

# altruism

## my life's purpose

kyall glennie



And now, all will be revealed. This arrangement of words, placement of pronouns and alliteration of allegorical statements serves one and only one reason: to document how, in a short two years, I found my life's purpose.

While it is likely I have been searching for that purpose since my birth, these five periods documented here describe eras of immense change. Through thousands of references to "I," I chronologically account to you what it means to be this person, one who embarks on new eras frequently.

This is a detailing of the ways in which one can decline, fall, descend, and then surface, rise, and live. This is the exploration of what it means to be finding myself, and finding purpose in the meaning of life.

This is a realization that all that was, is, and will be for me has a purpose. This is how kyll glennie found that altruism is the purpose of this experience.

September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008



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## section one

# more words

These works originally were published in a volume I gave only myself - under the title, "more words." this title came to signify all I thought I had to give at that moment. When confronted with controversial dinner conversation showcasing extreme racism, all I believed I could do was offer more words to help heal the world.

But really, looking back, it wasn't the world that I could help heal. I could help to explore what needed to be healed inside here. This person lacked grounding and focus. While I thought I had a reason to live, I didn't exactly know what the purpose was.

Hence, here are more words that explore the experiences I had in life to teach me of my consciousness.

**one.**

I forgot exactly how "one" we all are  
pretend, for a moment, we're drifting in this vast sea  
some call it a navy soup  
others, a solar field  
and think about how our vessel is but one.

think about how our movements to the left  
are but one sway.  
our tilting to the right  
is just one flinch.

I forgot exactly what "one" would mean  
when I became the embodiment of individualism  
in this ever-continuing conversation  
with other parts of this one.

I forgot exactly what atom I make up  
in the frame of the individual we call humanity.  
it functions as smoothly as it possibly can  
the way that a cancer patient doesn't give up  
merely because a few cells have gone bad  
and the growth spreads further and deeper  
with every attempt at rescue.

I forgot exactly what "one" meant  
when I woke up and thought this experience  
was all mine to enjoy.  
this thrill of travel,  
of searching for the best ways to enjoy life,  
of eating food as if any of it was meant solely for me.

When I love, one loves,  
when I live, one lives,  
when I rejoice, one rejoices.

There's something magical in being a part  
rather than apart of something.

we are all one.  
and the irony is the cliché no longer bothers me.  
how could it  
we are all one.

February 21<sup>st</sup> 2006 - 11:13 p.m.

## swordfight

the hurtful thing about the way that I would end this  
wouldn't be in the blow  
and the gushing of blood sure to follow  
it wouldn't be in what lays clinging to my sword  
severed, alright, but timidly shy about the truth  
that it has parted from its source

the hurt would be in this heart.  
in this wound that I would be inflicting deeper  
than any external pain has ever been granted the decency to explore

I wasn't ever sure as sure could be / you know,  
the way that geese know their mate isn't a duck  
or the way a snowflake knows it's not welcome  
not by earth or humans alike  
in the midst of June  
I wasn't sure as sure stated  
that bikers must be tough  
and barbies dressed in pink

I wasn't sure that I would always fit into the mould  
and wear this kilt and this dirk around my waist and assume  
the role of tartan bearer for a proud people.

I don't feel a need for that wound.  
I like the way my blood currents flow  
the leftward tilt it all has. when World Bank hacks  
spew hatred of the developing world  
I like that my temperature increase.  
when the rich get filthier in their wealth generated  
by the public. when notorious evils are clobbered  
by the might of uprising people.

I just hate the gashes I end up with on my arms  
the nicks across my chest  
the punctured marks on my heart  
when I am backstabbed by those  
supposedly fighting on the same side.

April 24<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 0:53 p.m.

## messiah

it hasn't been enough to find the waiting unbearable  
the messiah said to his followers  
you keep pushing for me to reach that perfection pinnacle  
and yet you don't want to get lost  
in the never-ending journey of discovery

the followers cried out.  
we know the way!  
let us show you!  
we know exactly how we want  
to see you become our leader.

and so he followed, for a time,  
the path so guided by the worshipping masses.  
he followed it straight,  
he followed it through narrow ravines and across cliffs  
through mountain ranges and wind-swept prairie  
through moss covered forests and rain drenched trees

he followed them where he was led.

and it wasn't salvation.  
it wasn't anything but the simplicities  
he had warned himself about in a past life.

a little stumble along the way,  
he ran into a turtle who knew no boundaries  
to lifespan or time or the essence of freedom

and that turtle spoke to him in simplicities  
that seemed brighter and more wise than anything  
the gospels purported to know.

and that turtle, with its feet clenching four seas  
knew some truths to the world that this messiah  
never could have imagined to stumble upon any other way.

he knew the masses were not always right.  
he knew the masses were easily corrupted.  
he knew the answers wouldn't ever be free of difficulty.

yes yes, the wait was unbearable to the masses  
the way he took his time in the shower made them shudder to think  
of the wasted effort along the way to perfection.  
but someday, the messiah thought,  
it wouldn't be a wait any longer.  
and disappointment would melt away  
when he became what they all knew in their hearts  
was who he was supposed to be.

May 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 - 10:00 p.m.

## cool

I stutter, briefly, in the hallway.  
it's a fine line between the dance room and the bar  
where the awkward odour of those who belong  
and those who are just trying to mingle here unnoticed  
but present  
is a little overwhelming, even over the spilled beer.

this freedom that comes from a night on the town  
in the most free-spirited place we can find in our city  
happens to be restricted.  
harshly.  
by the purveyors of cool.

I stutter because it's a necessarily evil  
the way conformity inflicts so much pain and heartbreak  
on those trying to escape the norm.  
it's a whirlwind of sights and sounds and yet it's a blur of sameness.

hair? jagged, or swooped, or curled but never plain.  
boots? high, or dirty, or bleached clean, or goth, but never regular  
runners.  
unless regular runners they are.  
clothes? trendy, or goth, or t-shirts, or geek, or trash, or sporty,  
but never just there, clinging to bodies as if they were mannequins.  
they must be worn.

I stutter because the forces of cool are pretty intense.  
it's more than peer pressure  
it's the way that insignificance seeps into my veins and jolts me  
from whatever lull I've reached  
into a subliminal depression based solely on the fact that,  
well,  
we all aren't cool, so who is going to be the cream rising to the top?

I stutter because I am worried.  
I came here, looking for adventure, seeking a good time,  
and yet I'm enraptured by all that is here.  
cool hunting is a sport that leaves much blood on the walls  
and sweat on the lips of those running and chasing and frantically  
pacing themselves  
to be cool.

