

Bridges And Balloons

We sailed away on a winter's day
With fate as malleable as clay
But ships are fallible, I say
And the nautical, like all things, fades

And I can recall our caravel
A little wicker beetle-shell
With four fine masts and lateen sails
Its bearings on cair paravel

Oh my love
Oh it was a funny little thing
To be the ones to've seen

The sight of bridges and balloons
Makes calm canaries irritable
And they caw and claw all afternoon
Catenaries and dirigibles

Brace and buoy the livingroom
A loom of metal, warp - woof - wimble
And a thimble's worth of milky moon
Can touch hearts larger than a thimble

Oh my love
Oh it was a funny little thing
To be the ones to've seen

Oh my love
Oh it was a funny little thing
It was a funny, funny little thing
To be the ones to've seen

Sprout And The Bean

I slept all day
I woke with distaste
And I railed
And I raved

That the difference between
The sprout and the bean
It is a golden ring
It is a twisted string

And you can ask the counsellor
You can ask the king
And they'll say the same thing
And it's a funny thing

Should we go outside
Should we go outside
Should we break some bread
Are y'interested

And as I said
I slept as though dead
Dreaming seamless dreams
Of lead

When you go away
I am big-boned and fey
In the dust of the day
And in the dirt of the day

And the danger, danger drawing near them was a white coat
And the danger, danger drawing near them was a broad boat
And the water, water running clear beneath a white throat
And the hollow chatter of the talking of the tadpoles
Who know th'outside
Should we go outside
Should we break some bread
Are y'interested

The Book Of Right-On

We should shine a light on, a light on
And the book of right-on's right-on, it was right-on

We should shine a light on, a light-on
And the book of right-on's right-on, it was right-on

I killed my dinner with karate
Kick 'em in the face, taste the body

Shallow work is the work that I do

Do you want to sit at my table
My fighting fame is fabled
And fortune finds me fit and able

And you do say - oh oh
That you do pray - oh oh
And you say that you're okay

And do you want to run with my pack?
Do you want to ride on my back?
Pray that what you lack does not distract

And even when you run through my mind
Something else is in front, oh, you're behind
And I don't have to remind you to stick with your kind

And you do say - oh oh
That you do pray - oh oh
And you say that you're okay

And even when you touch my face
You know your place
And even when you touch my face
You know your place

And we should shine a light on
A light on
And the book of right-on's right-on
It was right-on

And we should shine a light on, a light on
And the book of right-on's right-on, it was right-on

Sadie

Sadie, white coat
You carry me home
And bury this bone
And take this pine cone

Bury this bone
To gnaw on it later, gnawing on the telephone

And 'til then we pray and suspend
The notion that these lives do never end

And all day long we talk about mercy
Lead me to water, lord, I sure am thirsty
Down in the ditch where I nearly served you
Up in the clouds where he almost heard you

And all that we built
And all that we breathed
And all that we spilt
Or pulled up like weeds
Is piled up in back
And it burns irrevocably
And we spoke up in turns
'Til the silence crept over me

And bless you
And I deeply do
No longer resolute
Oh when I call to you

But the water
Got so cold
And you do lose
What you don't hold

This is an old song
These are old blues
And this is not my tune
But it's mine to use

And the seabirds
Where the fear once grew
Will flock with a fury
And they will bury
What'd come for you

And down where I darn with the milk-eyed mender
You and I and a love so tender
Stretched on a hoop where I stitch this adage
Bless our house and its heart so savage

And all that I want

And all that I need
And all that I've got
Is scattered like seed
And all that I knew
Is moving away from me
And all that I know
Is blowing like tumbleweed

And the mealy worms
In the brine will burn
In a salty pyre
Among the fauns and ferns

And the love we hold
And the love we spurn
Will never grow cold
Only taciturn

And i'll tell you tomorrow
Oh sadie, go on home, now
And bless those who've sickened below
And bless us who have chosen so

And all that I've got
And all that I need
I tie in a knot
And I lay at your feet
And I have not forgot
But a silence crept over me

So dig up your bone
Exhume your pinecone, sadie

Inflammatory Writ

Oh, where is your inflammatory writ?
Your text that would incite a light; 'be lit'

Our music deserving
Devotion unswerving
Cried; 'do I deserve her?'
With unflagging fervor
Well, no we do not, if we cannot get over it

But what's it mean when suddenly we're spent? - tell me true
Ambition came and reared its head and went - far from you

Even mollusks have weddings
Though solemn and leaden
But you dirge for the dead
And take no jam on your bread
Just a supper of salt and a waltz through your empty bed

And all at once
It came to me
And I wrote in hunch 'til four-thirty
But that vestal light
It burns out with the night

In spite of all the time that we spend on it
Om one bedraggled ghost of a sonnet
While outside the wild boars root
Without bending a bough underfoot
Oh, it breaks my heart - I don't know how they do it

So don't ask me!

And as for my inflammatory writ?
Well I wrote it and I was not inflamed one bit

Advice from the master
Derailed that disaster
Said; 'hand that pen over to me, poetaster!'
While across the great plains
Keening lovely & awful
Ululate the last great american novels
An unlawful lot left, to stutter and freeze floodlit
But at least they didn't run, to their undying credit

This Side Of The Blue

Svetlana sucks lemons across from me
And I am progressing abominably
And I do not know my own way to the sea
But the saltiest sea knows its own way to me

And the city that turns, turns protracted and slow
And I find myself toeing the embarcadero

And I find myself knowing the things that I knew
Which is all that you can know on this side of the blue

And jaime has eyes black and shiny as boots
And they march at you two-by-two(-re-loo-re-loo)
When she looks at you, you know that she's nowhere near through
It's the kindest heart beating this side of the blue

And the signifieds butt heads with the signifiers
And we all fall down slack-jawed to marvel at words
When across the sky sheet the impossible birds
In a steady illiterate movement homewards

And gabriel stands beneath forest and moon
See them rattle and boo, and see them shake, and see them loom
See him fashion a cap from a page of camus
And see him navigate deftly this side of the blue

And the rest of our lives will the moments accrue
When the shape of their goneness will flare up anew
Then we do what we have to do(-re-loo-re-loo)
Which is all that you can do on this side of the blue

Ot it's all that you can do on this side of the blue
Oh it's all that you can do on this side of the blue

En Gallop

This place is damp and ghostly, I am already gone
And the halls were lined with the disembodied
And dusty wings which fell from flesh
Gaslessly

And I go where the trees go
And I walk from a higher education
For now, and for hire

It beats me but I do not know
And it beats me but I do not know
It beats me but I do not know
I do not know

Palaces and stormclouds
The rought straggly sage and the smoke

And the way it will all come together
In quietness, and in time

And you laws of property
Oh, you free economy
And you unending afterthoughts;
You could've told me before

Never get so attached to a poem, you
Forget truth that lacks lyricism, and
Never draw so close to the heat, that
You will forget that you must eat, oh

Cassiopeia

Feel the mattress tense beneath me
Like the muscle of non-sleepy
Feathers flexing will defeat me
And it vexes me complet-e-ly

And the hexes heat covertly
Like a slow low-flying turkey
Like a texan drying jerky
But his meaty mitts can't hurt me

With my steely will compounded
In a mighty mound that's hounded
By the snap your steel string sounded
Just before your snores unwound it

And in store are dreams so daring
That the night can't stop from staring
And i'll swim sweetly as a herring
Through the ether not despairing

Go to sleep
You stunning sky

Gently creep
Cunning by

Quiet hum
Is amplified

By your thumb
That you suck dry

Hundred raging waters snare the lonely sigh
Oh, you hold your breath and clasp at cassiopeia

Hundred raging waters snare the lonely sigh
Oh, and you hold your breath and clasp at cassiopeia

Cassiopeia
Cassiopeia
Oh
Cassiopeia

Peach, Plum, Pear

We speak in the store
I'm a sensitive bore
And you're markedly more
And I'm oozing surprise

But it's late in the day
And you're well on your way
What was golden went gray
And I'm suddenly shy

And the gathering floozies
Afford to be choosy
And all sneezing darkly
In the dimming divide

And I have read the right books
To interpret your looks
You were knocking me down
With the palm of your eye

Go; na na na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na

This was unlike the story
It was written to be
I was riding its back
When it used to ride me

And we were galloping manic
To the mouth of the source
We were swallowing panic
In the face of its force

And I was blue
I am blue
And unwell
Made me bolt like a horse
[made me bold like a whore]

And; na na na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na na na
Na na na na na na na na

Now it's done
Watch it go
And you've changed so

Water run from the snow

Am I so dear?
Do I run rare?
And you've changed
So

Peach, plum, pear
Peach, plum

Swamsea

If you wanna come on down
Down with your bones so white
And watch the freight trains pound
Into the wild wild night

How I would love to gnaw
Gnaw on your bones so white
And watch as the freight trains paw
Paw at the wild wild night

All these ghost towns
Wreathed in old loam

Assateague knee-
Deep in seafoam
Ho, swansea!
Buttonwillow!
Lagunitas!
Ho, calico!

And all these beastly bungalows
Stare distend like endless toads
Endlessly hop down the road
Borne by wind we southward blow

And yonder, wild and blue
The wild blue yonder looms
'Til we are wracked with rheum
By roads, by songs entombed

And all we wanna do
Is chew and chew and chew

Dear one
Drive on

When all we wanna do
Is chew and chew and chew

And if you wanna come on down
Down with your bones so white
And watch the freight trains pound
Into the wild wild night

How I would love to gnaw
To gnaw on your bones so-o white
And watch while the freight trains paw
Paw at the wild wild night

Paw at the wild wild night
Paw at the wild wild night

Three Little Babies

There was a knight and a lady bright

And three little babes had she
She sent them away to a far country
To learn their grammar

They hadn't been gone but a very short time
About three months and a day
When the lark spread over this whole wide world
And taken those babes away

It was on a cold cold christmas night
When everything was still
And she saw her three little babes come running
Come running down the hill

She set them a table of bread and wine
That they might drink and eat
She spread them a bed of a winding sheet
That they might sleep so sweet

'Take it off, take it off!', cried the eldest one
'Take it off, take it off!', cried she
'For I shan't stay here in this wicked world
When there's a better one for me'

'Cold clods, cold clods inside my bed
Cold clods, down at my feet
The tears my dear mother shed for me
Would wet my winding sheet'

'The tears my dear mother shed for me
Would wet my winding sheet
Would wet my winding sheet'

Clam, Crab, Cockle, Cowrie

That means no
Where I come from
I am cold, out waiting for the day to come

I chew my lips
And I scratch my nose
Feels so good to be a rose

Oh don't

Don't you lift me up
Like I'm that shy no-no-no-no-no, just give it up

See, there are bats all dissolving in a row
Into the wishy-washy dark that can't let go

I cannot let go
So I thank the lord
And I thank his sword
Though it be mincing up the morning, slightly bored

Oh oh oh, morning
Without warning
Like a hole
Oh, and I watch you go

There are some mornings when the sky looks like a road
There are some dragons who were built to have and hold
And some machines are dropped from great heights lovingly
And some great bellies ache with many bumblebees
And they sting so terribly

I do as I please
Now I'm on my knees
Your skin is something that I stir into my tea
And I am watching you
And you are starry, starry, starry

(and you will never
Ever know how
Very sorry you will be
... I am)

And I'm tumbling down
And I check a frown
Well just look around
That's why I love this town
To see me;
Serenaded hourly
Celebrated sourly
Dedicated dourly

Waltzing with the open sea
Clam, crab, cockle, cowrie

Will you just look at me!

