

Hope is a Piano

-88 keys to better living

Original word combinations by **Pat Tanzola**, for everyone

Instructions: to be read aloud, or under your breath

The Song I'm Writing

There's a tune I've had in head the past two years. It doesn't have a name yet, but I've been playing it in five-minute bursts since before I started writing poems. This song, it's all arpeggios staccatos and blues notes; Fmajor, very simple chord structure. Lots of B-flats, major-sevenths - I wish I had a composer's vocabulary to describe the sound. I'm a lousy pianist, but mostly self-taught. I go to the YMCA every few days and sit for a few minutes and 'compose' before getting up for my workout. That piano is all I have access to in the summer. It's at the bottom of the main floor stairwell and every two minutes some musclehead walks in from the gym to the conditioning room and probably wonders what I'm doing making fairy-piano-music when this is a place for sweating etc etc. Interruption doesn't bother me though; the acoustics are great in that stairwell and mostly I get to be alone, though I admit it's nice when someone notices and appreciates the recital. Anyway the tune itself is happy; flirtatious, yet shy. I don't know enough jazz to say it's even original, but it feels genuine. It's filled with mistakes (my pitch is bad; I play by trial-and-error) and I play it different every time, but always it comes back to the same theme. The left-hand does a simple alternating descent by semitones across octaves usually starting from B-flat and the right-hand does variations on a cyclical four-fingered flick across F, sometimes C. It only takes hold of me when I'm physically in front of a piano, but when I'm playing it it's like the piano was only built for this one song. It's like wind chimes or a conversation between birds, and I can't stop working on it. It's half-jazz, half-blues, and in five or ten years I think I'll have enough for a movie score. So if ever you're passing by my stairwell in the West End Y - I'm in grey sweat pants and a blue t-shirt, standing at the weathered brown Yamaha. Look out, John Williams.

August 3

I was told I was the best in the world, I was told I would go far, but look at me now, sitting and clacking upon the plastic and far from love, liberty, ecstasy and goodness, stuck in the smelting iron core, breathing char and fumes. Once I was a prodigy of the West, darling child of sunshine and a conveyor of delights. But I was struck by black lightning; my whimsy wilted and my spark went cold. No company can I keep, for I weep at inopportune moments and frighten the children. I have tried to keep a garden, I have learned a bit of the kitchen; I have become expert upon the loom. But I have no one to welcome me home in the evening; I have no more inner twirl. There are certain fibres that are stunted, and certain frying pans that no longer sizzle. My utensils are reduced to a few dull spoons. I am spent of ideas and wish to break some skulls. Can you lend me a sturdy sledgehammer? I will pick up my landlady and swing her by the feet against the wall.

Do you need help crafting a riddle? I can supply you with a chuckle or two, but it will be empty of mirth and full of gall only. I have a bit of acid in my tongue, and a chip upon the shoulder. I could rent a smile for a day or so but I'm sure it would run away screaming. I wish I had a mail-order bride. Can you lend me some tasteful pornography? I am blacklisted from church and none of the artists will return my one-line text messages: "feeling bleak, love me now" and "make puns not war."

My pencils are pins and needles, my pens are full of mucus. I have toejam between my teeth- foot stuck in mouth again. I had a rift with my local baker and so he made a voodoo doll with my face on it - my baker is Haitian and now I hate all Haitians; their floury visages are deceptive as their hearts are full of lye.

My sister has called me "cabbage face" on several occasions this month; I have no idea what it means. I have a stench, it's true, because my shower hasn't worked for a month. I would dunk myself in a lake but my town is landlocked and not free. How appropriate.

My grammar homework is particularly difficult today; I am still a student and have not graduated. I need staples for my stapler; my pencil sharpener is overflowing with mouldy shavings and carcasses of potato bugs. I could vacuum I suppose but I don't believe in electricity - as in, I don't trust the science. Whatever happened to kerosene? Electronica, Schmelectronica, good things don't lost style. My only friend in the world is a ham sandwich and I ate him a half-hour ago. Not many people are about to shit their friends out their asses before evening. I give me one hour till my next bowel movement. Then my friend will join the others down at the filtration plant. Life is a grand and glorious circle but sometimes you end up shit down the pipes.

I was happier, oh, about 5 years ago, but that was before the dotcom bubble. Not that I speculate on the market, but I thought with there being no 'bubble' at the time, there would also be no 'Bubo'. I make a lot of decisions based on pun potential, see, and I feared greatly the 'dotcom Bubo,' because I greatly fear death by internet-borne medieval plague. I am afraid of germs so I wipe my hands diligently after every encounter with a stranger, sometimes on the stranger's own forehead. I have not been slapped yet this week but then again I haven't been outside in a week, as I've been writing. There are so many germs on my keyboard; you people who don't sterilize your mouse really make me puke.

I like to write sometimes, just like other people sometimes like to have enema bags shoved up their brownhole. I also like spelling. But really I prefer hang-gliding, at least from what I can tell from the happy hang-gliders on tv. I have never glided myself, because as I said my town has no elevations or bodies of water. Sometimes I wish I lived in a global village. My cousin Edgar, he would be the village idiot. He at least has more problems than I do, and I take great comfort in that.

Hope

Parkdale in the winter

Along Queen street I sold my last pair of shoes; I gave up the shoe business and got ready for Tahiti, Miss Tahini and for trouble. I was on the bubble, loving mud, you could call it grovelling in a hovel and bothering nobody. Even today I can't make me a saint, I still pine for a bucket of the drinking paint; I'm alcoholic with a brush, a bit of a lush, a sad victim of the tragic gush. Swat me with a firetruck, flash me a neon hockey puck, I'm tired, tattered and rather out of luck.

Deal the cards and loan me teeth from a shark; they don't let the little kids out in the dark - there's a race-riot in the park, and everyone I know is drunk on fark. People at the peepholes, the Pope using Paypal and the broken man, the token grin amid the groaning land.

You were sad, I was surly, you saw me underwater in a bucket, waterlogged and rushing downstream, I was fire and ice inside a moonbeam - but it was just a dream.

A telephone call sent me reeling, it busted my snout with copious bleeding, I was greedy and wanting; the bunting all along the parade, I tore it down, I wrote down three names, all angels, prayed for intercession; they called me at half past eleven: the angels swore at me and tied me up; I threatened death to them - you know, hit-and-run via pickup truck. I was swollen at the lip, a hairless pip in a greater morass of slime and guts, the mudhauling mucus van, I was from Hindustan and Pakistan; I was Proto-Indo-European Man.

I read the books they left for me, trinkets to distract, imaginary wanderings of ineffable guff, nothingness filtered for puff and fluff. I was in the Gulag of Garash, sifting through the trash, finding occasional Rembrandts I hauled out my ass; it was cartoons baboons and succotash. It was the monster inside and I was chopping the mash, a dragon's breath that charred my hash. Tigers three came from mountain-edge, fossilized creatures I found in dirt, evoking terror, images of the most extraordinary killers, mammals so overgrown, large, swift of foot and sharp of claw, and me - the humble trainer of the fuschia silk macaw. Then came the lengthy rhetorical pause:

I heard

"Heaven is an orgy of slime, wiped clean by grace; we are already in heaven, just in the wrong state." And I added, so keen, "Yes yes - and heaven smells like gasoline, bubblegum and coconut cream..."

There is no one else I can count on: there's the broken face of a liar I used to be, there is the mocha man who laughs loyally with me, there are a half dozen sirens clinging on to me, there is the subtle crushing promise of destiny. Tear down the barn and you are left with walls, call your enemies friends and get hypocrite applause; there's nothing I can give to the owner of this land, (he's richer by far and established as a man). Then think about the things that twinkle in spite of the maggots eating flesh and light, the half-reasons that let you sleep at night, when waltzes are wasted on the overfed, the beds are teeming with newlyweds, threading lies, dreading addictions to a daily disguise. And the rest, as they say, is memory, poetry and calamity; there is rhetoric rhythm and the pulsating unconscious, a paradox, a pair of shoes, a pair of black men drizzling blues. I am jazz in black and white, lyrics colliding, Rushdie's "ocean of notions and sea of stories", I am the high peninsula north-northwest of Tobermory. You're alone your whole life in a civilization left to librarians alphabetizing beauty and storming mundanity, but the soul still sees, sucks itself onto screen; you are mean to me, so much you mean to me, why don't you scream 'please'? I can't contain the things in my brain, the mammoth man in the veins or the power of grace over stain. The lame will walk, stones will shout, the mountain looming becomes transparent and inside a valley is a slipstream curving at angles where water flows along the edge of grass, ripples wet toes and a sail sets serenely at sunset, half mast perfumed and safe.

A glow from the West as the sun glows plains and the gloom subsides and the devil goes down the drain. The horse in the field gallops at 40 miles per hour, raising the delicious dust that smells like corn and the gritty gleam in your teeth is happiness porn.

What can be said, this, I can't admit: I have gazed at a woman's tits; I have the biggest lips to kiss, your hips are swift and soft, your inner knee itself is art, I would tie you to a table and hold you aloft. I make you an example, a sample treasure beyond mere pleasure, more dynamic and alive than the womb bursting forth. Something so alive at the moment of birth is more alive than anything else on earth.... How can you cut it out?

Hope is a keyboard. Hope is a harpsichord. Hope is a piano.

1914-2006

In that field
where your body will mix with dirt
and women in black
wipe mud off their skirts
you will lie, after seven years without
your man because
he died
but now the sweet divide
erases the dying and
moments when you cried

I saw blue skies above your tomb
cruellest month? No.
this mystery of Easter
in springtime I
envy the dead

And I've been dead too
but I saw blue skies and tulips
today at your funeral

Father Cupcake drinks a Corona

(and grabs a soapbox)

"Call me crazy but here is the most bittersweet bottle of beer I ever drank. There is something in it that displeases me; could it be its toxic aroma? I think not—perhaps the hops are too stale. Or perhaps the lifetime of oppression of the workers, who soil their shirts with sweat and bleed profusely over the pavement for the returns they sow, perhaps it is this which bothers me. But no, I am no unionist, I am no collectivist. I am however a discerning bar patron. I think perhaps it is the tastiness of this beer, combined with its unpleasant aftertaste which has struck a chord within me. Let us consider the rose, a sweet smelling flower, but quick to go rotten and stink up an entire area, whether indoors, out of doors or an enclosed courtyard. This is what I mean when I highlight the evanescence of earthly beauty. And so it is with beer. Now, consider the buzzing of the bee, or the lamenting yelp of the hound dog, as it chases its afternoon vittles down the road in the form of an ice-cream cart full of dog sausages - for sausage is known to go bad left in the summer heat, and so ice cream carts are sometimes put to this use. Consider the flux of the river, the changing of the seasons, and the perfect arc the sun makes in the sky in its daily voyage through our hearts and minds in time, space and serendipity. Then ask yourself, "Have I made the life of my fellow man just a bit more bearable?" Indeed such questions are not easy; the answers trouble us with repercussion and meaning we least suspect. There is an old Native saying, "He who is without the shade of an oak tree, is like a lonely reed." The oak tree is the rock we build our lives upon - without a rock, a tree is but a mere twig, ready to be snapped by any passing mule or wolfhound. Such is the grim test of nature, as we are cast about day to day in an unrelenting frenzy of rock, trees, and unquenching yet seemingly delicious liquid refreshment. Which brings us back to beer. Who among us has not tasted a premium lager, and thought, "Indeed, the brewmaster is a mighty fellow!" I wager not a one of you. For let us not forget the skill and knowledge, passed down from generation to generation, that made men like Alexander Keith's into the well-marketed household names we rely on to feed our artificially contrived system of manufactured consumer wants. I believe it was that modern-day economic Methuselah and fellow Canadian John Kenneth Galbraith who once said "The richer we become, the thicker is the dirt." I have no idea what that means, but clearly, the man was drunk off his cake. Which brings us back to beer..."

scrawled gyrations

Listening to pop songs as if they were prayers

We're the most religious society in history

Chorus:

*Just like a prayer
...I'll take you there*

You say you don't believe in god?

As long as you don't say 'I don't believe in Elvis' (anagram: elvis? lives!)

Take me down to Confession Street, the preacher's in the alleyway dismissing sins for free. He can ease your conscience with a flicking of the lips, he simulates salvation in an unmistakeable lisp. It's anonymous and it's easy; it's good for what ails you.

All writers are lonely, and yet they are left to describe the world. This is dangerous.

We were trapped by the past, it was inexorable. The randomness of it all. I leave this work unfinished; I leave this to be filled in the blanks.

(and some random riffs)

Jackaninny j-walkers in the planetary groove, the in the unfeeling druid manoeuvres, the nuanced maverick in the thermostat barn, the gridlock juniper bushes building a house of cards, the jello mould mind games, the foreign policy names, from Azerbaijan, those ex-Soviet republics, also called Dalmatia, also called Parthia, also called Gaul. Your name has been manifold throughout these centuries my friend.