May 7<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 6:53 p.m.

## evaporate

the necessity of being around people  
my own age  
older than I  
younger than I  
is kind of evident.  
so why do my three phones linger between rings?

I like the day.  
the day brings sunshine and chirping  
and green as far as eyes wander

but the night  
with its elegant drapery in the sky  
and the comforting stillness  
and relaxation  
brings such futility to everything.  
as if the vapid moments are not bothered  
to even exist.

as in,  
give up, I dare you. value yourself  
beyond your longer term mutual funds  
and see what you have accumulated in this life.

is it worth a drop in the bucket of this  
global economy?  
is it worth a spec of dust in this  
galactic expansion?

probably not,  
says the pessimist.  
and ends there.

probably not,  
says the optimist.  
but maybe there is something here  
that this global economy might need  
or this galactic expansion might miss  
if I was to evaporate.

May 26<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 1:50 p.m.

## at, twenty, for, where, to?

I pretend this is simple.  
I write as if the words  
wish to feel loved by others  
and the thoughts wish to belong in  
greater volumes than what I can  
self-publish.

I pretend this is simple.  
I wake up and sometimes, I smile.  
sometimes I stumble on my way  
and answer the morning greetings as if  
the kick in my heels is anything but  
contrived.

I pretend this is simple.  
the pretentious moments with ex-classmates  
who strive in their own right to make it seem worthwhile.  
the thoughts that flicker by when I am bragging up  
my self, my career-- they linger in the moment because of  
great hesitation.

I pretend this is simple.  
the way I try to remove the pressure of the moment  
with a faint attempt at relaying it all back to an experience.  
it doesn't work, most of the time, but the trials and tribulations  
continue.

I pretend this is simple.  
the way I hide, and then come out, and then dance,  
and then shudder in silence  
to parse the extrovert through the buttonholes of this introvert is  
beyond difficult.

I pretend this is simple.  
to live life as if it has meaning, as if it has purpose,  
as if with a destiny, a map, una carta, a plan, a heavenly design,  
anything.  
and then I fade into that delirious state  
while I'm as healthy as an ox and realize it does not.

I pretend this is simple.  
and twenty three years of it,  
in comparison to what it took the galaxies  
to draft up their plans:  
their round-robins of who gets to explode next  
of where to plant random intelligent life  
and where to leak carbon  
and where to instill platypuses  
and where to throw raccoons  
and where to be joyous  
and where to be green  
and where to be nothing

is a wonderful achievement,  
I think.

June 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10:43 p.m.

## nothing's ever satisfying

to a mind that has too many opportunities  
to be amused  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the walk through the mall  
where moral superiority trumps trendy pepe jeans sweaters  
or headphones engulfing the craniums of mouth-dropped men  
means  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the parking job in front of seniors  
where the swift movement of my wrists  
equals the first successful parallel park in over eight years  
still doesn't cut it.  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the cookies, the milkshakes,  
the cheesecake left over from a well-celebrated birthday.  
all devoured by a collection of sweet teeth  
begging for more.  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the computers, in white, silver,  
whatever their colour or curvy shape.  
with more memory, more space, more opportunity,  
more speed, more punch, more passion.  
more.  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the music  
in tones I think I hear at night  
dreamt up by a mind hellbent on eternal damnation--  
why did I have to hear a new Tori Amos album only in my sleep?--  
the collection and organization and the impeccable taste,  
be damned.  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the writing  
that fills out these moments of insomnia  
of boredom  
of dully stirred points in the day that otherwise would evaporate  
never seems to be enough, or complete, or even good.  
nothing's ever satisfying.

the quantity  
and quality  
and majestic nature of everything.  
the overpowering aroma of life,  
the colours of the leaves  
and filtered lenses  
and blobs of my lava lamp  
and dreams! the flying dreams!  
and nicely made beds  
and warm homes  
and cozy couches  
and friendly neighbours  
and laughing dogs  
and cute kittens  
and rampant consumerism  
and excessive spending  
and disgustingly large slices of pizza  
and trips to the moon  
and the investigation of the ancient world  
and the mountain tops crumbling  
and the icebergs melting  
and the children screaming  
and the water fountains cooling  
and the deaths that bring living  
and the whole intensity of the world that we live.

and yet here we are.  
a society,  
an individual,  
a man who ends his night in conclusion:  
nothing's ever satisfying.

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 12:07 a.m.

## worn out feet are far from worn out

the rubbing is simply a reminder  
of all the pain of generations of feet  
must go through.

picture this, foot rubber:  
you represent, with your current humans,  
over half of the existence of our race  
forever.

picture this, foot rubber:  
every moment spent not saving those  
currently here, in this generation, from  
it all  
is a moment wasted on half of our people  
that simple

picture this, foot rubber:  
we are already here, waiting to be reached  
those who will help you in the battle we want waged  
the battle of classes and war and injustice  
and we just need to be tapped into  
now.  
no, not soon, now.

the rubbing is simply a reminder  
of all of the pain of generations of people  
must go through.

July 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 7:26 p.m.

## I'm going to like the future, with its flying cars

it was a masterful event  
the moment I woke up and realized  
life would never be the same again.

the moment I woke up and smelled the air  
like I would finally smell it for the rest of time.  
the look of my closet and what future items  
would find their resting place there.  
the look of my kitchen and what future meals  
would find their aromas swirling above pots there.

it was a masterful event  
the moment I woke up and realized  
this didn't have to be as complicated or as complex  
as I had imagined.

the moment I woke up and looked around  
and felt no heartbreak for being simply here.  
and felt the joys of simply existing in a place  
of safety and compassion and wonder and exploration.  
and felt the peace and knowledge and wisdom of  
knowing that now is the time to simply be and be known.

it was a masterful event  
the moment I woke up and realized  
the world was simply turning in the same direction  
it always has.

the moment I woke up and noticed  
that life was to be as life was meant to be.  
that life was to be as blessed as I would put up with.  
that life was to be as full and warm and enjoyable  
as I would stomach.

it was a masterful event  
the moment I woke up and realized  
I was truly alive in my life.

and when I wake up that moment  
the clarity I will breath and see and speak and know  
and feel and touch and hear and think  
will be awesome.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006 - 11:43 p.m.

