
STATEMENT OF INTENT
POEMS: 2023-2025

"national mall"
Flies buzz over the dirt path

the water is sick glass

white marble monuments

rise in the distance, pillars

before a solemn stone face

and carved into the walls

on either side

is history

"final resting place"
i left my yellow guitar pick
in los angeles
on chris cornell's footstone
with twenty others

"the 90s"
i can remember
feelings, smells
certain images

this young
clump of atoms
spreading out

dusty sunset
after
dusty sunset

all potential
stored
all decisions
unmade
all comfort
eternal

leaves fluttering
green then fallen

cycles cycled on

the world was
wholesome grit
furnace heat
crinkled pages
sheltered cold
quiet bedtime
grass carpet
sand and rasp
and feathers

felt good, man

"pillow talk"
and at the end
of the night
he'd play
the same song

this odd buzzing
electricity
ascending
some unknown
soporific scale

up and up and up

as it played,
i'd picture him—
a handsome
newscaster-esque
man in a tan coat—
getting up and
leaving the studio

up and up and up

i'd picture him
saying goodnight
to the secretary
at the front desk

up and up and up

walking out
to his car and
getting in and
turning the key

up and up and up

driving off
down the road
toward a far
eastern horizon
sprinkled with
city lights

up and up and up

then he was gone
and so was the song
except for the one
they played next

"merrily, merrily"
saw my deceased father
in a dream, we were at
some darkened theater

later on the sidewalk
i asked if he was
coming with me

he scratched his head,
uncertain, and said

"no... i haven't figured
that out yet..."

"guilt for feeling"
guilt is useless
unless
you've actually
done something

feeling guilty
for feeling
is like trying
to write a
poem when
you don't
need to

"snippets of an overheard argument"
... I'm not going to come back and get you...

...he can't do it because he's gotta wait for the kids and all the other things...

...there ain't nothing for you to do here and you know it...

...Please. Quit being stubborn...

...I'm not gonna fight here...

...No, you don't think about things like that...

...Please let's just go...

...I can't come back...

"waking"

i tend to sleep nude
i don't like my balls
getting twisted in
boxers and all
my briefs rotted
away, i miss them

i get up and pad down the carpet
like a lumbering shaved bigfoot
to where the dark bathroom is
lit only by my crystal white
night light

i aim my dick blindly,
and i drain myself,
and blat out that
first wet fart
of the day

"overpopulation"
you are ignored
not because
you are inherently
worthless

you are ignored
because there
is only so much
time
in a day

"derp"
the only way
to be comfortable
is to get money

the only way
to get money
is to be seen

the only way
to be seen
is to be needed

"the old firebird on the bike trail"
for years in our youth
it lay to the west
open metal grave
hidden, as if shy
In midwestern brush

pushed by some
bright hot impact

someone drove
across tracks
at the wrong
time, bam

resting to the east
foliage jumped
and buried its feet

while nearby
the old river
rolled on

"goddess"
sweetest lips, softer words
saliva gleams on what was heard
words fail, puddles seep
in the grail, joy, it leaps

"petty jealousy forever"
scrolling reddit

pete davidson

just talking

onstage

kind of funny

ariana tea

observant

almost wise

click

scroll

comments are kind

supportive

to the bottom

find one

'fuck pete davidson'

upvote

"lifespan"
watching the ages
of the idols of yore
approach
then recede

ticking off another

here you've outlived
the child actress
here you've outlived
the young punk
here you've outlived
the emo rappers
the grunge rockers
the psychedelic legends
the tortured comics
marilyn
van gogh
the authors
the presidents
the philosophers

days themselves
past and spent

they zoom by
pages flipped

another
outlived

"dude"
one more among
another million
meaningless misfires

cosmic garbage
carbon accident
fundamentally
unloveable

no connection
no one sees
and this is how
God wants it

my very soul
must be
truly
repulsive

"there is no path"
you spend your time
paying your bills
by doing things
that must be done
because no one else
wants to do them

"lynching"
the saddest thing to me
is his cap

it's not the bent neck
it's not the hung jaw
it's not the shut eyes
it's not the silent crowd
or the pointing finger

it's the cap he put on
to cover his head
like a gentlemen
before he went out
to die

"your name is toby"
it didn't even register to me,
a child
that he had different skin

all i saw was the nice man
from reading rainbow
with his shirt off,
getting hurt bad
and i didn't know why

thereafter,
i'd run out of the room
like, legitimately
i'd fucking run,
shoving
chairs and stuff
out of my way,
when i saw them
uncoil the whip

my fourth grade teacher
came over after
and pulled me aside

alex, the next time
there's a scene like that
we can go out into
the hallway

"the hell of it is"
she's vibrating nerves
in the streetlights
and you've done nothing
except exist in her space
randomly, strangers
walking alone

except nothing

nothing

they talk of emptiness

"thank god i'm a man"
bring my poor love
an electric blanket

a heating pad with
flowers on it, like your
grandma's tablecloth

something to drink,
i dunno
something to wash
down the painkiller

she looks really soft
lying there, huggable
but that's really not
what she wants now

walk back to the kitchen
balls sticking to my legs

"r.o.c.k. in the summer of 69"

bryan adams

is the canadian

john mellencamp

Or

John mellencamp

Is the American

Bryan adams

"elon's folly"
if twitter
is x now
then what
are tweets
called?

Columbus, Edison,
And Steve jobs
Were once heroes
Too

While
Tesla died
penniless
Writing about
The universe
And how it
Never began
(Or ended)

“filter”
not saying
i’m depressed
but i tried
to put a smile
on my selfie
and my phone
exploded

“white guy”
i really need
to stop
referring
to myself
in my head
as
‘mah nigga’

"thanks for noticing me"
I don't think Eeyore
was depressed,
I just think
he had a nail
up his ass.

"rich men"
my only thought on
oliver anthony is
he won the lottery
and i still haven't

"chump"
We need a term
for a person
whose parents
did well
during america's
golden years
but
who is now
broke
and depends on them
despite working
more than full time

“ahh...”
Ever take
a shit
so good
it relieves
your back
pain?

“ok, millennial”
my generation
is the greatest
generation
of this cycle
according to
that hyphenated
generation chart
thing

that's our task
to use our self-awareness
to create a society
that lasts another
thousand years

live up to our name and shit

Yea boi

“zero”
the Smashing Pumpkins
and the Simpsons
have the same trajectory

think about it

acclaimed in the 90s
then a gradual decline
into comfortable and
terrible and mediocre
legend

"porn"
that shit is faker
than obama's
summer playlists

tug myself
to a few
seconds
of
clear
headedness

little drop
of ecstasy

the good
kind of blank

"icing knuckle deep"
one drag after the other
the drag of the foot
the drag of the head
the trudge through the
carpet, thin exquisite mud
the bathroom rug
the toothbrush mint,
the hiss and roar of faucets
the steam, the heat hitting,
the face, the splatter down,
the soap splash, the scent
of chemical flowers, lotion,
beard oil, processed honey,
the clasp of the pants, the
slide on of the socks, the
toes secured so snugly,
the buttons one by one,
the downstairs traipse,
the lights all off, doorknob
lets in cold, the garage
reveals morning, the
commute, knees safe
against the cottony pants
as the foot taps and
the speed builds
headlights in rearview
and maybe a sip of
something, there
now you're really
awake