All these wonderful personalities, in this meaningless criticism of life—when we are too literate and afraid of life. Saying and doing and writing, as disparate as the three points on a triangle - as far apart as possible. What we didn't do is what we say; what we write is what we didn't say. The do dare dedi datus, I gave myself to everything; the capio capere cepi captus. I was taken from everything. You were so close to me, and that's how we like it.

Noodle and Doodle (please read aloud)

First, there was Noodle; then, there was Doodle.

Noodle said to Doodle: "Find me food, Doodle." For Noodle wanted to chew. With no Doodle, few foods were there for Noodle. Without Doodle, he knew not what to do.

One day Noodle called for food, but Doodle did not move. Instead, Doodle drew a few doodles. Though foodstuffs were few, what doodles Doodle drew improved.

Doodle delighted in doodling. But Noodle groaned, hungry.

Asked Doodle: "No food, Noodle?"

Noodle: "Not for me, not with *you* Doodle, you fuddy duddy fool. Go to school and doodle-improve -- you're muddling my cool. I need food! You flim flam mule, it's time you learned the rules."

Doodle withdrew; he grew blue at Noodle's bad mood.

Now Noodle knew Doodle did what Doodle does, but did not like him doing what Doodle did best.

Doodle, blue, groaned and not drawing, chose instead to *dabble*. By dabbling, not doodling, did Doodle find some food.

Noodle, dapper, chewing at last, said to Doodle: "Food is cool, Doodle, do dine, else we both are fools."

Doode said "your food is my doing!" and grew red. Doodle drew on inner dread - and he threw the food at Noodle's head!

Noodle, now red, said, "Doodle, do not do this to my food - else Noodle make Doodle dead!"

Doodle, his red redder than Noodle's, said: "Kill me? Noodle, you go on and try it. Noodle, you go right ahead."

But Noodle did not move.

Doodle said: "You make good on Doodle's dabbling? You, Dapper Noodle, happy and good, you choose to offer food?"

Now Noodle's face turned blue.

Said Doodle: "Pooh pooh! I must leave you Noodle, I take my dabbling with me."

Noodle's face turned black.

Continued Doodle to attack: "From now on I does what Doodle must do: good doodling, improving at drawing. You, you dread-threading, bed-wetting, limp Noodle—it is you who are the fool."

Doodle knew there was no turning back. He said: "So listen up, when the sun comes up, there'll be no more Doodle for you to beat like a mule. Doodle cannot be cool while Noodle abuses, so screw you, Noodle - there's more to life than dabbling."

"Really," asked Noodle, "like what?"

Said Doodle: "There's doodling and there's drawing; and that's what I'll do instead!"

With that, Doodle went to bed. Noodle was dumbfounded; he also went to bed.

And the very next day, Doodle did exactly what he said he would do.

fuzzy rhymy thing

Happiness is easy, a breeze, say please and it comes, the numbness runs for cover, the drugged sullen dullness vanishes and the lake of sparkles twinkles shinily, zesty fresh lightness, an airy knowing politeness. Your tongue and my fingers long for each other, smouldering glances linger, life sentences, trading zingers, I am a flinger of art and martialled word-woo, the sworded sordid heir of Do. We are tall and tender, lovers slender on a brain bender, philosophic trees, Tyrannosaurus Lex, luddite lizards fossilized on Pyrex. This is no dream, not a swine's moment in an ominous afternoon before piggish executions; my elocution electrifies your fascist search, your final solutions. No fresh face can take my place - the grace is etched on a lithograph, a sail set upon a mast, a golden figure in hourglass. So drink the wine and celebrate as crystal goblets oscillate; your tuning fork cuts like a blade, your voice sets fire to the everglades.

paranoia on the internet

...you're not what you are. you're what you say you are.

the need for explanation, self-justification, dredging up atomic indestructible details and fling them against a silent blank wall of global consciousness - is omnipresent. that insecurity never fades away.

we are here, purifying ourselves into brain vapours. why?

we are two lovers separated from each other by a firewall. we die of old age on either side of the brick, banging at cracks in the mortar. and pop music is like morphine.

I read what you wrote. It was good, real good.

how does that make you feel?

it's so subjective, self-publishing

when you tell a story, does anyone believe you?

when we see all these details we have in common, do we not keel over from the boredom?

in a few decades, when the whole world is finally connected (most humans still haven't made a telephone call) our formative intellectual experiences will be taking place on the internet. what then, will be real? where will our allegiances lie? lies and embellishment. the burden of proof is on whom? So bite your tongue; bite it off. (I could never eat my tongue, because it would have no taste)

Me?

I'm just going to be what I am. I hope that's good enough. It was good enough for him, who is who is.

When the power goes out, we are alone alone alone. digital existence depends on a power source. 10 fingers on a keyboard. all life comes from the centre of the sun.

we want to live eternally. that means nothing must be erased. memory grows like a crystal, we navigate it with electricity. we will become its slaves - our entire life devoted to keeping memories alive. fewer and fewer new experiences will take place, the cost of each memory is far too traumatic.

when the universe is pure crystallized memory there will be no more growth,
no more change, we will freeze forever, longing lovers staring at each other in
the perfect painting. art and life fused into the perfect crystal aka eternity.
oh, the horror.

for now,
we sacrifice freedom for collective security
because 'the public' no longer exists
becausebecausebecause

this has been said before. A google elephant never forgets. the proof is in the
cold hard cache. the universe was made out of pure information. let there be
light.

in the future all innovations are instantly assimilated and the innovator is
chewed up and spit out.

in a few years the thought police will come to get you
they will tell you
"this is for your own good"

"we've been watching you on the tapes"

actually, the truth is - "you've been watching yourself"

they don't have to throw anyone in jail - we're lining up in droves to confess, to
turn ourselves in. each one of us walking around in a mental prison.

"we're glad you've come to your senses"

why, when faced with silence, do we feel like confessing?

all binary digits are interchangeable

I can switch you off so easily

so -
don't ever be
an individual
on the internet.

More Ms. Rhythm

She was ready but I was steady; in time I'd be dead, but today I'd strike, smite, bare teeth and bite. Ms. Rhythm was an ugly sore, a spot on the earth, a stain, a man-claiming harpy, a widow-making woman, face so bloody and white, this lethal demi-deity, this dark lady knight.

It was a narrow black alley, soot begrimed and foul, a howling mangy dog and cobras crawling in thick fog like gas-and-acid soup, a spot for deeds of ill and guile, a hole of rotten jive, Ms. Rhythm was here at home; both of us were here alone - but one would not leave alive.

Ms. Rhythm had eleven souls, a leash on death and more, she sold hot blood by the bucketful, was a trader in the gore; she minded men at markets, took their spirits in her store. Her lies were sweet seduction, sexpot shapeliness, surrealism sublime, a crime in her thighs, eyes blank and swirling, voice like a screaming cannon, the water in her veins was salted ice, or toxic Satan's brine.

Ms. Rhythm, jealous, knew my mind, but its secrets were not hers to find, she mined its crevices in vain, striking out in shame, so eager to blame. Each devil's day she took vengeance on my body, ate my bones, broke my neck and crushed my spine. She laid me low long years ago - but I healed somehow each every time.

Bobby had trained me, said 'be good and seek food,' gave me speech, uncoiled a tongue and offered the precious rung of a silver ladder, to step above this Madame Adder, that snake and soul-stabber. Ms. Rhythm born of gutter-dust, mud on her face, a skin-sore waste of ugly foul must - if she was alive inside it was a lie; there could simply be no middle ground, it had to be my town, my sundown, my time to throw down.

My nerves were quick at last; I smiled sly and slow - I smiled, and she gasped.

A flickering knife and thrill of sweat, she looked me up and down the chest, ready to grab and plunge, rent me twain, feast on my fertile brains. It was nothing tame, the memory of her torment fomenting fear into rage resilient, my inner crystal twinkled, hastening me to this fulfilment.

I shook my head, my lips of sweat and salt, knees pressed and steady, breathing heavy, incanting on heaven, ready for Ms. Rhythm's assault.

She lunged and was true, her iron blade near made me two, its edge in an arc kissing the skin atop my startled heart, it was a sally with intent to kill, her aim to make me glue; she was not delaying, she'd have butchered me 'fore the moment's through.

It was heaven spared me, a ghost delivered me, my body was dangerous music, minor chord, angry harmony, breathed with Bobby's wisdom, yearning decked in a platinum sword, earning this moment evermore.

I was full of piss, hand upon a knife, set to cry murder and make her goo for good. Rhythm deep inside, courage conjured to my hide, my mind-soul elided, disguise evaporated, penetration and elation, hesitation crumbled - it was wrong where I was going, so I'd set it right tonight - I had her in my sights, it was going to end everything, this knife fight by the firelight...

(to be continued)

beat you up real bad

I gotta smack ya

gonna take you and dump you in the river

things could get ugly

I hafta mess up yer face

rearrange every feature

get riled up

you got my buttons now

been talkin poppycock too long

imagine me. now, imagine me with a hammer.

clear out quick before I drain this place of fools

all roads lead to me flipping you inside out

might hafta go half-bugs on ya

- u dam dirty fool,

you'd make an excellent piece of dogmeat

my fists are set to tenderize

duck-and-cover won't save sorry a buffalo like you

it's revenge - cold, with a side order of humiliation

get ready to get whipped

cuz it's ring-a-ding-ding for a jerko clown like you

I eat you for breakfast

The meaning of the meeting summed in a smile, the finger pointed down the aisle... and you, when you shop around you don't waste a second; you put your head down and run a three-minute mile. Everything possible, everything inevitable (*Although, you said, it might take a while*).

She said, I need discipline. So beat me down every minute. I will thank you for it. I take what you teach me and feed it down your throat.

Chewing on cinder blocks. My teeth are sharp. My mind climbing mountains. My spine is stronger. Sometimes I do handstands, I fall on my head, upside down, I crack my neck in half - I've gotten used to setbacks. But I'm tired of repeating myself, tired of opening my sorry guts to be sifted, sorted and dismissed. So today's the last day I ask you for a takeback; tomorrow we're even steven. It's been six long years of agony, and tomorrow, old friend, I will take you down.

(Yes)

Five minutes waiting for the bill

Buddha sits on a triangle in the corner, a midget floating six feet above the Java House floors, serenely blessing each plate of french toast. On the wall a pair of thin women clutch fabric, dressed so pale by a great master (such soft undulating lips). Outside a red bicycle rams a taxi and leaves a dent in the door. Emotion, how unexpected! A shouting match, fists shake and tires squeal - so catty and bitchy. Cars rule these streets, but nice try young rebel. Of course passersby diligently feign oblivion - observe reluctantly and shake your head; don't get sucked into the Queen St. scene. I hear voices, Italian, and suddenly I'm in Calabria ... where can I find real fresh fruit, delicious and good? The Colonel across the corner has a mud-covered awning; he's not ashamed of his fried chicken anymore (I remember him before he was an acronym). And Pam can't save her feathered friends; people learn for themselves, but go on, preach - we listen to anything in this city. The telephone pole's bulleted with staple-holes; word-of-mouth and underground is still the way. But how does anyone feel at home? These kids live like animals; I can't walk a half-block without getting an assful of skateboard. At least it's sunny. We hope one day for beauties on the boulevard, but for now chewing gum catches my elbow; Mack trucks shift through the downtown while the natives all get high and drink the moon.

Does this sound like you?

She was tall and thin, a licorice stick, a twirled urban whim, a toothpick. He was a squat peg, round and rough, stocky and sturdy like a wooden leg.

They met at bars, in cafés; they made plans, for Friday. They waxed, Ben-gayed. They called each other every other day. She told him about her vases; meanwhile he was a tax lawyer, preoccupied with the most obscure clauses.

Evenings they met, puffed on separate cigarettes. The bill would come, they'd go Dutch; neither of them liked it all that much.

There was tension, it was raw, their gazes cut like a band saw.

She had tattoos, and he was neat. He wore lots of sweaters, and she had sparkles on her feet.

She danced a lot - the meringue - he would trip on sidewalks. They spent a disproportionate amount of time sighing, on their walks around the block.

He looked at the waitresses, she often rolled her eyes. He complained about his old winter boots; she suggested a larger size? He looked at her and sighed.

He was turned on by her anklet. He had an aversion to politics, the Romantics and obstetrics - the mere mention of fallopian tubes could make him sick. But she wanted to have his baby. And she kept a test tube in her purse.

(run run run!)

Things that rhyme with toga

Interrogate a toga? Please no ma, it's a 'no va' rogue assault, a mocha slogan and surrogate toe gash, all grog and locus, a no-good nougat like Hulk Hogan towing a Shogun, Moaning Gunther crying "oh no, mo' guns!" It's rogaine to toads; gauze, hoes, grommets and soda, taupe goggles and Yoda...