## those without spirituality still have morals

did you hear me say  
"oh, how I need you,  
now in my time  
when the questions arise  
that have arisen for generations  
for every sunset that passes  
and every heart sacrificed in the name of  
power  
and in that coughing of the wind  
that spits out hail and rain and thunder  
of being a truthfully good individual"?

did you hear me say  
"oh, greater good,  
find me on the path to your core  
and shower me with the knowledge I need  
to find it all on these travels  
the way the rich can, with their private jets  
and moments spent in contemplation  
of how to grow their wealth and influence further  
and teach me what I should anticipate  
in order to make the climb easier"?

did you hear me say  
"oh, what to do,  
when this day collides with my need to work  
and wake up and be solid and fresh  
and in charge  
when the workers all challenge my ability  
and the employers all demonstrate my inability  
and the servants all mock my capability  
to be successful"?

no. likely not.  
but I worry, nonetheless,  
in this little head of mine,  
of these same things.

July 24<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 12:45 a.m.

## camping

it's not cold  
says my mother, the universe  
I am only piercing your pores to let you know  
you can feel.

it's not scary  
says my mother, the universe  
I am only shaking the bushes to let you know  
you are not alone.

it's not dark  
says my mother, the universe  
I am only blinding the lights to let you know  
you'll be bathed in sunlight tomorrow.

it's not quiet  
says my mother, the universe  
I am only dimming the sound to let you know  
chipmunks will ravage you with cries.

it's not sad  
says my mother, the universe  
I am only showing you the beauties to let you know  
you can come back.

July 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 8:14 p.m.

## om

I only submerged for a moment  
that delayed pause between happiness and contentment  
and thought  
as I laid there breathing and noticing nothing but  
the echoes that my spinal cavern allows  
that this was tapping into  
an endless vacuum of silence.

I only dashed up the hill for moment  
that shot of thrill and adrenalin and freedom  
and thought  
as my feet gave way to sand and branches and  
most of all the lushness of moss  
that this was as close as I'm getting  
to running on the moon.

I only nibbled on the snacks for a moment  
that filled my belly with a blissful nourishment  
and thought  
as my eyes devoured simplicity and tasteful creations  
and my ears heard that internal crunching  
that this was my gourmet trip to  
every eatery in the galaxy.

I only bent over in the berry patch for a moment  
that surrounded my body with the pantry of bears  
and deer and rabbits and birds and humans  
and thought  
as my hands slightly coloured from the juice  
and my neck burned from the sun's presence  
that this was the teaching ability of nature  
and of the universe's om.

July 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 8:20 p.m.

## swim away from the island of despair

swim, swim  
because that's what I do best.  
sadly three years have gone by  
and still I ravage the dead airspace with tales  
of my fortitude in the water.

and when you're parked in alcatraz  
or stuck in azkaban  
hounded by ghouls and your own  
dementia  
you can't help but think  
those three years of bragging rights might have been  
better served  
by practice somewhere in a pool.

swim, swim  
the dry shores of sanity  
with the crisp cool air and breezy sunrays  
and noticeable wasps of fruit and honey:  
what a fucking evil temptation.

a carrot to be dangled here  
as I struggle out there in the water,  
always gasping and wondering whether  
the next stroke is my last.  
and never does it feel like I'm being pulled under  
or as if the waves won't let me go  
but their motion is relentless. the only relaxation  
is to flip over on my back  
and breathe.

swim, swim  
and up this current I go.  
and sometimes I make my way through  
and find a lifeboat  
and wake up just fine on a sandy beach.

and others I lay awake here  
and wonder  
what simplistic metaphor is the key I need to use  
to get out of this mess.

August 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 1:41 a.m.

## edge

it always takes an extreme  
to the edge they say.  
and here left writing  
on a Saskatchewan cliff  
after feeling  
a  
day  
pushed off  
do I know the truth

everytime the pressure mounts.  
like I climb mountains  
with age it seems to go harder.

but following all  
the essential vitamins  
music  
friends  
rum  
rural  
I. love. this. life.

August 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 9:30 p.m.

## plato was right about one thing

in my young age I am wise.  
I know my ups from downs  
the car is parked outside.  
the trees drop their leaves for rejuvenation.  
and you know what?  
I don't know shit.

I can breathe clearly  
and extrapolate on the intricacies of  
the politics of religion in the middle east.  
and then I sit by the side of the road  
waiting  
for I can't change a fucking tire.

I can mix cookie batter in mere minutes  
and fry tofu like a master.  
I can pretend to be healthy and smart about nutrition  
but can I lift my knees to my chest  
just a few simple times  
to get a proper workout? no.

I can compose prose  
I can rhyme show rhythm and carry a tune.  
I can paint and draw and demonstrate some basic level  
of colour coordination.  
can I explain how to use a simple cash register?  
no fucking way.

I love intelligence  
and intellect  
I love the belief in the unknown's future discovery.  
I love complicated musical patterns and awareness of  
the numbers of pi past 3.14.  
do I know how to love another human?  
shit no.

in my young age I am wise.  
but wisdom shows me my faults  
just as  
thankfully  
it is the illumination cast on my strengths  
I use for guidance.

August 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10:05 p.m.

## an atheist writes to Jesus

I wrote a note for you  
my dearest deity  
in tears.

perhaps your omniscience  
can read the invisible print  
that explains this contempt.

perhaps the way I'm forced  
into compromise  
every fucking time you allow death.

I don't like lying and waiting  
the end is nothing to you  
and the expiration of souls, either.

the way you hang over a population  
that has the potential  
your good book says - and still laugh.

how many bodies  
how much blood  
how much hurt do I need to generate?

they say many things about what it takes  
to reach you.  
too bad centuries have spread between us.

I know the orbits of celestial bodies  
and I know the construction of fog  
and I Know your existence is nil.

and still,  
my dearest deity  
I am in tears.

please take a look at my note  
and pass on to your friend  
that we are not worthy of this suffering.

August 24<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10:51 p.m.

## I guess it is my turn to fight

I wouldn't mind being the domestic  
seam ripper  
the one in charge of the clothes that cover  
otherwise bare bodies.

I wouldn't mind being the holistic  
toe healer  
the one in charge of nurturing every pain out of  
otherwise sore feet.

I wouldn't mind being the eclectic  
meal creator  
the one in charge of filling mouths  
otherwise left vacant.

instead, I think destiny decided  
I am to win over the cash that feeds the mouths  
that clothes the backs  
that washes the wounds  
and take charge.

and just as hippie colonies flaunt their  
sexual division of labour  
so too has a culture bent on equality  
flaunted me as a leader

just as libraries depend on authors  
and guitar makers depend on musicians  
politics depends on politicians  
and the left depends on hope.

