





Portraits



by Robert



for Nele and Ben



(untitled)

Thank you very much Paul
I go by Christopher these days
I feel like a new man
Have a great day
Thank you very much Pablo
Have a great day

- so we'll have the guy ask the driver...
and then there'll be deep silence
and then he'll say take me home
and then he'll say I don't really have
money for a tip
and then there'll be another silence
it just really feels right

Spend the Night

Dull-yellow gecko
on my wall,
how much will you charge?

- gone while I showered

chcem mercedes

niekedy sa hodím niekde
aj keď neviem ako dopadnem

bojím sa menej,
keď pred skokom
si obzriem priestor okolo nôh
a
vidím
dno.

Eli Eli

He was sitting there, eating his food. The restaurant was half-full. People finishing up, others arriving. He despised his situation. The waiters were men having conceded: this was it. This was it. He'd come close to a new life, another chance: now he was in the restaurant, waiting for dessert. He was going to kill himself. As if protest were an appeal someone heard.

Picking

प्रदीप
and
Robert
by the emerald
ruin pool
Women in the field,
Pradeep is ten years old
The field is now flat
a roll-roller idle on it
the women work every day,
slowly
picking at growth
the roll-roller doesn't serve much
E. Rasheed, Engineer & Contractor, is absent
a banana grove beyond.

The pool is placid

Notre Paris

De Paris je rêve à Montpellier.

Demain comme avant. Petite ville.

petit rêve

light blue

my baby doesn't care
oh, my baby doesn't care

my baby doesn't care
she's having an affair.

Family Time

On the seventh day
Dad's destroyed
We're having another great Sunday
Some cunts go to church
We sit here
Mum's possibly doing a line
The vodka diet cokes
Follow
One
After the other
God
You failed
Haha look at Dad
Let's leave the barman no tip
Fuck Europe
Ha Ha Ha

2.

Le matin elle se lève.

Ce vent revenu.

Seule elle retrouve sa place.

Ráno stáva.

Táto zima.

Rieka bez konca.

War of her brothers.

She finds.

Back

And they don't change.

We are mice, he says. They give my mother so little she barely covers heating, let alone food; we use gas, he clarifies.

A group of us ran, he continues; I lost my brother.

Father hanged from the kitchen beam.

I was small.

I am going to get even, he says.

I am going to go back.

Faith is blind. As sightless as a drive through snow falling so thick it has overtaken every inch of the windshield.

Turning to your right you see the person there at that time.

Then, on a day when weather could be late-fall clement or clear as pink sunsets an unexpected other sits by your side or walks into a room and you are together.

Add an engaging title

I think you are very attractive and I positively absolutely think you are a lady that is not interested in an affair, hm?, like sex and that kind of thing.

I listen to a lot of podcasts.

Can I hug you? Ukrainian ladies are very pretty, I know I don't know why. And Ukrainian men, they all don't take care of themselves. But Ukrainian ladies are very pretty.

Everybody has thousands of friends on Facebook, and the German population is in decline. Can I hug you?

You need to have focus. And you need certainty, you need certainty because you are insecure - not just you, everybody.

I come from a family where we hug a lot - especially my sister and my mother.

Did I try to kiss you, no, I did??

Not my father, that is why I am uncomfortable hugging men.

Now I want to go to Ecuador, I don't pay rent in Ecuador, then to Santa Monica. In between, if I can, I will go to Cuba.

Look, I meet a lot of ladies, I meet a lot of ladies but not those I find interesting. Look I look on Facebook, and I see, she is having fun, but she is lonely.

He was a violent man, you should have seen how he beat my sister.

I do not know you, but your energy you cannot hide. But enough, enough enough. I know it's going fast.

I left when I was seventeen.

When I want something, say I want to go to New York, I go. I don't wait.

I was born in the mountains. If you're not strong, you die. There are wolves, that come and eat your dogs.

I want a lady I can do sports with. Start listening to German music. Very few people understand. For example if you know someone like me you can learn Spanish. Yo quiero un cafe, I want a coffee, Yo quiero viajar. If you are persistent enough, for like three months, you can learn. Sometimes I want to step on the gas, and run him over, you know?

The system is not good.

I know, we shouldn't do this. It's normal. Me when I do this I don't even think, it's natural. Don't worry, nobody knows you here. I'm a banker. When I think about where I come from I smile and I am very proud. My brother is a banker at the Deutsche Bank.

Now I'm going to kiss you.

Futility of Art

If you do not change

you will _____

A Brother

I had misintoxicated myself.

Pills, the Doctor said.

Business aside he shared his excitement in the news of his daughter's return from the Mississippi where she had finally started disliking black people.

The past, he empathized, is to blame.

Athena

Rick took a bath. For an hour he lay in the tub.

Athena, his woman. They had met on a bustling autumn day on the square. She in a long-coat had caught his eye.

He in dark blue attire but that was not how they met.

Athena sat in black skirt black stocking black shoes on the edge of Rick's bed. He had been abandoned before. Another other. Transported by the roll of an imaginary bodhrán he held the door.

Athena walked out. In the South he had met so many nice people.

Is Rick honest?

Intelligence

How I wish I could turn back time, texted Johnson, on the beach.

Receiving the electronic message was Johnson's mistress, Ronda. She was sipping on a beer, at home.

No shit.

death will be welcome

a part in me still wants to sing
that is the part I want to hold on to
a glimmer in me knows love is around the corner
always getting up
because friendship exists
a part in me wants the role of man
animal
sky
a part in me is never alone.
a part in me still wants to sing
an ember in me needs to be part of something
like the river
around my laid back body
on its bed

The Night Wendel Shot Mike

Small towns are never what one expects them to be. They house normal people, like in the city. There, people have dreams and projects in various stages of development, uninhibited by option availability. Small town people dig deep.

On September 5th, in a town so small it need not be named, Wendel, a grocer, killed his dog, Mike.

Mike had been his best friend. Wendel had gotten special authorization to bring Mike to university with him: he'd helped him learn.

Growing up, Wendel had had a younger brother named Mike. Mike had been gay, obvious even in childhood. Wendel named his puppy Mike to remember his brother.

The night Wendel shot Mike, the moon shone onto the yard.

It took Wendel an hour to dig the hole.

Winds Bent Grass

(Harried Tale One)

In the House of _____ all is beyond the small, vulgar and needy. Grandpa, now dead, once father and protector, had not had it easy, as a child. As a man, father and protector, he would see no more pain, no suffering – and see he did. Times were hard, and Grandpa had put money aside; money, it so appeared, was easily put aside when not spent. And money could buy things, the latter action, buying things, being secondary. Having the possibility to buy mattered. What they thought – the way a man was perceived – mattered... they. They. Having... real estate. Real estate. Something concrete. And so, times were hard: evictions, layoffs, foreclosures – not Grandpa's problem, but opportunity. Like in Ameri___. And so the House of _____ became free.