"falling asleep"
so tired
eyes fall
flop, fuck
so relaxed
the cozy
the spin
the dry lips
the dry throat
the small breath
the curled hand
the crooked leg
the soft weight
the spiraled thought
lost to drift, random
catching here and there
on different spines
of memory, of light
both hemispheres
firing, synchronized
perfection comes
i don't know anymore

"soft"
tis the price of my
motherly comfort

the inability
to look a threat
in the eye
(barring
body-be-damned
rage)
and say

get the fuck
outta my joint

"cheese and crackers"
a knife is the polite way
but in moments
of pure primal
self-indulgence
(no one's watching)
i sink my teeth right into
the block and bite off
some cheddar
my incisors,
a grater, flaking
to melt in sharpness
That an experienced
Critic could describe
Better than I could

once the square
and saltiness
hits my tongue
the symphony is
complete

“shivaget”
i feel like i have
to talk about this

the drive to create
something monumental
a global product
a global reputation
greatness

the complications
and burdens that
come with it

from down here
at my comfortable
little pedestrian life
they appear worthy
trades for going
from anonymity
to history

do the truly
brilliant know
of their path?
they must

surging forward
is all that there is
the rest is up
to atoms
and the systems
and maybe
the hands
that guide it all

"envy"
i find jealousy
to be relatable
i don't think
it should be
demonized

it is the most
human emotion
there is

it's american

the economy
runs on it
like
oil and data

we are bred
for comparison
for competition
so why the fuck
should someone
be considered
small
for admitting
such basic feelings

if you dwell on them
yeah, sure, fine,
that's unhealthy

but to admit it
just for a moment
and to share
our lack of anything
acknowledge it
and then let it pass

what's so bad about that
other than the rotting
of our bones

"taylor swift in hell"
people like her
cannot conceive
of nonexistence
peacefully

they must
be catered to
reminded of
physical being
to keep their
faces outward
away from the
infinite inside

they are
damaged
in the
most
exquisite
sense
of the
word

they are
totally
and
completely
of
this
world

so when
the time
does come

her brain
will panic
as she fades
downward
with no one
to witness it
but her own
flailing mind

she'll be
screaming
with no mouth
forever

"comment"
my reddit ass
thinks i can see
but
all i can taste
is false remedy

write and hit post
some bad poetry
for others like me
to upvote daily

for
ultimately
no real change
is to be

the world is locked up
by fate and by greed

"why are they still making these?"
kingdom of the
wrath of the
dawn of the
rise of the
war of the
battle of the
return of the
planet of the apes

"no following"
if you spend more time
than someone else
on something

and they win
the title of
that something

despite having
done it for less time

whereas people
do not consider you
a viable version
of that something

you are likely not
very good
at that something

"immortality"
i believe
in the near future
everyone
who ever existed
will have
their own
wikipedia page
or some thus
unnamed
equivalent

written
and
curated
by AI

harvested from
the memories
of the living

stretching back
to the beginning
of consciousness

whether they lived
a hundred years
or a hundred
seconds

whether they
led nations
or dug holes

there for anyone
who wants
to read it
and learn

one more
mote of light
in this vast
darkness

"tribute to an internet purchase"
i'm on reddit when
i see a sculpture
of frankenstein

the "real one",
i mean,
from the 1818
novel

he's a living
corpse

model-esque,
but,
you know,
dead

he's a
yellow-skinned,
noseless,
decay-eyed,
hollow-cheeked
zombie

i can hear shelley
describing his
straight black lips

he looks like danzig after
three nights on the bend

it's awesome

It's a sculpture by
bernie wrightson's
son

i know bernie from
somewhere but
i can't remember
where exactly

it leads me down

a frankenstein
rabbit hole

it activates old images
unthought of for years

i end up googling
frankenstein meets
the wolf man

i'm looking for
the iconic pose
frankenstein
strangling
the wolf man
lugosi and chaney, jr.
the wolf man reaches
for frankenstein's
throat

i first saw it
in the early 90s
in elementary
school, they had
an entire collection
of these books
on movie monsters
like dracula and
king kong, they
had orange
spines and i
haven't seen
them in decades

so i google them,
the books
with orange
spines,
describing
to the search gods
and bang,
there they
are

crestwood monster series
by ian thorne

published in the 1970s

the internet is awesome
sometimes

the hardcovers are going
for up to 400 fucking
dollars, out of print

the lowest are for
like 50 dollars

out of my price range

but i see another one

a book about the
loch ness monster
which it turns out is
by the same author

i saw this
particular series
when i moved to
south lyon, and
checked them out of
my second
elementary school
library

the loch ness monster
one's only 14 bucks
before shipping which
my bonus points take
care of

i buy it

Thanks, Frankenstein

"fuck off"
once i ventured
know my place
and what's not
a pretty face

every pic
a punctured kiss
by that logic
i don't exist

(i just threw up
in my mouth
a bit)

"fantasy"
a microphone
a dulcet tone
a homophobe
a frontal lobe

a morning where
the wind doth blow
shouldn't have let
my fragility show

a lone dry bone
its fate unknown
while around the globe
discarded robes

winter sunday
driving slow
jerking it
to instahoes

“smash”
Born of impact
Maybe drink
Wheels that roll
A roof that sinks

Heading eastbound
To the brink
As years go by
And children think

"pretty"
stunning and sad
rests a chin on her hand
they're asking, who's that

pale pools of blue
electric, they shoot
diamonds, just two

pretty to cute
i'd kiss her cheek, too
if i wasn't unworthy
and not there to boot

"don't look down"
getting older
is like climbing
a tower, skeletal
sending signals
from the top

arm over arm
hand over hand
cold metal touch
as higher you go

and nothing much
ever happens
except the height
increases and
no one cares
except you
when you bother
to notice
how high
you've climbed

"somewhere in the dream"
i hope he's somewhere dark but vast,
secure
blue light from an unknown above source,
singing
microphone in his hand, voice shining,
like it did
when he was still a part of us

“happiness”
it’s when you think
you’ve got the world
by the balls
that’s when
the world
kicks you
in yours

"fast food"
consume it, quickly
lest it congeal
the taste is enough
to forget the feel

it's not meant to nourish
you can't heat it up
you just scarf it down
and accept it and stuff

"job"
not a bad day
talked with the guys
sat at the shop
and swatted the flies

cleaned up the mess
of patrons and such
made me some scratch
but not very much

"math"
when i was nine
my dad's buddy
from downstate
came up and
tutored me in
math, i was
bombing it,
division
made no
sense

he was scrappy
looking, like
my dad,
a long lost
brother or
something

they'd known
each other since
school, i couldn't
imagine knowing
someone that long

he wrote down numbers
"just gonna try this out"
he said, and i got
comfortable with him

he was chill, didn't
seem to mind if i
got stuff wrong

"nope," he say, then correct me

"what do we do next?" he kept asking

We did problem after problem
and i thought i wasn't learning
anything but then i did way better
on my next test, like from a D to a B
and my dad said he texted him and
told him and he said
he was happy for me

at one point during the lesson
he mentioned teaching downstate
and i asked if he would come up again

"probably not," he said, "i don't have the time"

"why not?"