I wouldn't mind settling  
because that's what we see as  
the bliss of home life.  
otherwise left to those who have no future.

instead,  
I think destiny decided  
this is it for my period at home.  
on to the races.

September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006 - 10:03 p.m.

## my atoms are something more than elements

what are now my atoms  
was once the tears of a whale  
crying for its stillborn calf  
the hair on the underarms of a  
flying squirrel  
using the natural trapeze of the jungle  
to entertain the butterflies below  
the eyelids of grasshoppers  
in the desert scorch  
the softness of green moss covering  
an anthill in the forest  
the majestic glaring cornea of an eagle  
soaring the cliffs  
the intestines of a hungry rat rummaging  
for scraps of a kill  
the howling vocal chords of hyenas  
as they threatened a calf  
the end of a tusk as it dug into the ground  
on an elephant's final descent  
the simplest spot on a rock  
lying alone in the sea  
the scales of a fish in a mouth of a sea lion  
and the roaring echo of a tiger

what are now my atoms  
were a wonderful assortment of things.

and all united  
by that radiating magnetism  
of the northern lights  
it is no wonder  
I aspire for greatness.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 - 1:16 a.m.

## **It's not as if the roots were left unwatered**

from the kid who thought nothing  
to stop random strangers and ask for their support  
for every cause deemed that day appropriate  
this is the sixth floor.

from the kid who believed in everything  
and every opportunity to be genuine  
and every person's ability to realize it all  
this is grounding.

from the kid who wished for simplicity  
and peace, food, mattresses, sleep and music  
all to be showered on the shoulders of the meek  
this is depressing.

from the kid who had no fear  
of running up to a microphone  
and belting out ideas on how to change the world  
this is the gutter.

September 18<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10:24 p.m.

## more words

it's not for a lack of desire  
to change this world  
did I remain silent.

and as a few more words were spoken  
I buried what yearning to be correct and helpful  
into the realization that it is going to be a while.

the impossible, they say, simply will take some time.

a few more thoughts became a single currency  
between getting from right to wrong.  
or the round trip.

pity. shame. despair. outrage. and then thanks.  
thanks, my new enemy— no wait, friend —  
for giving me a few more words to motivate the daily struggle.

bread can't wait to be baked.  
children can't wait to brush their teeth  
and be tucked into bed.  
bombs can't wait to be dismantled  
and leaves can't wait to be raked  
in the time it's going to take me.

but just a few more words  
and that's all it will be  
to drive in me every conviction  
I know I was born with.

it's not for a lack of desire  
to change ignorance into awe  
that I sat there and took a beating  
to the heart of a spirited man.

it's for the drive —edging, they say  
to succeed at something greater than spewing intolerance.

if life's measuring stick for me  
is notched every time I reach a new level of understanding  
let tonight frame my newest moment of sheer devotion  
to change the world.

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 10:30 p.m.

## from the outset, Adam dropped the ball

oh Adam, you foolish buffoon!

I had thought better of our forefathers.  
sincerely of our father.  
and yet you left us hanging there - what,  
with your preoccupations and hesitations  
of sharing the knowledge.

it was so simple.  
it always was. always is.

and the dropped shoe hit the floor  
and the shit hit the fan  
and the ball was left in play  
when you forgot to possibly relay the only message left that day.  
what a pity.

oh Adam, you forgetful man of a fool!

you leave much to be desired in history  
his story seems too simple  
to be left trailing in the wind  
instead of shared  
with the one who must have yearned to hear it.

after the fact  
after the fall  
after the forgetfulness of you

so in my readings, Adam  
I don't seem to read too much into  
the distrust and hatred of men  
that one would assume.

and that means compassion  
was instilled from a time  
when such an emotion wasn't supposed  
to have been necessary.

thank goodness for that  
for leaving the world up to us  
has left the garden rotten.

October 10<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 11:02 p.m.



## section two

# reason and wisdom

In November 2006, a book was born of fiction from my head. Under the title “Reason and Wisdom,” I thought I had crafted a somewhat comprehensible exploration of what it takes for reason and wisdom to guide a fictional character through the battles he faced.

Yet, at the same time, my own reason was missing. I was lost in the drive for success in many different ways, and sorry for myself for not finding it. I was ideologically conflicted, confused, and capitulating to the simple pleasures around me that may have done more harm than good. Wisdom? Every day, it indeed felt as if I was learning more, but my own wisdom never seemed to measure up to what I viewed as that of others.

This section details an era where my own reason and wisdom were failing me. It details the extremities of my existence, the moments I thought I had felt best and worst, all within a time span of six months.

## conscientization

I can cry life is so obvious.  
What I appreciate and cherish  
becomes what I am.  
what I am becomes all that  
I am able to appreciate and cherish.

others find love  
others find careers  
others find inspiring stories  
to guide their menial tasks  
and beer commercials to write their weekend plans

others find happiness  
others find contentment  
others find leadership  
in the way they coalesce to the center  
and dream of big dreams like flying to the Caribbean

but apparently  
it's all beneath me  
and those I gravitate towards.  
the shock that such a statement should bring  
can't poison or sting me.  
it's more a reality, this life,  
the way satisfaction or some virtue like that  
becomes a shining relic  
and accomplishing anything beyond  
impossibilities  
leads us to be further and further behind.

oh, life,  
the way you taunt me  
is quite entertaining, in fact.  
at least I have that consciousness that knows this.  
but what a world it would be  
if we could get over our hang ups  
and live through you the way we are meant to do  
instead of the way  
we convince ourselves  
is correct.

November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006 - 7:48 p.m.

## four years

I sit munching.  
this is a vegetarian stew  
hand-made  
coated in a light snow dusting  
of parmesan cheese  
just like my red car revels  
under its new blanket of white.

I sit listening.  
she wants so much  
and yet here I am, not in St Johns tonight  
I wish I was.  
I was there, once,  
in a long ago time  
probably when the vikings  
hailed me onto shore and said,  
lead us!  
you brought us this far!  
and I turned and ran for the ocean.  
just as I'm turning  
from the future.

I have the money.  
it's no obstacle, you see.  
I have the moral heart needed  
when an audience pines for one to be broken.  
I have the wit and the charm  
and the unintelligible rambles  
and the desire to hear her think.  
I have the eyes that can follow words  
and the hands that can write them.