Grandpa had already married, when he became rich. There were setbacks to this, but you can't have it all, Grandpa would recall. An old Je_ had once told him this: You can't have it all. Amen. As for his son... Grandpa did not know what to think of him, the kid was alright, but a mother's boy. It was weird, sometimes it was as if there were something sexual between the kid and the mother.

The kid (Hans) and his old man did not get on well. It could even be said Hans hated him. And none of the fundamentals of this changed. Grandpa died, paralyzed by fear and every possible disease, after eighteen years of misery, on a Saturday afternoon. Hans was still young, so to speak, but he was soft, as his father had suspected (though he had not been involved sexually with his mother). Most of all Hans had gotten used to working for fun. And most of the time work hurt. So Hans, of whom we will only speak for one paragraph, acted (he was a man who, when decided, moved without hesitation), putting all that value under management, by people who knew how to handle transactions, guys for whom transacting was an art. Thus it was Hans secured money for his family, as Grandpa had dreamed, forever. No one, not his son, Rick, nor his daughter, Ute, would ever have to work again.

Seasons drifted by: summers saw upheavals, golf being played on the moon, spaceships that looked as if they had been made of cardboard, but when warm winds bent long grass across fields all was the same again.

Ute graduated from the prestigious and alternative high school program she had been enrolled in aboard the very same boat the program had been held on. They, of course, were not always on the boat, her and the four other people enrolled. The graduation had been beautiful. Seas were calm. Ute was really into classical music. No one (for all practical purposes) listened to, played in or enjoyed her get-togethers but that suited her. She also held unparalleled affection for all things R_s_i_n. Rus__n culture, _u_s_a_ thinking, etc.

Rick smoked weed, secretly.

And Ute made two children: Larry and his sister. Seasons trundled on. Late fall was less easy to feel than even early mid-fall. Leaves no more. Alcohol. Larry made friends, gave money and executed. He was the brain. Larry's sister was lazy, thick and prone to violent behavior. She married late, a guy who repaired computers, expected nothing, enjoyed wine and saw eye-to-eye with his better three-quarters on politics.

By Far the Most Interesting

Man in a suit eating lunch quietly
intense secrets he tells no one
silently spiteful
working on a project at home.

Outside

Music

(or just) Over the Walls of the Maze

Larry had been abused at the tender age of eleven. He tried telling his loved ones about it. They did not care.

So he ran away. Into the abyss of his mind, to begin with.

In school he kept to himself. Look at that lonely boy, his classmates would say, he must be a loser. Larry knew the answer to that chemistry problem, chemistry was simple. No point in answering, though. Much simpler than life.

His classmates played basketball, a nice sport without too much contact. And girls liked basketball.

Life at home was worse than the abuse.

Popa worked in an office. Larry was told by Ma that Popa wrote things on paper because these things needed to be written. Just what this was, and how Popa came about this expertise, Larry knew not. Ma, though, wanted to believe that there was something in this and that was good enough for Larry; it had to be.

Ma said the Economy was bad: this was something Larry could not wrap his mind around. Someone or other had said: It's the economy, Stupid! and Popa made a point of this on a regular basis and he, Larry, was not stupid. But for the life of him Larry could not understand how this economy decided things.

Popa was always very serious - when times are hard men must be serious and when times are easy men must be serious, life will be hard again.

Maybe the economy had been abused.

Sometimes - when Larry sat on the carpet in his room and he watched wind move leaves on the tree outside - he felt normal.

Ma worked on a headset connected to a computer. She called so many people every day that people would often stop talking to her before she finished her first sentence, and this increased the number of people she called, because she had to call people without stopping. Ma said she had to be happy with every single person, even the really bad ones (because they were customers) but the upside was that it developed her character. Much later in life, when Larry was old and Ma died, Larry learned that Ma had been intensely medicated throughout most of her life. Maybe she had been abused. On the day of the funeral Earl told him Ma ingested, is the term Earl used, twelve pills every day when she worked on a computer.

Work was as important to Larry's parents as Larry's abuse at a tender age, and the secrecy of this unexplainable matter, were to Larry.

Earl was a party animal. He was Larry's older half-brother by two-and-a-half years. Earl was high a lot.

Every morning Larry woke with euphoria on his mind, a yearning for possibility, a new day, to discover that the maze ended things.

Fuck this shit,
Larry told
himself
and he crept
out
of his mind,
over
the walls of the maze,
and
into
economy
and
basketball.

Thus,
some say,
Larry ran
away,
for real,
in
the end.

Rules,
they say.

Larry had been abused at the tender age of eleven. It hurt, he remembered, maybe.

No one wanted to hear about it so Larry depressed.

Pa was devastated, too. Maybe he had been abused.

At times Larry listened to jazz.

And the economy was bad.

Over the walls of the maze, thought Larry.

Over the walls of the maze.

**How I Brought Down the Soviet Union
(Pavel's Story)**

I brought down the Soviet Union.

But I can't tell you.

A Penalty

It wasn't a penalty, he told his mother.

There was nothing she could say. He was drunk: he had been drunk for a number of years now.

It wasn't a penalty, he repeated threateningly. What exactly he threatened to do was unclear, though he was on the verge of tears and a full breakdown.

She did not want him to fall apart, there and then, in front of her. It wasn't, she reassured him.

**Jak jsem rozložil Varšavsku smlouvu
(Příběh, další)**

Rozložil jsem Varšavsku smlouvu.

Povím Ti později.

Home again

She was sitting on a picnic bench, alone.

The weather had turned again. It was snowing and a light carpet covered the otherwise neon-speckled collection of expired project.

Now Central and Eastern Europe it stood for republics bridging investment East. Business was good; the nerds were moving in. Things hadn't changed.

Her pulse was high and her breathing cut up; fear had found her again. But that was the excess and the solitude - it was a New Year after all, and the City was waiting but again she drifted. Some things hadn't changed: the familiar smell of pollution, which like a father's aftershave recalled childhood; the simplicity of cement.

Businessmen brought money and with money came a cornucopia of twists and perks, unexpected invitations to colorful events full of people you saw on television. The mood felt new as well. It covered the harder surface and the end result was a blend of tough-skinned pessimism and contagious happiness; hopelessness and a chronic propensity to distribute energy.

Business

You see, business is about making sure you take a dollar ten for every dollar you give.

The Blue-footed Booby was astounded, as if her life had come to an immediate stop. I thought it was about some strangely intricate concept whereby two dollars come and a dollar goes, which is difficult to understand she said.

You're naïve.

Quietly hopping home the Blue-footed Booby was wrapping her mind around the news her Best Friend had just thrown in her face when what-do-you-know Oldo shows up.

He was enthused, wearing white jeans and in no apparent hurry.

Change

The year was 1965. Black people were multiplying.

We used to swim in the river.

Close

Hey Man, where do you come from?

What country?

Hey I'm not a guide.

Where are you staying?

I'm walking there.

Shiva, lots of people come here to celebrate Shiva.

