

# THINGS STILL MOVING

short poems by  
Sean Tierney

*published by*

ARP Press  
a Ra Press subsidiary  
100 Kennedy Drive #53  
South Burlington VT 05403

Copyright 2026  
Sean Tierney  
All rights reserved

“Park Maintenance Log #271”  
originally published in *Corvus Review*  
Issue 23, Winter 2024

“A Walk in the Park”  
originally published in *Streetcake*  
Issue 90, Streetcake Experimental Writing Magazine

“Sandstorm”  
originally published in *Poetry South*  
Issue 11, Mississippi University for Women

“Shampoo”  
originally published in *River Poets Journal*  
Volume 12 Issue 2, Lilly Press

The final 21 poems  
are a tribute to  
*They Might Be Giants*

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
LISBON	46
FIND HOME	47
SEVENTHGRADE	48
STEVEDORE	49
CONTRASTED	50
DEEPCDOWN	51
PENNY PRESS	52
PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #271	53
SEPALS	54
DAIRY	55
PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #332	56
SUNDRESS	57
THE GULL	58
LACRIMOSUM	59
GOLD(MINE)	60
MEANING WHAT EXACTLY	61
FOXTROT	62
OTIOSE	63
ONION	64
A BLOCK OF DENSE MATERIAL	65
ASTROPHYSICS	66
ALL THROUGHOUT	67
NOT THE DEMETER	68
CALENDARS	69
GROCERIES	70
IF YOU WANT TO SEE	71
MUTESCERE	72
MALE PATTERN	73

UNKNOWN WISH	74
ACARPOUS	75
SWING SAW	76
BROWN LEAVES	77
EYE RELIEF	78
FORD TEMPO	79
GROUNDSKEEPING	80
SWEPT	81
PIGHEAD AND THE MULE	82
MOLE CRICKET	83
THIS IS A DOCTOR'S NOTE	84
PLINTH	85
COLLECTED	86
PICNIC	87
CHANCE MEDLEY	88
SKY-HIGH 2	89
PO·UHM	90
A WHOLE LIFE	91
TRANSLATED	92
M YOU E	93
A WALK IN THE PARK	94
UNIDENTIFIED CRITTER	95
JENSEN BEACH	96
FALSE KNOT	97
TWO CATS	98
DELICADO	99
TOUCANS	100
A HEX	101
VODOUISANT	102
SQU	103
FIELD GUIDE	104
OWNER'S MANUAL	105

PARK MAINTENANCE LOG #445	106
UNDER A ROCK	107
ELECTROGRAM	108
HULL LOSS	109
TRAMPING	110
PAIN	111
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY	112
THE SOFT BUT STEALING EAR...	113
SPORE	114
EARTHQUAKED	115
POLLEN	116
FROTHINGS < (0+1)th	117
LAND!	118
THE FOLIATE HEAD	119
JARGON	120
HIT BY A CANNON	121
3 DAYS ON THE LAKE	122
SHAMPOO	123
HYPNIC JERK	124
A SPEAR THROUGH WATER	125
SANDSTORM	126
MULCHED	127
SPRINGING	128
CALLING ALL CURS	129
THERE'S MUCK, THERE'S BRASS	130
GUIDING LIGHT	131
TREES & BIRDS	132
ONE WAY UP SHORT	133
EVERYTHING IS CATCHING ON FIRE	134
FINGERTIPS	135
I HEAR THE WIND BLOW	136
HEY NOW EVERYBODY, NOW	137

WHO IS THAT STANDING OUT THE WINDOW?	138
I'VE FOUND A NEW FRIEND	139
COME ON AND WRECK MY CAR	140
AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO HIT ME IN THE EYE?	141
PLEASE PASS THE MILK, PLEASE	142
LEAVE ME ALONE	143
WHO'S KNOCKING ON THE WALL?	144
ALL ALONE, ALL ALONE	145
WHAT'S THAT BLUE THING DOING HERE?	146
SOMETHING GRABBED AHOLD OF MY HAND	147
I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU	148
I HEARD A SOUND	149
MYSTERIOUS WHISPER	150
THE DAY THAT LOVE CAME TO PLAY	151
I'M HAVING A HEART ATTACK	152
FINGERTIPS II	153
I WALK ALONG DARKENED CORRIDORS	154

## 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 painter's 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, facing the couch. 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

SUNDRESS

*for Kisha*

I'm getting older but I still roll grass into a ball  
and when I hug you I squeeze you  
down to the highest gravity version, a habit I  
developed in the long years  
dreaming of being  
hurled at your navy blue sundress  
with the flowers  
to break my flying fall

I revolve now around a new center of attention's  
burning, turning  
one last time so every side can see  
who  
stilled  
my  
spin

## THE GULL

Breezes incontestably bury mid flight swallow  
up the hollow bones and down *frozen* like a thought  
we wrap cottony in bubbles say hey you see  
that thing trying to fly but staying still? That poor  
little down trying to up?

## LACRIMOSUM

In light of the speck of dust  
in my eye having no clue the mountain  
of his avalanche can see, I say  
so what?

Most of life goes  
through our fingers, if you know  
the wet of a single flake,

you basically got it,

I say

## GOLD(MINE)

Little sundrop servants,  
with the buckler petals colored  
by order and family,  
stay true to what they know  
goes away, whether  
a statue's head and arms,  
or rain water,

the thing's falling  
is what feeds; the decalcifying  
shine of a sun (in a  
pinch) halos all the hilltop's  
treetops' lean tips

## MEANING WHAT EXACTLY

When left, a question'll flatten to its color *usually*  
*blue* like if you left the yard, a hundred  
feet or so, you'd see the  
green but no grass holding it

I like what that implies

Fetching cargo from a wreck, all buoyed while  
the ship fades, proving a life  
after to some  
small degree, no?

## 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*

Some days 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)<sup>th</sup>

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

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