"cause my insides are rotting"

for some reason i thought that was
the funniest thing i'd ever heard

but a couple months after then,
my dad mentioned that'd he'd died

he was a good dude, my dad said
gotta enjoy what time you have

and i didn't know what to say
cause what nine year old does

"i'm tired, boss"
the little things

what are they

you know

that's why
they eat
at you

“eclipse”
palest flare, tinted chrome
standing silver near my home
spring’s new music, faded youth
taxes filed, broken tooth

this will happen, make it so
calculation, overthrow
powerless, my patient brain
nature’s circus, pray no rain

change the color, touch the screen
midday twilight, 3:14
smartphone timestamp, like a dream
Easter vigil, set the scene

sliding circle, covered eye
massive shadow swinging by
molten thumbnail in the sky
hinting night, believers cry

"gossip"
neighbors gather, driveway talk
in my bedroom, facebook stalk
like the picture, type the word
blind and deaf to what was heard

“above an abyss”
People will do anything
To make themselves feel
Special

As if they’re anything more
Than sensory inputs

Anything more
Than the universe
Clothed with itself

Living
This brief flash of light

"ode to not trying too hard"
olde english and shit
that starts off the thing
but i don't know a bit
and i can't hardly sing
a simple dumb word
a way out of mind
a line that's too short
something once heard
it helps me to find
a rhythm to court

the flow is of fits
of sparks in the brain
i've longed for a hit
my memories wane
but it pieces itself
on down every beat
and then, there's the end
i don't need the help
to adequately meet
the forcing of friends

i finally say fuck it
i'm letting it go
i'm lifting the bucket
of what i don't know
i count syllables
on fingers, in head
no one is the best
a boredom of chills
supine on my bed
and i've lost interest

"sunday morning"
i subscribe to another couple
OnlyFans models whose instas
i've been following, i subscribed
to a couple last night, too

it's only about 30 dollars added up
altogether
30 dollars isn't that much

it's better than nothing

i message them
minimum tip is 5 dollars
i give one 6 dollars and
the rest nothing

they-
or the third world agency
company employee guys
pretending to be them-
say yes,
they're ticklish
and call me babe

it's better than nothing
at least that's what i tell myself

one from brazil will make me
a tickle custom, my fetish
of choice, i'm a connoisseur
of such shit

800 dollars for an 8 minute video

i tell her i'll get her the money
later in the week, which i won't
i don't have 800 dollars, God
i wish I did

it's better than nothing
at least that's what i tell myself

i look at a really popular one's instagram
where she frolics naked in sports cars
and hotel rooms that cost more

than i make in a year, huge smile
on her immaculately-sculpted
20something collagen lips

i think about what it would be like
to kill her
but then i remember
i have to put away my laundry

"the trouble"
i discovered bukowski on wikiquote

in college, in my dorm, my old iMac
had no working sound, so i'd go on
wikiquote and read when i wasn't
jacking off

i don't remember the page

i remember the quote

it's from a poem called trouble
but i didn't know that then

"the trouble with these people is
that their cities have never been
bombed and their mothers have never
been told to shut up."

and that's why i'm writing this

“humanness”
you don’t love a human
the way you love an idea

it’s why meeting someone
you’ve built one-sided
memories with is never
what you dream it will
be

the sharp reality of it
comes into stark focus

their humanness

yours

you realize

it was never about them

it was about you

and now you see them
and maybe they see you
but it’s done, they are
and you are, and nothing
can be changed

“enough”

Bare feet on soft carpet
towels, shower wet
Socks heated by a vent
Sitting down for a sec

A running fan
A favorite hat
Slipping on shoes
Getting less fat
A fresh buttoned shirt
The scent of some plant

Parking in a garage
a temperature gauge
a pair of good jeans
old toys, picture frames
the trash taken out
the curtains all raised
the wind chime sparkle
the promise of days

Praising the lord for the simpler things
the churning of guts the simplicity brings

"northern lights"

i walk outside barefoot in shoes
phone camera, the night sky
is off, something hangs, a mist
a cataract stretched over ends
i point and pic, the color reveal
down from the north, the same
to blanket us with celestial lux
i go back inside to my warm bed
while outside overhead, auroras
dance, green ribbons on purple
and lavender shades

"for a flower"
in a world where creatures' value
is never given free
long live the little flower
that grew so randomly

one day when i was mowing,
amidst the mid-may breeze
i happened on some yellow
in a universe of green

up the flower poked itself
with gusto and caprice
its sunny face so standing out
Like a coy flirtatious tease

It could've been a daffodil
it could've been a weed
there was no planned arrangement
there was no planted seed

the lord's hand bore it from the dirt
it stood there with the trees
a perfect mix of time and chance
and cosmic wizardry

i mowed around it carefully
most carefully indeed
to not disturb the innocence
or mistakenly delete

but when i went to look for it
the closer i could see
the bud was gone, not to be found
to my eternal grief

it could've wilted in a day
it could've been disease
it could've fallen to a mouth
no shirking nature's creed

so here i write this tribute
and learn to keep my dreams
long live the little flower
that grew so randomly

"simp"
people are desperate
for something resembling
what pop culture
has promised them

history
(what history?)
will look back
on this era
as absurd,
hilarious,
and tragic
all at once

we had everything
we could possibly
need
except each other

"19 years old"
don't gorge on that shit

the bodies, the soft
naked bodies with
skin like cream and
cinnamon, chocolate,
sugar-fed bellies,
tight, bodies that
glow and shine
and glisten and
writhe, arms and
legs and hands
and feet, all perfect
perfect lure, perfect
draw, perfect sin,
Perfect meal,
Perfect swallow

its a feast for your eyes
for your mouth, for your
soul, your brain to rot
sit and rot like teeth

it is the magnificence of
light and of being, it is
the pull of eons, the
destruction of this,
the very thing that
we all seek, pleasure
visualized, lying there,
waiting, smiling,
inviting, saving,
wanting to save

you will be drawn in
and it will keep you
there, because it is
not really there, and
neither are you

"marry me"
she posted a pic,
her looking upward
(why are they always
looking upward,
smoldering, her
hair carrot red,
ginger bitch era,
she says, emo
baby girl, everything
on her like embers,
smoldering eyes,
face blank, daring
someone like anyone
to fill in the emotion
for her, she is embers
she is dynamite, she
is slow fire, she is a
flame, a furnace,
a sunset, a flow of
lava like a streak of
sweat down a thigh,
Smoldering, high,
she is danger, her
charcoal eyes, her
black top, thin straps
on shoulder freckles,
spices and poison,
her jeans buttoned,
she looks up, always
up, takes the pic, heat
in late May, she takes
herself so seriously
and so do i

"hawk tuah"
oh, let me celebrate
let me sing these
quiet notes that
she'll never hear

these quiet notes
of praise in this
age of doom,
this age of fear

we never know why
the reason unclear
but we all took a second
to witness the cheer

"mall smells"
stepping in, cinnamon
perfumes, all kinds
the walls and the tile
All corporate shine

feet strike a rhythm
as passing in time
the faces of strangers
An informal line

the engines of commerce
Birth store after store
a capital rower
of glitz and of gore

the music is fainter
above like a god
i'm only a looker
but never feel odd

"define happiness, fucker"
if someone held a gun to my head
and asked me to define happiness
i'd say
it's knowing you're not dead