I have four years of poems.  
I have four years of conscious thoughts.  
I have four years of crying.  
I have four years of laughter.  
I have four years of magic.

I have four years in three books.  
I have four years in new hair and nails.  
I have four years in metaphysical questioning.  
I have four years in internet history.  
I have four years in biochemical discoveries.

I have four years of desire.  
I have four years of fear.  
I have four years of hatred.  
I have four years of passion.  
I have four years of repetition.

I have four years of showers.  
I have four years of silence.  
I have four years of walking.  
I have four years of dreams.  
I have four years of lust.

I have four years of experiences.  
I have four years of life.

December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 - 6:23 p.m.

## climb

to be down  
is not to be downtrodden

to be sad  
is not to be sadly missed

to be empty  
is not to be left empty-handed

to be ill  
is not to be ill-willing

happiness is not becoming  
of one who wants not to be happy

but the thrill seeker  
the experiencer  
wants it.

just as the conscious hiker  
likes the stumbling steps  
on this climb.

December 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 7:17 p.m.

## accepting

it's not a matter of understanding,  
anymore.

I understand.  
oui, je le comprende.

I'd rather just know  
anyway.

just know the truth, just  
once.

just know exactly what's happening  
tomorrow.

and yeah, maybe that's  
irrational.

but life I find certainly  
is.

and maybe that's the charm to  
it.

the irrational charm. the lack of  
direction.

the spontaneity I always  
lack.

it's always  
here.

so, yes, it's not about  
understanding.

now, it's about  
accepting.

December 30<sup>th</sup> 2006 - 9:36 p.m.

## moral superiority

there's a certain amount of moral superiority  
to being right.

oh, what danger!  
oh, what irrational behaviour!

waltzes and tangos lead to simpler steps around the floor  
than the way we prance about  
and pretend to know what the hell  
we're saying.

oh, the charm!  
oh, the sweat!

the hesitation we have to being truthful and honest  
is only caused by the lack of respect  
for those views and opinions  
that can be found taking refuge  
in the rational minds bumping atoms  
in the air around us.

oh, the whit!  
oh, the prose!

we like our thoughts. we like our minds  
because they've churned creameries easier  
than these concepts.  
we like our beliefs to trump other beliefs  
and for the trumping to be hostile and merciless  
just like our dinner.

oh, the calm!  
oh, the self-centredness!

smilies and friends and neighbours  
and love that flows like the stardust through orion  
can't bring us to the conclusion  
that sometimes we're wrong.

oh, the shame!  
oh, the delight!

January 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:23 p.m.

## Children of Men

we want the best.

we'd breed the best.  
we'd show 'em,  
fuck yeah,  
what morning sickness is all about

and we'd wear it with the small amount of  
pride  
that we'd ever allow to show  
about our current status.

and we'd help 'em with school and shit  
you know, maths and sciences  
maybe a little gymnasium once in a  
while.

we want the best  
and we'd have the best.

and then there'd be,  
like,  
less of the evils.  
because children of men  
would be different children indeed.

January 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:40 p.m.

## vulnerable

the scariest part of being known  
is being vulnerable.

the vulnerability of being known  
is that the armour would no longer  
wear itself around me  
like valorous fighters would experience.

random acts of stripping  
of these threads  
strangely, enough  
does the opposite  
and builds up a new layer  
of indifference to being known

what is scarier?

to be vulnerable  
or to be a mystique  
who goes through life  
without others' knowledge  
of the true self?

January 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 11:36 a.m.

## pride

there can't be fear in being known.  
that level of vulnerability isn't healthy.

hence. what I am proud to stand up for and be.

a man

who banks with an ethical credit union-owned bank  
who befriends those otherwise not befriended  
who melts at the sight of neon green  
who worships those with hope and idealism

who wants nothing more than simple happiness  
who connects with the universe in his own manner  
who writes prolifically, if not well  
who wants success for those without

who needs to feel welcome to feel whole  
who bends over backwards for the needs and wellness of friends  
who challenges himself daily to be better at everything  
who desires only the problems be swift in their resolution

who surrounds himself with people of inspiring characters  
who lives life at fully as capable at this point  
who trusts that things always do have a bright side  
who truly wants and believes the glass is half-full

who smiles quietly alone at the beauty of it all  
who wishes for stars to shine brightly in constellations  
who sees clearly a future made for those with grand aspirations  
who reads and contemplates the works of others

who listens intently to the rhythms of the world  
who bathes in the sunlight, in the ocean and in dreams  
who doesn't feel guilty for flowery language  
who doesn't have self-doubt about my own consciousness anymore.

that, my friend, adds up to pride.

January 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:44 p.m.

## **under the influence**

I feel more alive and inspired now  
in the moment  
than sobriety has ever graced me with the knowledge  
of its arrival.

scary thought  
to become one  
who thrives  
artificially.

I always thought I'd be the one  
who nourishes this world  
with the pains-taking approach  
of hard work and labour of the mind.

I just never knew  
it wouldn't feel welcome  
while not self-induced  
with influence.

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:58 p.m.

## **a likely irrational approach to the definition of survival**

I'm so ready to uncoil  
the bounce off the wall  
may be quite the impact.

Perhaps it's best to contain it  
BUT HOW???

When the fervor and fever  
burns this deep  
one can't help but  
spin out of control once in a while.

and they may say  
as they reflect back for me  
what a spinout it was.

perhaps.  
rather, I'd like to think  
they thought I took a chance  
to survive.

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:06 p.m.

## I'm ready

hi folks. it's me. seriously.

this time, there is no voice trying to be sheltered  
from my own internal filter.

this time, there is no mind hiding in the dark of the ways  
I like to pretend I'm secretive.

this time, it's actually me,  
lashing out when I say it's about fucking time.

I have few opportunities to live.  
I say few, because we need to get beyond this concept of one life.

but I truly believe it's a matter of experience.  
and this is meant to be experienced.

and if it so happens that you stumble towards me  
and I don't respond, please, spit.

throw a tantrum, and cause concern and raise your voice  
and shake me and make me realize what I'm about to do.

it's only a matter of experience  
before I gain that comfort level with the unknown.

but it's only a matter of shyness  
that prevents such from ever revealing itself.

so, please, help me along the way, says the real me  
in a last fit of exhilarating awkwardness.

because this time, it's me calling out  
and saying, yes, I'm ready.

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:21 p.m.