Oh, oh, oh, oh

Oh, oh, oh, oh

YS

Emily

The meadowlark and the chim-choo-ree and the sparrow
Set to the sky in a flying spree, for the sport of the pharaoh.
A little while later, the Pharisees dragged a comb through the meadow.
Do you remember what they called up to you and me, in our window?

There is a rusty light on the pines tonight;
Sun pouring wine, lord, or marrow, down into the
Bones of the birches, and the spires of the churches, jutting out from the shadows;
The yoke, and the axe, and the old smokestacks, and the bale, and the barrow
And everything sloped, like it was dragged from a rope, in the mouth of the south below.

We've seen those mountains kneeling, felten and grey.
We thought our very hearts would up and melt away,

From that snow in the nighttime,
Just going and going

And the stirring of wind chimes
In the morning
In the morning

Helps me find my way back in
From the place where I have been

And, Emily, I saw you last night by the river.
I dreamed you were skipping little stones across the surface of the water
Frowning at the angle where they were lost, and slipped under forever,
In a mud-cloud, mica-spangled, like the sky'd been breathing on a mirror.

Anyhow, I sat by your side, by the water.
You taught me the names of the stars overhead, that I wrote down in my ledger
Though all I knew of the rote universe were those Pleiades, loosed in December,
I promised you I'd set them to verse, so I'd always remember

That the meteorite is the source of the light,
And the meteor's just what we see;
And the meteoroid is a stone that's devoid of the fire that propelled it to thee.
And the meteorite's just what causes the light,
And the meteor's how it's perceived;
And the meteoroid's a bone thrown from the void, that lies quiet in offering to thee.

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You came and lay a cold compress upon the mess I'm in;
Threw the window wide, and cried amen amen amen.
The whole world stopped to hear you hollering.
And you looked down, and saw, now, what was happening:

The lines are fading in my kingdom
(though I have never known the way to border them in);
So the muddy mouths of baboons and sows, and the grouse, and the horse, and the hen
Grope at the gate of the looming lake that was once a tiny pen.
And the mail is late, and the great estates are not lit from within.
The talk in town's becoming downright sickening.

In due time we will see the far butte lit by a flare.
I've seen your bravery, and I will follow you there

And row through the nighttime,
Gone healthy,
Gone healthy all of a sudden,

In search of the midwife
Who could help me
Who could help me,

Help me find my way back in.
There are worries where I've been.

Say, say, say, in the lee of the bay
Don't be bothered.
Leave your troubles here,
Where the tugboats shear the water from the water
(flanked by furrows, curling back, like a match held up to a newspaper).

Emily, they'll follow your lead by the letter.
And I make this claim, and I'm not ashamed to say I knew you better.

What they've seen is just a beam of your sun that banishes winter.

Let us go! Though we know it's a hopeless endeavor.

The ties that bind, they are barbed and spined, and hold us close forever.

Though there is nothing would help me come to grips with
A sky that is gaping and yawning,
There is a song I woke with on my lips,
As you sailed your great ship towards the morning.

Come on home. The poppies are all grown knee-deep by now.
Blossoms all have fallen, and the pollen ruins the plow.
Peonies nod in the breeze,
And as they wetly bow
With hydrocephalitic listlessness,
Ants mop up their brow.

And everything with wings is restless, aimless, drunk and dour;
Butterflies and birds collide at hot, ungodly hours.
My clay-colored motherlessness rangily reclines
Come on home, now! All my bones are dolorous with vines.

Pa pointed out to me, for the hundredth time tonight,
The way the ladle leads to a dirt-red bullet of light.

Squint skyward and listen
Loving him, we move within his borders:
Just asterisms in the stars' set order.

We could stand for a century,
Staring,
With our heads cocked,
In the broad daylight, at this thing:

Joy,
Landlocked in bodies that don't keep
Dumbstruck with the sweetness of being,
Till we don't be.
Told: take this.
Eat this.

Told: the meteorite is the source of the light,
And the meteor's just what we see;
And the meteoroid is a stone that's devoid of the fire that propelled it to thee.

And the meteorite is just what causes the light,
And the meteor's how it's perceived;
And the meteoroid's a bone thrown from the void that lies quiet in offering to thee.

Monkey & Bear

Down in the green hay,
Where monkey and bear usually lay,
They woke from a stable-boy's cry.
He said: "someone come quick
The horses got loose, got grass-sick
They'll founder! Fain, they'll die."

What is now known by the sorrel and the roan?
By the chestnut, and the bay, and the gelding grey?
It is: stay by the gate you are given.
Remain in your place, for your season.
O, had the overfed dead but listened
To that high-fence, horse-sense, wisdom...

But,
"Did you hear that, bear?" Said
Monkey, "we'll get out of here, fair and square
They've left the gate open wide!

"So, my bride.

"Here is my hand. Where is your paw?
Try and understand my plan, ursala.
My heart is a furnace
Full of love that is just, and earnest.
Now.
We know that we must unlearn this
Allegiance to a life of service,
And no longer answer to that heartless
Hay-monger, nor be his accomplice
(That charlatan, with artless hustling!)
But ursala, we've got to eat something,
And earn our keep, while still within
The borders of the land that man has girded,
(All double-bolted and tightfisted!),
Until we reach the open country,
A-steeped in milk and honey.

Will you keep your fancy clothes on, for me?
Can you bear a little longer to wear that leash?

"My love, i swear by the air i breathe:
Sooner or later, you'll bare your teeth.

"But for now, just dance, darling.
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?
Darling, there's a place for us;
Can we go, before i turn to dust?
Darling there's a place for us.

"Darling. C'mon will you dance,
My darling?
The hills are groaning with excess,
Like a table ceaselessly being set.
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?
And we'll get there yet."

They trooped past the guards,
Past the coops, and the fields, and the
Farmyards, all night, till finally,

The space they gained
Grew much farther than
The stone that bear threw,
To mark where they'd stop for tea.

But,
"walk a little faster,
Don't look backwards

"Your feast is to the east, which lies a little past the pasture.

"When the blackbirds hear tea whistling they rise and clap.
Their applause caws the kettle black.
And we can't have none of that!
Move along, bear; there, there; that's that."

(Though cast in plaster,
Our ursala's heart beat faster
Than monkey's ever will.)

But still,

They have got to pay the bills.
Hadn't they?
That is what the monkey would say.
So, with the courage of a clown, or a cur,
Or a kite, jerking tight at its tether,
In her dun-brown gown of fur,
And her jerkin of
Swansdown and leather,
Bear would sway on her hind legs;
The organ would grind dregs of song,
For the pleasure
Of the children who'd shriek,
Throwing coins at her feet,
Then recoiling in terror.

Sing, "dance, darling.
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?
Carling, there's a place for us;
Can we go, before i turn to dust?
Darling there's a place for us.

"Darling.
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?
Keep your eyes fixed on the highest hill,
Where you'll ever-after eat your fill.
O darling...dear...mine...if you dance,
Darling: i will love you still."

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Deep in the night
Shone a weak and miserly light,
Where the monkey shouldered his lamp.
Someone had told him the
Bear'd been wandering a fair piece away
From where they were camped.
Someone had told him
The bear had been sneaking away,
To the seaside caverns, to bathe;
And the thought troubled the monkey,
For he was afraid of spelunking
Down in those caves.
And also afraid what the
Village people would say,

If they saw the bear in that state
Lolling and splashing obscenely
Well, it seemed irrational, really,
Washing that face;
Washing that matted and flea-bit pelt
In some sea-spit-shine
Old kelp dripping with brine.
But monkey just laughed, and he muttered,
“when she comes back, ursala will be bursting with pride
Till i jump up!
Saying, ‘you’ve been rolling in muck!
Saying, ‘you smell of garbage and grime!’”

But far out,
Far out,
By now,
By now
Far out, by now, bear ploughed,
Because she would
Not drown:

First the outside-legs of the bear
Up and fell down, in the water, like knobby garters,
Then the outside-arms of the bear
Fell off, as easy as if sloughed
From boiled potatoes.
Low’re’d in a genteel curtsy,
Bear shed the mantle of her
Diluvian shoulders;
And, with a sigh,
She allowed the burden of belly to drop,
Like an apronfull of boulders.

if you could hold up her
Threadbare coat to the light,
Where it’s worn translucent in places,
You’d see spots where,
Almost every night of the year,
Bear had been mending,
Suspending that baseness.

Now her coat drags through the water,
Bagging, with a life’s-worth of hunger,
Limitless minnows;

In the magnetic embrace,
Balletic and glacial,
Of bear's insatiable shadow—

Left there!
Left there!
When bear
Left bear;

Left there,
Left there,
When bear
Stepped clear of bear.

(sooner or later you'll bury your teeth)

Sawdust And Diamonds

From the top of the flight
Of the wide, white stairs,
Through the rest of my life,
Do you wait for me there?

There's a bell in my ears.
There's the wide, white roar.
Drop a bell down the stairs.
Hear it fall forevermore.

Drop a bell off of the dock.
Blot it out in the sea.
Drowning mute as a rock;
Sounding mutiny.

There's a light in the wings, hits the system of strings,
From the side, where they swing—
See the wires, the wires, the wires.
And the articulation in our elbows and knees
Makes us buckle;
We couple in endless increase
As the audience admires.

And the little white dove,
Made with love, made with love;

Made with glue, and a glove, and some pliers

Swings a low sickle arc, from its perch in the dark:
Settle down, settle down, my desire.

And the moment I slept, I was swept up in a terrible tremor.
Tough no longer bereft, how I shook! And I couldn't remember.
Then the furthestmost shake drove a murdering stake in,
And cleft me right down through my centre.
And I shouldn't say so, but I knew that it was then, or never.

Push me back into a tree.
Bind my buttons with salt.
Fill my long ears with bees
Praying please please please love
You ought not
No you ought not

Then the system of strings tugs at the tip of my wings
(cut from cardboard and old magazines):
Makes me warble and rise, like a sparrow.
And in the place where I stood, there is a circle of wood—
A cord or two—which you chop, and you stack in your barrow.
It is terribly good to carry water and chop wood,
Streaked with soot, heavy-booted and wild-eyed;
As I crash through the rafters,
And the ropes and the pulleys trail after
And the holiest belfry burns sky-high.

Then the slow lip of fire moves across the prairie with precision,
While, somewhere, with your pliers and glue, you make your first incision.
And in a moment of almost-unbearable vision,
Doubled over with the hunger of lions,
Hold me close, cooed the dove,
Who was stuffed, now, with sawdust and diamonds.

I wanted to say: Why the long face.
Sparrow, perch and play songs of long face.
Burro, buck and bray songs of long face!
Sing, I will swallow your sadness, and eat your cold clay,
Just to lift your long face;
And though it may be madness, I will take to the grave
Your precious longface.
And though our bones they may break, and our souls separate—

Why the long face?
And though our bodies recoil from the grip of the soil—
Why the long face?

In the trough of the waves,
Which are pawing like dogs,
Pitch we, pale-faced and grave,
As I write in my log.