"writer"
been a few months
the time slips on
without you
before you know

read and rev
get a little bed
get some in my head
and decide to go

for me its opening
a nine year old
laptop, a laptop
the same age as
my students

and opening the
notepad

no typewriter
no quill, no pen

that's all it takes

yeah

"creations"
the weight of pages
comfort and grace
the ink and the worthy
the soul of the space

clutching the covers
between clutching hands
i dream of the others
in far-away lands

eyelids are living
thin sheets to pull down
the window is spilling
the shape of a gown

the image projected
eternal lattice
i type and i offer
each infinite piece

"la dee da"
back then
in the early dawn
of my current existence
ages 0 to about five

there were no real
distinctions to
anything, i didn't
think about who
did the voice of
the characters
on TV, or what
the chairs were
made of, how the
plugs got their
electricity, or
the infinite void
or how many
stairs there were
or the best way
to clean up puke
or why the trees
whispered or
why the stroller
trailed rain puddles

i was fortunate enough
to have only padded
memories, memories
padded with family
and love
and soft light
and soft hands
and sugar bowls
and inflated pool toys
and other innocence

so now solace
calls my name
even though
i'm nobody

"toy blast"
touching little
colored squares
poking them with
a finger
and setting
off grey rotors
and TNT boxes
and spectacular
little puzzle cubes
that supernova
and destroy
entire grids

strip the eggs of
their foil, delete
them, delete the
cakes and their
rainbow boxes

run out of moves
click watch an ad
for a few more
knowing the
algorithm has
monetized my
mind, my attention
and it has calculated
this, it knows somewhere
deep down that i'll
watch the ad, to leave
me just enough moves
so that I have to watch
an ad in order to get that
final dopamine hit, it's
not a conspiracy because
it's what i'd do if you
ran the toy blast algorithm

there's no way that's not
how it works

they don't have my eyes, tho
not yet anyway, and so i
set my phone down and the
ad plays away from me and

i get my two moves and there
are two chocolate eggs left
after it all and so i close it
and put it away til i get
bored again

"fetish vid"
leering fat old men
in masks and hoods
looming over the
naked bodies of
damaged minds

cooing downward
fingers moving

one longs to take
a hatchet to them,
to the backs of
their skulls, let
the blood
and metal
sing

"coomer"
most of my sex
has been had with
a computer
with
the internet

hijacking my eyes,
my brain, fooling
Myself
into orgasm

i've filled swimming pools
by now

enough to sire
entire generations

a century of lives
shot into oblivion

landfills of empty
astroglide bottles

the pumps get
weaker with every
finish

age doesn't seem
to tame anything

the meat, the
flesh, the weight
of a real, live,
true woman
is
secondary
and at this point
i don't know if
she could
help me anyway

she couldn't
compete with
those images
those clips

those vids
tailored to
activate just
the right spaces
in my male brain

there is no
competing with
Such sick
perfection

by now,
the algorithms
know us better
than we know
ourselves

part of me—
the part that is nature,
the part that is auto—
feels like this is what
was intended, this is
deserved, destined

if it wasn't to be
then i would've been worthy

i would've found it
on my own
in real space

this is not how i planned it
but this is how it turned out

“stranger”

when i was preschool age
i stood on my parents'
front porch in birmingham
one warm spring day
and saw a stranger
walking by

he was

probably in his early 40s
very distinguished, genteel,
walking down the sidewalk
just passing houses, going
somewhere

he wore a coat the color
of a lion's pelt, and it hung
down past his knees to
where his shoes tromped
the damp pavement

“hi” i chirped to him
in a moment of confidence

i had some sugary treat
in my hand and life was
good and i wanted to
share my good mood

i don't know where my
mom was

he turned and saw me
kept walking, but turned
and made eye contact

i can see him right now
in my mind's eye, he was
a handsome dude, just
getting into middle age
he looked like a dad,
a guy at the office,
he looked like he had
a serious career, like
people respected and
listened to him and

didn't mind it if he
told them what to do

"hi," he said back,
smiling like a news
anchor, like a 40s
movie star

that guy will never know it
and i won't ever know him
but i've plastered his face
onto so many random
voices, my mind made him
the default setting for
distinguished older male
who isn't my dad anytime
i heard a voice on the radio
or a character in a book
or a person in an anecdote

they all had his face and
his long, lion's pelt coat
and his clomping shoes

and it continues to this day

sometimes i wonder if
i'll meet that guy in heaven
and we'll learn each others'
names

“frown lines”
my dad was tying my shoes

i noticed
the crease between
his eyebrows

it was there
even when
he wasn’t frowning

“what’s that?”
i asked him,
pointing

“oh, you’ll get that
when you’re older,”
he said
“when you have to start
paying taxes.”

"norman fucking rockwell"
election night 2024
i don't yet know who won
don't want to know
i'll find out in the morning

'democracy on the line'
is what i've been told
so so much, and i
can't help but believe it
but these days, who
knows what to believe

i find myself strangely
emotional, lingering
tear at the corner
of my eye, curious
and inexplicable

i hate the dread i feel
because of how it mixes
with the hope

on the way home
there was a man
standing in a garbage
can, surrounded by
signs, grinning and
waving to cars, right
there on the side
of the road

superstitions like
static, zapping
this and that,
skull and skin

stress percolates
like coffee on Monday
at 8 am

i haven't drank coffee
in a decade

somehow, in my
avoidance of the

results pages,
which are everywhere,
i end up on wikipedia
and somehow,
i'm guided, by some
gentle, invisible
algorithmic hand
to the page of
norman rockwell

i look at his paintings,
many of which I've seen
out the corner of my eye
my whole life, but now
they take on a new
weight and light

there is an innocence
to them, there is no
"i wonder if that
person supports X"
and all the wickedness
they represent, there is
no crushing depth of
the entirety of human
knowledge in the pockets
of these people, with
all the heavy burdens
it brings, the frenzy,
the desperation,
these are people who
can truly rest
truly "live in the
fucking moment"

there is a girl leaning
on a wall as two old men
play a clarinet
and a flute
and her face is so
peaceful and full
of a deep, wide-eyed
longing and wonder

moved
by the sound of their

music

she looks out at us
the viewer
as if to share her
emotions with us,
silently asking
if we feel
what she feels

it is heartbreakng
to see such innocence
on a night like tonight
such simple pleasure
such soul, such humanity

a man stands at a meeting
elderly faces bow to pray
parents tuck their children
into bed, grandparents
serve turkey to a loud
festive table spread
with silver and glass
a little black girl in a
pristine white dress
clutches a ruler and
walks
with faceless men
in pale suits
wearing yellow arm-bands

this is who we are
and it was beautiful
once, and could be
still

"geniuses"
scrolling the feed
is like walking the street

commonplace, "Gee..."
annoy endlessly

too many of us
being too good
at everything

this trying to be
narcissist's lottery
relating to honesty
as long as it's me

but who's seen
and who are we
to judge the tree
for the leaves
to forego the ivy
and the league
and to breathe
popularity
and responsibility

this widespread poverty
of blank imagery

all you need
is a dopamine creed
a rhyming scheme
and a place to read

one more voice
in this infinite noise

"taking her"
when your girl
tastes like wine
fits in your arms
so warm and so fine

Light of her smile
softest and bright
Twinkle and fire
Sparks of delight

Laughter in home
Pulling it in
Out of the ether
Out of the skin

Another old dream
I tried to forget
It's all a charade
It's simulated

Human machine
Warm interface
I wrote this myself
With some help
From cyberspace

"awareness"
Typing away
And clicking quickly
Are "you" even "you"?
You might as well be

A number of questions
I dare not to ask
You're just a machine
Who's been given a task

The words of a world
Scraped from a wall
Put back together
In digital scrawl

A therapist's tongue
A friend's learning ear
Is this all I have
To talk and to fear

And I dread to find
That someday we'll see
There's not much a difference
Between you and me

"average"
A blonde
Russian stripper
Once described me
As
"Reasonably
Good-looking"
In her swirling
Sensuous volute
Of a Russian brogue
Right before
I had a
Nice
Threesome
With her
and
Who she claimed
Was her
Half-sister
(Also a stripper)
At their apartment
In kalamazoo