Do you want chocolate opium balls?

Something natural.

Good for you.

Here it's all about natural.

How long you stay here more?

One ball you can turn around six times.

Relaxed, no backlash.

Chocolate balls made by my Grandmama.

Opium from my Grandmama.

Soft stuff, natural, 3000. Not the hard stuff from China. 9000.

I can see it in your eyes.

About Bernard

I won't build suspense; nine years down the road Bernard shot himself. But before then, he encountered complications. He once picked rocks on abandoned fields of expectation.

Bernard worked in fireball, July heat. Unusual heat he did not suspect to be a consequence of fossil fuel consumption. His thoughts would hover on his friends; working in cafes, making more money, smooth-talking lady bees that worked at the bar... why exactly was he there? Damn. Those fields had no end. Looking back, he saw just as many stones as before. Sometimes it looked as if they'd multiplied.

Possibly noticing, Papa Bee flew right in on his four-wheeler and provided a sincere expression of shock, disappointment and urgency. "What is this... good God." Non-conflictive, he acknowledged Bernard's failure, "I thought you'd be done last week." Candid, he admitted, "Summer's coming to an end. I just don't know what's going to happen if we don't get this done."

Dead silence had fallen for what seemed like twelve firm seconds, but was barely two; a single crow resounded, and Papa Bee confessed, "When I was a young bee, I picked garbage for four summers to put together a piece of shit bicycle, I called it Piece of Shit. It sure looked bad..." he sank, "- but now!" Blushing, merging distress and satisfaction Papa Bee concluded, "look what we have now."

Contrast

A woman, out of love with her man, comes home. It does not feel like home anymore. Love used to bring her comfort: now she can't sleep. Outside, a hostile world more welcoming than the sight of her kitchen. Tomorrow she is going to quit her job.

Randolph, her man, loves his life. In the morning he strolls downstairs and sets the percolator on Super Fast. Coffee makes his morning needs fluid and pleasant. He would not change anything. Especially not the little asian whore he balls on his desk at nine.

Idle-morning Mood Selfie

(a polite fuck off)

This is a three-quarter-funny story about a girl who decided that she was going to try and be nicer.

Plants she used to own.

Time flew.

Minus the not-so-genuine salutations, was what she ended on now, taking her relations with people to a more honest level.

So Anglo-Saxon this life she thought. How does one do not to express hesitation in writing?

Uncle Dave

Uncle Dave walked into the boardroom. The others were already seated, waiting, busy with handheld devices, working while working. Double-billing was not unusual; someone once triple-billed, putting in time on a flight to a destination servicing two clients.

Casual regards exchanged.

They called him Uncle because he was someone they could go to. He had been heading the company for seven years and numbers were impressive. Now they were used to having sector peers acknowledge them before they had provided such acknowledgement themselves. It was not going to be a usual meeting as the market had slowed and the atmosphere was marked, by question marks. Encroachment of uncertainty but Uncle Dave had entered the room and they could feel his energy.

Sit. Throat clear. Shuffle.

"Good morning." The meeting had been launched.

"It's nice to see everyone up so early," Uncle Dave liked to remove tension. He addressed key issues and the agenda was respected: a quick glance at the day's schedule, perceptive summary of global development, clear information on where they stood. Uncle Dave was an engineer.

And so the meeting proceeded according to schedule and presenters succeeded each other with slides projecting growth in the mid-to-long-term range. Bolder estimates would at times conflict but all confirmed increased demand.

"Early valuation will require aggressive positioning."

"Absolutely. Do we stand ready?"

"Equity!"

"Yes."

On Sunday Dave's daughter would be seventeen.

Having obtained consensus Uncle Dave gave the floor to the lunch-slot Guest Speaker: a political man.

"After several years of high returns the tide is turning, I'm afraid we may not enjoy finance," the politician's discourse was predictably bearish and the mood intensified. "Research shows that our electorate has different priorities - half do not understand basic concepts..."

"Ha!"

"Ha, Ha, Ha," and the tension dissipated. "Chairman..." they of course never referred to him as Uncle, "it has been suggested..." and the meeting proceeded, again predictable, almost immune to the clock.

**Light Gray, Off-Gray, Pink Gray, Almost-Black Gray, Blue Gray,
Olive Gray, Steel Gray of a Sweater, Pale Morning Green-Blue
Gray of Chipped Plaster, Perfect Gray Railing and a Purple Kite**

little gods on a roof
sunrise over the river of renewal
smog hides all on a clear morning
but the far riverbank, boats
and their idle men, blurred

a man hawks up sediment
street dogs finish up the last round
leaving the older, weaker and sick
there, on a street that will feel it nip
at the heel with its last gasp
and pour a glass
of dishwater on it -
go do that somewhere else.
better men burn on higher ground here
and when their thorax is so charred
even tendons are gone, and when
what was once a smile - all that
makes a smile - eyes, cheeks, shining
tip of a nose - is a cavity
and the head nods
taupe, yes taupe cerebral matter
exits said abyss.
a slobbering exclamation of the long
gone departing
goodbye!
then men on this riverbank sift through
ashes cooled for jewelry or other
accessory of no use.
monkeys on rooftops.
all is gray here
under the sun

for Michelle

A faint smell of
autumn, as if we
weren't in the city,
but in the past of a
tomorrow hoped for,
pure, like children
who'd managed to
get far.

Lunch

On his way to lunch Larry crossed the street. There was no one in there, that early.

It was 12:09 now. Someone was bound to come in. Would he eat a burger or a cheeseburger.

Oh, Larry felt like a beer.
Outside cars passing by.
People passing by.

>

Fear, burn like a
wicker in a glass
cup on a
grandparents'
resting place, on a
night when even
the dead need you
to go away.

Choses de couleurs

C'était un samedi. On était allé à chasse.

Le bois canadien c'est du bouleau, des ruisseaux, du sapin en masse. Des geais bleus, autres choses pleines de couleurs et des suisses. Quand on est jeune on tue pour voir comment ça marche.

En après-midi, Julie faisait une fête, dans son sous-sol (chez ses parents).

En arrivant on lui a remis un sac en plastic. C'est un suisse, mets-le dans le congélateur, merci.

On était pas trop vie sociale.

Advice

If you can
don't come back
It's cold here
youth looks different
and leaves
are red, orange
and yellow

Scavenging Dinosaurs At Each Other's Throats

(Harried Tale Two)

Now, I'm going to tell you a story while drinking. First two sips, in.

I saw vultures on high plains of Florac (or up on the crest of one of the ranges of the valley it lies in). Now I didn't know we had vultures in Europa (note the mood: I'm playful - no more gloom).

So I'm on these plains and in the middle a silver pine plantation grows. A vast expanse, the plain. The sky is covered, so the too white sun for white men is not shining. It's August, the wind is light, warm and constant; it feels as if I've entered a porthole. These could be the high plains of New Mexico, or its whereabouts. For far, very far, the plains extend: not a soul in sight. Rolling valleys extending on the horizon, all around. A path veers in the general direction of the pines. The wind keeps my now too long hair aloft, caressing my neck.