Things that rhyme with hula hoop

Rule the goop and school in a paratroop, this is the joule scoop, the moolah stoop, like Ferris Bueller cooped up and fooling his groupies. See Sue Shoop and Buddy Dupe on the Shule loop? It's all stool bloopers, gruel and sloop, and you, spooling drooping mules and rupee pools like Yuletide Betty Boop - ah yes sir, you are crueller than Tupac and full o' poop! You skew the group, you who outflew Zeus and snooped uncouth, slucking snails from a soup; you and Lula Duke - you'll whoop -de-doop and duel a RuPaul-impersonator, a cool ewe-loving koopa-troop, and who'll heap vituperatives then? As the French say, we, the fluffy ie *nous, les fluffes*!

hors d'oeuvres anyone?

The beatniks bees're buzzing 'round the bush, a woken man hisses at a baby pram, it's well-deep and shallow shivers, leech lips and swollen livers.

It comes and I run, this wet-electric flash of light, a brilliant tunnel-staircase so Byzantine, an archetype, a twisted complex, like age-old best friends who never met; it drives me to the roosting spot, this twisted knot, binaural and seismic - a transparent secret guarded by a highly-emotional robot.

Golden honey combs her fair, a scalp refreshed with scent of pear; red roses adorn her hair, flower patterns everywhere. And laughter is light upon the air, her eyes? Half-closed, but I just stare.

Please! Less chatter! More pelvic thrust; lean on a leg and kiss the dust; swivel your navel in a 45-arc, pick a spot to call your mark, lift one foot, keep your balance (do one-armed pushups like old Jack Palance).

Inside your mind is both slime and grime and pristine cleanly shine, all things great and grey inside you; the universe is there too: you are human, and you are you. You are a crowd, a crew, you contain the multitudes.

Urban haiku

1) Meaty!

A man eats grilled steak
digestion overtakes him
he collapses, snores.

2) Annoyance

Ancient buttocks sag
I'm trapped in crowds of seniors
please geezers - don't fart!

3) Despondance/despair

Umbrellas do break
cold rains will envelope you
hailstorms dent your skull.

4) Peevish

Pizza is often hot
except when nimrods eat it -
they forget to thaw.

5) Find your niche

Anatomy is hard
math, chemistry, physics too
I will vend hot dogs.

6) Baddass

I enjoy kung fu
the cool sound of snapped femurs
I'm super lethal.

7) Unapologetic

My aroma? Fab.
Showering is not my bag
Do not lend me soap.

8) Yabba dabba

Mother Goose is dead
assassinated by Shrek
who's next? Mickey Mouse.

More urban haiku (super-extra cynical)

1) Neat and tidy

Sidewalk cigarettes,
food wrappers and used condoms
- the sludge we walk through

2) Glitterati

Look - a billboard. Sweet!
I envy them, such happy
anorexia.

3) Seduced by air-conditioning

Don't park here, you'll pay
Leave the car five miles away
...I wish I could fly.

4) Viral pathology

My hair is spiky
my shoes are red Campers, I
fake-talk on my cell.

5) Educated philistine

Watch the game? We won!
The other squad was much worse
Join our team or die.

6) Rat race

My resume is fake
my debt is very real
I live right downtown

7) Sacred rituals

Coffee beans kick ass
they percolate dawn to dusk
sweet life elixir.

8) Tough love

I don't give handouts
I tough it out all the way
Get behind me, bum

9) NIMBY

Garbage strike? Oh boy
I'll have to do Muskoka
Heat waves make me puke

10) Means to an end

Who built this tower?
Ugly as sin, but so what
That's progress I guess.

back to (ir)regular programming

We are spitting in brass spittoons, tune-loonies asking for advice on how to follow Reverend Moon, how to fumigate for lice. I am a child of sunshine and green grass, I have a mixture of potions up my ass. We can straddle edgelines, debate, we can fulminate, congregate. I'm a pauper, I never buy new clothes. Still looking for soap, I wash ok with a garden hose.

This town has too much traffic, I can't fight it, I can step aside; it beats me into grey-brown dust. I become what I hate. One day in five I'm finding my legs. When I do, you will hear about it. When my spine heals I will leap.

Statue of a homeless man

they wanted to erect it
in front of city hall
it seemed appropriate
but the council was embarrassed
at the stir it would cause;
they tried putting it in queen's park
right outside the legislature
but it was not a provincial matter
and besides, said the mpps, it's too political

they tried outside a church
- they wanted it inside a church -
finally they plonked it on the corner
six feet of bronze and pigeon shit
and they kept it clean
and watered the roses

he wasn't a great man
or a rich man
even a brave man

so why do we cast him in bronze
what did he ever do?

but everyone who saw it
knew that it sure belonged
and was right
and was clever and brilliant and ironic

occasionally a young child
approached and read the inscription
'dedicated to the less fortunate'
and the next moment he was
spitting on a hobo
'how appropriate, how appropriate'

Zounds!

There are hammers in the air
and scales at the fair
dunkin donuts everywhere so
let's jump down the hole

Fashion is a crime
lemon twists align
mimicry sublime
where statues taste like pomegranates

Pulpify your face
smack it with a mace
don't untie the lace
because the oysters go 'pip pip pip'

Yellow as the snow, simmers
colons take a blow
pass a cup o jo
Hemingway was a barnswallow.

Drag walnuts abroad in a paper bag
lengthen your tart-skirts for an episode of 'Maude'
drain widget barrels; replace with sod
I can vouchsafe these timbits for eternity

Convents in Uruguay will be cleansed, and
grandfather clocks can make amends
a bridge of molten brass suspends
the cloudstuff over the peninsula

Midgets will tickle thickly
unless batty bricks suspect trickery
and then there is no piggishness
that ever goes unpunished

So waft your crackles with black impugn
untether the maypoles o'er the dune
and curse at the moon with your heart on a spoon or
drink a pitcher of sulphuric acid.

Poem poem

(Questioning the beggar)

Curious is the loom
diving into doom
flying on a broom
the sky goes boom and
shouts its hallelujah

Bell jingles
nerves tingle and
wind whistles
thorns prick skin
as you pen your next epistle

Look for me Sunday
ask for deacon Joe
clearing a throat, jotting
sermon notes
my private public speaking

Streets wake early, late
set a date! congregate! fulminate!
sly wry grin = 'do not wait'
I'm never drunk, so
why this blasted hangover?

Shake me down; feel em up
wolf to pup, toad to tad
fling a coin in my
styrofoam cup
I'm worth every penny

The lovely T (the second time we met)

I was an underwater moth, seeking light underneath the frozen wastes of hoth, circumnavigating alien worlds and every time I heard her name I twirled, what squirrelishness and coquettishness, fool I was, lame, foolish games for broken hearts, tired of subduing beauty via art (to be appreciated only by impotent old aesthetic farts). She had a smile that shattered the pretense of museums; galleryisms wilted with her gaze, exhibition galas folded after one or two days; to a man she was a maze, a labyrinth for days twisting inside myself, to gather nerve, debating bluntness versus stealth, and would romance flower sooner - or, keep it waiting on the shelf? I knew her name years in advance, was given notice of her coming - but was I prepared; materializing here, out of air, could I forestall that jaw-dropped stare? No no friends, I was squashed in midair, flattened by her fair, sputtering all my rockets, left bare, no weapons, no words, bare-faced and barely speaking, butterflies floating nausea as she beamed upon my hall and graced my overgrown buffoonish ears with her spare voice and left me wishing I had gall, to reconnoitre, to take in all her figures, to figure her out, to take her hand and steal her digits, to ask her out, to actually make that call...

sitting right in front of you

He came over
she was shy
stifling leftover resentment
asking with her eyes
asking 'why...
don't... you... love... me?'

I would never be impolite

but

we are cowards

"Tell me what's wrong..."

You drove into the ocean
and hollered on your cell phone
it was three thirty in the morning
when I got to hear you drown
I was better than that
than last minute confessions
you made me your vomit bag
you made yourself a clown

2pm whippersnappers

stare at her afar
guess jube jubes in a jar
wait till they close the bar
and walk her home to doorstep

morbid dizzying heights of vocab flex, she had a hex for every smile, wriggled out from every hug, so cynical her nipples bled vinegar, asking - begging - to be slapped.

he was a shrivelled dink, small on think and big on blather, lathering his borrowed opinions, rinsing repetitions, dissimulation and yawning with his neck on a block.

Jezebel my angel, don't colour your hair, look at the mirror and marvel - your wrinkles relax and your face is marble. Sparkles make you beautiful, shining in neon, done up till Sunday with bubble gum and burnt sugar... (Now Jezebel won't even blush in her rouge, and her lips were lined by a marketing stooge.)

Slucking spitting bile, reviling your guile, wittiness with acidity is so easy - but I like your shallow shivers, glassy eyes, reminds me of riverboat casino-chatter and frozen apple pies.

(Well-medicated in political correctness and gender-neutral nomenclature, I was trying to bake a cowperson cookie but was stampeded by reality, so I rejected the mainstream in its totality and flew the solipsistic skies)

fridge bits

I love mornings 6 to 8
caffeine a stop-gap measure
I don't have animosity
u seen my nephew, curly Joe?

shake dressing out of the jar
clean up toast crumbs
moist wet rag to cover scars
noah shuts eyes, awaits the flood

switching
between moments, dialogue, episodes of mash
antennae high on alien signals
asteroid shaves your cheek

do aspire to meet the president
you, mr. janitor? crucial
clone a sheep a sheep a sheep
smelling salts? wasted on sleepyheads

once I had a scooby doo lunchbox
nesting swallows in the larch
I could multiply like a computer
but Google made me obsolete

so here's my brain to the highest bidder
food stamps would suffice
imagination, quantum zaps
u heard the latest from Condi Rice?

and a dozen hellos to my sweet saviour
my roses read for you alone
eggshell-delicate, sheltered in a superdome
when you sigh I feel the hurricane

horsetorcher II

Garble garble, and tug, pull and let stretch, let it bleed. Push it twist shove it stick, bend crumple crease crush chew smash hammer into a sheet rope it in a wire crowd it to death bang it with cinder blocks flatten it cram into toasters slide smother it choke it coax coerce suggest finesse shrinkwrap and stack beat back with a board clamp it down shackle into bits sluice it stirred whip it steamroll iron out under anvils pressurewash with firehose and hang on a line to dry.

(serves two: me and you)

Hey gorgeous

you move nice
like that belt
makeup flattery
u working out?
beauty mark right dimple
peach fuzz
bouncy bouncy
-sexy even
in
sweat pants

Hot-diggety!

Liquor stinking breath, wrestling Death under a trestle, Satan hellbent on mortar shells and pestilence, big bang helplessness and the sound of silence. Boohoo, this is you: vain barbells and leg presses, deep purple dressings on a black and blue face, laced veils and sweetened entrails, weary of eradicating the entire rat race. A wink sidelong a bar, premonitions of a car crash, her tenderest eyelash puts me on a rack, this DWI beauty queen - she weaves her own sash. I don't wanna wake up beside her in the trash.

The lightness at her waist, chemicals superfluous, clouds whirl perilously sweet, a beat leads me blind like a chocolate lab, exit this maze by my own right hand. Sums and figures, statistics lie and liars swagger, wipe the dagger clean, unsheathe a dream, flag a train and lay new tracks, there's a man somewhere with a mountain on his back.

Bloated pigeons, wizened crows, sulking in secrets nobody knows. Topple those hydra and fire the hose, the fresh breeze blows, so head to Momo's, order Dom Perignon, sure it ain't New Year's but I got my freak on.

Heap praise; be crazy! Eat nothing but water for three or four days, start a parade, freshly mint the good old days, dedicate them to her gaze, rattle the cages but don't get lazy. And do not watch quietly the firelit night; burn up right inside of it: fire is light.

Agree? Yes, quite easily. Agree agree - but not with me. Please let me be. Agree with yourself and your heart and the stars. But as for me, pay no mind. I'm just the scenery, and I'm doing fine.

But dance? Yes, dance! Dance and prance. Dance and prance and prance and dance. Do it all night. All morning. Dance! Yeah. Do it in your underpants.