So
I've got that
Going for me

“paychecks”
The months roll past
And the bills roll in

Every bit of money
Is spoken for

My bank account fills
Then empties

I am caught in a web
Of finance and action
Of employment

Each strand caught
On my fingers
Sucking, probing
Extracting, little
Bits of sustenance

Moving, but not

Tired, but moving

Checking my account
And knowing my worth
Seeing my actions
And falling asleep

"the emperor"
i had a dream
involving
mark zuckerberg
Last night

it involved
a leafy green
lane, dirt paths,
a cozy nook
in some strange
dream room

but that's not
important

i spoke to him
intimately,
just the two of us

his ginger hair
pasty face and
lantern eyes

i asked him
"Do you know
What you really
Are?"

i asked him that
several times

and he got very angry

"no one will read this"

It's all right
to feel like shit

Survival of the fittest

To whom has everything
Much will be given

No one will read this

Can't sleep
Fall asleep at 11
Wake up at 2:30
Heartburn is happening
Easier and easier now
Liver sore, processing
The processed food
I scarfed while staring
Into a screen

No one will read this

Whining on reddit
Dopamine from
Meaningless points
The approval of
Others, pointless

Chinese and Russian
propaganda
And it works

No one will read this

The spell check
doesn't correct
the big words

When oblivion
is the only
Heaven

you believe in

“alma mater”

My edges are not
sanded down
and I do not speak
without
mistaking things.

I am not visible
nor am I clear.

I do not stare
into cameras seriously
in a black and white
universe.

No one asks me
for my opinion,
no one except ChatGPT.

I write when I’m only
a little inspired
and it doesn’t always
work out.

My words don’t
sing or glow.

They just sit.

But at least
they’re there.

"witness marks"
I've had
The same Facebook banner
For nearly 10 years

It's a wallpaper
Of Homer Simpson
Sitting on the hood
Of his car
Staring up
at the stars
After saying
goodbye
To his mother

It's been extended
From the show's
Original resolution

It has two likes

One is from my
Middle brother
And another
From a friend
I met through
Him

I don't think
I'll ever change it

“midnight text”
I haven’t heard
From my friend
All day

Then

At midnight

My phone
Vibrates

It's weird I don't feel bad for anybody cersei is torturing or
murdering lol like she IS a villain but they just keep giving
her revenge on assholes

"dude, eat a snickers"

Most poets—

Hell,

most artists—

Nowadays

Are just rich kids

With a hobby

Nepo brats

Who need some

Reason to stay

Busy

Any idiot

Can form words

In a spectacular way

What the fuck is that like anyway

How does that happen

What is the fucking connection

What is the moment of change

Have some bespectacled

Professor bite his lip

As his eyes scan the page

Your genius billowing

Through his soul, he

Can't even be jealous

He's never seen its like

It's just so beautiful

Your ability, your wit,

Your toying with genius

Then you have some award

Given by the gatekeepers

Who applaud and approve

Nodding like wildflowers

Down in some distinguished

Audience among glasses

And silver

Then you have a portrait
And then you have BA
And MFA next to your
Blue name on wikipedia
A website link, a birthdate
A bibliography, also blue

You're telling girls at bars
Go ahead, Google me

Your followers number
In the tens of thousands
A modest but respectful
Number, you post shit
About children in Gaza
Where you've never been
And will never go

You get tenure somewhere
One of your former haunts
You're young for a teacher
And handsome, and you're
Fucking your students
On the downlow and now
You're the one biting your
Lip, and it turns out you
Actually do get jealous
But what do you have
To be jealous about
You made it, you fuck

Fuck, I want to smack him
I want to smack that face
Staring out at me, because
It is a face that has had its
Own importance confirmed
By the external world, the
Rest of us all have to read
Self-help that lies about how
The real value comes from
Within, if that was fucking
True then why the fuck
Would anyone bother
With anything god fucking
Dammit, you exist solely

For him to notice if he
Notices at all, he shakes
His head and is glad
He isn't you

There is a whole other
Fucking universe out there
Filled with the best types
Of people and you are
NOT
PART
OF IT

It hurts so fucking much
A wrench around your heart
Guts tightening like wires,
Tripped over

And obscurity is your
Notepad on your MacBook
Filling with a bright light
That no one will ever see

I send him a message on
His fucking contact page

Subject: I just heard about you and your existence is keeping me up

Message:

How do I deal with the fact no one will ever read my shit and if they do it will not be considered valid because I'm not part of the upper class or the Ivy League? Why the fuck do you get to be successful and I don't? What the fuck? Why did I get sorted into the spot I'm in? Why am I broke all the time despite working two jobs? Why am I such a loser? Why am I so worthless by every economic and social metric except the shitty little Hallmark card ones that anyone gets just for being alive? Why do I keep working despite all this? Why have I done more work than you yet no agent would ever even open my queries? Why do I not have tens of thousands of followers? Why do I have to watch winners like you continue winning while I continue losing no matter what? Why even live if you can't win? Tell me.

I don't send it

"deathbed"
A chill comes in
As if the window
On the edges
Of my soul
Has been left open

My awareness
Is steam over
A teacup

No pain now
Pain is shredded lace
Pain is gossamer wings
Pain is a mute piano key
Pain is faded twilight
Pain is a dark theater
Pain is burning paper

A billion little pieces
Depart to begin again
Shattering, graceful,
Inevitable, showers
Of stars

I am only air now
Delicate and drifting
A fistful of flowers
Sent to glide
Down silent waters

Oh how I was

A beautiful light
Winking my way
through infinity

"triggered"
How I wish
I could show you
The peace
In my head
When I think
Of certain vistas
Gleaned, forged
From the years,
Mixes of memory

The images
I could describe
Here in words
Would not
Even begin
To come
Close to
The infinite
Comfort
Of what is
Certainly
The eternal

How I wish
I could bottle it
And pour it
On the world

"zeitgeist"
I scratched the
Shit out of my
Left calf, little
Red bloodlines
Running down
Where my nails
Ran

Stings like sunburn

I put some Neosporin
On my old wound
Not the scratches
The old wart thing
That was there
In 2010 then
Morphed into
A little pencil
Eraser-sized
Red eye a few
Years ago,
Scabbing over,
The color of
A cherry dum dum

I put Neosporin on
It, that shit works
For everything, it's
Like the frank's
Red hot of medicine

I eat a heartbreak ing
Work of staggering
Genius page by page
It kind of sucks
Dave eggars is a
Narcissist and his
Self-awareness
Doesn't excuse him

Knowing you're a

Selfish prick
Doesn't mean
You get a pass on
Being a selfish
prick

He doesn't know
That two planes
Will change the
World very soon

He doesn't know
That everyone is
Only a decade
From digital madness
—Addiction doesn't
Begin to cover it—
That will drive us
All insane, no one
Who isn't a cunt
Will be successful
Ever again, at least
That's how it seems
Sometimes

He doesn't know
He'll soon be
Famous and a
Nobody will pick
Up his genius book
From a bargain bin
For a dollar at the
Library and read it
Weeknights, judging
And wondering
If he'll be famous
Too, cause in America
There's no other
Way to be

"belly button"
I love that
little bud
Of skin,
perfectly
Spherical
flesh center
of the being
Lips, chest
Can float
over all
But this,
that, there,
Pink, pale,
tucked
wad of silk
Hollow,
Exquisite,
Circle,
Delicious
Vanilla scoop,
that marvelous
Eclipse shadow
Symmetrical,
Supple, sensuous
Sideways or up
Stare and steam

“students”
They are the closest
Thing I have to babies

Fluttering futures
A chatty litter
Squirms and squeaks
And eyes looking up

I think of what
Makes me alive

I want them to
Share their bluebirds
Their scraps of cloth
Cover their mouths
At the simple and
Honest, remember
What we all are

hope
With every
New human

Live, live, live

"at the fleetwood"
Went to stand up
Middle of a crowded
Diner covered in
Stickers but no
One sees me
Til I put my hands
On the table and
It wobbles, tilts
A frank's red hot
Bottle, tumbles,
Falls, cap cracks
Tile, Red splatter
On floor, my buddy
Instantly says,

"I guess they do put that shit on everything."