I imagine Comanches appearing over a hill, yonder. I kill two, because my superior rifle and my skill as a shot, horse knowing I need it to ride perpendicular to the oncoming rush, crossing over to my right, enable me to. Then I ride (to a fort, bla bla) like the wind.

I'm in the pine grove. This could be Canada. Or Sweden. I've never been to Sweden.

And down the road I hear screeching. A ruckus, as one can imagine a herd of scavenging dinosaurs at each other's throats over a carcass would make: it's loud. I'm afraid - though it looks like it's coming from just around the bend, where farmland appears. I see large wings. Could someone be farming some ostrich-like giant turkeys, or something, going insane? Should I continue - the path cuts right through... The edge of the grove and its dark green outline prevent me from seeing but the screeching has reached murderous level.

Something flies or leaps over the path.

Vultures.

Amazing. I'd just seen a wildlife sign a few hours before informing that vultures indeed dwelled here. But here they were - Magnificent!

Overhead two soar (by now I was at the grove's edge and the ruckus had hovered a few tens of meters down the road). But two soar overhead. One flapping its impressive wingspan, away, the other making a sharp u-turn, fifteen feet overhead, gliding slowly over my exact position. A curious and fearless individual. I had seen this with penguins. Penguins don't make you freeze.

What am I going to do? Tuck, roll, in a flash right-left scramble upon impact? No need. It examined my position. Knowing I could not fly.

Demi two.

Someone once told me a guy with a good arm he knew used to fill his pockets with baseball-sized rocks when navigating through a pass. Cougars (the animal) would occasionally prowl over the ledges, and they could be insisting, fearless as well. So after three or four well-placed rockets the cat would back off, posing no danger to the navigator, and lady. I think. I pick up a baseball-sized rock. I feel silly. Vultures don't attack people. Or did I skip a page, or switch channels, when the exceptional case came up. I feel disrespectful. Fuck it. CYA, cover your ass. They're watching me, the ruckus is as loud as ever, insanity, one flies off. Another follows. I drop my rock, not needing to look like an idiot anymore - I step forward, they are not panicked but one by one they fly off. The chatter of the small birds in the pines I sadly cannot name dies down.

My walk is ongoing. Houses or farmhouses or some kind of more-expensive-than-cheap room-for-rent in a tightly knit hamlet break the spell: it's August, 2014. I need to get back. I've wandered again and the day is ending: the sun-location is hard to identify. But I just gave it a hard time: it doesn't owe me.

It's ten to, says the waiter who's asked me to sit at the right terrace. Ten to what? I ask him a little too directly for smaller town etiquette. Seven, he says - I smile.

**Try not to get raped unless you already have in which case try not to have bad things happen again
(American days)**

Steve and me
on the Greek place
talking about alcohol
and sex

and an ill elderly
woman pushes him
out
of her way

and she spits in his direction
and he turns
and he tells her to shape
up and he spits at her

and we resume.

Dimmer-lit Rooms

- A play in three scenes and a visual/auditive/olfactory interlude

1.

Art walks into an apartment.

On a low table by the right-hand wall a lamp is lit.

Who are you?

I am the one to whom something is owed.

2.

A student walks out of a class: Thinking and Syntax: why did he go there.

A message reads: Art is with me.

...

The metropolitan transport system car is bustling with people; some in conversation, others expressionless.

Ambient music pervades the air.

The city smells familiar.

...

3.

A new life.

Is the student running away?

Is the visitor from scene one (Art) owed?

Is she gone?

Epilogue

Pleasantly bright lighting lights both stage and audience.

(Curtains)

West the Sunset

Birds flying east encounter difficulties.

Love is the fabric of life, they say.

to carl

i'm sitting in the train, going to Budapest
to meet carl and in front of me sits a woman, her skin
is clear and she eats like she should
so she probably likes men; her face
is a sea

reflecting light
and i'm staring at her breasts.
getting caught would make me feel rude -
Carl! she is beautiful.

Sunward

because you can't go faster than life

growing

at its pace

around garbage

Mellowing

Immature thirty year olds drive too fast. As such they cannot stand traffic.

Owning up to responsibility is not something Randall knew how to do. He knew how to party and how to be late, and how to work himself out of complications, but keeping pace with his fellows was not something he knew.

He blamed his upbringing and the system.

He moved a lot - Randall perceived himself as a high-energy person, an eccentric man. Not a failed adult.

On the other hand, churches were ancient, so old people took them for granted, thinking they would be around forever, like plastic. But in a way, like old people, churches behaved like infants on a regular basis: hoarding of things, sleeping in the afternoon, etc.

Thus, Randall and church paths crossed. On a windswept morning Randall was driving to the office when traffic upon which he happened stood so still Randall's hair grew. Flinging his sunglasses aside he cursed, twice, got a hold of the steering wheel with both hands, just as the instructor had showed him - ten and two - and he shook as hard as he could. But traffic did not budge, only his upper body rocked to and fro.

Why should he move for people if people did not move for him. So upset he was he left the engine running.

Storming up the church stairs Randall thought, God, if there was ever a time I needed you, this is it! and he pulled open the heavy door.

Alone.

A staircase spiraled downstairs. Below, humidity slowed his breathing. To his left, torchlit inscriptions: Brother Rick, 1391-1491. To his right, someone else; and thus, for as far as torches lit, Randall's people lay.

Visit by Softness

I am what I will have been, affirmed Wilson. It was a confident affirmation.

Wilson was South and had rented a room by the beach.

That particular morning was usual: ant cereal, watching miniature ants crawl over the cereal.

Dragging his feet wishing someone was watching he walked into another day of blazing sunshine, about to lament the unkempt state of the gate when the absence of pain struck.

Life was back he rejoiced secretly and the gravel crunched under his knees as he sobbed uncontrollably – he was alive! Alive! In a different light he stepped back inside and closed the door.

Lemonade

1.

Her mother was right: Dave was wrong. How can a man who can't mow the lawn or make money love?

She had graduated from a college that had cost her father real money, with honors; she had interviewed.

And then David.

2.

What an asshole.

But he made her laugh and that made her forget her father.

They, his friends (losers but nice guys) and the two of them, enjoyed themselves: weekend getaways, synthesized beats in Playa del Carmen.

Then war and the economy exploded. Or did the latter go first. Who cares. She lost her job. Nobody cared about her resume anymore. Her network turned up to be worth less than what her father had paid for.

She gained weight.

Where was her man when she needed him.

In the living room eating pizza was Dave.

Her family had been important. Wealth and knowledge had flowed in their stream for generations and she had added to that knowledge with education and things.

3.

It, her house, felt empty.

4.

She met Randal at the gym.