Then I hear a noise from the hull,
Seven days out to sea.
It is that damnable bell!
And it tolls—well, I believe that it tolls—for me.
It tolls for me.

Though my wrists and my waist seemed so easy to break,
Still, my dear, I'd have walked you to the very edge of the water.
And they will recognise all the lines of your face
In the face of the daughter of the daughter of my daughter.

Darling, we will be fine; but what was yours and mine
Appears to me a sandcastle
That the gibbering wave takes.
But if it's all just the same, then will you say my same;
Say my name in the morning, so I know when the wave breaks.

I wasn't born of a whistle, or milked from a thistle at twilight.
No; I was all horns and thorns, sprung out fully formed, knock-kneed and upright.

So: enough of this terror.
We deserve to know light,
And grow evermore lighter and lighter.
You would have seen me through,
But I could not undo that desire.

From the top of the flight
Of the wide, white stairs
Through the rest of my life
Do you wait for me there?

Only Skin

And there was a booming above you,
That night black airplanes flew over the sea.

And they were lowing and shifting like
Beached whales,
Shelled snails,
As you strained and you squinted to see
The retreat of their hairless and blind cavalry.

You froze in your sand shoal,
Prayed for you poor soul;
Sky seemed a bread roll, soaking in a milk-bowl.

And when the bread broke
Fell in bricks of wet smoke
My sleeping heart woke, and my waking heart spoke.

Then there was a silence you took to mean something:
Mean, run, sing,
For alive you will evermore be.
And the plague of the greasy black engines a-skulking
Has gone east,
While you're left to explain them to me
Released
From their hairless and blind cavalry.

With your hands in your pockets,
Stubbily running
To where i'm unfresh,
Undressed and yawning

Well, what is this craziness?
This crazy talking?
You caught some small death
When you were sleepwalking.

It was a dark dream, darlin;
It's over.
The firebreather is beneath the clover.
Beneath his breathing there is cold clay, forever:
A toothless hound-dog chocking on a feather.

But i took my fishing pole (fearing your fever),
Down to the swimming hole, where there grows a bitter herb
That blooms but one day a year, by the riverside
I'd bring it here:

Apply it gently
To the love you've lent me.

While the river was twisting and braiding, the bait bobbed
And the string sobbed,
As it cut through the hustling breeze.

And i watched how the water was kneading so neatly,
Gone treacly,
Nearly slowed to a stop in this heat;
Frenzy coiling flush along the muscles beneath.

Press on me,
We are restless things.
Webs of seaweed are swaddling.
You call upon the dusk of the
Musk of a squid:
Shot full of ink, until you sink into your crib.

Rowing along, among the reeds, among the rushes,
I heard your song, before my heart had time to hush it!
Smell of a stonefruit being cut and being opened.
Smell of a low and of a lazy cinder smoking

And when the fire moves away,
Fire moves away, son.
Why would you say
I was the last one?

Scrape your knee: it is only skin.
Makes the sound of violins.

When i cut your hair, and leave the birds all the trimmings,
I am the happiest woman among all women.

And the shallow water stretches as far as i can see.
Knee deep, trudging along—
The seagull weeps 'so long'—
I'm humming a threshing song—

Until the night is over, hold on,
Hold on;
Hold your horses back from the fickle dawn.

I have got some business out at the edge of town,
Candy weighing both of my pockets down
Till i can hardly stay afloat, from the weight of them
(and knowing how the commonfolk condemn
What it is i do, to you, to keep you warm:
Being a woman. Being a woman.)

But always up the mountainside you're clambering,
Groping blindly, hungry for anything;
Picking through your pocket linings—
Well, what is this?
Scrap of sassafras, eh sisyphus?

I see the blossoms broke and wet after the rain.
Little sister, he will be back again.
I have washed a thousand spiders down the drain.
Spiders' ghosts hang, soaked and
Dangling silently, from all the blooming cherry trees,
In tiny nooses, safe from everyone
Nothing but a nuisance; gone now, dead and done
Be a woman. Be a woman.

Though we felt the spray of the waves,
We decided to stay, 'till the tide rose too far.
We weren't afraid, cause we know what you are;
And you know that we know what you are.

Awful atoll
O, incalculable indiscreetness and sorrow!
Bawl bellow:
Sibyl sea-cow, all done up in a bow.
Toddle and roll;
Teethe an impalpable bit of leather,
While yarrow, heather and hollyhock
Awkwardly molt along the shore.

Are you mine?
My heart?
Mine anymore?

Stay with me for awhile.
That's an awfully real gun.
I know life will lay you down,
As the lightning has lately done.

Failing this, failing this,
Follow me, my sweetest friend,
To see what you anointed,
In pointing your gun there.
Lay it down! Nice and slow!
There is nowhere to go,

Save up;
Up where the light, undiluted, is
Weaving, in a drunk dream,
At the sight of my baby, out back:

Back on the patio,
Watching the bats bring night in

While, elsewhere,
Estuaries of wax-white
Wend, endlessly, towards seashores unmapped.

*

Last week, our picture window
Produced a half-word,
Heavy and hollow,
Hit by a brown bird.

We stood and watched her gape like a rattlesnake
And pant and labor over every intake.

I said a sort of prayer for some rare grace,
Then thought i ought to take her to a higher place.
Said, "dog nor vulture nor cat shall toy with you,
And though you die, bird, you will have a fine view."

Then in my hot hand, she slumped her sick weight.
We tramped through the poison oak, heartbroke and inchoate.
The dogs were snapping, so you cuffed their collars
While i climbed the tree-house. Then how i hollered!

Cause she'd lain, as still as a stone, in my palm, for a lifetime or two;
Then saw the treetops, cocked her head, and up and flew.
(while back in the world that moves, often, according to
The hoarding of these clues,

Dogs still run roughly around
Little tufts of finch-down.)

The cities we passed were a flickering wasteland,
But his hand, in my hand, made them hale and harmless.

While down in the lowlands, the crops are all coming;
We have everything.

Life is thundering blissful towards death

In a stampede
Of his fumbling green gentleness.

You stopped by;
I was all alive.
In my doorway, we shucked and jived.
And when you wept, i was gone;
See, i got gone when i got wise.
But i can't with certainty say we survived.

Then down and down
And down and down
And down and deeper,
Stoke, without sound,
The blameless flames,
You endless sleeper.

Through fire below,
And fire above,
And fire within,

Sleep through the things that couldn't have been,
If you hadn't have been.

And when the fire moves away,
Fire moves away, son.
Why would you say
I was the last one?

All my bones, they are gone, gone, gone.
Take my bones, i don't need none.
Cold, cold cupboard, lord, nothing to chew on!
Suck all day on a cherry stone.

Dig a little hole not three inches round
Spit your spit in a hole in the ground.
Weep upon the spot for the starving of me!
Till up grows a fine young cherry tree.
When the bough breaks, what'll you make for me?
A little willow cabin to rest on your knee.
What'll I do with a trinket such as this?
Think of your woman, who's gone to the west.
But I'm starving and freezing in my measly old bed!
Then I'll crawl across the salt flats, to stroke your sweet head.
Come across the desert with no shoes on!
I love you truly,
Or I love no-one.

Fire moves away. Fire moves away, son.
Why would you say I was the last one?

Clear the room! There's a fire, a fire, a fire.
Get going,
And I'm going to be right behind you.

And if the love of a woman or two, dear,
Could move you to such heights,
Then all I can do
Is do, my darling, right by you.

Cosmia

When you ate,
I saw your eyelashes.
Saw them shake like
Wind on rushes.

In the cornfield,
When she called me

Moths surround me.
Thought they'd drown me.

And I miss your precious heart.

Dried rose petals
Redbrown circles
Framed your eyes and

Stained your knuckles.

And all those lonely nights
Down by the river,
You brought me bread and water
(water, in.);

But though i tried so hard,
My little darlin,
I couldn't keep the night from coming in.

And all those lonely nights
Down by the river,
I was brought my bread and water
By the kith and the kin;

Now in the quiet hour,
When i am sleeping,
I cannot keep the night from coming in.

Why've you gone away?
Gone away again?
I'll sleep through the rest of my days,
If you've gone away again.
Sleep through the rest of my days.

Why've you gone away.
Seven suns away.

Can you hear me? Will you listen?
Don't come near me. Don't go missing.
In the lissome light of evening:
Help me, cosmia; i'm grieving.

And all those lonely nights
Down by the river,
You brought me bread and water
(water, in.);

But though i tried so hard,
My little darlin,
I couldn't keep the night from coming in.

And all those lonely nights

Down by the river
I was brought my bread and water
By the kith and the kin;

Now in the quiet hour,
When i am sleeping,
I cannot keep the night from coming in.

*

Beneath the porch-light
We've all been circling.
Beat our dust hearts;
Singe our flour wings.
But in the corner,
Something is happening!
Wild cosmia, what have you seen?

Water were your limbs,
And the fire was your hair
And then the moonlight caught your eye,
And you rose through the air
Well, if you've seen true light,
Then this is my prayer:

Will you call me, when you get there?

And i miss your precious heart;
And miss, and miss, and miss,
& miss, & miss, &
Miss, & miss, & miss your heart.

But release your precious heart,
To its feast, for precious hearts.

HAVE ONE ON ME

Easy

Easy, easy
My man and me
We could rest and remain here, easily

We are tested and pained by
What's beyond our bed
We are blessed and sustained
By what is not said

No-one knows what is coming
Or who will harvest what we have sewn
Or how I've been dulling and dumbing
In the service of the heart alone

Or how I am worn to the bone
By the river
And in the river made of light
I'm your little life-giver
I will give my life

Haven't you seen what I've seen
Don't you know what you ought to do
I was born to love
And I intend to love you

Down in the valley
Where the fields are green,
Watch my luck turn, fro and to pluck
Every last daisy clean
Till only I may love you

I am easy
Easy to keep
Honey, you please me
Even in your sleep
But my arms want to carry
My heart wants to hold
Tell me your worries
I want to be told

Sit and see how the fog
From the port in the bay
Lays like snow
At the foot of the Roanoke

Hear the frog going courting
Till the day he croaks

Saying even then
How there is light in the river
And there's a river made of light
Come on you little life-giver
Give your life

Who asked you
Who asked you
If you want to be loved by me
Who died and made you in charge
Of who loves who
All the livelong day
If I have my way, I will love you

But One can't carry the weight
Or change the fate of Two
I've been waiting for a break
How long's it gonna take
Let me love you

How about it
How about what I have to say
How about that livelong day
How am I gonna stay
Here without you

Easy, easy
You must not fear
You must meet me, to see me
I am barely here
But, like a Bloody Mary
Seen in the mirror
Speak my name
And I appear
Speak my name
And I appear
Speak
And I appear

Have One On Me

From the courtyard I floated in
And watched it go down
Heard the cup drop

Thought, "Well, that's why they keep them around"
The blackguard sat hard, down
With no head on him now
And I felt so bad
'Cause I didn't know how
To feel bad enough
To make him proud

By the time you read this
I will be so far away
Daddy longlegs, how in the world
Am I to be expected to stay
In the night
In the night, you may hear me call
Pa, stay your hand
And steel your resolve
Stay where you are
So long and tall