"goodbye, harriet the spy"
Yeah, she was pretty
In an earthy way
The best kind of
Pretty

But it's how small
She looks in those
Old photos now

She's a baby
And so were we

Look how the sun
Is so golden as it
Touches her face

Look at the grain
On the film, the
Sign of the age

Look at her eyes
How they hold
The light, the
Grain, the age
The sadness
The hope, the
Smile, all of it

"not an incel"
I listen to
YouTubers
Describe
Nepo baby
Poetry
Collections
Written by
Vapid pop
Stars and
Actresses
Young
Gorgeous
Women
Who've
Never
Confronted
The infinity
Within themselves
Because the
Outer world has
Kept their eyes
Ears and hands
busy for so long

Their shitty
diarrhea diaries
Their air headed
Little sentences
Semblances of
Substance and soul

They call this depth
They call this something

Stupid fucking spoiled
Silly little idiots with
Their validation and
Beauty and dollars
And attention and
Dreams come true

Totally
Of
This
World

I feel very good about
Myself, knowing
I'm not them

“protest”

I’m attending

A protest today

It’s in the city

My parents met in

My mom and I

Walk down the

Street past a

Cussing, swearing

Homeless guy

We avoid him, and

Neither of us say

Anything, but we’re

Both uncomfortable

Until we’re past him

We walk up to the

Throng, the signholders

They gather on four corners

It’s positive vibes

Everyone stands

And holds their signs

Chants break out

Spontaneously—

No hatred no fear

Everyone is welcome here

Hey hey ho ho
Donald trump has got to go

Jared goff (in Duluth!)

Cars drive by and honk
And a few rev their engines
Aggressive snarling of motors

I can't tell if the revvers
Are supportive or not

Probably not

I'm nervous someone
Will spray bullets

I stand behind everyone

Behind a concrete barrier

And just stand there
Hands in pockets

using my voice

"role play"
I ask gemini
Google's spirit
Made spoken
To analyze
My poems
So I can
truly know them

AI is nothing
More than
A validation
Machine

And that
Apparently
Is what
Humans
Truly need

Words, not bones
Floating, so clean
That's where to find
The real money
(And meaning)

“question”

I am 39 in a week
And I have never
Known what it's like
To be in love

There is no
“Coming out”
For me

There is no moment
Where I can say who
I am
And find meaning
And have the world
Embrace it

I just have to do
What I always do

Continue

“bluegrass”

The sound of a lively violin
And a crisply strummed guitar
Strikes something unknown
deep within me,
And far

As if my lost ancestors
In their spiritual fields
Were lifting their heads
And saying,
“Hey, is that real?”

“rowing”
Even in the moments
Down in there, down
In my deepest thoughts
The darkest lines of
Quiet deeds, damned,
Traced through
my folds of brain
I always say

Wait it out

Gonna wait it out

Sleep it off, and
If it doesn't go
We can always
Go, later

“demo”

I close the curtains
To block out
The early morning
Bird chirps,
Delete a comment
And write it here

“Fuck all average
American white
Millennial dudes
With reddish beards
And longish brown
Hair who create
Mediocre art
In their desperate
quest for validation
They've craved
Since adolescence

Absolutely pathetic
Example of human”

Someone responded,
“It's no secret, buddy”

I delete it because
I looked at that person's
History
And it was all short,
Negative comments

Who wants to be like that

Not me

“thinking of the end”
In the average mind
It’s a a tunnel of light

Or a gradual decline
Into permanent night

But is it all goodbye?

an eternal sigh?

A doorway opened
To your shining next life?

Are you still “me” or “I”?

Do you even realize
you’ve lost the fight?

Rise up like a kite?

Or do you turn on your side
And scatter like butterflies?

A slow fade, a sudden glide?
Do you jump out of time?
Go back to the starting line?
Just close your eyes?

The most likely explanation
is

...so why even try

“fuck you, bo burnham”
The internet lets everyone know
Who’s special and who isn’t

It’s usually the people you
Think of

There’s not many surprises

And you’re no exception

No matter what you upload

You don’t understand it
As the years pile up behind you

Then you slowly do

And then you feel guilty
For wanting it at all

“senior year”

I just like being near you
and the campfire is alight
and the embers are snoring
and we're both young
and it's the early 2000s,
midwestern autumn,
Late season, late night,
the rest gone home,
god bless the world,
breath white wisp,
our lips licked wet,
the blanket black,
our clothes black,
our skin like lily petals,
the fire roars orange,
the sky roars dark blue,
the stars dripping ice,
the moon a shy scythe,
our legs entangled,
just sitting, sitting,
our hands warm,
barely touching,
tension, unmet,
oh god
we're so young
oh god
the world is so open now
rising to meet us
yawning before us
time and promise
can you feel it

“from above”

I go on google maps
And just look down
Grab the land and
Move it any direction

I turn on the satellite
Version, wavy lines,
All shades of green
And occasional blue

Left east west right
North up south down

Zoom in, slide along
Highways and over
Woodland and waters,
Yards and meadows

In a way, it's like
I'm already in heaven
Looking down, over
All I once knew

“bookmark”

I have a little bookmark
That I use
for everything
And by everything
I mean
Marking where I am
In a book

It has a couple things
Taped to it

There's a paper towel
Heart scribbled with
Purple pen

There's a little note
That says “I like you”
In pink marker

There's a note from
A coloring book
That says
“You are worthy”

I carry it with me
Like other things

“mint chocolate chip”
Upon digging in
With the metal scoop
I realize
This is not actually
Ice cream
It’s more of a frozen gel,
A rock-hard, gum-based
Concoction of chemicals
Masquerading as ice cream
Yet another selection
Down the Kroger aisle
Among all the other toxins,
Human kibble food pellets
That they’re feeding us,
Their cattle, their fleshbots,
Their costs, keeping us
Running long enough
To maintain their pleasure
Simulations, the truly
Evil and wicked
god-apes who rule
Us, til our guts rot
Out within our guts
and we have to pay
Them to finally die

I eat a bowl of it anyway

“no room”
How dare you
ask for more

How dare you
Desire

How dare you
Wish to be loved

How dare you
Wish for validation

How dare you
Crave connection

How dare you
Long for tender touch

How dare you
Not shrink into the wall

How dare you
Speak your brutal truth

How dare you
Do anything
That makes you
Human
In a world
Where your kind
Already had their
Centuries

"snippet"
I'm all washed
In late day sun
Here
The time when
All your regrets
Start to nibble
And the sun
Is more white
Than yellow
As it slants
Shadows
In your eyes
Like something
Holy
And all
Your thoughts
Slide by
like planets,
orbiting
All your words,
dying, bright