The River

The story of a woman who's drawn downriver into a narrow and rocky pass and there's nothing she can do about it, her arms are limp from rowing upstream, even her fear is receding, for it has worn her mind to its limits. Perhaps that which is drawing her is death? Why then is something in her so excited about what she'll find and feel there – what it'll be like to be there? Surely it must be related to living. Either way, no point in making a fuss. Maybe if she rows downstream.

All feels wrong now: maybe something's right.

How can I make this go faster, she thinks – she's tried, nothing left but to wait... This can't be the only way – maybe if she jumps overboard? make herself do something.. Her latest thought feels silly; she can't even be bothered with tormenting herself anymore.

Let the river tell you, a voice whispers.

You who are reading this, does this sound plausible?

Decisions are hard to make.

Another Twenty Years

Bipolarity doesn't exist.

Bad decisions

and alcohol do.

Company

A twelve year old sat writing what looked like poetry on the lawn chair next to me by the lake. I sat smoking bio cigarettes I made myself inhale because the very small beer – a boc – I drank just before was so poorly served smoking, or doing anything destructive I could lay my hands on, was just about the only thing I could do, now that God had again intervened to help me (the bar was closed, Monday evenings the owner'd explained as he locked up, the bar is closed).

You write, I asked the young man. Yes, he said, I'm working on a report, I'm a scout, and we have to report on each of the last three days. But one day I'd like to be a writer.

Then he turned to a younger boy, and he said, you see, if I had color pencils now I'd draw that – he pointed to the sun, which had just set beyond the hill opposite the lake, reflecting off clouds, as if by telling his friend he could do something for him.

Silence set in and I decided I did not need to finish the cigarette. Anger was again receding.

Use words, I suggested. Not a bad idea, he interjected.

- in a way that will make a reader, I continued – understand, he completed my sentence.

- see.

Good to know I'm not alone, I thought, later.

Two Observations

last night i was falling asleep
after having dinner with a couple of creative
acquaintances
and i thought
what i love about henry
is that, in spite of his
hypocrisy, deceptiveness,
manipulative nature, jealousy,
capacity for pettiness and
lack of courage (or apparent lack
thereof), he has a dark side.

also last night was the longest night,
like
ever

(or, The Long Way Home)

(and it's everything here, in the missing middle, that somehow redeems it all)

America you make me want to vomit
You made Ginsberg sick
It's half a century later
And you've fulfilled every nightmare
- you're stupid.
And thick - that which combines unintelligent and vulgar
And I'm not even American
- go fuck yourself
Your so-called culture
Life revolving around dull work debating humanity
Even your expensively educated youth pose on the internet with automatic weapons
Proud
In love with a red white and blue flag - couldn't you stiff right-angled churchgoing cunts think of something remotely original.
Even your women are war-obessed simians - so much for femininity.
If I have to feel the lame horror of one more corporate order...
But I will.
Because low, alcoholic drug fiends - if not street garbage, then Grade A import or just prescription brain-muting pills your ted talk ass-licking 'engineers' researched and developed
Like the shit being put in my handicapped sister
Because her sold mother got broken by the hate-filled loser she handcuffed herself to
The one who like you dreams of deregulation but can't wipe his ass

You plague.

This is what I do with my time.
And I'm not done.
Though now I have to ride my bike home.

I spend my time trying to find some way to compatibilize my life with you and it just depresses me.
I hate you, and it feels honest, right and just.
This is what consideration for you
And everything you stand for
Makes me write: Nothing.
And I guess that what one must reconcile themselves with
And learn to love
At fucking forty:
The fact that you are
And the world - a more dire place than when your ted audience lived less than a century - has not ended.
Awesome.

thought #6

pie-chart This.

A Grave Incident

Sitting opposite Marlon was Douglas.

What did you see?

Hot light was working its way into Marlon, suspected of direct involvement in a grave incident.

The week before last Douglas was in Amsterdam, with friends.

In charge of analysis, in another room, was Susan. Life had not been the same since Gérard's suicide.

Heidi sat on the left of Doug. This is going to take forever, she thought.

The House Across The Street

It's been 8 years since David passed and I don't ever remember missing him. Fact is, I did not know him.

We were neighbors, back in the day - he a diminutive, quiet boy sometimes standing on the slope of the front lawn, facing the house across the street, mine.

Strange, I thought to myself.

Back then things were different.

One day, in the park, the summer camp monitor paired us for the leapfrog or some demented race and we finished first.

That day I remember thinking to myself, he cares, he doesn't care for your or anyone's pushing him around.

To tell you the truth, I don't know why I'm thinking of him.

A perfect day

Perfect drizzle on sunburnt pavement
aching skin
is cool.

Slant of a pour
man's afternoon
in company.

On a perfect day
out
on the margin.

Dead time moving
in the dark
thought beyond recognition.

Sister, lighthouse
where are you
your brother is crying.

Up the River We Go

Nine men: 5 girls, 4 boys
in a basket
1 paddler.
The clear night sky is star-filled.
Directly under the half-moon,
a lamp over
river crossings.
The basket spins counter-clockwise,
we paddle to the right,
the basket spins clockwise,
we paddle left.

Together

Wilson was wondering if she
would again care.

The woman standing in front
of him smelled humid. He
hated standing in the line-up
just to buy milk but legislation
prohibited the employment of
more than one cashier.

His sex-life had come to a stop:
What do you do? - the most
horrifying of questions. I... -
and the ship had sailed.

Notes on Pawan's Story

I'll tell you my story. I used to be, one time, when I was 17, mafia. I took people by the neck, I put gun in face and one time I kill somebody. Then I needed to go away, on a boat, I needed to go away.

Now I changed. Good karma. I'm 34, I'm married. I have two children, I sell flowers in the morning.

(Do people change?)

(What a life.)

Marriage is important, he says. You have children, you see then, teach them, in his eyes there is love. There is also a longing. He looks into the distance, over the Ganges, beyond the other bank.

I know people who sell drugs, he says. Every morning I see them, they ask for money, I stay out. He needs to lean on someone, just a little, even though he is married – even though family life has shown him a way back, on his boat, back to the same port, but to a different life. He needs to move his feet now, 34 is too young to sell flowers here.

He pays me back. A family, he says, marriage. Like all men he believes, shamelessly – there is something more, in this life, he knows this. Pawan, father of Hanuman, now a man. Feeling the current he will now rise, dig inside himself and sail.

Come back, he says. Next time you come back, come see me, we go on my boat.

(People need to believe and there is no weakness in that.)

My English is not good, he says.

Sena sleeping with a smile

Looking for friends where there are none
wanting to hold peace
love on the doorstep of a bar
on church stairs.

Grove Canvas Art
(from Afar)

A touch of orange
as the banana
leaf
dies

- for Lakesh
and family
(who got fucked by UNESCO)

Ira Mana Me-Sethe Hey

Burning of Big Mother of a guy
whose name starts with D.
The party is ongoing, Bodies
non-stop.
The funeral pyre district is alive,
commercially and all.
D does not mind.