Here's Lola, ta da!, to do
Her famous Spider Dance for you
Lighten up your pockets
Shake her skirts and scatter, there
A shrieking six-legged millionaire
With a blight in his sockets

Miss Montez
The Countess of Lansfeld
Appealed to the King of Bavaria
Saying, "Pretty papa if you are my friend
Mister daddy longlegs, they are at it again
Can I see you"

Poor Lola, a tarantula's mounting
Countess Lansfeld's handsome brassiere
While they all cheer

And the old king fell from grace
While Lola fled
To save face and her career

You caught a fly, floating by
Wait for him to drown in the dust
Drown in the dust of other flies

Whereby the machine is run
And the deed is done
Heaven has no word
For the way you and your friends
Have treated poor Louis
May God save your poor soul, Lola
But there is nothing I adore
Apart from that whore's black heart

Well, doesn't that just beat all
Miss Gilbert
Called to Castlemaine
By the silver dollar
And the gold glitter

Well, I've seen lots
But never, in a million years
Would think to see you, here

Though the long road
Begins and ends with you
I cannot seem to make amends with you, Louis
When we go out
They're bound to see you with me

At night, I walk in the park with a whip
Between the lines of the whispering Jesuits
Who are poisoning you against me
There's a big black spider hanging over my door
Can't go anywhere, anymore
Tell me, are you with me

I called to you, several times
While the change took place
And then arrived, all night
And I died

But all these songs
When you and I are long gone
Will carry on
Mud in your eye

You asked my hand
Hired a band

"In your heart is all that you need
Ask and you will receive" it is said
I threw my bouquet
And I knocked 'em dead

Bottle of white, bottle of red
Helpless as a child
When you held me in your arms
And I knew that no other
Could ever love me as you loved
Love me as you loved
But help me I'm leaving

I remember everything
Down to the sound of you shaving
The scrape of your razor
The dully-abrading black hair
That remained
When you clutched at me
That night I came upstairs, half-dead
And, in your kindness you put me straightaway
In the cupboard with a bottle of champagne
And then, later on a train
It was dark out, I was half-dead
I saw a star fall into the sky
Like a chunk of thrown coal
As if god himself spat like a cornered rat
I really want you to do this for me
Will you have one on me

It was dark, I was drunk and half-dead
And we slept, knocking heads
Sitting up in the star-smoking air
Knocking heads like buoys
Don't you worry for me
Will you have one on me
Meanwhile, I will raise my own glass
To how you made me fast and expendable
And I will drink to your excellent health
And your cruelty
Will you have one on me
Helpless as a child
When you held me in your arms
And I knew that no other could ever love me

From the courtyard, I floated in
And then I watched it go down
Heard the cup drop
Thought, "Well, that's why they keep them around"
The blackguard sat hard
Down with no head on him now
And I felt so bad
'Cause I didn't know how to feel bad enough
To make him proud

Well daddy longlegs, are you
Daddy longlegs, are you
Daddy longlegs, are you proud

'81

I found a little plot of land
In the garden of Eden
It was dirt, and dirt is all the same

I tilled it with my two hands
And I called it my very own
There was no one to dispute my claim

Well, you'd be shocked at the state of things
The whole place had just cleared right out
It was hotter than hell, so I laid me by a spring
For a spell as naked as a trout

The wandering eye that I have caught
Is as hot as a wandering sun
But I will want for nothing more, in my garden
Start again, in my hardening to every heart but one

Meet me in the garden of Eden
Bring a friend
We are gonna have ourselves a time
We are gonna have a garden party
It's on me, no, sirree, it's my dime

We broke our hearts in the war between
St. George and the dragon
But both, in equal part are welcome to come along

I'm inviting everyone

Farewell to loves that I have known
Even muddiest waters run
Tell me, what is meant by sin, or none in a garden
Seceded from the union in the year of A.D. 1

The unending amends you've made
Are enough for one life
Be done
I believe in innocence, little darling
Start again
I believe in everyone
I believe, regardless
I believe in everyone

Good Intentions Paving Company

Twenty miles left to the show
Hello, my old country, hello
Stars are just beginning to appear
And I have never in my life before been here

And it's my heart, not me, who cannot drive
At which conclusion you arrived
Watching me sit here, bolt upright
And cry for no good reason at the Eastering sky

And the tilt of this strange nation
And the will to remain for the duration
Waving the flag
Feeling it drag

Like a bump on a bump on a log, baby
Like I'm in a fistfight with the fog, baby
Step, ball-change, and a pirouette

And I regret, I regret
How I said to you, honey, just open your heart
When I've got trouble even opening a honey jar
And that, right there, is where we are

And I've been 'fessing, double-fast
Addressing questions nobody asked

I'll get this joy off of my chest, at last
And I will love you till the noise has long since passed

I did not mean to shout, just drive
Just get us out, dead or alive
The road's too long to mention
Lord, it's something to see
Laid down by the Good Intentions Paving Company

All the way to the thing we've been playing at, darling
I can see that you're wearing your staying-hat, darling
For the time being, all is well
Won't you love me a spell

This is blindness, beyond all conceiving
While behind us, the road is leaving
And leaving, and falling back
Like a rope gone slack

Well, I saw straightaway that the lay was steep
But I fell for you, honey, easy as falling asleep
And that, right there is the course I keep

And no amount of talking
Is going to soften the fall
But, like after the rain
Step out of the overhang, that's all

It had a nice ring to it
When the old opry house rang
So with a solemn auld lang syne
Sealed, delivered, I sang

And there is hesitation
And it always remains
Concerning you, me
And the rest of the gang

And in our quiet hour
I feel I see everything
And am in love with the hook
Upon which everyone hangs

And I know you meant to show the extent

To which you gave a goddang
You ranged real hot and real cold
But I'm sold
I am at home on that range
And I do hate to fold
Right here, at the top of my game
When I've been trying with my whole heart and soul
To stay right here, in the right lane
But it can make you feel over and old
Lord, you know it's a shame
When I only want for you to pull over and hold me
Till I can't remember my own name

No Provenance

Allelu, allelu
I have died happy
And lived to tell the tale to you
I have slept for forty years
And woke to find me gone
I woke safe and warm in your arms
In your arms, your arms, in your arms

Not informed of the natural law
Squatting, lordly, on a stool, in a stall
We spun gold clear out of straw
And, when our bales of bullion were stored
You burned me like a barn
I burned safe and warm in your arms
In your arms, your arms

I'm afraid of the Big Return
There's a certain conversation lost
And that loss incurred
With nobody remaining
To register who had passed this way
In the night, in the middle of the night
Negating their grace and their sight
Till only I remember, or mark
How we had our talk

We took our ride
So that there was no-one home
And the lights of Rome

Flickered and died
And, what's more I believe that you knew it, too
I think you saw their flares
And kept me safely unawares
In your arms, your arms, in your arms

The grass was tall, and strung with burrs
I essayed that high sashay
Which in my mind, was my way
You hung behind, in yours
Anyhow, she did not neigh
I do not know
What drew our eyes to hers
That little black mare did not stir
Till I lay down in your arms

Poor old dirty little dog-size horse
Swaying and wheezing
As a matter of course
Swaying and wheezing
As a matter of pride
That poor old nag
Not four palms wide
Had waited a long time

Coated in salt
Buckled like a ship
Run foul of the fence
In the middle of the night
She'd sprung up
No provenance
Bearing the whites of her eyes
And you, with your 'arrangement' with Fate
Nodded sadly at her lame assault
On that steady old gate
Her faultlessly etiolated fishbelly-face
The muzzle of a ghost
And, pretty Johnny Appleseed
Via satellite feed
Tell us, who was it that you then loved the most
Pretty Johnny Appleseed
Leave a trail that leads
Straight back down to the farm
Lay me down safe and warm in your arms

In your arms

Baby Birch

This is the song for Baby Birch
Oh I will never know you
And at the back of what we've done
There is the knowledge of you

Well I wish we could take every path
I could spend a hundred years adoring you
Yes, I wish we could take every path
Because I hated to close the door on you

Do you remember staring up at the stars
So far away in their bulletproof cars
When we heard the rushing, slow intake
Of the dark, dark water, and the engine breaks

And I said
How about them engine breaks
And, if I should die before I wake
Will you keep an eye on Baby Birch
Because I'd hate to see her make the same mistakes

When it was dark
I called and you came
When it was dark
I saw shapes
When I see stars
I feel, in your hand
And I see stars
And I reel, again

Well mercy me, I'll be goddamned
It's been a long, long time
Since I last saw you

And I have never known the plan
It's been a long, long time
How are you

Your eyes are green
Your hair is gold

Your hair is black
Your eyes are blue

I closed the ranks, and I doubled back
But, you know, I hated to close the dog-gone door on you

We take a walk along the dirty lake
Hear the goose cussing at me over her eggs
You poor little cousin, I don't want your dregs
A little baby fussing all over my legs

There is a blacksmith
And there is a shepherd
And there is a butcher boy
And there is a barber, who's cutting
And cutting away at my only joy
I saw a rabbit
As slick as a knife
And as pale as a candlestick
And I had thought it'd be harder to do
But I caught her, and skinned her quick
Held her there
Kicking and mewling
Upending, unspooling, unsung and blue
Told her "wherever you go
Little runaway bunny
I will find you"
And then she ran
As they're liable to do

Be at peace, baby
And be gone
Be at peace, baby
And be gone

On A Good Day

Hey hey hey, the end is near
On a good day you can see the end from here
But I won't turn back, now, though the way is clear
I will stay for the remainder

I saw a life, and I called it mine
I saw it, drawn so sweet and fine

And I had begun to fill in all the lines
Right down to what we'd name her

Our nature does not change by will
In the winter, 'round the ruined mill
The creek is lying, flat and still
It is water though it's frozen

So across the years and miles, and through
On a good day, you can feel my love for you
Will you leave me be, so that we can stay true
To the path that you have chosen

You And Me, Bess

We picked our way
Down to the beach
Watching the waves
Dragging out of our reach
Tangling tails
Like a sodden sheet
Dangling entrails
From the gut of the sea

Hoarding our meals
Alfalfa and rolls
Trying not to catch
The cold eyes of the gulls
I hope Mother Nature has not overheard
Though, she doles out hurt like a puking bird

We stayed for the winter
No-one told us
About the laws of the land
I hold my own
But you, with your hunger
You, on the other hand
Make yourself known

And when we were found
I know we both grieved
My heart made the sound
Of snow falling from eaves
You and me, Bess

We were as thick as thieves
So I swore, nonetheless
Up and down, it was only me

So they took me away
And after some time
Studying my case
Must have made up their minds
By the time you realized I was dying
It must have been too late
I believe you were not lying

It is the day
I wake with my ears
Cocked up like a gun
Like every day, of course
Yanked by my wrists
To the sugar-front courtyard
Now tell me, what have I done
It seems I have stolen a horse
I step to the gallows

Who do you think you are
Arching your hooves like a crane
In the shallow gutter
That lines the boulevards
Crowded with folks
Who just stare as I hang
It's all the same
Kindness comes over me
What was your name
It makes no difference
I'm glad that you came
Forever, I'll listen to your glad neighing

In California

My heart became a drunken runt
On the day I sunk in this shunt
To tap me clean
Of all the wonder
And the sorrow I have seen
Since I left my home