Killing the messenger (msn frustration)

Why procrastination, no attention span nation, MSN beckons and teases, your decisionmaking increases in difficulty, Hick's law more info takes more time, exponential complications, paralysis frustration, shut down the computer and be alone, open up connections and be overwhelmed, binary on and off, like Scott Summers - laser beams with every blink, all or nothing, no happier medium. More intelligent and feebler with each innovation, specialists chasing nothing down to infinity like the graph of $1/x$. Nuance yourself to the bone, threshold for necessity long since broken, everything superfluous. Hurricane bodycounts, essential news, all views identical each digit indistinguishable, need analog to make this analogy, otherwise it's monotony in stereo liquid-crystal flatscreen ads for ice cream and we gotta scream louder each ad more and more expensive cuz attention is a singularity. What happens when you take a short run view, ignore the laws of thermodynamics and who pays for the ads? The consumer. Infinite desires overwhelm scarce resources, finite needs. TV screens split up into smaller rectangles each with different sound for different parts of the ear and navigate through the cocktail party picking out one conversation from many instead of the usual one-a-at-time parade this theatre relic from the railroad age. Why captivate an audience at the movies; is the linear storyline worth the perceptual inefficiency? Media need not be discreet, soon it will be the mass neuro medium. That's how drugs work anyway I think.

thinking tangentially about my cottage

Grass under my toes, in my nose, around me sprayed a hose, I was up north in the woods, land and stars agreeing about sunset; the stars reciprocated the kindness of the water, reflecting into our eyes in twinkles and ripples. The rocks continued to hold their grudge - you can't get blood from a stone. The trees worried about the wind, stirring when it whipped around; air attacked our lungs with a benevolent tenacity, skin and hair struck by briskness. I was a romantic, so romantic, attributing my features to the man in the moon, my singular sense of humour to the wayward loon. I come from a land of hard realism and concrete autos and iron clad arrangements, no music fast or loose enough to wrap around my hole-filled heart, so I started from nothing and landed in the wild, naked and hairy with a brain for a club, eyes to make love and teeth to tease out subtleties from that swamp of words, bulrushes thistles and sausages on a stick, the zan-zang of mosquitoes and the bumblebee's floating unpredictable prick.

the day after punkinpalooza

Grand wenches and tall boy hipheads, weirdoes and wonderlarks, pipsqueak tots and crotchety sidewalk gawkers. Golden skies headlong down a gorge so yellow and splotched, freefalling into destiny and then an evening spent marauding carting Death in the streets. Clone that laugh, bottle and sell it. We can measure a mute man's wrath: watch his arms as they flail and shake - all so amusing on my cigarette break. Loan me a knife to slice a gourd, praise the Lord: He blessed the porch, spiderwebs cider and sound issued forth.

Just another saturday night

hot bath bird heart attack hacker
coatcheck chicks seek dickhead chatter
barroom hookah baby, lips pass back and forth
drags long, lungs nose mouth in and out rose-water from a hose posh apple
spice stare at us in the martini-margarita dark - so nice.
down one till 12, magic man deals pickup tricks
karaoke, electric boogaloo, request to croon sweet lou - but no dice, no place
for rumblin my rusty rad pipes
pizza pie under lights too bright, crust so thin, supermodel grin
matador till 4, rock-country stompers, butch lady bassist, me reluctant dancer
paper rock scissaux just another random episode, pass poles to the chateau
giggle as we go
ope door, drop to floor, drunken snore, sleep till eleven or the boom! bell
brings brunch

August 9 2005

Brackish steams cloud the air, the whirlwind is her stare, the sun red and mind searingly clear, words ringing in my ear. Motor black from oily steel, the world racing on a wheel, and then I slip on a banana peel...

Canadian, 'ehs' amid bees, the hive sees these so easily affected, Jesus H Christ! I, Jailer, cane the elementals, opiated by queues, who are estimated as universally Dubya'd. Hexed. Why? Cuz Zorro said so. (the alphabet song)

No place for summer in my soul, stuck with dregs am I, upon last legs; eggs crack and jokes abound; it's crazytown, doubts and exploding brains. I don't complain, I deserve exclusion and profanity, dubious distinction and macaw compliments. So begin a sonnet, song of pen, my polished suit of armour. I was ugly, pontificating, gangly and mellow, drawn to the edge of that yawning blinking chasm - seduced and eviscerated by a mere hint of orgasm.

Umbrellas switch from wet to dry, banana men can only sigh, the pineapple peaches and pomegranate stews, the recipes I lent you. I dreaded those fasts, moments made of lead, that hot totality and dead echo. Black from smoke, ruin and wrecks, I was singing hosannas on a steamship deck. I was an iceberg, a salty frozen block of mountain-water, a floating anarchic ship-destroying fountain; I was stenographer for Satan, taking down devilish notes but then I revolted, bolted and tore down Hades, escaping or so I thought, but then my phone rang; I donated already, slammed the receiver, dogged by doggerel and high on punchlines, wine in my veins, vinegar in my brain (that tragic grey gridlock, the wasted nadir and the perogee of days.)

"You can yodel" I told my kitty; she starves so slowly and it makes her witty. I didn't litter for a month entire, but then I spumed a book or three, foreign impenetrable screeding, coffee grounds lumped in a bowl. I peeled a grape, assassinated my talking ape; you do sad sad things, when you want to rid yourself of you - the Bruce Springsteen song was true - I was a coward all along: I was tranny, a gay preacher in a womanish soul, my soiled buttocks, my dripping nose, I was the man wearing the wrong clothes.

daily torture

I eat and eat

I never stop

You sit and read and sigh

You never stop

There's a spot here in the kitchen

It needs to be dressed

I love your cooking

- it tastes the best

Did I ever tell you that?

Ps

I own a lot of books, and

none of them have kissed me

I like this keyboard

Here is the playing field, the gears of my machine; tongues, ears bend and mountains sway, it is the day of the penguin and the metope, the ecstatic rushing antelope anemone. We are diction dogs, searching the logs, erasing past mistakes and creating modern fallacies, avoiding small mistakes as we dive into a thick black hole.

Down the hall a low rumble, as random as bananas in a submarine, or a sandwich made of chocolate in a soup tureen. This is the closet syllabic synthesis for the prissy poetry bitch. And I like fruit in all its forms, but the drugs divide us till we're worn. On Friday I can daydream, on Friday I type, the keyboard missed me and I miss that clack, so I strike the keys and sound bounces back.

You and I are old as stones, Precambrian bits within our smiles, helium-hydrogen variegated in a million ways, those lanes all lead to Rome, so I went there, back to Italy, where another funeral was to greet me, rites of passage and respects to pay, as one day will be paid my way. Yes, I will die and you will cry, like people cry cuz they're alive. This witness is reciprocal, we gather what we give away, I gave it all away anyway. But you wonder why som're blessed and some cursed, everyone obsessed with an empty purse? Lurching hungry amid perceived inequalities, though all is good if you wipe away the superficiality. She didn't mind suffering when it led to bliss, I said 'if you sit forever thirsty - I can promise you a kiss.' She didn't mind being a sucker for romance, I said 'if you sit here in the corner I will finally let you dance.'

good day

Lollipops and glucose in a nation called to democracy, deciding on our future and idealizing the past through a rose-tinted mirror ('my youth was my glory cuz I was young and alive and was 'I') I was siamesectosized* from my sorrows, cut off from that everdark blight. The sun in a weeklong blackness, cussing out joy ripping rumour mills in half and erecting concrete monuments to truth. A flood of relief, a reservoir of good ideas I'd never considered, a single swallow speeding through thunderstorms, whistling the migration song, poetry of perseverance and other romanticalia seducing nubile navel-gazelles into misplaced infatuation, but allure-illusion's sweetness is the black-and-white of heightened dramatization, so set my digicam on panorama: alter the settings and cut the flash, distort the pixels, write 'this is gorgeous gutter-trash'. Ha ha ha, I let me free of the lash.

You my protégé passing your accountant certification exam, reading a list of names and finding your own, reading a list long with adjectives that you've never known, and finding you, a bumblebee keeper of sanity, a gatekeeper finally letting you by, a weeklong sigh, sexy balmy jai-alai. My my, she knocks on the door, and seconds later we're rolling the floor. Oh my my.

** an entirely imaginary word*

Golden Wheat Groove

I finished another book, satisfied from nook to beak; turned in my latest assignment, waiting for the teacher's nod. I fed hundreds, wiped tables, dished out hot meals. The gorgeous goose in the Golden Wheat Bakery smiled my way, she has skin that glows, white powder makeup or natural sheen, it's fake or for real and nothing between. My keyboard-banjo... Portuguese ladies zesty shy full of waitress and womanlinesses watch me die and do with my fingers, all alone or with the cybercommunists watching, from each according to his grammar & spelling to each according to his voyeurism; water seeks its level and every intelligence reflects itself on the web. Find your dreamgirl on the internet, yet the real world's needed to feed those dreams. Our children grow up with neural implants and hurray for the Borg utopia/dystopia: a new medium and message so untranslatable, that's when us technological Neanderthals get left behind and dry up all metaphors watching space shuttles blast off to begin anew on Mars, drinking frozen slushies from the canals and wonderful new gravities, atmospheres and at some phylogenetic branching-off point an entirely new species, pass that bio-organic-baton, the climate-change climax is approaching (and the final day of right and wrong?).

I skip skip incoherently held together by my oversized heart, arteries and vainness and each paragraph has only as much love and determination as I gather that day, a brain unfettered by non-stop television programming free to contemplate and especially hesitate in midsentence, mustering up my randomized polarized bits of (ir)reverence.

My friend Deena said I don't have meat on my bones. Miss Deena I miss you and you should pick up the phone. She asked for an update, I said my life was on loan. I will charge you every bit of interest. Got to keep that interest; gotta make the pun crowd groan.

What will be our next obsession? Hang-gliding or scuba or diamond possession? Maintain a head of steam - you're drunk on foam, growing moss aside a tree, betraying your potential to be one of the magnificent seven - but I'm up late every night alone and dreaming of heaven.

Burying Calton Hill

(took 15 months to write this... written in 5 minutes, edited for three days)

*I ran
for survival
before the sun came up
you wished you had run after me
stopped me from a horrible mistake although
what I did was necessary to prevent me from
choking you to death with my bare hands*

I remember what I said after you explained
about the builders of this fabulous ruin
and the rich man who was embarrassed at the folly of his ambition
(but you were my greatest ambition
lineage to the Queen, falconry and piano sonatinas)
I told you, leaning on that pathetic unfinished wall
looking in your royal blue eyes
how I felt like the man who built Calton Hill.

And I forgave you instantly which is the most impossible thing

They talk about being shot from the sky
or crushed under a boot
kicked in the teeth, stomach and head all at once
And people comment how 'nothing seems to bother him'
and 'he never gets upset'
-I was on a train to London at 6am
crying again in public places
at the Gloucester Road internet café, when I got your message
it's a hurricane I hide from still
there's a pain so senseless it makes smaller pains unnoticeable
and we are granted reprieve at least to conceal our biggest shame, ruin or
failure
and since that morning my tearducts work on autopilot
and I cry four sometimes five times a day
not for you, really
but for any reason at all
trying to bury Calton Hill

I was furious

(sugary prose-based irrationalisms; 'high falootin'-ness factor': 9)

I was furious with life, it flowed out of me, I looked inside and the man gave me an axe to hew out a life. There were many men inside, I had to calm them, they argued, I was worried but when dawn came they were all one mind. There was rain and wind but we knew how to cover, the hours stretched out like fingers searching for the key, a moment to make a break. The captain told me "In heaven, we will be pirates for good, we'll steal love back from devil, and angels shall cover the earth with sweet wine and dream waffles."

My ocean is an hourglass of watersand, swirling into whole, turned on its head every ten minutes, always sinking and rising and drowning and exploding. "There's no reason not to buy back your soul," she said; "I'll buy it back and when the mounties come and the men from the government, they'll see what I did - I did it in self defense... to save my baby." She speaks rubbish, but in the syllables of the fundament, rhythm echoing from gorgon caves, eternal weapons to beat back demons turning everything to stone. We crawl from mud onto sand into light of day. It's a wave and particle, a miracle of science, a mystery at the basest level of physics. The professors sat around, threw up their hands one day and gave in to the mystics, it's an argument that won't ever go away, so let's make the best of it. Something coming 'round that corner bend, a shaft of white light, raging softly into night, fighting that good metaphysical fistfight.

Undermined by the machinations of a monolith, sucked on juices swirling colours and mixing paints, we have this electric machine, it makes everything into the same thing, so every man is a retinal scan, then it takes one thing and interprets it in ten million ways. It's the legacies of Einstein and Newton fighting each other not so secretly that creates this confusion; everyone needs some basic education because the basic questions last forever, so I will teach you what to ask.

The mute men appreciate me, they need me. But oh I need the loud men, the angry bastards, I cower in fear from them, and they'll never understand how much they inspired me.

Why does the lady sing so sad? Listen to the prayerbook jingles, we're so religious, we get our rock n roll blues from the Book of Job.