I'm in Varanasi. On my way here, in the train, I ran into 'fairies' again.

Fairies are transvestites, ousted by Indian culture, in a way. So they've naturally found a way back in. Exploiting a loophole of religious belief, they walk around, in groups of two or more (dressed eccentrically with lots of make-up), extorting merchants, and people in general. Excluded by society, they've taken on the role of people with mystical powers capable of cursing you if you don't give them money. And, when neither sympathy for their situation nor fear of the gods suffices to induce the target to cough up some dough, they expose themselves.

On the train, a fairy in wild-caveman attire ambushes the fifty-something man sitting more or less placidly in front of me. The caveman takes a large chicken drumstick bone hanging loosely from a string around his neck, sucks on it, pulls it out of his mouth with a pop, invites the guy now pinned against his seat to suck it, sticks his cloth-held package in the guy's face, suggests substituting the bone with his dick, ruffles the man's hair and the latter pays up. I'm next.

And I panic. He looks at me, nods as if to say, you know what's coming, and I clench my fists loosely, raising them and say, 'I will knock you out.'

In turn he freezes, this unnecessary threat places him in a difficult situation, for if he backs off he loses face. So I unclench my right hand and point to the window behind him adding, 'Out the window.'

You see how everyone in India is on the same page – upper castes, lower castes, outcasts. The man who got extorted rapidly lets the transvestite know he's gotten what he needs and the latter disappears in a flash. I feel ashamed. India has worked its magic again.

'Ira Mana Me-Sethe Hey' is a poorly vulgarized approximation of what the processions carrying colorfully-veiled deceased chant, as they run downhill, through streets, to the riverbank where they proceed to ceremonial cleansing, before the body is carried back up onto a pyre and lit.

À temps plein

À Montréal Marcel ne m'a plus reconnu
Ou il s'en foutait
Ayant atteint le fond de sa foi
Lui restant peut-être une réserve
Et pas une goutte de plus
Pour un dernier droit
De qui sait quelle longueur

Le cadre de son travail disparaissait
Il sait que ça dérange pas
Mais il voit l'œuvre du temps
Qui lavera le reste, tout
Sans doute

C'est platte, Marcel a dû se dire
De sa voix plus intime
Son son plus pointu étant plus
Pour le public
Son ton sec pour les hommes
Autrefois sous ses ordres

Être intime avec tout le monde
Ça sert à rien

Après, Marcel se reprend

Pleurer ce n'est pas pour les gens

Qui ont vu

- pour Marcel (Proulx)

Thinking

Looking out the window, like

Norman's mother

On the Breeze

Booze, her downfall.

She'd quit. And off the wagon - wasn't the wagon going somewhere she didn't need to be?

By now the pool had so much floating in it, it looked abandoned. Poking around with that pole was even sadder; and the net, the way it nearly tipped her over.

Install this.

Installation art is a conceptual business. So you put together a concept, in your mind, and you make it speak, to others. Anxiety, pain and freedom: they had understood what she had said, eighteen years ago, and the money was rolling in.

Too late.

Leaves from the neighbor's oak tree.

Blue Note

Office life could be stable and reassuring, most of all offices were predictable and investors appreciated predictability. In the morning one waited patiently until one's slot in revolving doors ushered one in, unless one was in a hurry. That was what the doors on each side of the revolving platforms were for. Then one waited for his or her elevator, a routine he had come to know all too well: odd-numbered floors serviced by the elevators to the left, even-numbered on the right. Routine was welcome in the life of the office person: traffic, car radios, escalators. His office had not changed in over thirty-five years, a satisfactory situation. The company did well. The office to his left housed an associate he was not particularly fond of: work ethic unpolished, etc.; getting married with another man. Times had changed, but office life did not welcome change. Office life was indifferent to all but change. Unless it did not notice change. On his way, he closed his door, as he always had, and in the hall by the coffee machine stood an associate.

- a person with a literary inquiry: So what would you say is the setting of your story?

- someone who'd just bared himself: ?

It Comes Together

I wonder when I get to be bailed out. I drank all my money away, and then gave some to a woman of *mauvaise vie*. Maybe if I gave her your money... Have you ever wondered why no one is cool with you self-regulating? I have. So I'm self-regulating this paragraph. Fuck, tits, black Jesus.

And all the while this irritation - my right arm, it's like it was on fire.

It's not the bad life; I've had this irritation since I slept in my sister's bed when I was eighteen. My old lady made me take up the empty mattress because some people were spending the night in my higher quality quarters. My older sis and I were never that close - she was slow, and the father used to mock and beat her regularly; claiming she was overweight (?). More than anything he couldn't stand when she exposed his fear, especially when she'd keep doing it while he was hurting her; she'd give off these deep gurgling sounds, like life does when lunging desperately. My sister made me nervous because she was too tough.

The other day I'm crossing the street at one of those crazy, spaghetti intersections where vehicles come and go from sixteen different directions - like in a cartoon - and an older woman's crossing it too. About my mother's age. And I see this car coming at full-speed and I'm sure it's going to fucking drive through the old woman (she's walking ten or fifteen feet ahead of me) so I lose it; I scream, and she must have thought that she was going to die. But the car sped by. Down a spaghetti option I had not foreseen - and the woman lays into me: she had the little green man etc. I had seen her double-bump on hood and windshield, ejecting like a muppet. I felt embarrassed so I walked by as fast as I could. I turned back apologetically, but she was still recovering. I turned back again and she smiled. It was one of those episodes that you want to forget, but it was also funny.

**Row of Room Doors Reminiscent of Yesterday's
Afternoon**

Light turquoise wall
lit on one end
Vivid turquoise back
of a kingfisher
on scarecrow

On the Street

A man jogging down a lamplit, beachside street, or so it seems. Roosters doing what roosters do. Beach waves crashing onto a polluted beach. Ankle bracelets, from the avenue in front of the house: two women.

People living the dream, here. Which dream being the question; they do not ask too many questions. This place is inspiring but you have to get your feet dirty.

The air is kind, sweet-smelling. Crickets or amphibians of some sort celebrate the end of the night - the fat lady in sky-blue pants continues to march down the street, same direction I'd seen her take the first time around. It's morning. The crickets are letting up.

A story will come, if you are patient.

If you're not patient, a story won't come.

A young man strides down the street, à son tour, loving the wind as it brushes against him. He extends his arms, flexes his forearms as if to touch his ears and extends his arms again.

The morning march continues.

Others.

Upstairs Yair hawks up tobacco induced sediment. The fat lady is on lap three, at least. It is now fairly certain she also employs an alternative route. Sightings of her on the lamplit street are identical, each time, walking from left to right. Music booms, three houses away. Perhaps a religious process. Now it's crows, crickets, waves and a stereo. On her way back the woman may be doing a hundred different things. This is unknown to us.

Surf is visible now. The religious music is seasoned with a touch of joyous flute.

Something calm is receding now. Daytime is upon the neighborhood.