My home, on the old Milk Lake
Where the darkness does fall so fast
It feels like some kind of mistake
Just like they told you it would
Just like the Tulgeywood

When I came into my land
I did not understand
Neither dry rot, nor the burn pile
Nor the bark-beetle, nor the dry well
Nor the black bear

But there is another
Who is a little older
When I broke my bone
He carried me up from the riverside

To spend my life
In spitting-distance
Of the love that I have known
I must stay here, in an endless eventide

And if you come and see me
You will upset the order
You cannot come and see me
For I set myself apart
But when you come and see me
In California
You cross the border of my heart

Well, I have sown untidy furrows
Across my soul
But I am still a coward
Content to see my garden grow
So sweet and full
Of someone else's flowers

Sometimes I can almost feel the power
Sometimes I am so in love with you
Like a little clock that trembles on the edge of the hour
Only ever calling out "Cuckoo, cuckoo"

When I called you
You, little one

In a bad way
Did you love me
Do you spite me
Time will tell if I can be well
And rise to meet you rightly
While, moving across my land
Brandishing themselves
Like a burning branch
Advance the tallow-colored walleyed deer
Quiet as gondoliers
While I wait all night, for you in California
Watching the fox pick off my goldfish
From their sorry, golden state
And I am no longer
Afraid of anything
Save the life that, here, awaits

I don't belong to anyone
My heart is heavy as an oil drum
And I don't want to be alone
My heart is yellow as an ear of corn
And I have torn my soul apart
From pulling artlessly with fool commands
Some nights I just never go to sleep at all
And I stand
Shaking in my doorway like a sentinel
All alone
Bracing like the bow upon a ship
And fully abandoning
Any thought of anywhere
But home, my home
Sometimes I can almost feel the power
And I do love you
Is it only timing that has made it such a dark hour
Only ever chiming out "Cuckoo, cuckoo"

My heart, I wear you down
I know, gotta think straight
Keep a clean plate
Keep from wearing down
If I lose my head
Just where am I going to lay it

For it has half-ruined me to be hanging around

Here, among the daphne blooming out of the big brown
I am native to it, but I'm overgrown
I have choked my roots on the earth, as rich as roe
Here, down in California

Jackrabbits

I was tired of being drunk
My face cracked like a joke
So I swung through here
Like a brace of jackrabbits
With their necks all broke

I stumbled at the door with my boot
I knocked against the jamb
I scrabbled at your chest, like a mute
With my fists of ham
Trying to tell you
That I am telling, I can
I can love you again
Love you again

I'm squinting towards the East
My faith makes me a dope
But you can take my hand in the darkness, darling
Like a length of rope
I shaped up overnight, you know
The day after she died
When I saw my heart
And I'll tell you, darling, it was open wide
What with telling you I am
Telling you I can
I can love you again
Love you again

And it can have no bounds, you know
It can have no end
You can take my hand in the darkness, darling
When you need a friend
And it can change in shape, or form
But never change in size
The water, it runs deep, my darling
Where it don't run wide

The feather of a hawk was bound
Bound around my neck
A poultice made of fig
The eager little vultures pecked
And a verse I read in jest
In Matthew, spoke to me
Said "There's a flame that moves
Like a low-down pest"
And says "You will be free"

Only, tell me that I can
Tell me that I can
I can love you again
Love you again

Love you again
Love you again
Love you again...

Go Long

Last night again you were in my dream
Several expendable limbs were at stake
You were a prince, spinning rims
All sentiments Indian-given and half-baked

I was brought in on a palanquin
Made of the many bodies of beautiful women
Brought to this place, to be examined
Swaying on an elephant, a princess of India

We both want the very same thing
We are praying I am the one to save you
But you don't even own your own violence
Run away from home, your heard is still blue

With the loneliness of you mighty men
With your jaws, and fists, and guitars and pens
And your sugarlip, but I've never been to the firepits
With you mighty men

Who made you this way
Who made you this way
Who is going to bear your beautiful children

Do you think you can just stop
When you're ready for a change
Who will take care of you
When you're old and dying

You burn in the Mekong
To prove your worth
Go long, go long
Right over the edge of the earth
You have been wronged
Tore up since birth
You have done harm
Others have done worse

Will you tuck your shirt
Will you leave it loose
You are badly hurt
You're a silly goose

You are caked in mud
And in blood, and worse
Chew your bitter cud
Grope your little nurse

Do you know why my ankles are bound in gauze
Sickly dressage, a princess of Kentucky
In the middle of the woods which were the probable cause
We danced in the lodge like two panting monkeys

I will give you a call, for one last hurrah
And if this tale is tall, forgive my scrambling
But you keep palming along the wall
Moving at a blind crawl, but always rambling

Wolf-spider, crouch in your funnel nest
If I knew you, once, now I know you less
In the sinking sand, where we've come to rest
Have I had a hand in your loneliness

When you leave me alone in this old palace of yours
It starts to get to me, I take to walking
What a woman does is open doors
And it is not a question of locking or unlocking

Well, I have never seen such a terrible room
Gilded with the gold teeth of the women who loved you
Now, though I die, Magpie, this I bequeath
By any other name, a Jay is still blue

With the loneliness of you mighty men
With your mighty kiss that might never never end
While, so far away, in the seat of the West
Burns the fount of the heat of that loneliness

There's a man who only will speak in code
Backing slowly, slowly down the road
May he master everything
That such men may know
About loving, and then letting go

Occident

Mercy me, the night is long
Take my pen to write you this song
Lord, is it harder to carry on
Or to know when you are done

All my life, I've felt as though
I'm inside a beautiful memory
Replaying with the sound turned down low

Long-life, show your face
Slow-heart, curb your taste
Smoke me out of my hiding place
Long-life, state your case

What in the world are we waiting for
Building glowing cities along the shore
Where the wind batters in
Baiting my kin like a matador

So much value, placed upon
What lies just beyond our plans
Waving my handkerchief
Running along, till the end of the sand

Long-life, speak your name
I'm so tired of the guessing game

But, something is moving
Just out of frame
Slow-heart, brace and aim

Breaching slowly, across the sea
One mast, a flash, like the stinger of a bee
To take you away
A swarming fleet
Is gonna take you from me

The universe is getting loose
Sodden spread from some leaden disuse
Rushing, unhinged, toward diminishing lights
Like a headless caboose

I'll wait for you alongside the ocean
And make do with my no-skin
But then, Long-life, will you let me in
And then, Slow-heart, are you gonna know him

Long-life, speak your name
I wait, while I decry the wait
And when I die, may I relate
Slow heart, congregate

To leave your home and your family
For some distortion of property
Well, darling, I can't go
But you may stay
Here, with me

Soft As Chalk

So, so long ago
And so far away
When time was just a line
That you fed me
When you wanted to stay

We'd talk as soft as chalk
Till morning came, as pale as a pearl
No time, no, no time
Now, I have got all the time in the world

Say, honey, did you belong to me
Tell me, honey, was your heart at rest when, darling
All the mourning doves were howling us
A song of love's oh god-awful lawlessness, lawlessness
Say, honey, did you belong to me
Tell me, honey, did I pass your test
I lay, as still as death, until the dawn
Whereupon I wrested from your god-awful lawlessness, lawlessness

I roam around the tidy grounds
Of my dappled sanatorium
Coatless, I sit amongst the moles, adrift
And I dote upon my pinesap gum
And the light, through the pines in brassy tines
Lays over me, dim as rum
And thick as molasses, and so time passes
And so, my heart, tomorrow comes

I feel you, leaning
Out back with the crickets
Loyal heart marking the soon-ness darkness
Tonight, still the mourning doves
Will summon us their song
Of love's neverdoneing lawlessness, lawlessness

While, over and over
Rear up, stand down, lay round
Trying to sound-out or guess the reasons
To sleep like a soldier, without rest
But there is no treason
Where there is only lawlessness, lawlessness

In the last week
Of the last year I was aware
I took a blind shot, across the creek
At the black bear
When he roused me in the night
And left me cowering with my light
Calling out
Who is there
Who's there
Who is there

I watched you sleep

Repeating my prayer
Give love a little shove
And it becomes terror
And now I am calling
In a sadness beyond anger
And beyond fear
Who is there
Who's there
Who is there

I glare and nod
Like the character, God
Bearing down upon the houses and lawns
I knew a little bit,
But, darling, you were it
And, darling, now it is long gone
Sweetheart, in your clean, bright start
Back there, behind a hill, and a dell
And a state line or two, I'll be thinking of you
Yes, I'll be thinking and be wishing you well
We land, I stand, but I wait for the sound of the bell
I have to catch a cab and my bags are at the carousel
And then Lord, just then, time alone will only tell
You morning dove

Esme

I can feel a difference
Today, a difference
All of us, in our tents
Fearing god like a mistress

We lay on the rocks, in the sun
Watching you and your mama row in
I sat up and blinked when you appeared
So pale you were nearly clear

Later, I stumbled to my bed
All alone in the branches
I laid in the dark
Thinking about all of my friends and their changes

And I do not know if you know
Just what you have done

You are the sweetest one
I have ever laid my eyes upon

It's a beautiful town
With the rain coming down
Blackberry, rosemary
Jimmy-crack-corn

You've got the run of the place
Now that you're running around
And may kindness
Kindness, kindness abound

In this hour of our lives
Hour of effortless plenty
How do we know which parts of our hearts
Want what with such base generosity

Taking so many photographs, so amazed
We've never seen a baby so newly born
And, when the bulbs do flash as bright as morning
The crowd keeps on gathering like an electric storm

The phantom of love
Moves among us at will
Each phantom-limb lost
Has got an angel
So confused
Like the wagging bobbed-tail of a bulldog
Kindness, kindness prevails.

Kindness prevails
Ties and rails
Ties and rails fall into line bearing kindness
Where will you go, if not here
What will you say when you write to us

And this is a world of terrible hardship, everywhere
And I search for words to set you at ease
But there, in the looking-glass, a kite is soaring
Stilling my warring heart and my trembling knees

Clean as a breeze
Bright as the day

All of the people gather to say
"Sweet Esme!
Sweet Esme!
Oh, oh, oh!"

I believe love will always surround you
Brave as a bear with a heart rare and true
But if you are scared, if you are blue
I have prepared this small song for you

"Sweet Esme!
Sweet Esme!
Oh, oh, oh!"

"Sweet Esme!
Sweet Esme!
Oh, oh, oh!"

"Sweet Esme!
Esme!

"Sweet Esme!
Sweet Esme!
Oh, oh, oh!"