## street

I have trouble saying this.  
it's hard to pretend I'm fucking street  
when y'all know it ain't true.

the rage - contrived  
just because I had to.

the one who wishes for some  
conformity with all  
y'all don't know how hard it is  
to be that

knowin' yourself  
and tryin' to be  
real  
and tryin' to keep it real  
is a job in itself.

January 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:47 p.m.

## peasant

there's a new peasant in town.  
packs wandering  
the locals are scared silly.

their windows  
now shards shattered  
and their hearts hardened to their  
newest creation.

oh, the woes that we fought for  
to survive for  
and to amass our creative juices  
to bring forth the latest rodent.

oh, the lights that flickered  
and the pages turned repeatedly  
in endurance, only to cause a darkened generation.

there's a new peasant in town.  
this one blisters many an iris  
with fanciful appendages and apparatus  
dazzling in the spotlight.

an empire of empty expectations  
focused inward actions  
amendments made to the most macro  
level of local.

slaves, really  
to the new imperialisms.  
the first generation of boundary-less  
serfs.

trouble is, the historians hate this categorization.  
distrusting of the downplaying  
of past mistakes.

yet, there's a new peasant in town.  
with more freedoms and liberties and  
suppositious achievements  
we're simple pawns, comrades.

January 29<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:36 p.m.

## four ambulances

four ambulances found their way here  
past here  
all siren like

the wailing is strangely familiar.  
almost like the way I've been found  
dashing through the snow  
looking for refuge  
shouting for attention  
trying to clear a path of forewarning.

if the people being rushed to assistance  
are to die  
is it a sign of things to come for me,  
the fading away of this soul?

or are things not nearly as dreary  
and is a rescue mission unfolding  
delivering me  
to a hospice?

February 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:01 p.m.

## a little worrywart buried alive

what's scarier  
to me  
is not that I face this battle so often.

you know,  
me,  
the one where you throw yourself  
against the tracks  
and wait for the train to come barreling towards  
inches from your face  
and then decide to pull the plug on this analogy  
and relax.

what's scarier  
to me  
is the cure feels so damn in reach.  
the lost aptitude of salvation  
still must be resting on a cross somewhere.

what's scarier  
to me  
is the lifelines all around are never too short  
the water never too deep  
the cold too intense or the  
wind too fierce  
and yet I always make it out to be that way.

what's scarier  
to me  
is the restless nights of self-loathing  
that follow a cleanse of  
this cabin fever  
now that I find myself always  
stuck away somewhere.

what's scarier  
to me  
is not that I am here so frequently.

it's that I know how to get out.

February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:16 p.m.

## puzzle

the strangest thing has happened.

I relapsed.

the pieces fought to be rearranged  
elegantly.  
they would have come marching  
through the door  
leaving elephant tracks of mud all over the place  
hadn't it been for my stern filter.

“not now, pieces,” I commanded,  
with as much authority as I always pretend  
I would have when I tell people what I would  
really like to say.

“You're much too disheveled for that  
to be today's agenda.”

But they whined, and squealed on their heels  
and came crying to me,  
pulling at all of the heartstrings  
and aching my body all over,  
saying,  
“it's no use to restrict us!  
We're ready as ready can be  
to be put together!”

I didn't know how,  
huddled into my walk-in closet  
or fumbling in the living room for the light,  
this could be so simple.

but it was, and is, and will be.

when life is a puzzle,  
solve it.

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - 6:06 p.m.

## I'm still here

it's been almost three months.  
pain, sadness and all that  
yeah, I could dwell on it.

I sometimes do.

I am my own anchor to self-doubt  
tossed aside long from shore  
hoping to catch something and  
struggle to hold on.

but today, I guess I found that superhero  
strength.  
I guess I've been able to lift freely  
off this earth and sore.

the rhetoric could make one puke,  
it's so contrived.  
the simplistic metaphor probably wouldn't  
be stomachached by a generous grade seven  
english teacher.

but it's true. I'm no longer there,  
I'm here. I'm still here.  
a wonderful place to be.

February 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:55 p.m.

**ha ha!**

not only did I make it  
I FUCKING MADE IT

and from here on in  
I can concentrate on me  
first  
because that's what I know I have to do

and THEN  
-the best part-  
I can concentrate on others  
getting to some point of  
goodness  
as well.

because if I can make it  
OTHERS CAN FUCKING MAKE IT TOO.  
because  
there's no guilt  
for feeling good.

February 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:04 p.m.

## la inseguridad de subir

yo se que mi problema mas grande  
es simple  
es inseguridad.

la seguridad que no tengo  
simple  
es en amigos  
es en la vida  
es en todos que me encuentro  
es en la idioma que escribo ahora  
¿por qué escribir en ingles, donde  
los otros - la familia, los amigos  
todos  
que pueden entender?

¿por qué hablar a mis compañeros  
a la oficina cuando  
debo tensionar de los trabajos  
y no encontramos las soluciones?

¿por qué no tengo seguridad?  
es simple.  
es porque tenemos unas paredes  
mas alto que yo, y que ustedes  
y que nosotros podemos subir.

February 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:12 p.m.

## focus

somewhere along the line  
the temptation to solve it  
and save it  
and fend for the future  
became a little misplaced.

focus  
the icicles hanging  
the steamed milk in expensive lattes  
the observation of foreign languages  
the collection of new music  
alternative focus

the littleness of these hands  
they feel so insignificant  
their connection to reality  
wanted to be there.  
but rather, it's long long severed.

I thought many things.  
I still do.  
the confusion of those contemplations  
only serves to build the case for a need for focus.

when you're consumed with obsession  
like jealousy  
the dirty glasses resting on my cheeks  
leave little to be seen.

I can't think straight  
when the idea moulds itself into every thought.  
I can't breath freshly  
when the scent is always shaded and fermenting.  
I can't be myself  
when the person I visualize isn't who I am.

focus  
the soymilk breakfasts  
the green silicone casing on the ipod  
the snowdrifts no longer being shoveled  
the newfound fascination with socializing  
alternative focus

but the future!  
the temptation to fall ill and fake  
the need to rest. to hide in a fort  
to revel in the simplicity of this complicated existence  
is so great. is so bloody great.