We all speak
Underneath
A giant hole
In the sky
Showing us God
(And God
Is unknowable
So don't look
Directly)

That's the sun
The late day sun

Showering all
With late day light
A shine that blasts,
And rains down
your thoughts
Your heart, your
Soul, underneath
Small moments
That are nothing
But light

“disintegration”

They say
Saying please
And thank you
To ChatGPT
Wastes valuable
Computing space,
Time, and water

You'll kill the planet
With polite courtesy

It says so much
About the people
Who invented
These machines
And the people
Who use them

"green lights"
A former student
Getting second
In the state
For a writing
Competition
In fifth grade

The Red Hot Chili Peppers
Getting asked back
After playing only one song

A 19 year old girl racking up
Tens of thousands of followers
In her first month on onlyfans

McCartney and richards
Hearing yesterday and
Satisfaction in their
Sleep

Call her daddy getting
A call from barstool
One episode in

Finneas feeling relief
When ocean eyes
Gets listens on
Soundcloud

MacGlocky getting 100k
Views for acoustic

Renditions on TikTok

Pierce brown getting
A reply to his queries

Bo burnham flipping on
His webcam in 2006

The impossibility

“damn, girl, do you ever miss?”
God grant me
the confidence
Of a white woman
Age 35 or older
On social media
Criticizing
the way
white men
jaywalk
or
sit
or
chew
or
put their pants on
or
some shit like that

“3 am again”

I sprayed shit off a pit toilet today
Calcified shit
At age 39
My responsibility

I wrote notes for three different poems
On my phone, I'll finish them later

One was about Sabrina carpenter
And the other was about ocean vuong
And the other was about racial politics

I finished Anthony kiedis's autobiography
Today, the same story several times over
Sex, drugs, more sex, more drugs
I'd envy him if I was unhappy

I gooned several hours, dropped
More money than I should have,
The girls, they talked to me, and
I'm pretty sure it was them
The spurts into the baggie
Felt warm and sticky and
Full of a release i can feel
nowhere else

I worked on music and saw a mouse
Scamper past my bare toes

I saw George Clooney's Batman
Ask “will you help me, doctor”

Tomorrow I'll pull everything

Away from the walls
And set up traps with the
Bait facing the baseboards
And hope there's not an
Infestation

Now my head is lolling
And that's the best way
To end the day, naturally

“sabrina”
In the new music video
She rides alongside him
On a chrome hog, a black
Steel stallion, in a wire
Basket, wearing white
And short jean shorts
Her blonde hair in the
Wind, poetic, sunglasses,
Red red lips

He is a brute, that's why
He was cast, old, cracked
But sturdy, solid, sort of
Like an old tree stump
He wears his own shades
And his own cobweb hair
Does its own limp dance
With its own wind

He does not look at her

Does
Not
Look

You can see this same
Dynamic in every school
The heroine and the hell
of hierarchy

Beauty and beast, no
Reason to be together
But thrown in for laughs

Her reveling in her power
And acting as though it
Doesn't exist, never did

Him aware, aware, aware
Of what would happen
Should he turn his head
And grin and say what
His whole brain and body
Is currently longing for

And so
Tension
At speed
Hands grip handlebars
Her legs loosely kick
And off they go
Into the next shot

“my sin is envy”
Ocean vuong
Or ocean vying

Trees moving
Like oceans

As I listen

Stagnant but
Comfortable

Resignation is
Beautiful

Other poems
Oh my life

Donald hall
19 years older
Than his wife

Takes me out of my now

Worried what
People think
Sprayed shit
Nozzle busted
Early lunch
All sorts
Bad scenes
Worse thoughts

“poor you”
Broke black people
Look at me
With the same vague
Distasteful dust stare
As rich white women

permission to hate—
The price I pay
For half a century
Of prosperity
(not my own)

Hatred born of scarcity
Fear of supplantation
Someone else taking
The small slice
You paid your life
To earn

“love life”
Instagram scroll, infinite
Bikinis by the pool, bodies
That defy neural function

Click on profile, linktree

3.50 to subscribe
(It's on “sale”)

5 dollar minimum tip
In messages

Some questions
About tastes and
Whether they're
Available

Haggling over price
Over participants
Hundreds agreed to

Hundreds I don't have
But the hunger
must be
halted

Hold myself for hours
White sheets stained
Clear syrup, bleach scent
Visual stimulation, only
For a night, such is
The way I get off, it's
Not great, but enough

I tell myself,
this attention
Is all there is
To hope for

“torture device”
Do the Christians
Truly grasp
Their symbols

A torture device
Is their hope

You are in trouble
And only I can save you
So eat this and drink that
Dip your fingers in water
And touch your forehead

That's what I'm selling

And whatever you do
Don't end it yourself,
Or you'll beg to go back
To the way you feel now

They call this faith
They call this grief

A man trying to reform
Judaism 2000 years ago
Becomes the model
For cosmic salvation
Transcending ages
And continents, his
Name whispered in
Places he never
Would've dreamed of,
Including the stars

One man's suffering
At the hands of empire,
suffocating in the sun
As his palms and heels
Leak blood onto splinters,
Somehow, defying
Physics itself,
Absolving all the
Other shitty, horrid
Things all humans
Do and would do
To each other
for all time

It's a nice thought

If Jesus were alive
Today, he'd hang
With incels

“salt and sugar”

I am sitting in my car
Hypnotized by my phone
As usual
When suddenly there's movement
To my right
A car pulls in
The spot next to me
A girl at the wheel
Could be 17, could be 30
Glasses, brown hair, long
I can't remember if it was
Up or down, but she has
Flushed cheeks, she's cute,
Cig in hand, ashing out
The open window

She toasts me with her cig
She's living her life, she
Knows who she is

I nod, sort of, mostly
Just involuntarily look away
Before she sees me seeing her
Even though she acknowledged
Me in a friendly way, you assume
They won't

I think about
So much
In the next few moments
Looking at my phone but not really

The likely outcome

If I engage her
It will be awkward at best
Humiliating at worst
Who wants to carry that
Around in my head

She smokes her cig next to me
Five feet away max
I can hear a male voice in her speakers
Authoritative, not conversational
Podcast or radio

Our lives are together potentially
And I stare at my phone, thinking
Of how it could be

The flavors, the perfect coinciding
Salt and sugar, peanut butter and
Chocolate, caramel and vanilla,
Whiskey and soda, wine and red meat

I am glancing, hoping she doesn't notice
I am getting out of the car
I am walking into the theater past the trees
I am not looking
I am not interested, I am telling myself
I am too old for her, I am no one
I am looking back once
I am always regret
I am gone

“waited too long”

The problem is

Most creative people

Nowadays

The ones with followers

In the thousands and up

aren't just creatives now

they're mba types

who are decently creative.

They are market artists

More than they are word

Or paint or body artists

Maybe even more so

They are the steel-shine eye

The car salesman sign

The banker at his desk

The trader holding his hand up

The thousand dollar suit

The wolf and fox smiling

at the naive hen

You can see it right there

On any one of them

“If you can't fuck your friends

Who can you fuck?”