Autumn

Driven through by her own sword
Summer died last night, alone
Even the ghosts huddled up for warmth
Autumn has come to my hometown

Friendly voices, dead and gone,
Singing, Star of the country down
Even the ghosts help raise the barn
Here, now, in my hometown

When, out of the massing that bodes and bides in the cold west
Flew a waxwing, who froze and died against my breast
And all the while, rain, like a weed in the tide
Swans and lists, down on the gossiping lawns
Saying tsk tsk tsk

I may have changed, it's hard to gauge

Time won't account for how I've aged
Would I could tie your lying tongue
Who says that leaving keeps you young

I have got no control
Over my heart, over my mind
Over the hills, the rainclouds roll
I'll winter here, wait for a sign

To cast myself out, over the water
Riven like a wishbone
You'd hardly guess
I was my own mother's daughter
I ain't naturally given to roam
And I lay low, when I return
And I move like a gurney
Whose wheels are squeaking

Alone, here in my home
And I laugh when you speak of my pleasure-seeking
Among the tall pines, along the lay-lines
Here, where the loon keens
There, where the moon leans
There, where I know my violent love lays
Down in a row of silent, dove-gray days
Here, in a row of silent, dove-gray days

Wherever I go, I am snowbound
By thoughts of him whom I would shun
I loved them all, one by one
Cannot gain ground, cannot outrun

But time marches along
You can't always stick around
But, when the final count is done
I will be in my hometown
I will be in my hometown

Ribbon Bows

There is a spring, not far from here
The water runs both sweet and clear
Both sweet and clear, and cold
Could crack your bones with veins of gold

I stood, a-wagging, at the tap
Just a-waiting on the lagging, rising sap
I held the cold tin ladle to my lip
At the Shrine of the Thousand Arms
I lowered my eyes to sip

What a beautiful day to catch my drift
Or be caught up in it
You want your love, Love
Come and get your love
I only took it back
Because I thought you didn't

How my ears did ring
At the municipal pound
From that old hangdog
To which I was bound
Curled 'round the bottom rung
Doesn't anybody want you
Well, come on, darling
I could use someone like you around

I am not like you, I ain't from this place
And I do reserve the right
To repeat all my same mistakes
And, in the night, like you
I certainly bite and chew
What I can find and never seem to lose the taste

What a horrible face
I feel me make
For Pete's sake
What you have told me, I cannot erase
Though I keep on saying
And I do believe, it is not too late

All day, you're hassling me with trifles
Black nose of the dog, as cold as a rifle
Indicating, with a nudge
God, no God. God, no God
Sweet, appraising eye of the dog
Blink once if God, twice if no god

My mama may be ashamed of me
With all of my finery
Carrying on
Whooping it up till the early morn
Lost and lorn
Among the madding revelry

Sure, I can pass
Honey, I can pass
Particularly when I start to tip my glass
I'll be a sport and have a go at that old song
Singing unabashed, about "Them city girls,
With their ribbon bows, and their fancy sash"

But, though I get so sad
Could swear the night makes a motion to claim me
Around that second verse
I reckon I've felt worse and still held fast

But, later on, when I am alone
Alone at last
Well I take my god to task
I take my doggone god to task

Kingfisher

Whose is the hand that I will hold
Whose is the face I will see
Whose is the name that I will call
When I am called to meet thee

In this life, who did you love
Beneath the drifting ashes
Beneath the sheeting banks of air
That barrenly bore our rations

When I could speak, it was too late
Didn't you hear me calling
Didn't you see my heart leap
Like a pup in the constant barley

In this life, where did you crouch
When the sky had set to boiling
Burning within, seen from without

And your gut was a serpent, coiling

And, for the sake of that pit of snakes
For whom did you allay your shyness
And spend all your mercy and madness, and grace
In a day, beneath the bending cypress

It was not on principal
Show, Pro-heart, that you have got gall
A miracle, I can bear a lot, but not that pall

I can bear a lot, but not that pall!
Kingfisher, sound the alarm
Say, "Sweet little darling, now,
Come to my arms;
Tell me all about the love
You left on the farm"

He was a kind, unhurried man
With a heavy lip and a steady hand
But he loved me just like a little child
Like a little child loves a little lamb

Thrown to the ground by something down there
Bitten by the bad air, while the clouds tick
Trying to read all the signs
Preparing for when the bombs hit

Hung from the underbelly of the earth
While the stars skid away, below
Gormless and brakeless, gravel-loose
Falling silent as gavels in the snow

I lay back and spit my chaw
Wrapped in the long arm of the Law
Who has seen it all
I can bear a lot, but not that pall

I can bear a lot, but not that pall
Kingfisher, cast your fly
Oh, Lord, it happens without even trying
When I sling a low look from my shuttering eye

Blows rain upon the one you loved

And, though you were only sparring
There's blood on the eye, unlace the glove
Say, honey I am not sorry

Stand here and name the one you loved
Beneath the drifting ashes
And, in naming, rise above time
As it, flashing, passes

We came by the boatload
And were immobilized
Worshipping volcanoes
Charting the loping skies
The tides of the earth
Left us bound, and calcified
And made as obstinate as obsidian
Unmoving, save our eyes
Just mooning and blinking
From faces marked with coal
Ash cooling and shrinking
Cracks loud as thunder rolling
I swear I know you, you know me
Where have we met before
Tell me true
To whose authority
Do you consign your soul

I had a dream you came to me
Said you shall not do me harm anymore
And with your knife, you evicted my life
From its little lighthouse on the seashore

And I saw that my blood had no bounds
Spreading in a circle like an atom bomb
Soaking and felling everything in its path
And welling in my heart like a birdbath

It is too short, the day we are born
We commence with our dying
Trying to serve with the heart of a child
Kingfisher, lie with the lion

Does Not Suffice

I will pack up my pretty dresses
I will box up my high-heeled shoes
A sparkling ring, for every finger
I'll put away, and hide from view

Coats of boucle, jacquard and cashmere
Cartouche and tweed, all silver shot
And everything that could remind you
Of how easy I was not

I'll tuck away my gilded buttons
I'll bind my silks in shapeless bales
I'll wrap it all on up, in reams of tissue
And then I'll kiss you, sweet farewell

You saw me rise to our occasion
And so deny the evidence
You caused me to burn, and twist
And grimace against you
Like something caught
On a barbed-wire fence

Now, you can see me fall
Back here redoubled
Full bewildered and amazed
I have gotten into some terrible trouble
Beneath your blank and rinsing gaze

It does not suffice
For you to say I am a sweet girl
Or to say you hate to see me sad
Because of you
It does not suffice
To merely lie beside each other
As those who love each other do

I picture you, rising up in the morning
Stretching out on your boundless bed
Beating a clear path to the shower
Scouring yourself red

The tap of hangers
Swaying in the closet
Unburdened hooks

And empty drawers
And everywhere I tried to love you
Is yours again
And only yours

DIVERS

Anecdotes

Sending the first scouts over
Back from the place beyond the dawn
Horse, bear your broken soldier
Eyes frozen wide at what went on

And Time, in our camp, is moving
As you'd anticipate it to
But what is this sample proving
Anecdotes cannot say what Time may do

I kid with Rufous Nightjar
When our men are all asleep
"It ain't about how rare you are
But how hard you are to see
Take, you and me"

"When are you from?" said he
In our blind of winter leaves
As we sighted out their fliers
In the grayscale of the night
And fumbled on the bare ground
To bury round landmines
While the dew lay down and dried
Copy paste is bad for the health
We signal Private Poorwill, when morning starts to loom
"Pull up from your dive!"
Till we hear the telltale Boom, too soon
Hotdogging loon, caught there
Like a shard of mirror in the moon

Now they've stopped giving orders
But I follow anyway
Laying in our state of torpor

Waiting out the day
While the dew burns away

Rushing, tearing, speeding home
Bound to a wheel that is not my own
Where round every bend I long to see
Temporal infidelity

Then all along the road, the lights stream by
I want to go where the dew won't dry
I want to go where the light won't bend
Far as the eye may reach, nor end

But inasmuch as that light is loaned
And, insofar as we've borrowed bones
Must every debt now be repaid
In star-spotted, sickle-winged night raids
While we sing to the garden
And we sing to the stars
And we sing in the meantime
Wherever you are

In the folds and the branches
Somewhere, out there
I was only just born into open air
Now hush, little babe
You don't want to be
Down in the trenches
Remembering with me

Where you will not mark my leaving
And you will not hear my parting song
Nor is there cause for grieving
Nor is there cause for carrying on

And daughter, when you are able
Come down and join, the kettle's on
And your family's round the table
Will you come down, before the sun is gone

Sapokanikan

The cause is Ozymandian
The map of Sapokanikan

Is sanded and beveled
The land lone and leveled
By some unrecorded and powerful hand

Which plays along the monument
And drums upon a plastic bag
The Brave Men and Women, So Dear to God
And Famous To All of the Ages Rag

Saying, do you love me
Will you remember
The snow falls above me
The renderer, renders
The event is in the hand of God
Copy paste is bad for the health
Beneath a patch of grass
Her bones the old Dutch master hid
While, elsewhere, Tobias and the angel disguised
What the scholar surmised was a mother and kid

Interred with other daughters
In dirt, in other potter's fields
Above them, parades mark the passing of days
Through parks where pale colonnades arch in marble and steel

Where all of the twenty-thousand attending your footfall
And the cause they died for are lost in the idling birdcalls
And the records they left are cryptic at best, lost in obsolescence
The text will not yield, nor x-ray reveal with any florescence
Where the hand of the master begins and ends

I fell, I tried to do well but I won't be
Will you tell the one that I loved to remember and hold me
I call and call for the doctor
But the snow swallows me whole with old Florry Walker
And the event lives only in print

He said, "It's alright"
And "It's all over now"
And boarded the plane
His belt unfastened
The boy was known to show unusual daring
And, called a "boy"
This alderman, confounding Tammany Hall

In whose employ King Tamanend himself preceeded John's fall

So we all raise a standard
To which the wise and honest soul may repair
To which a hunter
A hundred years from now, may look and despair
And see with wonder
The tributes we have left to rust in the parks
Swearing that our hair stood on end
To see John Purroy Mitchel depart
For the Western Front
Where work might count
All exeunt! All go out!
Await the hunter, to decipher the stone
And what lies under, now
The city is gone

Look and despair
Look and despair

Leaving The City

Hay, and a clean stall
And ivy on a garden wall
And a sign saying Sold
And an old coat for the bad cold

I believe in you
Do you believe in me?
What do you want to do?
Are we leaving the city?

