

## Table of Contents

Partial/Eclipse	2
Dissemination, atomic	3
Before spring.	4
Early july.	5
Orange Peel in the Snow	6
Dead Cat in the Driveway	7-8
Scribbles	9-10
Free Rent	11-13
Poem LX	14
Poem LI	15
Three Beaus	16
A.A.	17
Presently	18
Kananaskis, Alberta	19
Crossroad	20

## Partial/Eclipse

the partial eclipse  
the night didn't drag  
stained fingers over  
catching leakage  
of mouths sucking  
no one's breath  
sending forget-  
blooming throughout  
in fact we got more sun  
sunglasses became  
and we saw the low-  
version of celestial  
in the same way  
to blank spaces  
growing fractal  
of light my skin  
draped over  
we'd all love a little  
behind us and  
paper lantern skin  
what would you do  
if it stained your cornea  
you closed your eyes  
bottom all vacuum  
you

didn't look like anything  
across the day like dirt  
clean sheets on a napkin  
from the edges  
down entire inkwells  
caught in their chest  
me-nots of carbon dioxide  
their bloodstreams  
than ever before  
extensions of eye-lids  
budget shadow theater  
drama play out  
shade does favor  
of wall & patches of grass  
and predatory in the absence  
folds turn into sand dunes  
machinery I suspect  
less if the sun crossed  
our organs shown through  
like flesh lamps with a fever  
if you eclipsed the light?  
and no matter how long  
it was all bright all lake  
leaving no space between  
and the rest of it

## Dissemination, atomic

It isn't hard to imagine

that as the number of nuclear  
detonations ticked up to the mere  
thousands, we created just enough  
radiation to turn pieces of us ourselves  
counterclockwise.

Everyone got a little sick at once  
and no-one noticed. Somewhere,  
the DNA of a sparrow unspools.  
But humans like to think  
they are different. No peptide bonds

can explain away the synapses  
of our desire. How can we know  
what we want when the water  
is thick with waves, tongues  
to lap us apart

like paintings exposed  
to the acid of the air  
or sentences clipped  
of punctuation, letters  
decaying on either end?

How many times have you  
known what you want  
only to watch the tapestries  
on the palms of your hands  
rewire into the unrecognizable?

## before spring.

When we were fresh-faced and strangers,  
The only earth we touched was full of potholes,  
Full of rainwater gutter debris aging garbage  
We swam, cautious, in one block segments only.  
Anything faster would disrupt the stasis of week-old  
puddles  
And our own presumptions about  
How walking should be.

We forgot how light felt on our skin.  
We forgot how to lean towards the sun, reaching  
We never looked up, we thought above us was all  
Telephone wires and doom.

That year, like every other that has passed,  
Brought a murder of crows, it seemed like thousands  
To circle in warning  
Always March, always on a clear day, always around dusk.  
There were no holy murmurations of starlings, or sparrows  
Only black, dense noise that filled the neighborhood.

We were always looking down,  
In our fragile union between downpours,  
Which were frequent, vicious, indifferent to delicacy-  
It mattered not the timing, or setting,  
Suddenly, the sky would come to breaking open.

I pictured myself the umbrella, which we never had.  
I pictured myself the chattering teeth, too.

## early july.

I want to recall what I said, but all that's there  
Is the dark nighttime contour of a fistfight in somebody's  
backyard.

People keep yelling, and I am anticipating police lights  
Splitting open the road, except it never gets that far-  
To bare feet on pavement, the ragged breaths of running  
away.

What I can recall:

The view from the roof, and how everyone moved like ants  
In their frantic pathways,  
And how we watched from afar.

The next morning belonged to a magnificent stillness,  
Like dust had settled on everything,  
Any past dizziness vanquished,  
Any window of opportunity from the rooftop now closed.

I want to recall what I said, but all that's there  
Are your nervous static-energy shocks- and how I moved!  
I moved to where I thought the mercy was,  
I wanted to reach out and make contact  
Because when you know intimacy in centimeters,  
It is hard to return to passing with a wave.  
I wanted to reach out and make contact,  
I wanted to touch the light sheen of sweat, the groove  
between  
Your nose and lip (*philtrum*)  
I had something to say and I didn't get it out,  
There was something floating dead in the wine and I didn't  
get it out,  
I refilled anyways,  
I drank generously.

## Orange Peel in the Snow

The snow is fresh and white except  
for the dull-orange dewy thing that's  
ripped and curling in on itself.