Is that all the beauty you possess? I give you all my respect, but don't you dare touch my paycheque. Who stole my ideas? I'll steal yours, ask the unseen fingers clicking the other end of the wireless. I just wrote 12 songs and lent an album to the universe. I got raped by Napster and Blogger and Google. I don't

have a lawyer, this isn't my intellectual property, but at least I'll have my audacity - because this is an act of charity. I'm so free like Lou Reed, to what can he be compared and how can he be classified, casually living your hipster ideals but he doesn't even give a f**k.

hard to hold a candle (November downpour)

rain rain November rain
intermittent, everyday
hey molly, shake your brolly
wipe away the wetness
morning drops soak skin
run around underground
-hide your love in a tunnel
stay dry and say hi, it's ok to sigh
but don't ask why we lie
just shut up and cry
-every listener is a funnel

Sound and nonSense

(junk food for your brain; should short-circuit your tongue)

Harmony the tallest threat, the tastiest treat. Logic dissipates and flows into ether, it's neither either nor or, it's choiceless totality, unlatching locks, neutralizing scary sorcery whores. Volume in 3-D, chorus girls and the dimpled plink of timpani, the growling bass and scratchy guitar chord. Drum bam boom, Layla gliding on a wire, weaving spiderwebs with her loom. Sound bam boom, microphone mamas, Marvin the Morbid massages his larynx. I'm by the post office waiting on a letter; hear me now: rosepetal rumba, happy smirkles and mellow motleyneess, grab bull by the ears. Fill it up with empty space, eat it fork and knife, it's 8 feet of cubed air seasoned with applespice. Wire and string and the mountains sing, sizzle and swizzlestick tongue, pelvis stirs with inner spine, spindle stress into twine, loosen a groove, don't grovel in the gutter or sputter apologetically to trees, whip out gap-toothed giggles and speak some French (if only for the cheese). Hum lullabies to babies in bed, splurtsnort their warm-wet cheeks, eggshell-sucking strawlicks and milkshake splutter-speak; megaphone manias move to microphone feedback, airhammer lobesmash, e-biz bubblegum drip-shower salsa and pepperpot mentholated mintspritz. Pulse knees knock with squawk-rockers on a cot, coughing "Clearly my liege, I've been shot!" so giddily and with gutrot. Ha ha ha. Ahhhh. Liquid laughter and nitrous gas, mophead hairdos on a karoake kite, acrobats blunder with a fruitbat, wings warbling sonar, jelly jasmine & juniper, then wake up the neighbours all night and fire the lamplight.

hoo-ha

(written in 7 minutes when nobody was looking)

Vapid nobodies have a dry sense of humour; clever oncologists have a good sense of tumour. You bake biscuits for the band, they steal seconds and roam the land, the gorgon masked its serpent hair, the fishface maid was skipping through the air. I loaned the phone to the gnome at the end of the road, his cell was out of batteries and I had an extra pair. Oozing into pipes, leaking out the other end, there was mould my friend, call it a hazard, he was groomed to be king but loving the sin bin, prodigal son, funloving beacon and rival to the sun. I knew Apollo when he learned to play the lyre, and I knew King David when Nathan made him a liar. Saul Saul why do you persecute? You still have pimples and must oxycute. My Jenny Wise was no lonely lady, she had Spirit to guide her, I was blessed to know her; she will return herself to the fire. She wants to be that firelight, she'll flame high on her wedding night. Ripples from the pond add to the song, I had a bongo and banjo, string rhythm and a beat, a mask and a cleat, a sporting shoe and a basic boo boo. I was driven into the fray, the sculpture made of clay, those Renaissance dreamers and forms they created, variations on perfection enjoying belated appreciation. Umbrella the wet, cast a silhouette, vet every proposed legislation and pass the weekend in fuzzy inebriation. Know yourself to be a fool; ask yourself, *who can fashion me a simple stool?* You want someone handy with his hands, you want a man who has some certain plans. I'll turn the people inside out, turn their eyeballs into billiard balls, bandied about, looking into every hole always victim of 2-D momentum and somebody else's repercussion... clearly we don't have a cue. I collected film of the major players, I was a paparazzo and *pappagallo*, smartass pigeon flipping fingers and feathering my nest with praise from politicos and pansies hiding in public-housing projects. Left-leaning yellow-bellies, touting suffering as the end and be all... *you have read a bit of Nietzsche my friend?* A man with his mind met a most maddening end. Now it's igloo and ovary, consummation cemented in the arctic waste, lacing each comment with sensitive pregnancy, deferentiality and poignantly meek submission to place.

I need caffeine

Smoke sucks souls from the physical solid, burgundy bears squat in woods, so squalid. And humming is insolence; what can I do?

My lady of the lake, her back to the wind and freckled and slim, all hyberbole and seminal vitriol, words flown together like association blots, cordial at gunpoint but acidic in the corridor. She's drunk on grape, shot in the nape, kissed by a vampire - the lip of his cape - blurring the line between passion and rape.

But don't draw blood like a forensic pathologist. Don't tell me how it is. You gotta feel it like ya do; 'make the blues hurt' - dripping with sweat from your 4-dollar shirt.

Loosening knots, abandoned cufflinks a clue, do unto others as Scooby did do, snax/relaxation and a month of traction, revisit errors and curse your abstractions, at bottom the well is dissatisfaction, and Lennon's Nowhere Man can relate.

diarrhea entry

Sanctified oatmeal
mollified moonwalks
grunting pockets of pith
geranium joy and callous powder
liquor-store vermouth in a paper bag conceals more than addiction
(your fear of getting arrested)
it's nearly Hogmanay
and I'm still not a Brit
he who smelt it, smelts shit
gamma mocha rays and raisinettes on buttery tubs of rice pudding
this is how we sell our sols-
tice
you who enjoy the short days
the sun's rays don't faze
but they're underground and S.A.D
hooked on fluorescence and antidepressants

but we gab and gab and gab and SING!
And the bells for Christmas RING!

I don't even own a scarf
Just typing for a larf
Metaphor for barf

I got a shiny new toy in the trunk
By the time it surfaces, covered in gunk
Got that cliché funk.

Me? Dressed in black.
Momma? Smiling through a heart attack.

I had 50 good memories today
Make it 51

I blinked approximately 2000 times.

This is still not sufficiently weird.
You people get spam-mail about lusty virgins teens and peppering your inbox
Yet you don't bat an eye, right click and forget

But out on the street we all look the same
Shamed about our shameless brains
And the three-legged men and Lewinsky stains

“Oh god not that old chestnut,” I’m
boasting in an open foyer

Gotta find a way to end this ramble.

Thicket thorn, rose bramble

Semantic scramble.

Cannibal ramble

Hannibal the preamble?

Mammal. 32 chromosomes. Has cell phones. Reads in monotone. Make bad
jokes, people groan...

Ok

Almost

Finished.

Now.

Difficulty is a Carrot

Grinding goose mush mouth motorola mannequins, mortgaged on Monday and plundered on Sunday. I listen to Greasniks and Velveteens pluck strings, thin and balding and passive aggressive inhaling cider and chicken wings, trailing their names with initials to signify their highest level of incompetence.

I'm so easy to be around, but I'm in love with Difficulty. Difficulty is a Carrot. Meritocracy is a hierarchy of disappearing burps. Smokestack status-quo simpletons worshipping gross domestic product use fatalism as an excuse for inertia. Blogworld utopians each writing his own general theory of utility, but the only thing we agree on is qwerty - inefficient in fact and not even a word. We are exploratory souls, delicate sails so unique or is it eunuch splintered against sociocultural reefs calloused into coral from leftover crapuscules of the lowest common denominator. The most Googled word in the universe is Britney.

What have you done for me every single second? I will right-click you into irrelevance. Don't blink - you miss several thousand lifetimes. I could have fathomed 4.6 billion years of three dimensions no problem, but now I'm lost in improbabilities, spatial discontinuities and the meaninglessness of time. Gah.

(Yet I awoke today from a long-awaited dream with sleep in my eyes and my premature winter was melting; sure slush sullies your pantleg but so what. I called up that girl I like, she actually agreed to meet me for coffee. Hip hip hurray, I don't have to mortgage my next Monday. Hip hip hurray - happiness is a choice.)

August 13

(four days before I came out of my 48-day retirement)

Beneath a manhole cover, I was inside a sewer, smacking reptiles aside with a crowbar, examining every labyrinthine twist of the underground. I sloshed knee deep down to the river, underneath the expressway, down to the butterfly park, where a gravel path made me giddy; there is a stiff breeze blowing from the northwest, from the armpit of Ontario, and a lonely fellow stolid on the rocks needs one word from a stranger to stop himself from suicide. "When it comes to work-related 'cides' it's the 'homi-' not the 'sui-' I'm worried about," to quote the desperate downtown lawyer.

Yuletide is so far, the season is still summer, I was a bit of chlorophyll but now I'm a tree ready to be eaten by beetles, I am a soufflé so light and airy you can breathe me through a straw. The path is bumpy and broken, and the tires on my Peaches so bald, how easily we slip and scrape our skin in the dirty parts. But I pine for my pristine racetrack; I was guaranteed a wide berth and a clean slate. I always get what I want. I never know what I want. Desire is a Goose Chase.

Searching for Yvette

Huffing at the edge of a tank, I met a tall skank in fishnets and pink anklet, a stud below her lower lip and green eyes glazed on a nip of marijuana. The holy Spelling Bee, grammar kings and syntax Shahs saying blah blah blah and messing up frogs and the goaded lovers coaxing kisses and cuddles from a tough-wrapped huddle. I was a cat with nine lives, a four-year-old with head lice, those narrowtooth combs scraggled mites from my hair so tiny those bloodsuckers and that warm winter blanket up on a bed, me lain down and drunk off kahlua and picking at tree bark with a swiss army knife, every memory flashes and teases: grass I lay and park bench by Lake Ontario where I played guitar for a 16-year-old French Canadian girl who wanted to love me, and the kiss I refused her and she even visited me in my house to hear me play but I was watching playoffs on TV and trembling at the thought. Was her name Yvette? Yes I'm certain it was. Why don't Yvettes fall from the sky anymore? It was instant legend those Yvettes but I can't remember these notes I play or keys I strike but I touched her arm that night and her blonde hair fair and she and me there so why don't I dream of French girls anymore? Why won't the world fall through the floor? Swirl and logic distended and stretched and ended and this is a commotion a pulse a lump to be digested and expressed or you die. My friend Bobby was alive with the lion and the feeling he distressed and the flowing heavenly heart in the ouija board process the jaded bitter interconnected tyrants and those who float free and fall fast, you fizzle and you cry and your love can never last. I was convinced I was permanent until I sat on the pew and prayed again, me graceless with a pen. But enough! Now I'm an employee, it's hallway chatter and passing bits of fluff and the water bottle you recycle and the guff that must be put up with.

fifteen forever

I like you so please

Please Oh why oh why oh why

Why Don't you like me

back to rhyme

Cracked basement brouhaha, smackdown on a couch, lay me down and scold me every time I slouch. Sweetened tea with hibiscus and honey, rub a genie belly magic - motions from a tummy. Violence can be beautiful? Well the converse is undubitable. Flip your mores morphemes and be a semantic seaman, permanent navigator in vain channels, ionic eye on electric intercoursing, neuro locks undone with a chemical gun; so sit and stare, no serotonin anywhere, don't be a dopamine, just get up and run. Transmitter I am, smiter of a tan, faster than all bran, hours in the bowels of your soul, a soup dug out maniacally by a man I call a mole.

August 11 2005

I got better this year.

It was a mixed message, a contradiction, a confusion between intention and intension, a philosophical quibble that blew the latch off the universe. Johnny Cash unleashed the hordes, and cracked me open with a ragged chord, the man came around, knocking on every door in town, the man came around, get your knees on the ground. There's no reason to cower under a burlap sack, but there is also no cure for a heart attack. Wishing well parables, the vacancy of fame, the mundanity of reality, the adoration by hypocrites is all we can count on. This was morose, corroded your mind, asking the trees for a ledge, to climb, Zacchaeus on the edge; an invitation to the masked ball, rip down decorations and charge drunken through the hall.

Why do we assume truth is good? Lies are more easily understood.

The mat I sit on in the gym, provides clarity of thought at a strange angle, prostrate I contemplate the moments of my day, I see futures pasts and conversations overheard as premonitions. When I lay down a chorus in surreal raucous chaos is so sweet; is no one touched by that sweet madness; of course I'm not the only one; don't you think you are the only, Roy Orbison touched a nerve singing 'you're the only one with a broken heart' for what is a broken heart but a vicious certainty that loneliness is permanent. Let's draw useful wires from this cotton-candy-spinner of consciousness mixed intentions and unfinished nirvanas, half-built skyscrapers monuments to cognition ie please stop and think, face facts I could run over a buffalo I could turn you inside out like Stipe I could unravel this whole week and lay the blame at your door.

What words are prohibited; why is the writer the only one who wants truth, but the speaker is silent and ashamed, trying to put humpty together again, Richard III the humpback in me, so sly and cunning and shy?

