweater and hat and lamplit cheeks

snooping my very snoop

I'VE FOUND A NEW FRIEND

Just short of
the man in his garage, I see
the arms
of a soon-come cypress, a little nest there
with little birds
bent on
staying out of
hand

Chirping, but sweetly not
at me

COME ON AND WRECK MY CAR

Without even looking, your tail's in my
head right up the eye I
can't take off
you without damages

AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO HIT ME IN THE EYE?

Her audacity to imply such a reverse is typical
of the pretty ones
that need no mirror to gauge the closeness
of an object like me

PLEASE PASS THE MILK, PLEASE

*If you were to break the chair
groans the flinders less grounded then by
narrative flesh can still
take the missing shape like a child to a place
at the table*

LEAVE ME ALONE

An unoiled garage
door's bawl's no invitation, lady
don't appear
with a screeching temporo-
mandibular
and expect me to grease it

WHO'S KNOCKING ON THE WALL?

Coming at me from the angles you do you
might as well pound concrete
I open
on a side you'll never know

ALL ALONE, ALL ALONE

Days of Heaven reflecting in the glass
of the microwave. What some call the magic hour now
more definitively 5:36

WHAT'S THAT BLUE THING DOING HERE?

After all that hubbub
you'd think the rain was so thick it turned to paint and dried
up there

SOMETHING GRABBED AHOLD OF MY HAND

Under bedclothes the old clock ticks
again with looser rules than first played for
instance her hair is red
it's 88:88 and she's clearing the room for
my return

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU

With the window shut your
sayings erode like ends of a battery
turn green blue
and leave flecks when pried
from the jamb

I HEARD A SOUND

Day struck a match on the asphalt roofs
of the neighborhood
that pops to life the night the rabbits chase
like they were shot
from a gun at the westward fleeing shadow

*A recycling bin's little wheels
turn*

MYSTERIOUS WHISPER

In the shower drain a tonsil
of hair her color and length'll take the roughness
out of my song when strained
so thin it fogs so hushed you can wipe it away

THE DAY THAT LOVE CAME TO PLAY

Out front
with a bag of nectarines she's
waiting for a squeeze I'm
so giddy I shake my own hand
before opening the door

I'M HAVING A HEART ATTACK

It started in the tension
and the turning of the digestion
of the bowl of ice cream I ate too late that melts my
dream to a pool of a
real inventive fear of a time
you aren't here to
ease me when I need it
so often

FINGERTIPS II

Like a comet through the paddy field,
any change'll tissue the rut, like, so what,
now your side to side has an up and
down

I WALK ALONG DARKENED CORRIDORS

Not a stitch of the material today

for me to fill the sleeves of wrap
the placket or hem

Yes, the lights've gone out

for me I feel for the door lift
the toilet lid
and do the rest by sound

OTHER COLLECTIONS FROM THIS AUTHOR

Dizzying Patterns (2024) Bottlecap Press

Ground Pearls (2022) Sunday Mornings at the River

Inhibition at 20,000 Feet (2017) Ra Press

Telephone (2016) Ra Press

Doubly Sweet for the Strange (2013) Ra Press

Zen Like a Hole in the Head (2012) Ra Press

Lawless Adirondack Haiku (2010) Ra Press

My Ill-Read Ophelia Poem (2010) Ra Press