Left only a part of the rind  
that wrapped the soft citrus body  
you had for breakfast

and peeled in a hurry — started with  
dull fingernails, had more difficulty  
than you might have expected

from the globes stacked tall  
and glowing in the produce aisle  
and just sixty-nine cents a piece.  
Some flesh is left on the left side of the peel  
where you struggled, just for a moment,  
before you tossed it into the snow and

let it sink into the ground to become soil  
someday — but not now — it's still  
formed softly like a hand around

an apple and missing the sweet  
half-moons that wait in translucent  
envelopes and stick together.

Did you like it?  
Was it juicy —  
sweet?

Did you eat it  
slice by slice —  
slowly?

## Dead Cat in the Driveway

Strays are always wandering around on  
the usually empty streets of the  
quiet neighborhood that at night becomes  
a dark, suburban feral cat kingdom.

Their eyes shine brighter than street lamps  
as they lurk, soft, aimlessly scavenging.  
The unbothered, unnamed – ignored until  
an urgent leap past your headlights – the quick

blur of overextended bony fur  
bounding into the bushes and hiding  
you'll come to expect and wait for – braking  
down the gravel decline into their world.

There's no way to know, unless you've seen them  
in their skinny strides when the streets are theirs.  
I thought – I knew – it would happen one day –  
the inconvenient death of a cat –

A body known by nobody and left  
alone – silken, muted, and powerless  
to decompose into the crude daylight  
beside a hastily slung newspaper.

I'm sorry I didn't have much to say  
when you came frantically to my front porch  
talking about the dead tabby left splayed  
in the middle of your driveway last night.

You asked me what to do with the body –  
it was decaying and smelling quite bad –  
couldn't keep looking at its lifeless paws –  
had to leave and it was blocking your car.

Thought you'd throw it away in the dumpster —  
Never thought much about their quiet lives  
or how heavy their dead bodies would be  
suspended in a shiny black garbage bag.

I'm sorry I didn't have much to say  
when the inevitable happened to you  
and I thought I'd be a better person  
by then — would know what to do with the clunky dead.

Thought this must have happened before — that there  
would be some number to call, someone who knew  
where the stray cats go when they die  
in your driveway and block your Toyota.

But I didn't know and neither did you  
so we just sat there and talked about it,  
watched the sun warm its cold, hardened body,  
and wondered if anyone missed it.



[illegible]

[illegible]

## Free Rent

i said "talk to me tomorrow"  
it said "nah right now"  
i said "it's time for a change"  
it said "nah let's stay the same"  
the voice outweighs the reason  
and i can't outrun the seasons  
and i still can't control how fast my plants die  
i still can't control what makes my mom cry

i said "let's talk tomorrow"  
it said, "this can't wait"  
and i said "why can't i keep it down?"  
it said "there's always a way to force it"  
i start to laugh at the way my hair spills out of all of my  
hats  
and how the buildings breathe and collapse when my  
head feels off center  
i've got nothing but shards of glass between  
my finger nails would peel right off if they had the  
chance  
but i said i could control my body  
i said i could control my mind

i said, "let's talk tomorrow"  
it said, "now or never"  
i wanted to choose never  
and i wanted to run away,  
but bipolar packed its bags yesterday  
and i just can't seem to fit them in the trunk  
and it seems i lost my keys when i dropped the eggs  
i danced on the shells and i fell off my bike  
i tried to teach myself how to love and how to fight  
i can't help but wonder if i'm doing it right

i said, "i can't talk right now"  
it said, "don't hang up on me"  
and i let my phone die before it could call me back  
i wrapped myself in blankets  
and i stared at my pupils until they stared back  
the mirror will warp itself to a body you can control  
but i cracked mine long ago and there's no coming back  
there's no coming back  
there's no time for tomorrows

i said "i'm blocking your number"  
it said, "i'll buy a new phone"  
i said, "i'll quit phones then"  
and i threw mine across the room  
but then instagram and snapchat floated through my  
brain  
and i tried to cry by blinking in the rain  
but there are things you can control  
there are things that you can't feel  
and there are rotten apples in the backseat  
that you can't seem to hide  
and no matter how hard you try

i said, "talk to me when i don't have an exam to study  
for"  
and it said, "you don't have any potential"  
i said, "you never make any sense."  
the only time it does makes sense  
is when it's quiet inside  
of the glass house i live in  
and it always seems  
that there's someone standing outside  
holding a rock  
ready to throw