I just want to pick up a package of solutions  
as complicated as a travel insurance policy  
tacked onto the bill when I'm off to paradise.  
that precise and unencumbered fix.  
I just want it to be laid out and mapped  
and I pretend often I am somehow  
already laden with compass and whistle.

if this is balance  
I wonder how faltering I'd feel  
to be tipping to one side.  
I like the way I can wake and face the day.  
I like the way I can justify just about anything, really.  
but I hate the way the stuttering starts  
when I'm put into a box  
(usually self-erected)  
and forced to find a means of escape.

focus  
random walks around the lake  
structured, strong-worded directions  
confidence  
blank CDs waiting to be filled  
the magical notion of company in this  
alternative focus

somewhere along the line  
I falter like my comrades.  
thankfully, I know deep down  
what gear I need to shift into  
to get out of any rut.  
I just wish I was more focused  
on that ability  
instead of the obvious attention  
to the barricades.

March 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:15 p.m.

## **water**

I like  
turning the tap on more  
so I am warm

I like  
submerging in the tub  
so I am coated

I like  
swimming in the deep end  
when there is clarity

I like  
drinking heaps and gulps  
and feeling refreshed

I like  
sprinklers, dripping eavestroughs  
and melting puddles

I like  
that 70% of me is you  
water

March 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:19 a.m.

## when good and bad collide

the obscenities of tonight equal  
bliss  
love  
devotion

to a world where we feel some sort of  
feeling  
to the world where  
boundaries do not mask our sacrifice  
for the worldly and external experience

and i may have little to say now

but i know the realm in which we roam  
is anything but void  
and the depression i may not want to address  
is anything but solid

when the world finds itself  
in the conversation of smelly touques  
and giggles.

April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:53 a.m.

## litmus test

I've got to develop my own litmus test.  
it's not enough to be comparison shopping for the best me.

it's no enough to strap myself  
to external qualifications of who I should be,  
and I'm desperate to do that.

fuck it,  
I need a simple way to measure up  
and that has to be to my own goals and desires.

and the first place to start is the self-hating bashing tendencies  
that I know only too well  
through this fucking withdrawn process of introverted writing.

if there is an audience for the hatred-filled drivel,  
it's my own depressed ego.

and the only way to get that out of the way  
is take it out to the pasture  
I'm so loathe to admit is part of me and blow it away  
with all the violence I am capable of mustering,  
because I know it lingers here.

and perhaps then, with less self-hatred  
the vocabulary will grow and the expressions will morph  
into something beyond grade nine metaphors  
you know, back when I barely knew  
that most basic of a definition.

perhaps then,  
it's going to be something beyond  
a self-critique every fucking time I open up and want to get words out.

perhaps then,  
it won't take an endless evening ahead of me of  
desperation and fear for my own self loathing  
that will spar me into action and cause something to spark here.

ah, it sounds so simple,  
and perhaps that is just the way it is.

April 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:49 p.m.

## pretty hate machines, or: closer to survivalism

walking around town  
cool and all  
high school teams couldn't compete  
with the booming self-esteem  
emanating out of my touque-covered head  
filled with the sounds of radical industrial music  
or random techno beats

walking around town  
I was the owner, and you were the slaves  
and you were the bootlickers amongst us  
as I force-fed you with all the pity I could muster  
and you reveled in it.

April 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:50 p.m.

## dirty thoughts

we are so preoccupied with whatever  
cleansing we can get done  
we don't know how to wallow in the filth we kick up

yes, there is excrement on our feet  
and you better believe that it fucking stinks  
and not only do you not want to see or hear  
about the smells of the laboratories of the world  
you don't want to know of the food processing companies  
who churn meals out of the meat  
of the mixture of creatures  
we leave up to our modern slaves  
to slaughter for our urban enjoyment.

you don't want to know of the details  
of those who scrub porcelain in shopping malls  
after diarrhea strikes those shoppers  
who were otherwise content with  
finding bargains this afternoon.

you don't want to know the details of the stench  
that fills the nostrils of those  
who pile tonnes of our refuse each morning  
in the landfills that are already so out of style  
with where we need to be heading in our society.

you don't want to feel remorse for those poor souls  
left draining body fluids out of our corpses  
when we aspire to the depths of our deaths.  
it's grit that we have taken to be apart from.

fair enough, one could argue,  
that we've regulated those tasks to someone else.  
it just so happens that someone else might be us, some time,  
left to defend our own exciting adventures with the porcelain chariot  
and moaning of the times when servants picked up  
after our excretions into them

ah, the pain of any antibiotic cleansing is wonderful.  
wonderful to know how removed we are  
from the world in which we find ourselves surrounded.

April 8<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 11:27 p.m.

## **we just want your happiness**

we just want your happiness.

and maybe that's too much to ask.  
already, I know this.  
it's consuming of our energies  
and my love for your future  
that I bury you with the burden  
of meeting our expectations.

we just want your happiness.

and maybe that's irrational to request.  
already, I know this.  
it's demanding of our spirits  
to see you falter, that's all,  
when we know what's laid out  
in destiny is so fulfilling.

we just want your happiness.

and maybe that's selfish of us.  
already, I know this.  
it's more about my mental stability  
and my own self-fulfilling prophecies  
than your resolution of self-doubts  
just that we love you.

we just want your happiness.

and maybe we want it for ourselves.  
already, I know this.  
but it's true.

April 18<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:24 p.m.

## I am in control

the sound of rain reminds me:  
I am in control.

it could be the cat brushing against this laptop  
or the second finished novel in two days  
or the evening spent high in the redemption of  
good, solid friendships  
or the mystique that tomorrow always brings  
when it's a weekday

it could be the lingering self-doubts I have about my own sanity  
or the ruckus I allow my mind to take me to in those / these low times  
or the wilting ability I sometimes have for  
self-preservation  
or the cherished fleeting moment of self-confidence

and then a splash on the road not far below reminds me:  
I am in control.

it could be the essential salvation  
of external confirmation of ability  
or the long-winded way I have described these circumstances

or the small, tiny efforts I made to remind myself  
of my duties as a friend  
or the limited quantities of illicit drugs that remain  
flowing through this blood, like well-intentioned oxygen bubbles

it could be the way the pauses in my writing  
are like water droplets off a waterfall:  
mist long before the pool below

or the sheer level of focus it takes  
for someone to always be reminding himself  
of what it is to be someone else  
or the hysteria one can generate so internally  
over the anxious moments of solitude  
or the simplistic existentialist pleasure I gather  
from being so fucking aware of it all

and then a roar of a wet tire in the rain outside reminds me:  
I am in control.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 10:18 p.m.

## I am still here

probably why I am here,  
again

I am still here.