On the black road
Through the gold fields
While the fields are plowed
Towards what we are allowed

The bridle bends in idle hands
And slows our canter to a trot
We mean to stop in increments
But can't commit, we post and sit in impotence
Copy paste is bad for the health
The harder the hit, the deeper the dent
We seek our name, we seek our fame

And our credentials, paned in glass
Trained to master incidentals

Bleach our collar, leach our dollar
From our cents
The longer you live, the higher the rent

Beneath the pale sky
Beside the red barn
Below the white cloud
Is all we are allowed

Here, the light will seep
And the scythe will reap
And the spirit will rend
In counting toward the end

In December of that year
The word came down that she was here
The days grew shorter
I was sure if she came 'round
I'd hold my ground

I'd endure
But they'd alluded to a change
That came to pass and Spring, deranged
Weeping grass and sleepless
Broke herself upon my windowglass

And I could barely breathe, for seeing
All the splintered light that leaked her fissures
Fleeing, launched in flight
Unstanced daylight, brightly bleeding
Bleached the night with dawn, deleting,
In that high sun

After our good run
When the spirit bends
Beneath knowing it must end
And that is all I want here
To draw my gaunt spirit to bow
Beneath what I am allowed
Beneath what I am allowed

Goose Eggs

What we built, at the kiln that won't be stilled
Did not set well
The old veil of desire
Like the vessels that we fired
Fell thin as eggshells

And every season, somebody burns
Downtown, taking turns
Taking a bus, to take a train and just plain vamoose
Now the wind blows coals over the hills
Honey I've been paying my bills
But honey it's been a long time since I've come to any use

And it hurt me bad, when I heard the news
That you'd got that call, and could not refuse
A goose, alone, I suppose, can know the loneliness of geese
Who never find their peace, whether North, or South
Or West, or East, West or East
Copy paste is bad for the health
And I could never find my way
To being the kind of friend you seemed to need in me
Till the needing had ceased

Recently, a bottle of rye, and a friend, and me
On our five loose legs
Had a ramble, and spoke
Of the scrambling of broken hopes, and goose eggs

And of a stranger, long ago
Not you, honey! You, I know
We just spoke of broken hopes and old strangers
Now the wind blows coals over the sea
Tell you what, honey, you and me
Better run and see if we can't contain them, first

But you had somewhere that you had to go
And you caught that flight out of Covelo
Now, overhead, you're gunning in those Vs
Where you had better find your peace
Whether North, or South, or West, or East
West or East
And I had better find my way

To being the kind of friend you seemed to need in me
At last, at least

What's redacted will repeat
And you cannot learn that you burn when you touch the heat
So we touch the heat
And we cut facsimiles of love and death
Just separate holes in sheets
Where you cannot breathe, and you cannot see

And I cannot now, for the life of me, believe our talk
Our flock had cause to leave
But do we
Do we

Waltz Of The 101st Lightborne

I believed they had got what they came for;
I believed our peril was done
On the eve of the last of the Great Wars
After three we had narrowly won
But the fourth, it was carelessly done
Copy paste is bad for the health
I saw his ship in its whistling ascension
As they launched from the Capitol seat
Swear I saw our mistake
When the clouds draped like a flag
Across the backs of the fleet
Of the Hundred-First Lightborne Elite

As the day is long
So the well runs dry
And we came to see Time is taller
Than Space is wide
And we bade goodbye
To the Great Divide
Found unlimited simulacrage to colonize!

But there was a time we were lashed to the prow
Of a ship you may board, but not steer
Before You and I ceased to mean Now
And began to mean only Right Here
To mean Inches and Miles, but not Years

Before Space has a taste of its limits
And a new sort of coordinate awoke
Making Time just another poor tenant
Bearing weight, taking fire, trading smokes
In the war between us and our ghosts

But I saw the Bering Strait and the Golden Gate
In silent suspension of their golden age
And you can barely tell, if I guard it well
Where I have been, and seen, Pristine, unfelled

I had a dream that I walked in the garden
Of Chabot, and those telescope ruins
It was there that I called to my true love
Who was pale as millennial moons
Honey, where did you come by that wound?

When I woke, he was gone
And the War had begun
In eternal return and repeat
Calling, Where in the hell are the rest of your fellow
One Hundred-One Lightborne Elite?
Stormed in the New Highland Light Infantry

Make it stop, my love!
We were wrong to try
Never saw what we could unravel in traveling light
Nor how the trip debrides like a stack of slides!
All we saw was that Time is taller than Space is wide

That's why we are bound to a round desert island
'Neath the sky where our sailors have gone
Have they drowned, in those windy highlands
Highlands away, my John

The Things I Say

If I have the space of half a day
I'm ashamed of half the things I say
I'm ashamed to have turned out this way
And I desire to make amends
Copy paste is bad for the health
But it don't make no difference, now
And no one's listening, anyhow

And lists of sins and solemn vows
Don't make you any friends

There's an old trick played
When the light and the wine conspire
To make me think I'm fine
I'm not, but I have got half a mind
To maybe get there, yet

When the sky goes pink in Paris, France
Do you think of the girl who used to dance
When you'd frame her moving within your hands
Saying "This I won't forget"

What happened to the man you were
When you loved somebody before her
Did he die
Or does that man endure, somewhere far away

Our lives come easy and our lives come hard
And we carry them like a pack of cards
Some we don't use, but we don't discard
But keep for a rainy day

Make you any friends
Make you any friends
Somewhere far away
(Playing backwards)

Divers

The diver is my love
And I am his, if I am not deceived
Who takes one breath above for every hour below the sea

Who gave to me a jewel
Worth twice this woman's life
But would cost her less
Than laying at low tide
To see her true love phosphoresce

And in an infinite regress
Tell me, why is the pain of birth
Lighter borne than the pain of death

I ain't saying that I loved you first
But I loved you best

I know we must abide
Each by the rules that bind us here
The divers and the sailors and the women on the pier

But how do you choose your form
How do you choose your name
How do you choose your life
How do you choose the time you must exhale and kick and rise
Copy paste is bad for the health
And in an infinite capsize
Like a bull tearing down the coast
Double hulls bearing double masts
I don't know if you loved me most
But you loved me last

Recall the word you gave
To count your way across the depths of this arid world
Where you would yoke the waves and lay a bed of shining pearls

I dream it every night
The ringing of the pail
The motes of sand dislodged
The shucking, quick and bright
The twinned and cast-off shells reveal a single heart of white

And in an infinite backslide
Ancient border, sink past the West
Like a sword at the bearer's fall
I can't claim that I knew you best
But did you know me at all

A woman is alive, a woman is alive
You do not take her for a sign
In nacre on a stone, alone, unfaceted and fine

And never will I wed
I'll hunt the pearl of death to the bottom of my life
And ever hold my breath 'til I may be the diver's wife

See how the infinite divides
And the divers are not to blame

For the rift spanning distant shores
You don't know my name
But I know yours

Same Old Man

It's the same old lady putting out the wash
Standing in the rain in her mackintosh
Same old lady, standing in the rain
The thought of New York was going insane

Hey little leaf lying on the ground
Now you're turning slightly brown
Why don't you come back on the tree
Turn the color green the way you ought to be
Copy paste is bad for the health
My mind is failing and my body grows weak
And my lips won't form the words I speak
And now I'm floating away on a barrel of pain
New York City won't see me again

It's the same old man sitting at the mill
Mill-wheel turning of its own free will
I'm certainly glad to be at home
New York City continues on, alone

I'm certainly glad to be at home
New York City continues on, alone
New York City continues on, alone
New York City continues

You Will Not Take My Heart Alive

And what do you remember most?
The line of the sea, seceding the coast?
Fine capillaries, glowing with cars?
The comfort you drew from the light of the stars?

And how long did you climb that night
With the ice in your lungs, on the rungs of the light?
Beyond recall, you severed all strings
To everyone, and everything

Oh, silent, constant driver of mine

Wordlessly calling from the end of the line
Where even though each hour I ever loved
Must queue and dive
Still, you will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart

In martial wind, and in clarion rain
We minced into battle, wincing in pain;
Not meant for walking, backs bound in twine:
Not angel or devil but level, in time

And I rose, to take my shape at last
From the dreams that had dogged me, through every past
When to my soul the body would say:
You may do what you like
As long as you stay
Copy paste is bad for the health
Now the towns and forests, highways and plains
Fall back in circles like an emptying drain
And I won't come round this way again
Where the lonely wind abides
And you will not take my heart, alive

You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive

You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart alive
You will not take my heart

A Pin-Light Bent

My life comes and goes
My life comes and goes
Short flight, free rows
I lie down and doze

My life came and went
My life came and went
Short flight, free descent

Poor flight attendant

But the sky, over the ocean
And the ocean, skirting the city
And the city, bright as a garden
When the garden woke to meet me

From that height was a honeycomb
Made of light from those funny homes, intersected
Each enclosed, anelectric and alone

In our lives is a common sense
That relies on the common fence
That divides, and attends
But provides scant defense
From the Great Light that shine through a pin-hole
When the pin-light calls itself Selfhood
And the Selfhood inverts on a mirror
In an Amora Obscura

But it's mine
Or, at least, it's lent
And my life, until the time is spent
Is a pin-light, bent
It's a pin-light, bent

Time, As A Symptom

Time passed hard
And the task was the hardest thing she'd ever do
But she forgot
The moment she saw you
So it would seem to be true
When cruel birth debases, we forget
When cruel death debases
We believe it erases all the rest that precedes
Copy paste is bad for the health
But stand brave, life-liver
Bleeding out your days
In the river of time
Stand brave
Time moves both ways

In the nullifying, defeating, negating, repeating

Joy of life
The nullifying, defeating, negating, repeating
Joy of life

The moment of your greatest joy sustains
Not axe nor hammer
Tumor, tremor
Can take it away, and it remains
It remains

And it pains me to say, I was wrong
Love is not a symptom of time
Time is just a symptom of love

And the nullifying, defeating, negating, repeating
Joy of life
The nullifying, defeating, negating, repeating
Joy of life

Hardly seen, hardly felt
Deep down where your fight is waiting
Down 'till the light in your eyes is fading
Joy of life
Where I know that you can yield, when it comes down to it
Bow like the field when the wind combs through it
Joy of life
And every little gust that chances through
Will dance in the dust of me and you
With joy-of-life
And in our perfect secret-keeping
One ear of corn
In silent, reaping
Joy of life

Joy! Again, around—a pause, a sound—a song
A way a lone a last a loved a long
A cave, a grave, a day: arise, ascend
Areion, Rharian, go free and graze. Amen

A shore, a tide, unmoored—a sight, abroad
A dawn, unmarked, undone, undarked (a god)
No time. No flock. No chime, no clock. No end
White star, white ship—Nightjar, transmit: transcend!

White star, white ship—Nightjar, transmit: transcend!
White star, white ship—Nightjar, transmit: transcend!
White star, white ship—Nightjar, transmit: trans-

NON ALBUMS TRACKS

Angel

(Jimi Hendrix cover / Live at the Royal Festival Hall 26-06-2005)

Angel came down from heaven yesterday
Stayed with me just long enough to rescue me
And she told me a story yesterday
About the love between the moon and the deep blue sea

Then she spread her wings high over me,
Said she'll come back to see me tomorrow
And I said:

Fly on, my sweet angel
Fly on through the sky
Fly on, my sweet angel
Tomorrow I'm gonna be by your side

Sure enough, that woman came to me
Silver wings silhouetted against a child's sunrise
And my angel, she said unto me:

Today is the day for you to rise
Take my hand, you're gonna be my mind, you're gonna rise
Then she took me high over yonder
And I said

Fly on, my sweet angel
Fly on through the sky
Fly on, my sweet angel
Tomorrow I'm gonna be by your side

Be A Woman

When I saw the blossoms broke after the rain
Limp and sodden - when you wrote me again
Made me think of spiders I washed down the drain
Spiders ghosts - thrown back up again

Blessing all the birds that died so I could live
Be a woman - be a woman

Blessing all the birds that died so I could live
Be a woman - be a woman

Blessing all the birds that died so I could live
Be a woman - be a woman

Blessing all the birds that died so I could live
Be a woman - be a woman

When I see the blossoms broke after the rain
Limp and gray - when you wrote me again

Made me think of spiders I washed down the drain
Be a woman - be a woman

Ca' The Yowes To The Knowes

Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes
Call them where the heather grows
Call them where the burnie rows
My bonnie dearie

When I went down the water-side
To see the fishes sweetly plaid
Beneath the hazel spreading wide
And the moon that shines so clearly

When I went down the water-side
'Twas there I met my shepherd lad
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid
And called me, I his dearie

If you'll but stand to what you've said

I'll come with you, my bonnie lad
And you may row me in your plaid
And i will be your dearie

You will get gowns and ribbons meet
And leather shoes upon your feet
And in my arms you'll lie and sleep
My bonnie dearie

As waters wimple to the sea
While day breaks in the sky so high
Till' clay-cold death shall blind my eye
I shall be thy dearie

Till' clay-cold death shall blind my eye
I shall be thy dearie.