i said let's talk tomorrow

it said, "no time like the present"  
and i stopped wondering what it would be like to be a  
dog  
i wanted to spend my money on something that would  
make a difference  
but i bought a pack of altoids instead  
my best friend eats mints like they're candy and to her  
they probably are  
she tells me people make her nervous and i said me too  
we crunch on mints and pretend like we're better than  
that  
you can't control how you taste but you can control  
what you put in your mouth  
and how you look when you swallow  
there's no point in sliding down mountains and  
expecting not to fall  
being crippled never feels so bad  
as when you're trying to hold someone else up too  
you can't run across a battlefield with a broken leg  
and hope not to be shot

and so i said, "let's talk later"  
and it said "well i guess there's a time and a place"  
i said "why don't you find your own place"  
it said, "i like the free rent here"  
and i said, "im moving"

## Poem LX

Weber taught an apple of revenge,  
resting under the mother tree.

The orchard noticed:  
An unnatural reddening,  
a fury of the seed.

Weber read the apple his absurdities & bizzarities  
and laughed at his own futility.

Plotting the deaths of hundreds  
the apple learned its place among the cosmos and

how little he must have felt? To know  
and to never have his revenge.

A single match overtook that place  
and the apple took his own name  
as a place to begin.

Weber decided it would be best  
not to liberate anymore fruits  
for a time.

## Poem LI

Weber ran his romantic life like a never-ending game of Sorry.

With the unfortunate side effect of always picking those pieces  
who had to go home,  
or to jail,  
or who had been forgotten under the couch in the living room.

He never drew odds, always even  
if he wanted an odd.

He felt like he could only ever really move with other odds  
and although he often veiled himself even  
his heart remained odder than ever.

He thought he might try Monopoly,  
but he wasn't any good with maths  
and hardly knew when to put his money  
where his mouth was.

Weber may have been a bad kisser or a good kisser  
but no odd or even ever gave him the number.

### 3 Beaus

[Donatello:]

I made David  
to look at  
that ass  
in bronze  
so you too  
might hit  
the gym

[Michelangelo:]

I made David  
so you too  
might change  
the head  
on your statue  
that contradicts  
what they say  
about massive hands & feet

[Bernini:]

I made David  
to freeze the moment  
of the stone  
so you too  
might see  
a killer body  
of accuracy  
determined  
& in motion.



## A.A.

"Everyone tonight listening is the most important.  
Now I say it's important

'cause ringing the neck of a chicken can sure cause a mess  
but tub fulls of shit ain't cleaner & that's even with all the  
eggs. It's important

you hear that it's not where you're from it's where you're at.  
Your mouth can go unnoticed but it's important

you taste that 'cause the eyes are how we see  
but the stomach takes the fill. You know what there's  
important

is you can't see your stomach too well.  
So how are you today also is important

'cause lord knows you have been too - well you're here now  
that's what's important.  
Have you ever tried your coffee black? Have you? We've  
got some. It's important

you can get back to raw sometimes. Make the vowels our  
beer tonight  
consonants the wine. Let's make tonight something  
important

something about you my friend?" *Oh well I guess I'll bend  
my name's Jack but it's not here what seems too important.*

## Presently

A mist is sleeping upon the lakeshore.  
My well-worn lips are tenderly slipping  
From yours, resisting desire for more  
Turning away, towards the sound of dripping –

The requiem of rain, bleeding off pines,  
Trickling onto the pebbles of the coast.  
A song so lovely it cannot be mine  
Marble girls meander silent as ghosts.

This is a lake, but I wanted a sea,  
'Tis debauchery, instead of a throne.  
Crescent clamshells are not enough for me  
Yet you rest them upon my collarbone.

Your pleasure is ample for the moment,  
Be warned – I find more thrill in atonement.

## Kananaskis, Alberta

Melancholy haunts  
    The chasms  
Remembering falls  
    To the mountain goats  
There is only snow  
    On peaks  
But it is summer  
    Down below.

When I am gone  
    When I have left this place  
My left hand's shadow stays  
    Sprigs of dandelion floss, peonies  
Between thumb and forefinger  
    A potion for years of yearning.

## Crossroad

Stranger!      Sorry  
but since we've met walking this road  
by our high-ceilinged halls  
& crawl-space of pleasure  
    could we wave –  
forgiving ourselves for stalling the other's motions  
of course & having weaved stitches of language  
sewn with passion to warm us – be for one  
moment  
    one      before we go keeping on?