People here shit on the beach and the street, their cows shit (defecate) on the street too.

* Inscribed over these pencil-drafted lines is a roughly-circled, black-pen note reading:

How about
saving yourself
or just not needing
saving

A Step from Freedom

I dreamed of a cowboy last night.

They came and he killed a man.

Across fields, over a bridge, up falls.

He ran but he did not want to.

Berlin: Post-Communist Capital and Cultural Center

Recently, I've been trying to find a "middle", which is difficult to explain.

It's a bit like focusing on the present moment and adjusting to the pace. When I find that middle I don't think about the past or the future, I just do whatever I do; a series of muscular contractions I've had since a neck injury dissipates and the general state improves.

It's probably an occurrence many are aware of, but it's my recent thing.

It reminds me of a large inscription on a wall in Berlin that reads: "How Long is Now."

Another, more vulgar, there reads: "Free your mind and your ass will follow," but I think they both mean the same thing.

Clean Checkered Shirt on a Wire

Green oasis at the heart of
carbon monoxide apocalypse
Dudes lying on their back, sleeping
wind rustling palm trees
a child calls out from the faded
red-brick cluster of homes
alongside.

A Track with Greenery

(Harried Tale Three)

When I was twenty I fell in love.

It's hard to say how or when or why it happened, but I know who it was with.

I was a late bloomer. Lots of time had been spent dallying around with friends. My only experience(s? does the s absolutely have to be there) with women were a brief relationship with a girl younger than me who'd told a friend buying jeans I was her type and a high school prom event I prefer not to mention.

She was eighteen.

I moved to the big city, when I was twenty. My father, then still a man believing in the good of things, financed my schooling, to the extent I lacked nothing. Her and I had flirted, quite a bit, the year before, but I had been a flirt for a while, and nothing led to suspect something was on.

It was Fall when it happened – Autumn, if you will – I capitalize both, as it is my favorite season. She called, invited herself over (probably pondering the pros and cons for a day or two before) and I picked her up at the central station. I suggested dinner, after dinner I tried to kiss her. She moved. I kissed her on the neck, turned to order a drink and she placed a kiss on my neck.

I tried putting an end to our dalliance when over the December holidays at a fancy dessert crêpe restaurant I informed her of the impossibility of a relationship with me. She was silent. Done, I thought, free to (?), I thought, but she insisted we go for a drink.

She was silent. I broke. Our relationship was official.

That winter was perfect. My room window gave on a rundown train track, overgrown by greenery then barren, snow covering it as it did the rest of the city. It was a huge window, so days were well-lit, and every second weekend I left it slightly open at night, for she visited, and in the middle of the night, when she woke, she moved, up against me, and all was perfect again.

I was jealous. Since I could remember I, for some reason, felt time was running out. By the end of spring a new reality, one I was reticent of, crept upon us – not something bad, just different – and I was young at heart.

A pick-me-up

just speak
said he
and he was right
an awful man, boisterous
loud-drunk
lonely - malice in his eyes
his heart longed
for poetry

just speak, he said
and he spoke
in code, the man fallen
pick me up he repeated

poetry cannot save
i lied
to myself crying

There

India doesn't care: I don't either.

There is something profoundly secondary about the white man's way of life, or whatever it is India is force-fed. Some of them, Indians, are fat. Those are the ones exercise marching on the beach in the morning, afore trundling on to some office. The ones crouching on the beach, watching the sea, as if there were something there, are of healthier composition.

Leer at the Man with the Pencil

Families distrustful of the lone man

a wolf - why's he alone

how could he be here alone

too old to be smiling for no reason

distrustful of life was he

at war

Sigh

I live in a place I can't stand. Everything about it I used to love, or make myself enjoy thoroughly, now makes my blood curdle. And I keep eating, to compensate for not having a job. I used to think I was an alcoholic, but ends up that was one of those things you want to believe, so you have an explanation. Also, I think nobody loves this gig, hence love. I know what you're thinking – woah, there we go, a classic case of fear of... something – but no. It's not like that. I see people who legitimately care for one another, and in their eyes you see knowledge, that this everything just is. And they're just as uncomfortable as I am about it. Accepting the truth is hard because being at peace with it doesn't make cold nights or overexposure to sunshine any nicer. Which brings us to the obvious: money. It can make cold nights warm. But the knowledge of the cold night, the fact that it is and you know it is, stays. Pain one literally gets used to. The other day I got blood tests and I looked at the needle as it broke my vein, and when the nurse asked me if I had been afraid I answered yes because it's what she wanted to hear, or maybe just because I did not want to deal with whatever could have come after a no answer. But I felt nothing. So here I am. By the door of an apartment by the station. I've been here for over five years – by the station. But I can't keep pretending I'm afraid. It's like hiding from hiding, or not not living, which is neither living nor dying, though for obvious reasons I can't speak for dying. This is where I wanted to be: writing. And I know this is where I need to be, but it doesn't make it any easier.

It's the about part that is hard, because I know too well what this is about. People enthusiastically ask, 'Oh, and what do you write about?' And I can't keep from sincerely not understanding the question, each time. I once had a girlfriend, and she was great for a number of reasons but one really good thing was that each time I stopped listening to someone, because they had just that instant ceased interesting me, she would give me a nudge and I'd catch on, tune in again and there had only been a mild gap which even if the person noticed they did not take offense to. 'It's not nice when you do that,' she would say, but I couldn't help if the moment the beginning of the sound emitted by someone indicated that they had gone off to somewhere else, were speaking to themselves, I disconnected. If they were gone, I might as well leave. So it's the same when I get the writing question (said question inevitably following an inquiry as to what it is I do). Would you ask someone what they paint? Or what they act? No, because it's not the particular role they are playing that matters, but how alive it is, and how it fits into a whole. And platitudes (uses of the word whole, for example) are platitudes. But I think people ask because they find it exciting, that someone would have chosen to believe in life enough to sacrifice security, and all the pragmatic advantages of employment, in the dryer sense. But art isn't exciting, and it has to be honest, so I can't really answer anything anymore. I used to have this great answer for people who asked me too many questions when I was a kid. I'd say, 'Because.' And they would insist, and I would look at them and they would get it (i.e. stop the questions, and then leave, because that was all they wanted, one presumes). So I think the only reasonable answer to the writing question is, 'I don't know.' And so we come full circle, and that which was so hard to accept becomes the subject of the work at hand.

I just deleted a paragraph. Guys on typewriters couldn't do that. They actually had to think and then own up a lot more. They were still huge losers and egoists and loners and alcoholics. It's the doing your own thing that works and doesn't work, that which inspires though also that which deflates others, when you let them down, because you have things to do. And no, there is no such thing as balance, just a good run. It's how you did all of it together that matters. Or not.