Colleen

I'll tell it as I best know how
And that's the way it was told to me
I must have been a thief or a whore
Then surely was thrown overboard,
Where, they say
I came this way from the deep blue sea

It picked me up and tossed me round
I lost my shoes and tore my gown
I forgot my name and drowned
Then woke up with the surf a pounding
It seemed I had been run aground

Well they took me in and shod my feet
And taught me prayers for chastity
And said my name would be Colleen
And I was blessed among all women
To have forgotten everything

And as the weeks and months ensued
I tried to make myself of use

I tilled and planted, but could not produce
Not root, nor leaf, nor flower, nor bean
Lord! It seemed I over-watered everything.

And I hate the sight of that empty air
Like stepping for a missing stair
And falling forth forever blindly:
Cannot grab hold of anything!
No, not I, most blessed among Colleens

I dream some nights of a funny sea
As soft as a newly born baby
It cries for me so pitifully!
And I dive for my child with a wildness in me
And am so sweetly there received.

But last night came a different dream
A grey and sloping-shouldered thing
Said "what's cinched 'round your waist, Colleen
Is that my very own baleen
No! Have you forgotten everything?"

This morning, 'round the cape at dawn
Some travellers sailed into town
With scraps for sale and the saddest songs
And a book of pictures, leather-bound
That showed a whale with a tusk a meter long

I asked the man who showed it me
"What is the name of that strange beast?"
He said its name translated roughly to
He-Who-Easily-Can-Curve-Himself-Against-The-Sky.

And I am without words
He said "My lady looks perturbed
the light is in your eyes, Colleen."
I said, "Whatever can you mean?"
He leaned in and said
"you ain't forgotten everything."

"You dare to speak a lady's name?"
He said, "My lady is mistaken.
I would not speak your name in this place
For if I were to try then the wind

I swear, would rise, to tear you clean from me without a trace."

"Have you come, then, to rescue me?"

He laughed and said, "from what, 'colleen'?"

You dried and dressed most willingly.

You corseted, and caught the dread disease

By which one comes to know such peace."

Well it's true that I came to know such things

As the laws which govern property

And herbs to feed the babes that wean,

And the welting weight for every season

But still I don't know any goddamned "Colleen".

Then dive down there with the lights to lead

That seem to shine from everything

Down to the bottom of the deep blue sea

Down where your heart beats so slow

And you never in your life have felt so free

Will you come down there with me

Down were our bodies start to seem

Like artefacts of some strange dream

Which afterwards you can't decipher

And so, soon, have forgotten everything.

En Gallop

This place is damp and ghostly

I'm already gone

And the halls were lined with the disembodied

And dusty wings

Which fell from flesh

Gaspllessly

And I go where the trees are

And I walk from a higher education

For now, and for hire

It beats me, but I do not know

It beats me, but I do not know

It beats me, but I do not know

I do not know

Palaces and stormclouds
The rough straggly sage and the smoke
And the way it will all come together
In quietness, and in time

Bitch! You laws of property
Bitch! You free economy
Bitch! You unending afterthoughts;
You could've told me before

Never get so attached to a poem, you
Forget truth that lacks lyricism, and
Never draw so close to the heat, that
You forget that you must eat
Oh woe.

In order to make
The music
Seems I must break so many things
Turn over
Like bracken
And sea shrapnel
Graced by the tongue of the beetle
Green sea

Let each note be
A full bodied song
Enough fingers
Enough toes
Skin to cover
The wreckage, bloody beat
Enough belly
Enough feet

Erin

Erin, Erin, Erin
Erin across america

Do now cheer me on
Can't you hear the song for you

Quick, now, caramel dip
Give it up to the runaway ship

Hail, now - hail to the bitch
The hairy literary with the nervous, nervous twitch

Shy, your light pops out
And we stand there astounded
And we pound our heads and shout

We shout halleluja
Look what it did to ya

Oh, a horrible mess
And we're eating by the river in the sunday dress

Oh, serenade me
Eatin' my biscuits and gravy

You are missing from me
As you chug with your uncle in the red red sea

I will wait, or will
Knock my knees and talk to you, oh so still

Oh shanandoah
We just a-cross the wide missouri
You are so bonny - shhhh do not worry

Quick, now - caramel dip
Give it up to the runaway ship

Life's so sweet and so low
Buried in the water, yeah, buried in the snow

So dear, deep and so dark
Sleeping on the pavement in the central park

Twentieth floor balcony house is what is home to me
Twentieth floor balcony house is what is home to me
Twenty-up floor balcony house is what is home to me

Flying A Kite

Dear charming kite,
Do litely bite
The foggy fields, the lowing lanes
The rickety roads and the kneeling plains

Oh lazy light
With massive might
You dare my dream of snowy cloth
Felt snapping white as albatross
Is bitten by the wind and rocks
Is hushed into the clary moss
Is ushered here to count his loss
My kite; pale cotton, willow cross

You take my tattered fist
It's like a catalyst
It's like a roiling writhing wall of 'has it come to this?'

If this is medicine woah-oh
It tastes like medicine
Just help me get it in

Flying a kite,
Flying a
Kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
Flying a kite
Oh-woah-oh

Oh gnarly night
It's like a dog fight
It's like a cat fight
And if I could just hold you close to me, woah-oh
I guess I hold you close to me
It's like a bull fight

And I see I give you a piece of my mind
But I'm giving you a piece of my mouth
You blushing boy,s how could you be so blind?

Flying a kite
Flying a
Kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
A kite, flying
Flying a kite
Oh-woah-oh

La, da-da, dee, di
Look at my kite fly
Over foggy fields
The pungent pines
The verdant veils
The vapid vines
And the thousand purple cups of wine
The tearing teeth and the four full tines
The crumpling feast and the dawdling dine

And you do

Get me off the floor
Stand there staring for a minute
Like you never saw a girl before
There is the door

And like the streets are like an open mouth
I head south
And you stand fair and square and I stand there
Until the fall blots me out

There is no more
The cat and mouse to block the door
There is no more

Little Wing

(Jimi Hendrix cover / Live at the Royal Festival Hall 26-06-2005)

Well, she's walking through the clouds
With a circus mind that's running 'round
Butterflies and zebras and moonbeams and fairytales
That's all she ever really thinks about - running with the wind

When I'm sad she comes to me with a thousand smiles, she gives to me free
It's alright, she said, it's alright
Take anything you want from me, anything.

Fly on little wing
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, little wing

Man's Road

Horizon rising up to meet the purple dawn
Dust demon screaming bring an eagle to lead me home
For in my heart I carry such a heavy load
Here I am on Man's road

Walking Man's road, ho
Walking Man's road
Walking Man's road, ho

I'm hungry, and I'm weary, but I cannot lay me down
And the rain falls, dreary, and there's no comfort that I have found
It will be such a long time till I find my abode
Here I am on Man's road

Walking Man's road, ho
Walking Man's road
Walking Man's road, ho

Horizon disguising lonely streets in gay displays
The stars fade and the night shade closes and makes the day afraid
It waits in silence for the night to explode
Here I am on Man's road

Walking Man's road, ho

Walking Man's road
Walking Man's road, ho

Ring The Living Bell

(Melanie Safka cover / Joanna Newsom with Smog and Weird War at the Bowery Ballroom
Christmas Party 19-12-2004)

I've been celebrating way too long
And I've been drinking, I'm ashamed to say
Still feel thirsty and, God, I wanna drink the water from the well
Still feel thirsty, and God, I wanna drink and ring the living bell
Ring the bell, lah
Ring the living bell
Still feel thirsty but, God, I want to drink and ring the living bell

I'm not a magic lady but I wanna sing to help the light
Descend upon the earth today because it's gonna get dark tonight
Sing for light, oh
Sing for living light
Still feel weak but, God, I want to give and shine the living light
Still feel weak but, God, I want to give and shine the living light

Been walking... walking down the street all night
And I been feeling kind of cold
Still feel naked but, God, I want to feel warm before I get old
Feeling cold, lah
And I'm feeling cold
Still feel hungry but, God, I want to give and shine the living light
Still feel hungry but, God, I want to give and shine the living light

Been... been celebrating way too long
And I have eaten much too well
Still feel hungry, God, I want to give and ring the living bell
Still feel hungry, ring the living bell

Still feel hungry but, God, I wanna give and ring the living bell
Still feel hungry but, God, I wanna give and ring the living bell
Oh, still feel hungry but, God, I wanna give and ring the living bell
Still feel hungry but, God, I wanna give and ring the living bell

Ring the living bell
Ring the living bell
Shine the living light

Shine the living light

The Fray

Bottom of the ninth inning
Out which I stray through the crowd
First it was what I call quiet
Then it was biblically loud

You should have seen how they tumbled
You should have seen how they danced
You should have seen them all luscious and lean
As they flew by the seat of their pants

It was not the boiling' frustration
It was not they cannot care less
It was not the face of that reverend place
In the horrible state of undress

I moved in a way I call mindless
I flatter myself a move true
I carved out a "j" in the spectators fray
Because that's just the thing that we do

Yes, I carved out my name in the ninth of the game
Because that's just a thing that we do

What We Have Known

The tadpole buoyant as basalt
The seahorse horsing in assault
The owlet in his greenery
The narwhal in his cup of sea
They all believe
They all believe

But collusion bleeds through back allies
From parapets that end on feet

When one is weak they discretely meet
They throw the bones into the street
And they progress
And we retreat

And all the books our fathers wrote
Are in the middle of the road
Little by little we implode
History brittle, brown and broke
We can't remember what was spoke
So we stare in wonder at the smoke
What it begets is born alone
We know not now what we have known

Ladies; breathe deep against your whalebones
For your children come home made of stone

The terror seething sees a way
Or like the wheezing of the bay
In miniature agonies
They travel westward on the breeze
Bring us all to our knees

The dappled horse, the sorrowed mare
With eyes that do not see but stare
Beneath boots as black as Malachi
He drives a nag into the nigh
Into the nigh

And all the baby boys we've born
With eyes averted from the storm
Sent off to die in perfect form
We know now what we have known

Satellite photos rhetoric
See how the euphemism stick
And when they come back broke and burned
Those who return have no return

Yarn And Glue

Do you know what this is son?

This is the panoptic on
And all around us blink the brash
And shifty eyes of common cash

So do we die or do we travel?
Down the path by which one dabbles
In the arts of antediluvian crafts
With yarn and glue

So gather twilight to your breast
And couch the rabble-rouser's nest
And we will take a day of rest
And we will all be heaven-blessed

And we will gather round to dine
And pass the time with wicked rhymes
And toast in dandelion wines
To hear their mellifluous chimes

We toast the fallow furrows that we sow,
We toast the monies that we owe, oh, oh
We toast the creditors we daily face
Who topple down with gruesome grace

And we toast the aristocrats with blood of blue
Because we know our collars are that colour too
And we toast the artisans of antediluvian crafts
With yarn and glue

We do, we do!