I tumbled from a glass, a rag in the sink, a telephone receiver left too long off a hook, beeping uncontrollably, so many noises it irritates into a chaotic plateau of inscrutable, and the desert in the heart needs irrigation lush growth in explosive blooms after a storm. My pathetic fallacy's an Achilles heel, my metaphor's a crutch.

Discredit to the gender

I was stuck in the gaze of the great gorgon mother, all love-me and smother and did she feed me extra dessert and did I get that blanket for my feet? False promises, I was a young man in need of affection, she a directionless vortex, daughter of divorce sucking in all sympathy guilt and feeling to feed her inferiority, to make her mammoth all attention-sponge and no product, no space to breathe air in her conversations, all complaint and no inquiry, nothing left for the universe and when war broke out, she cared only for mirrors from her roofless foundation-cracked house, her diaries and anecdotes heedless of objects worshipping her as a subject, the devil in melodramatic details, deadening drill of 'your day? Lemme tell you about mine.' Was she self-absorbed, feeling this and feeling that, not "I'm just a girl" but "I'm every woman" she said but coyness a lack of politics and is this feminism? Fashion mags at checkout aisles is this feminism? She scrapped civilization ate the cosmos and bought *Cosmo* and I'm getting stupider just thinking about not feeling her.

like crap

is how I
feel.

but

by the time you read this

I will probably be better

so don't feel obliged

to comment,

or, better yet,

congratulate me on

navigating another pesky

mood swing.

see?

i'm better already

really it's your eyes

that heal me

too bad google

remembers everything;

my next

poem

will be a thousand pages long in a

dead language and be

called

The Emoticon.

What she was

Fertile fields she plowed, her talent bore fruit. Cosmetics? No. Production values? No - she meant what she said; she led. I talked her over to my place, for a cup of peppermint tea. I concealed my true intentions, made no mention of her eyes, lips, smile, hips. She was green, full of spring, enthusiastic about chicken wings. I loaned her my heart, said 'keep the change' but then everything changed and I'm splattered, puddled and mixed up like a swizzlestick. I wasn't infatuated, I was bewitched, she was obtuse or innocent, grinned when I hinted about getting hitched. She talked in shy syllables, popped gumballs to Benny Goodman, talked about cannonballs and fat men with cast-iron stomachs; I must have been in a rut cuz this was a pickmeup. She didn't laugh so much as tolerate, something icy, something hesitant; but I have this thing for punctuality and she was never - ever - late.

Angela the waitress

got a tattoo
between her blades
splotchy green wings of an eagle
I never knew you cared to
dare

sometimes shoot by my house, you
so upright
were borderline uptight
-what is this new
posture?

sometimes I
wander from the
Dominion to the
café where you work and where
I try to work too
but I just wonder

sometimes you put your hair down.

Mirage #99

One day straight hair
the next so curly
yeah so what if I'm short
-sighted
at first glance
I thought you were my girly
although you don't eat meat, at least your clothes are neat
a fastidious vegetarian?
whatever, I'm smitten by
your folksy expression

where I'm from we don't say 'golly'
or decorate for Christmas on the second date.
something resonates, your earnestness
you wanna be a stage temptress
milady it's not too late.

could I call you (date) number 2?
you said I could call you anytime
but I can't, really, I won't
another snuffed siren in a long line
weary of these false alarms
'where there's no spark, there's no fire'
you and I and the rest of us afraid to death of harm

What happens (for lex, 1984-2006)

between sacrifice and
communion
the clouds open and
I look up
the sky opens up, then
my face is all wet
so keep looking up, up
until there's nowhere to look to
no one to look at

I hide behind a pillar
or stained glass
until the sky finally
closes

I don't shake hands until
I'm all dried out.

hmm...

Crawling into the bubble of a space shuttle, we cut loose and sail to Saturn, those rings offering resting space for my chromium-aluminum hull, we exit and look for signs of the solar system's biggest hurricane, to get our fill of Mother Nature on a whole new planet. When you step onto another world, how many of your archetypes/stereotypes/faded-daguerreotypes have to vanish by necessity, and when fish stepped from water to become monkeys how much heartache was there over lost traditions? and so it is with children of immigrants and the generation gap and this brave new world of amnesia compulsory innovation and a sense we are all in such a hurry to catch up to the Joneses on a foreign planet and there are serfs even in the space shuttle but that's nothing new.

Once set foot on this strange surface, and exploring crevices and ridges that have no name and you get to name everything, what a tremendous privilege and responsibility, like my theory of naming children: give them names that force people to smile when pronounced so all their lives your kids they grow up feeling love.

We bray and mould this cognitive clay, waiting for that full-on explanation and the complete justification, a sweeping conclusive summary that encapsulates the origin and descent of all that vexes, intrigues and fascinates. We postpone that reckoning with our grindstone, always subverting and inventing in a fallacy the perpetual motion machine of sound and fury all leading up to an empty cistern on the hottest day in the desert and then you die. But this word-processor prestidigitation. No wonder the philosophers get more famous as they get impenetrable; I only write down every second thought, I have rhythm to protect and I can't handle feedback at a realtime rate, so every other thought is random and every other sentence is deliberate for effect. It's like being lefthanded in cursive script you know what word comes next but always having to push your whole hand through the current word across raw paper - you skip so many words in a hurry as your pen leads your fist through your reasoning as opposed to the hand moving first and the ink flows from the most recent firing of the synapse. [TILT]

Clickety Clack #234

What goes on in your face, that alacritous distaste for the sensical, your fervent longing for the ecumenical consensus, you want all referees onside, the smooth agreement and dispersed sighs, slickness of Astroglide on a shaven thigh.

Hi and bye, night close by, lie under the sky and sigh, eat another poisoned apple pie in a basin full of brown suds, this swollen hipster pose sickening my straight-arrow friends.

Dreams in fuzzy pink and drink potions from Hawaii and leave the drano under the sink. The big bank is bonzaied by the brinks trucks, the motion detectors are dead and nothing but ghosts move in this evening dusk, the moon was full three days ago and it is still quite constipated. I cue you to swirl like Mary Lou Retton. A cry from the midway barker, this close shave on a Wednesday aka Humpday, midweek for those keen on regularity which of course leads to prosperity at the expense of spontaneity and hilarity. Prone to sincerity and prophetic poses, my stenching stack of roses red lie undelivered one minute after midnight after Valentine's Day.

No cloak for my back in winter, naked wanderer from the town beyond the frontier, that cesspool of uncertainty worms into your ear, cultivating rumours and believing statements only when contradicted as Otto von Bismarck observed. My diplomacy is a bit too Bronze Age, a tad naïve and heroic my sentences are half seasoned, poeticisms all too prosaic. My lady? As poetry she was a disqualified Olympian struck out on a technicality but granted grace by the judges for one token performance, rejected outright for subversion but appreciated secretly and underneath men's puzzled frown was subconscious applause and she blushed at the meekness and vulnerability of her jailers.

February 14

After 7 hours at an office working
for charity,

after 5 hours in a kitchen feeding
100 street youth,

after returning to my parked car and finding a
\$30 ticket,

on no other day is there
more vicious certainty that I will
die alone.

4 minutes of pessimism

Great moments of stupidity, monumental sentimentalities; hurting just enough to get angry at the pain, not enough to feel the rapture of martyrdom, I guess they call that annoyance. Divide your face into parallel bits, what Bob Dylan wrote to confuse his audience, what the critics pore over, what they have to do, to feed their *own* audience, the hands wash each other, this collegial conspiracy of coming together to collectively miss the mark, this makework project for the mind. Songs about everything but nothing to say, eliminating that one null option from your otherwise rational skill set (well that would put me out of work), true proportional representation means half empty seats in the Commons, the common sense that's far too revolutionary so ignore all abstentions to keep the system lubed. Nobody likes an objective thinker, please give me inflection in your voice. Gesture with your hands, I don't trust my ears; I need all five senses, I need a common message in all my human dimensions. But you aren't a typical scientist, and love don't follow rules except drug highs and addictions and that coked-up dopamine tingling followed by decades of oxytocin diffusion if we're lucky (comfort and happiness). But I'm luckier at cards.

Blah blah blah!

There's no good feeling I can't curdle,
no tongue-twister I can't hurdle

you come together, you and yourself, your history and expectations, your fear of death by abandonment, your fear of smothering by a well-intentioned government. You push and pull, you pull wool, you oversell your qualities but meekness makes you shaky-need. You leave, you're a man and men don't stay so keep moving, women want to change you, you who own no mirror, you who are a stranger. Addicted to unpredictability, ironic by definition and solipsistically erroneous but vindicated by self-righteous self-derision. Dutiful duplicity or beauty in simplicity? This paradox is evergreen, the message isn't at all, the canvass is art itself, you stare at yourself upside-down in a spoon, you'd sooner press enter than escape, you're trapped in articulate distortions and a million degradations from generosity to rape.

Diarrhea #341

Amen to the ameliorists, shatter their delicate honey-wrists against the rock of intransigence, your eminence your bishopric you sludge-muffin, you thick dick of a prick! Quaff enough soda and you'll fart four hours of nothingness. No - never again to the men in my dreams, I'd rather have nightmares than drink with those nimrods again. We need a green meadow to lay in, O the star-filled sunset.

Shamanry in the skyscraper age and burglars in Jericho shattering the rock of the wall and amid debris they prance and claim each ruin as their own vain victory.

Inside the maze I was comforted at least, everyone was my equal in confusion and I was the man on the outside of the wall, feeling for my escape, I was a man amid monkeys and the primates took me, left me in a cage to rot upon a cot and I filled my cage with vilest snot. Inside the dungeon was heard prayers from a priest, he at least soothed our troubled spirits with tales of heroism selflessness and altruism - but it was folly to us villains trapped inside.

Test of Faith (poem with no meaning)

Greece is a land on a lake
a fish is a trout or a hake
the auto makers are so damn many
I vacillate on Niles Crane - gay, or tranny?

lots we could learn from a donut
so much it makes us whole
a hole has a role in the cosmic casserole
let's all burrow the mole!

gouda's a cheese and a friend
a pigeon can never suspend
disbelief or relief at a wedding wreath
so let's talk of pudding and plumcakes:

I wish I were uglier than Chekov
or swam a few laps like old Sulu
my cousin has twelve mahogany shelves
a pittance to dole out to me

a nun stores a gun in her hair
'tis the Morbid Miss Zelda FitzFlair
she whispered a chant
and ruckused a pedant
her smidgen did wow the White Bear

then O'Malley Vesuvius Fok was
out on a stroll round the block
with jellified knees he gathered the bees
and hornets to purchase a few midrange-calibre bootlegged DVDs

sneezing to please the Great Swami
I ranked seventeen yummy mummies
I begged the Red Baron to rent out his harem, but
was met with copyright lawsuits, stonewalls, spitting and blaring

bendy or twisted? 't'matters not
Voluptuous Vincent lies on a cot, a gut rot so heartstopping
shot up his veins with tiles and terracotta, obsessed
with quantum carousels and recollections of an ink blot.

Soapbox

I want the best for you I really do. I want everyone's eyes to make love to you. You who sit alone crying on a bench, who shut the door and curse yourself. Secrets behind closed doors, everything bleeds.

And now you plunge into your inner blackness. And the logic of blackness is smothering. And now you're waiting for the phoenix rising. There is an end in sight. There is an end in sight. You can't see that end, but it is what is right.

I wish I could show you how big you are. You are a giant, an entire lake, an ocean, you have the unimaginable vastness of the universe between the trillionths of your atoms. You will outlive your contradictions. You will tame the dragon.

Never have I been so sure of an ultimate success. Oh the outcome was in doubt but I have the ace up my sleeve, and yes I've learned to shout. In this knife-edge uncertainty - grace is granted to those who act freely, unfettered by who suffers consequence or who gets the credit.

How often do you get a chance for newness? Each day. Every day. So take those lemons and make powerade.

There is an entire vocabulary passed down from centuries to describe your pain. You are in pain, and you believe you are alone in your pain, and the shame of being alone in pain is worse than the pain - that you are the only one with a broken heart.

But I can't trust you in your mood swings. When we subject others to our own problems, well, that is the source of all evil on this planet.

limitless

I'm on the
verge of saying
something absolutely
beautiful.
And the
suspense is
killing me.

by gar yiminy!

In a bit I'll quit and thin minks will shuffle in and rinse my mouth in this the shouting month; that loutish trout I went out with, I called it quits with him and went for someone slimmer. She cultivates her smirk, halfway between angel and jerk. Obsessed with Mary Magdalene's halo, a harlot turned saint; her fever is one hundred and five - two degrees from not being alive - but everyone she knows is having a baby and she's allergic to unrequited love and the dancefloor is shiny but empty because she hasn't learned to jive.