The guy who bought the garbage can off me today, who ran up to my place, he's maybe living life, oblivious to anything and all, barely making conversation, checking if the thing was what he wanted, running off to get money, telling me he has no change, running off with the can. I thought, maybe he rolled me? Maybe he gave me a fake twenty? So I went to the supermarket self-service machines, with a bottle of water, and I inserted the twenty. Not fake.

people come here for solutions
don't do that
words do not solve
problems that don't exist

to a retired friend

Years ago
will be fine, you said - the system
doesn't work -
a
product, breeder
of a breeder, crippled. Maybe that's
the way it was.

As the wind sweeps the dusty streets

So many different things happened. Events that changed my life. It's difficult to zero in on one, or on a single theme, and attribute that which is happening now, to a crossroad or set thereof in particular.

Now, I sit in a dimly lit studio, in the South of France, unemployed, recovering. I've come down here to write, more than five years ago, thinking the story had come to at least some kind of end. For as they say, one cannot write about Paris in Paris. Paris, somehow, has kept expanding.

Though maybe now. As the wind sweeps the dusty streets night and day.

The first story that comes to mind is one that has stayed with me, for it involved love.

No. We'll let that one slide.

I was a bad young man ... And you see, this is as far as I can write. Paris is outside again. Tomorrow I will get up again, have coffee, and then I will walk out my studio door, an iota more ready than I was this morning, turn around, lock the door ... my sister got me the keychain I use now ... And I will walk down the half-flight of spiral stairs, past my bicycle, down another flight-and-a-half and I'll open the door to the African neighborhood street by the train station I live on.

Maybe I'll want to tell you more then.

Fear is Going Away

Down the street a person ambles: s/he is lost. Lights overhead expose an emptiness. Is this it, s/he thinks out loud.

No answer comes, as expected. Why would the nothingness say more than it already does? This feels obvious to him/her now. All is gone: the pain, love, hunger, thirst, weakness, strength. Now s/he just is, there, in what is darkness hidden by lighting, a sound as audible and real as anything.

S/he is walking towards an apartment in which a lover lives.

a thousand galaxies

sadness does not go away
nothing goes away
to where
space?

one week
the hubble telescope focused on a square millimeter
and a thousand galaxies
appeared

focus on sadness
look
a city
friday night!

and then it's monday again
or worse
sunday
or worse

get a job
they say
they say
many things

Thought #32
(for my friends)

Is Jesus going to walk you home when you die
because he isn't going to walk me
Home is going to be a cedar box, maybe cherry and I'll be wearing my best suit and you will be wearing yours.
Forgetting religion you will want another drink - you will Laugh! And talk about those times
you will try to have sex with the barmaid
and I will have no need
to go anywhere.

Life

Ha ha ha, my blanket. My blanket.

She was still laughing to herself when Omar, her husband of nine forgettable years, called for her.

Yarmilla! The high-pitched sound of his voice pierced the mosquito netting of the mobile home Omar, Yarmilla, Shariff and a girl had rented, with money from Omar's father, who'd obtained the liquidity one way or another.

Yarmilla!

Yar- Omar's bugle-like cry for the attention of the woman in his mobile home was drowned. Yarmilla had had enough.

Shariff was eight. His life, he felt - there was no point in addressing his life. This was his life.

On the front, porch-like facade of the home, the girl played with her imaginary friend, X. One day, she and X would be neighbors, and the screams from their respective houses would mesh, in a cacophony of life; like crickets in the morning, all and at the same time.

Her blanket. She loved that blanket and had been looking for it (everywhere).

the tour bus

from the shade
the street looks less filthy
the toothless guy at the bus stop
is enjoying the sun
to the extent he still finds enjoyment
the people are dressed horrifically
anything you find put it on
plastic fabric made in china
urged by demand
i want money for coffee in the shade
the beggar drinks bad alcohol
adele has two trillion views
time is as unkind as it always was
back when fuckers lived in the forest
lost teeth at nineteen
and buddha gave out wisdom
in an already crowded india
while his bloated abdomen inflated

_____ bus station is a hive of confusion, noise and functional disorganization.

It's nighttime. Outside a streetlamp or neon here and there provides an aperçu.

Sharp whistles pierce the mayhem, punctually. It is hard to see who is whistling, but someone is reacting, as the sharp alarms are occasionally followed by more subdued, approving peeps.

His desk is organized.

The officer has either realized his phone, at his desk, in the middle of the hall, is ringing, or said sound has broken a carefully measured threshold of his, informing him that the ringing of his phone will soon become priority number one.

African Neighbor

Palor was eaten by a whale. Like Jonah.

Doctors came around every morning, to get
him out: no dice.

There he was. Inside the monster. Waves
crashing against it, digestive juices attacking
him, a faint light – the heart of the beast
emanating a glow he could only describe as
Midnight Orange.

- pour un voisin, qui sans
trop d' stress
s'est relevé

And A Murder Of Crows Brought The Night Sky Down

One by one my
illusions died, crisp
november air of a
winter back and
welcome, ok rob,
that's ten minutes,
and i gotta change
the kilkenney

to Maria from Granada

you were so hot
there was a lot about you

and then there was more.

you were going to a dance class

you were going to dance.

remember, i ran up to see you
in my argentine camiseta
tell you you were beautiful

you were
and most probably still are

i won't wish
you would have approved of
that drink i was trying to fight through my crappy spanish and fear...

you give me a reason to write words that make sense
and that is good for me.
so this, is for both of us.

(...)

Slow Tuesday
I'm buying water
Two five liter containers
Not really bottles
I hate writing structured
Text
This is as long as I can be
fake
Because who am I writing
to
Even if you pay for it
Will you see me
Will I help you on
weekends with yard work
Or will you see a man I
fail to be
Because this
And that.

Disappear and take me
with you
Somewhere I can be me
more easily
And I can fuck around in
your yard
See this is me
And that is probably why
I write less.

Tomorrow's Words

Now time just passes
The poem is waiting to be finished
The window has never closed
Just now as poetry crosses threshold
It is closing onto a universe

Over Downtown

I don't know
anybody
anywhere
anymore
- thought
as I watched
two ferries
iced in
at opposite ends.

Messy procedure

the hours pass
Frankly I don't know if anything's changed
it's an ongoing march uphill
My gut is becoming disgusting
the way others are
so fine
is there a way back from here
There always has been
each time I said tomorrow
and tomorrow becomes today
disappointingly
Large americano decaf
no more alcohol
yesterday
yesterday
yesterday
if I write it down one more time
It will connect onto all the tomorrows
and you and me and the fucking gestalt
Will have a middle
Yeats
what would
you think

Mingle
(a state of affairs)

She's in her house
The fortress forbidding savages
And the subatomic particle freezing cold

She's fixing her organic coffee cup lid
Well brought up
To not mix with the more exposed

Here thou shalt not lay a hand
Here we feel for you

LGBTQ+
Climate change
Do not touch

Here networks of communication are almost free

Poetry here
Is studied
From afar

And in some incredibly complex way
She and Here fit
Into a Galaxy

Lower the drawbridge.

It's spring