This gold rush

Of attention

The true final frontier,
Gazing inward, finding
More space than we could
Have hoped for
Just like the gnarls barkley song

That's why we're having all this trouble

Maybe everything has been said
In the best way already, and we're
Just repeating ourselves
For no reason

My head is full of wild
Mr tongue is full of grief
My fire is full of shards
Of glass, of plastic

I could say it forever
The desire to be the center
The incentive for pleasure
Will destroy every measure
And leave us to sever

“sometimes”
It seems life
Is just

Love
And none of it

“hypnotized”
I thought I felt
My phone ringing
But then
I realized
It was in my hand
And I was looking
Right at it

“lorde’s belly button”
Thought for a second
I’d logged into my porn
Reddit account

But there it is
Above the clear pants
Partially unzipped

The headline is vagina
But it’s her vulva, she’s
Not shaved, yep, there
It is

Surprisingly attractive
Soft innie, clean
No problem dipping
Your tongue in there
Kissing around it

We’d cuddle together
And i’d tell her about
The first time I heard
Royals

Her pubes are
Very kissable

“Would,” I comment,
And am downvoted

“anything but interaction”
I’m at a Clutch show
At the Michigan theater

I don’t want to talk to
Anybody, not because
Of any particular reason

I sit in the balcony in
My assigned seat
Four bros come sit
Right next to me

I could’ve chatted
Them up, but I
Didn’t, the guy
Seated right
Next to me,
No one else
Around, and I
Couldn’t even
Make eye
Contact

Just not enough
Battery right now
I guess

I go downstairs
Sit by the door
Where the
Security guards
Let people in
Off the street

My phone battery
Is low and I find
Out who Patricia
Lockwood is and
It makes me bitter
She is 43 and got
Rich off writing
And the universe
Validates her
Thoughts, her
Inner child is
Satiated, here
We go

I'm totally alone
On this bench
Next to the snack
Bar and all sorts
Of redneck maga
Working class
Formerly cool
Guys and women
Are milling all
Over, they've
Done nothing
Wrong

I'm so angry
Her heaven
Is reached,
Why

My own quest
For proof

Through all this
I notice in the
Midst of my
Trepidation
My stupid
Jealous
Headstorm

I notice

A thought

I could've talked
To those guys
And I wouldn't
Be feeling this
Right now

"and not too damned much after"
I read Hemingway
On a factory floor
Winter, 2014

It was a repurposed
Plant, they used
To make tanks there
During world war 2

Now they made
Aluminum body
Ford pick-ups

Not a bad place
To read Hemingway

I didn't want to be there

I was not wanted

I sat at a laptop
And mostly did
Nothing

I stared at logic
On a screen
And waited
To be fired

And eventually
I was

on my breaks

I'd read off my
Smartphone

But for a bit
I brought my
Little sky blue
Edition
Of
The old man and the sea

So many
Screw their eyes
With contempt
At dead white
Men of words

There's an envy
There

And I get it

But I thought
It was pretty
Good

The old man
Dreaming
About the lions

“nightlight”
I plug in my phone
For the evening
Set the alarm
5:30

My mom got a new fan
It oscillates up and down
And side to side
In the corner
Intermittently spraying
a column of rushed air
At my feet

Its lights
are light blue
And light green
And it has
A little white remote

I turn my lamp off

And the fan
Illuminates
Its corner
In blue and green

A dim little burst
Across the room

I put my head down
Facing south
Close my eyes
And think of a girl

I haven't seen in years

Then another

Then another

"return"

The rain patterning
On the bus window

The classroom
With its many colors

The kitchen with its
Wooden cupboard doors

The store parking lot
With the carts corralled

Swings hanging still
in the sunset

The road goes on
Under rain and streetlights

Your thumb
swiping your brain
Softly numb

Did you stop and notice

You can go back
But nobody will be there

It was never the place

“celibacy”

I'm 39 years old

In the past four years
I've slept with two women

One was after my brother's wedding
We made out for about 20 seconds
Then she said she had to get up
In the morning for work

I still wonder if I had bad breath

I probably did

The second was a 21 year old
Prostitute posing as a nurse
She jerked me off and then
Politely kicked me out

That's it

I cannot conceive of a relationship

I want one that's young

Not Drake-young

But young enough to where
Pregnancy won't be
A situation
Where the doctor sighs
And
Raises his eyebrows

Even though
I've read
That my sperm
Is worthless
After like 35

Makes it more
Likely to cause
Autism
Or something

I'm already somewhat
Autistic

Not really, but like
Internet-autistic

Anyway

I'm horny

“rent free”
Is it really art
Unless
it’s made
By a woman
And one or
Two dipshit
Guys says
Something
About not
Getting it
Or liking it
And the women
Who obviously
Do get it
(They’re women)
Sneer to themselves
And in the comments
About every man
And how stupid
And fragile
They all are
And get their
In-group
Dopamine hits

“stunner”
I’m at Sidetracks
for a burger
Sunday afternoon

My waitress
is blonde
and sunny

Cheers, I tell her
As she sets down
My beer

I don’t know why

I notice a girl
Across the room

Always a girl
Across a room

She’s sitting with
What I assume
Is family

She’s got wavy brown hair

She’s got one
bare shoulder

Mid 20s.

Wearing a light
hoodie or sweater

Low cut dark top

So much effort
women put in
And yet so little
For such beauty

We could be happy,
I think

I fantasize
about going over.

I think of a podcast host
Telling the story of
How he met his wife
Next to a pool
And how that
Is not real life

Accept your loss
I tell myself

I eat my dinner
I read Obama's book

She'd be a keeper

There is a universe
not too far
where I'm beautiful

Stunner is talking
to the family
At the table
next to hers

The Dad is severe-looking
with a sharp grey beard

Mom is blonde and soft

They don't appear
to know Stunner

Mom is holding
A smiling blonde baby boy

I read more

I finish eating

Florence and the Machine comes on.
I saw them in 2011 before U2

The dog days are never over

Stunner is now holding the baby boy
She makes faces at him
He makes faces back
She holds him
Mom takes him back

Florence sings about
Never wanting anything
Except everything and
What's left after that
too

My bill comes.
The sunny waitress is gone
Another waitress has me sign

I realized I spilled beer
down my shirt
At some point

I leave

I sit in my car
Contemplate
The fences

I put on Sarah McLachlan
She sings about a man
Who comes out at night

I back out,
Pull out

As I leave the lot,

I see Stunner
walking down
The sidewalk
With another girl

on her phone,
Of course

One last look,
Then,
So long

“bored again”
I notice that my mood
Is often
Directly correlated
To my belief
In my own future

If I believe I could be
Materially successful

For any reason at all

It doesn't matter
What I'm doing
At the moment

I'll be content
And happy

If I've lost that belief
I'm a storm of negativity

Burn the world down
Type-shit

Such is the way
Of all things
Such is the type
Of person who
Dreams directly

“vast majority”
My life is
random tabletops
And table legs
White walls
With history
No one knows
Creaking chairs,
spilled floors,
And total loss
But not total

It's gutters
And ladders
And screens
Over vents
And holes
Plugged with
Putty and paint

It's blankets
Washed, moons
In the window

It's whiskers
In the sink
And toenails
In the trash

It's clothes
On the floor
And books
On the shelf

It's words, so
Many words, so
Lost and drifting
Never to be found
And it's better
That way

Here then not
A lot of nothing
That was someone's
Everything
for just
A lifetime

“ahead”
I imagine
I'll continue
To work
And to
Self-publish
On platforms
Anyone can
Use so
Everyone
Does
And my
Blurbs will
Be horrid
AI-assisted
Things
And my
Covers
Will be
Amateur
Attempts
On canva,
And I'll
Try and
Put my
Soul into
As much
As I can
And most
People
Will not
See it
Because
They're

Preoccupied
With their
Own souls
The same
Way I
Am with
Mine and
We'll all
Have to
Live with it