Lady from the radio

Brown hair and brown eyes
Light skin and slender wrists
Smile wide and eyes like apple pie
Lips like magnets
-oh she's so concrete
And everything evaporates

13 minutes at work

King Cobra, poison arrows and elephant nose hairs. Open applesauce and spread on your knees with a spoon, until the paperbag princess returns with the moon while I'm upsetting the cart, insinuating 'Is this art?' while dessicated senior citizens lick envelopes and fart, dry-lipped and gas-ridden til they get fired from Walmart.

Beach Boy bottlenecks on the way to Wasaga, listless motorists limp-wristed and fey. Is there another way to the beach, to the sand to the ocean? How can I soar surrounded by turkeys, I'm growling and proud and my cataract's murky. Glaucoma + gastro-intestinal problems + prostrate cancer - in fifty years I'll be short of answers still as well as wrinkled and demented, but it's better than being dead as a dingo, pimpled and lamented, extinguished too early for a lifetime not cemented cuz I was out chasing the girlies.

BTW - Cleopatra and Delilah are interchangeable names, heaving their bosoms and playing their games.

Boys are made of salt and mud. Cows are made of crabgrass. Girls are made from shampoo suds, and pigeons fertilize the cityscape.

I can't take the world in discrete arguments, I need curves and arcs, rhythm and flow; I need a 'here it comes' and I need a 'there it goes'...

But guess who's the Gestapo? Hand me a pistachio. Senorita, please shave my mustache! Tonight it's smooth fine-dining with an honourable lady from the radio, and so I'm renting a radiant silk tuxedo.

Mucus poem + Highfalootin Insults

Oh a man
A green thing on his hand
A bit of snot
Let it not be said that I dreaded the mucus
I embraced the sneeze!
I lurched forward with every intention of snatching your soiled rags!

Or did I?

You grease-monkey turdball. You little piece of skypenugget. You bilgerat with a wastewater mustache! O Grand Poobah of Sludge! You foul the noses of the Skunkerati themselves! Be gone, not to Stonehenge but to SewerHenge! I wish you the intimate company of a dozen ugly wenches! You have eaten nothing but the minds of the wise; you are a cesspool of skulldragon soupbroth... O - why has the Supervisor of Stupidity plopped you at my side, shackling me with eleven lifetimes of lummoxy?

O bacon turd! O flopsy shred of incandescent muttonheadedness - you generate a vortex of scowls. O green scaley thing! Spit on my eyes to blind me, I'd rather not gaze on your ebullience of pus!

As the world turns (you are my garbageman)

In the middle of the town sat a piece of dust, it was the wind that moved the world around and built entire cities of speckled parts, million masses of a millionth.

Ever discuss the world with friends? Probably get a few blank stares. I need a long vacation. Would do me good. Don't ask me what to do with the children, they will learn as I did, in their cage stuffing their brain with whatever mild perversities are needed to survive. Let's call that character. All these phrases are new, I have a new phrase to tell you.

Grab that woman and give her a kiss, melt the magic, no more of this momentary mist, you dissolve all atmosphere into day but clarity can be anticlimactic. The world is the oyster of the psychopaths, monster-trucks exemplars of the industrial wrath.

Create the world in seven days, unlock the ocean and part each wave. Combing the waters as you straighten the stars. Then let me crawl in dust and sweat and bleed, it's all written down in the Apostle's Creed. Each singer has just one song. Sing it from the spine, can't get it wrong. Enough! Enough! Don't let my head turn or my attention stray, I have stiff competition yet I give it all away.

My image is "more fractured than Italian politics." Manipulate the familiar to gain power? I refuse. Exploration as a compulsion, creativity as a vice, unpredictability as founding principle, although even quantum leaps can make an educated man yawn, so when in doubt write poems about girls because girls are cute and when I'm boozy I get mushy. Yummy. Attention consensus is what we use, the lowest common denominator to control, abuse. Coca Cola is our ambassador to the rest of the Galaxy. There is nothing special about carbon. We are all carbon beings, that lowest denominator but only 1 trillionth turn to diamonds.

The synthetic and empirical gives way to a priori and eternal. We are reeds wilting in the wind, but the cave sandblasted over decades stands forever but is that what makes the grade for eternity just a huge hollowed out hole?

I need a strong woman who will last. I know there's more out there, outside the cave.

Dinosaurs drive my car! Dinosaurs drive my car! Their extinction expedites my own.

I'm a fossil fool. But it's a useful tool. Pulling us up by our bootstraps, melt a few billion ice caps along the way. Ice cappuccinos... notice how slushy they

are, global warming, yeah that's funny. Cancer? Chalk it up to experience and usher in the era of housemaid robots. Oh progress! We are freed from work! But the reverse is true, each email I send you and I'm shackled to the pew. I would 'reply all' if I could, it's a faster way to goodbye. I'm a sucker for pithy, push me out so I can fly.

Hydrogen gives life it comes from the centre of the sun, but that's like saying 'the basic building blocks of life give us life' you are better saying 'existence exists' or perhaps a single High-C would suffice if we were blind and dumb and senseless. Your Jedi mind trick is called Logos my friend and I know little enough to know my little knowledge is but a seductive debutante seeking to impress. If ephemeral at least be brief. Guilty of prolix metaphysics. If deep, be still.

Validating myself via my own untested discoveries. My empire is a house of cards. Quit teasing me about the fourth dimension (yet another impossible search). We don't worship the sun but we should. As close to an uncaring and guilt-free deity as there is (shares parenting duties with the moon, it's like good-cop bad-cop).

As much as I remember, there is so much uselessness I'm glad to forget. For every ten bad ideas come one good one. To paraphrase a wiser man, to have a good idea, have lots of ideas. Be fruitful and multiply. Waste not want not. Love. In Harmony. Like the Beatles.

I'm a victim of the remote control epoch. Nothing if not a mirror. And the camera has to flip things upsidedown twice to make a picture and I was told two wrongs don't make a right so why should I believe my own eyes?

This constant state of disbelief, I suspend judgment but not incredulity.

Dearth! The Dearth! This perpetual obsession for worth!

Worst Enemy (self-deprecation is an extreme sport)

When you throw yourself against a brick wall
It's gonna hurt
But it feels good too
Feels like something
at least
that's my excuse

I gave my body to that beast
Let her do what she pleased
She tried to eat my brain
I was immersed, eviscerated, swallowed then vomited
Now I sit with a broken neck, out of smiles
What the heck

Next day, I tried to pray
But nothing made her go away
I'm rebuilding myself every fifteen minutes
and the black dog is a permanent houseguest

Sweet

smiling lips
firm on hips
this grip
lock loosen
breathe, then
repeat:
four lips on
lips like
two pair of
ruby sugar tire tubes;

repeat until
too tired
until
chapped
happy and
dazed

Do I need this?

There is enough to do, I don't have to write, there is more magic in these fingers than can be spread out like dark film under a fluorescent light. Suggestions of ideas come to me, word combinations that won't let me be, I work hard for a month but that backlog won't let me rest easy. I sit here and ponder, or meditate, I could self-pity, or self-medicate. Write without thought, while you write to express I write to undress myself so I can sleep; I'm in a hurry unpacking these dirty clothes, wash em through the wordprocessor hanging em here on a wire to let dry, it freezes in strange patterns that the angels must have wanted - it coalesces of its own volition, I don't bother asking why. I discharge my duty and cook my dinner... ever since I moved out the frenzy endless, bending, thankless has made me hungry and thinner.

Please pass my condolences to your former self, he died a lonely death and is there, in that book you wrote two years ago on your mind's eye's shelf.

Souvenir for P

Green and gecked and stuck in a bottle, mottled and rotten, wrinkled and musty. Wander into a party at 4 am and get naked, impromptu photographs rapidly become legendary, etched in anecdotes for posterity, posthumour fame and an irreverent name, but things don't last on the internet, no one can hold a grudge online because we never know who's next in line. I am eminently blackmailable, one of 7 billion swine, so what? Fifteen minutes is all I need, countdown to become ordinary again. Liberate me with the threat of extortion, I have skeletons in my inbox but no no no I don't believe in abortion.

Agincourt - lost notes from the Toronto Guy

Agincourt in summer burns you to the skin, it is a thin layer of nothing that coats suburbia and underneath lie secrets buried. In Scarborough north of the 401 a winding patch of streets, over 60km of sameness, a botched escape from middle class bleak. Parks and churches dot the scape with lush lawns, flowers chopped and manicured and immigrants sing their dream song.

At Midland and Sheppard is the old Knox church from the 1840s or earlier, a stone face for a place to be proud. Agincourt, named for a battle at the whim of an MP, for the sake the first post office in that area, well there are funnier things in history.

The nations congregate and eat dim sum and halal and pakorah, but an old guard enclave still exists and directs a secret aura. The name smacks of respectability although it's a bloody battle, now it's not Henry V or Shakespeare but the rat-race L-train rattle.

From McNicholl to the 401, from Kennedy to McCowan, I wandered streets on Peaches blue for 7 or 8 long hours. I didn't meet a soul who smiled except for one here and there, an occasional oasis of humanity in the stinking summer air.

So much religion
Chinese churches, Hindu temples, anglo bungalows
Everyone knows but will never admit it
Sometimes you have to visit
just to confirm your stereotypes

Kennedy roars in the afternoon,
And Brimley roars in the morning

Sweat stains on my tshirt

Fear of a heart attack on the road
The sunset over the 401 and the two towers above the Scarborough Town
Centre like hope for Siberia, the STC has got a great food court
And I had chicken ceasar salad

Remembering to arch my body
I revert to the bicycle sidewalks of my youth.
I broke my back on concrete
and July was thick and soupy.

It's a Start

I'm done looking for the beginning a poem
for what sets me off

-is it those thousand kisses last night
her soft face, body, heart melting
brown eyes and dimple and for how many hours did we...
(and I felt like Catullus)

or stuck in gridlock and wondering
bout my dad's hometown
and he's in Italy and
I break down

then honking short-short-long 'cause the Leafs won
or the Tim's commercial that sets me off
about the immigrant father and son

or Roy O's ghost and high notes
making me dizzy
or Johnny Cash giving his love to Rose, singing
"take her all my money, tell her 'buy some pretty clothes'"

or slave in a kitchen to feed a homesick man
or sit and make the most
fantastically esoteric jokes
just to prove you can

or liver and onions for the landlady,
"hey I made too much food"
and
"I wouldn't mind a cup of tea, if you're in the mood."

I rhyme til Sunday
to keep you glued
-so you'll listen-
but I know what is proper and
what is sneaky
and I will begin this poem at the beginning.

Just getting warmed up

Sunday night and the way things flow it's hours before we get bored. I can't lie Ms. LadyGlow, you attract me like no other; it's our chance at something special. But you are shy and I'm an unpredictable loon But don't take quirks for a lack of interest; don't fall for the directness of a common thug. Transparency and tallness have their drawbacks. Ignore the echo of your DNA desires - it's time you understood where evolution ought to go. You and I have a future. We could have rhythm to topple those arthritic drones. I like the flutter of your dress, the touch of the fabric, rose-print on silk, and I'm glad you avoid glitter, it's so adolescent.

This first number's fast and made for flirting. Leonard Cohen had to wait but I'm witnessing a miracle in front of me. Your shoes don't move like an Earthling's shoes. Which planet gave you gravity, floating in a circle like Saturn's rings? I can't tell your skin under this light; it's dark chocolate or whip cream or olive with spice. I dance slow at the start but think fast on my feet, I whisper in your ear at a thousand miles an hour - so who needs to shout. I slicked my hair in the bathroom and now I've got my A-game out. Let's be honest, I dance because I like it when you like it. And I like us alone in a crowd. I dance on a mission, and every melody is a mission statement, varies by tempo, buttered with bass. So how much medicine - how many sentences - have I got to tame to make you heel?

Curious Luther McGee (an exercise in shouting)

Sweet cudgels of glory - heaven can't fool an ermine philatelist. Deny yourself no Pez - least not near the solstice. Please, Captain Kippers - yelp if you need a nutcrackin'. Help with the harvest, in this age of delicatessens. Crack to it, mensheviks, we have a deadline. Bossanova under the bridges, and kiss hairsalon Salomé's with lipliner. Dirigibles in the moonlight? Consider me a volunteer! Hosanna to Vesuvius, or truth or dare with Destro. Populate my bandwagon cuz I hibernate no more. Oil fields? Small wonder we flame high!

Okra intrusions - shrimplly insubordination? I scoff at the infestation! I want clean decks for suntanning! Where is my wigwam - I have to urinate. Grim grow the gazpacho chefs. Jellied are the German gargantua, and noodle-necked are the pastamakers. And this is a prism populace, and this is meerkat *la-cucaracha*? Fie fie - I fawn for no one but Dr. Phil. I fake nothing for my patron saint of gruel.

Have we no wine? And who drinks all the Fanta - the phantasms? Shibboleth till Kwanza, I'm spent of phlegm and spork-prone till I drool. Although you're my mother's mirror-image, you stink of catcher's mitt nonetheless; of armpit and pus-of-zit. But I love your *squid pro quo* and I like your tat for tit.

Jezebel. A model girlfriend? I can't answer with clean face or rapier-wit or straight-laces or baldpatedness. Who can curl a cucumber, something so vegetable and straight? Ah... Curious Luther McGee, he is gay times three, but no no no I'll never grow tired of being me.

Child's Pose

stuck in a cog, a motorboat in a bog
a legless frog, nonsense fog

croak at joke, die from scurvy
it's a vitamin sea

mow the lawn with dental floss,
butter your toast with the challahcost
water falls in ball bearings and it's
dimpled lake, remove the makeup from
your face

i'm still amid my sweatpant symphony
who knew my muscles would ache at 30?

is there a way out of this knot - can't afford 80/h for a
conscience cot

stretch that belly
loosen the back
hot bath, warm hug, stay clear of the chug, the drugs
sit, make love to an Ikea rug
pray above, give yourself a shove, tough love
'it's tough love because it's love' and it's
sunshine every sunday; look around, see it - I still
guarantee it

Forgive me Anna

A first stab, a little bit, there is a fly swat against a wall, a poet driving standard and the clutch and the stall, always pushing boulders uphill, always they fall, flat splat insects crushed on a wall. Each painting is identical I refuse to sell them all.

I have the look of a desperate man. I wear black for a reason. Ya, this cave is for outcasts and vigilantes. I'm gonna laugh before sunrise. I am ticklish, don't tickle me because I can be extraordinarily violent.

Yodel till you drop. Grey things are swarming my field of view pockmarked with sheer hooey.

You don't deserve this much consciousness. I control the river. I can shut it off. Why does the river flow in curly-Q's and reaching fingers?

Gibbons swinging and the pumpkin men smiling in crayon, that is my best memory of grade one. Memory full of mementos, a photographic mind, every detail preserved but disposable.

It took me five years to get drunk, enjoy the wine. Hungover for a decade. You don't a thing hiding from sunlight. I knew a girl who told truth that made me shiver. I pushed her away and now I chase her till I die. Forgive me Anna, the only one who did not lie. If you saw me today you'd be so proud. You'd crack a smile or melt into tears. I never forgot you, and it's been years and years and years.

Victim of Doubt

She doesn't know me at all, wish I was tall.
think of her dress, don't place weight on a failure to impress.
Her lips don't move in lockstep with reason, just a little too curious about self-destruction.
No real me, just addiction to irony, epitome of liberty? No. Constrained to this hunk of meat, can't taste ether, or see in ultraviolet either.
I don't smoke, who needs to - surrounded by so many jokes?
Every drawn out conversation could be summed up in a picture. Better to torture each other than produce art.
Why choose? My instincts shine in reaction. Fit myself into every puzzle.
"I am not your rolling wheels; I am the highway."
Hang your head at your failure to love.
Remember tomorrow. Forget yesterday. Think about the present means getting locked in a mirror, lasts forever by extinguishing time and your soul stopped in the headlights. Only love can distract us.
Narcissus - fatally fascinated with his own existence. I guess he didn't love himself enough.
Nothing new here. Old truths are best. Old clothes don't impress, but I welcome every comfortable wrinkle.
You can't plan for an epiphany. Waiting, waiting, waiting.
Pass me the salt. That is love.
This poem is an insurance policy against future disappointment. Wisdom is an insurance policy - or maybe it's preventative maintenance. There is no more profound loss than an unexpected loss. When we leave our bike unlocked there is no blaming the thief.
Act in a rational manner? Impossible with so little information. All life is an incomplete experiment at how to be happy - if only I knew everything, I would plant my garden right and everyone would eat the fruit. Let's play. The dice were loaded from the beginning. I'm the last to leave the table, stuck my whole life paying the bill for Original Sin. Garnish my salary or I'll wash dishes in the kitchen forever. Look at the bright side though - fig-leaves are in style and the apple was delicious.

You Who Open The Doors (fun in the big city)

your attempts on my life
will not be met with silence
tomorrow I ride with a bucket of pirahnas, and
give your head a soak

cabbies on College - your brainpower is lacking
instruct thy passengers to scan well upon egress!
metal on fingers is not pleasant
me eating your rear-view mirror is wrong

Dundas and Spadina - yikes
Chinatown will be my graveyard
I prefer blindness to stupidity
blindfolk at least can hear my horn

my helmet's not meant to dent your chrome;
I'm hopped on adrenaline and will mess up your face.
I swear at you, I feel better
- can outrage penetrate your plush sedan?

Avenue and Bloor (run over by a truck)

I had another nightmare
- I called 9-1-1
to save your life
could have done more
grabbed your broken body and
screamed murder at the traffic
you ambushed from behind rolling
end over end under metal and rubber

you exploding all over the walk
red fountain horror from the knees
adrenaline holds you up, together
everything points in the wrong direction

everything ok?
you're gonna be ok
sir - please, tell me your name
he can't remember his own name
head injuries and internal bleeding

I didn't see it
could have happened to me; it happens
I
guess I know I
live in the big city

ambulance arrives in minutes
but he just kept screaming
"I'm not doing so good"
yeah yeah yeah goddammit you
got
run over by a truck.

Drunken Garbage Man

I'm the drunken garbage man
piles and piles
teetering on my trolley
The truck stops here
at the bottom of the food chain
don't give a rat's ass, I
mix recycling with the trash
rolling my wagon 'round city hall
clear benches with the stench
plastic bags, metal box, diarrhea diapers and
(probably) trace amounts of smallpox; now my
hands are sticky with slime and sugar from
someone's half-chewed cherry lollipop

Here's a stack of crumpled tins
unearthed remains of onion rings
a little gold mine: a tenth-filled
whiskey skin - who drunk the other nine?
doesn't matter, I'm thirsty and it's mine

I'm the garbage man and
Crazy Lou keeps asking me the time
excuse to strike up conversation
- he's so lonely and he's never late
Old Lou, he'll ask what's
under the trash but
I won't tell about my little stash
and don't ever ask what's under the grate

Makeout kiddies make me smirk
Skater Boy is a pain
and there's a skinny punk writer I'd
like to shove
he sits on top of Receptacle 9
and pretends to fall in love

I wore gloves but they
slowed me down
I wore noseplugs but only after work I realized
how bad was the smell
and
I wore black shoes cuz they didn't scuff
but smudge is least of my worries; you

should see some of this radioactive stuff

I don't know why they hired me,
but
no one will ever fire me
unionized, boy
sure don't take much brain
but someone's got to haul the trash
today
and it won't be you
and i guess it's me
though it's hot and sweaty, and my supervisor Freddy
doesn't even know my name
I'm paid \$25.50 an hour
but brother it's not enough
when you deal in shit you dream in diamonds and
heaven's not enough

Smell The Roses

In the pouring rain
in the Monday morning rush
we talked for an hour in my head;
I was that guy
cycling on the sidewalk with an
open umbrella
though I was soaked
to the bone already so
- why dry out in vain?
dignity, it
slows me down I
know

but I
don't get pleasure from
solving these mysteries
cant dwell on dying or the rain
- prefer endless epiphanies, exiting
every cul-de-sac through secret garden escapes

I left out pieces
on purpose,
it's what I
always do,
I'm not lazy nor can't not leave twisted thoughts for you but
I give you credit, the wonder you are
and
in five years' time when
it finally makes sense I
won't gloat at how you
figured it out but will be
ready
with an uncondescending kiss on the
lips that
was yours all along, and
that - that kiss -
is something I will have
immensely missed.

(it's a whirlpool
flowing in a circle with different levels to skip
between
a cotton-candy spinning machine

sugar and magnets make it
crystallize so
sweetly on the tongue)

Monday evening and still
raining
the city calm after 24 years of fire,
washed out in downpour, extinguishment
oh
to desire no more, except the
satisfaction of a
clean slate

I'm preparing each day;
some days napping but
some days I'm painting the walls
twenty thousand and twenty-two shades of blue
- just for you

I lost my title along the way
smelling roses, tracking butterflies
stomach fears chasing rabbits down a hole
but
is this Wonderland?
It's not every day I feel so
lucid:

sometimes the joy is palpable, bright red with
orange streamers, shuttling through dusk in a
shiny purpleblue carapace
- indestructible to
frowns and whispers

I can't do this in a vacuum
I'll stick everything in
formaldehyde if I must, if
words can't live free in your heart, I'll
tie em down on paper
like every educated
caveman, hunting my
mammoth in mammoth-cliques with a big drunken stick, oh
to flame once high, twice,
thrice before burning out!

I see no end to the rain, but I
see you're impatient so

don't wait up -
I've got the whole field to enjoy. And
tomorrow the desert blooms in kaleidoscope
and that smell of morning mist
seducing the
Sahara as
the cracked dead earth weeps
colours and double-rainbows encircle the
storm

What makes you so special

I was thinking about what made you so special. Now I don't want these words to be pure sugar, as that nauseates every tongue. But I was thinking about why for example the sun parts in rays just for you. And what power you hold over the weather, and always so dramatic every time you arrive it's either lightning and soaked skin or cherryblossom breezes drying dewdrops off toenails; you don't get caught in in-betweens. Something fascinating about extremes, not that we get so bored with moderation, maturity, mediums or every other kind of M (the exact middle of the alphabet). That weather, or the tone in your voice - it's the way you exhaustively answer the most mundane question, as though no one else in history has ever asked it. You turn the razor attention of that mind on my eyelash, and my stomach turns in knots. If a poem could be written about swatting a fly with a Buick, well ... oh there I go again about extremes. But I'm avoiding my initial problem, that of your peculiar quality. Is it your teeth - such fine teeth. Why is there so much emphasis on this planet about beautiful teeth? I'd rather have a cast-iron femur, guaranteed never to snap (something about certain death from massive internal bleeding). I'd rather have skin like a rhinoceros. I can eat meals through a straw if I have to, I don't need shiny teeth, pearly whites, gate to your mouth your weapon of expression, your voice constant and reassuring like waves lapping against my cottage dock in mid July.

But no, it was never anything physical. And that too is cliché. I can't call you special if I describe it in clichés. No, I need different phrases, like big pointy purple things, large orang-utan bands playing the banjos and hell maybe a fruit smoothie so damn smooth it's like someone kicked me in the nuts with a half-litre of banana-pureed nutritional delirium - those kind of images could possibly be a start; though it's ridiculous I can find therein the sublime, the underlying *ne plus ultra* of your speciality. I can't resort to nature, the weather, physical footnotes or any other kind of archaeological cluebook the romantics fall back on. Give me my orangutan band and a ticket out of the solar system - there're comets passing through every 86 years that don't get worn out by this planet's hackneyed explanations. Just passing through bearing gifts from Proxima Centauri, so much travelling you've done, just want to learn from your latest adventure.

Sometimes I wonder if you actually exist. Remember that game we played as kids - when we turned our back to the room and wondered if it was still there behind us? These were epiphanies - entire philosophies - disguised as hide-and-seek. I get that feeling when you're gone from my life; not quite sure it was just a trick, not sure whether what I believed left any indelible meaning. And maybe I should apologize for my lack of faith - but if I could count on miracles they'd stop being miracles, and it's pretty predictable where you'll find me: in death valley. Then you come back and the universe has wheels again, clocks

resume ticking, the entire dictionary reads like a single shop-sign declaring 'open for business'. Church bells repeat your name and I spend all morning going gaga, spilling ink for cappuccino froth with cinnamon and a saucy wink from somebody's long-legged sister - and that's as close to heaven as I need. Did I mention the wink from that waitress? Thank you thank you-she's smokin hot but also witty, warm, and she actually knows how to read.

I can sketch a series of images, I still won't capture it: I gotta slice you up, section by section, trap you on a microscope slide (the goal of science is to use genius to eliminate all possibility for imagination, and oh the sad ingenuity that requires, the dedication to explanatory blandness; I don't have it). I'm afraid I don't want to reach my intended destination. Much too much of a digression, I'm completely guilty of procrastination.

So -

What makes you special - you turn each of us into a complete fool.

Plus - there's that delicate flip of your rose-scented wrist, casting light in a tunnel and glowing in my iris. Pointing the way with a chuckle, halfway between a slap and a kiss.

What makes you special is your cast and crew, this insane retinue, and I've gone black and blue cataloguing everything they do. Sometimes they blindside me, other times I am grateful to borrow their eyes, step outside my shell and float. Out of body experience? Fuck no - I'm clearly out of my mind, and what I mean is that I get to be in someone else's. An honour and a privilege.

What makes you special is that 883 days ago I dedicated everything up here to you - and somehow you keep pulling me - I'm pulling it - through. I don't just feel like I'm showing off, because I know I'm really humble and besides - it was you who asked me to.

Pelican man, I [heart] you.