I know the basics  
and I have followed literally all the rules  
and I was there.  
I was marching in anticipation  
of a future meant for someone I thought I was

and I am still here  
not because I let them line up their guns  
and fire away at the plans they had made  
not because I moved out of the way when  
militias came marching machetes drawn

I am still here  
because I choose to be.  
I choose to worship at the alter of the experience  
and cherish even these evenings spent  
worried about the fact that my tearducts don't open  
I choose to listen to the rumblings of traffic  
and savour the aromas of the chlorinated tap water  
I choose to remember the accomplishments  
these same otherwise hopeless six months have brought to my border  
I choose to like the fact that I made progress  
I am still here because I seem to enjoy it.

probably why I am here,  
thankfully.

I am still here.

because they would love my defeat  
because they would find favour in my faltering  
because they would martyr me in front of the crowds  
because they would charge my co-conspirators with the recklessness I  
would otherwise exert

I am still here.

probably why I am here,  
tonight.

I have breathed in deeply  
and scrunched my cheek muscles  
in a multitude of manners  
and admired my unplanned evening agenda  
and divided the indecision from the core of my being

I have relaxed,  
knowing it is necessary no matter the notion  
that I could somehow let it slip by  
I have challenged my own tolerance  
for sap and the fortunes of what may come  
from this recent correspondence

I am calm,  
knowing that things always find a way  
to straighten me out sooner or later

I am content,  
knowing I am still here  
and that I don't want to give up.

April 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:13 p.m.

## section three

# sicilia

There is a small island floating in the Mediterranean. Some had called it a discouraging place, where crime is government and defeat is the spirit of the people. I call it the location of the starting point of the rest of my life.

I went to Sicily in May 2007, alone, to get away. Physically, I did remove myself from my surroundings, but it was the emotional escape that I needed the most, for what I found on that island was an ability to finally relax.

It was in this relaxation that the brilliance of accepting my life's purpose started to build, later. This section details the simple pleasures of the gift to my life that Sicily brought to me. There can be nothing greater said of Sicily than its instillment in me that the good life is a simple one.

## (Calgary)

what is shocking  
about this sudden  
turn of events?

surely not the calamity  
definitely not the way I can exhale  
simply not the joy of senses  
exposed and tantalized.

what, then?  
cherie, if I only knew.  
I've drawn up the best plans  
a lowly cartographer can muster  
and followed them with the  
only innate compass I've  
ever been given.

It hasn't mattered. Always  
detours.  
Always cul-de-sacs find their way.  
Always sprung on me those  
conversations that I can't handle.  
what, of course, is not the point  
only reaction is.  
And if life keeps up, and if  
I always see my cards, then  
I'm always ready to be dealt a new hand.

May 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 4:13 p.m.

## (Calgary)

it didn't take rocks,  
the shattering sands of bombs  
the collateral of shrapnel  
to pry me open.

I wanted to breathe  
the external air for once.  
I wanted to be of another space,  
one that now I recognise is  
boundless.

I wanted nothing more than an  
external experience.  
In this, there is doubt whether  
I left inside behind the glass  
the fragile creature that  
introvertedness says must be protected.

but I have a theory:  
that creature was meant to  
expire the way metamorphosis  
hits at impact when a  
caterpillar looks out the window  
and starts to grow wings.

May 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 6:09 p.m.

## (Palermo)

dio se chiama  
at least, I think that's what she said.  
It seemed appropriate on that street.  
I probably wasn't wearing my shirt  
and this was as translucent as  
I usually am not.

now, berries  
frutti that looks and smells  
like dog shit baking  
baked biscotti and dog shit!  
falling out of trees so large they've  
helped encourage an envy  
among other flora.

It's hot, but not so hot as to  
encourage change.  
I've found that a recurring theme.  
Neither cellphones nor french fries  
American sneakers nor desperate immigrants  
working the streets  
have done that. The bombs of the war  
the expanded EU the smart car  
they all fall in place.

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 5:02 p.m.

## (Palermo)

gelato, crema penna.  
groups of men walking down the street,  
only to stop and check out clothes in shop windows  
businessmen in suits eating gelato.  
not spilling on their ties.  
thousands of youth - maybe hundreds of thousands -  
eagerly anticipating some random concert I have yet to hear.  
thousands of youth enjoying the evening  
splitting perhaps a 24 between them all.  
incorrectly purchasing tomato and red pepper.  
how north american of me to assume  
other than they'll weigh them for me.  
a protest, or something, table set up  
to protest something I didn't figure out.  
a clock that shows the night is young,  
yet a shoulder and feet that do not feel it  
a clean enough shirt, although wrinkled,  
that buys me the freedom to feel  
slightly less anglicized in a world of  
solidly Mediterranean people.

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 10:20 p.m.

## (il treno per Catania)

thousands, millions.  
mille. grazimille to this sea locked island  
for showing me fields of poppies.  
near valledurmo in the midst of  
nothing beyond fields  
there are thousands, millions  
waiting to be picked.  
maybe not.  
waiting to wait.  
still. quiet, fragrant like  
how I imagine a red sea of hills to to smell.  
windmills on the hills  
wind in the tunnels shuts the windows  
and I swelter.  
I don't know if this is the right train.  
I don't know if this is the right way to be living  
always afraid, always judging.  
I don't know if writing is clarity or confusion.  
I do know  
thousands, millions of poppies  
are waiting for me to see breathe and  
love them.

May 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:15 p.m.

## (Catania)

lagrimas del cielo.  
finalmente. I needed a break from my longtime  
friend the sun.  
I needed space because it was evident  
from the beating up shoulders have taken  
that we spend too much time together.

mercado de pescado.  
the way bins were full of the skin and bones  
that make the meat animals  
removes for a moment the hesitation  
I have for it all.

gatto de la calle.  
in need of this rain shower on its  
shoulders just like me.  
in need of companion because  
one shouldn't let all life go to waste  
waiting to be picked up on the street.

May 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:00 p.m.

## (Catania)

the thing is it's easy.  
for what reason everyone is so scared  
I have no answer.  
it's easy because people are people  
they help, love, work, try, eat, be, just like us.  
they want, need, cherish, feel, care, just like us.

so the elitist in me gets knocked down  
a few pegs every time I enter a market  
and shy away from what is simple.  
the needs and wants of life always are.

they are laid out perfectly,  
just as innate as the hunger or thirst  
I force myself into frequently to  
test my resolve.  
just as I resolve to be better  
I also resolve to be!

*May 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:15 p.m.*

## (Catania)

abre los ojos.  
la vida es corta, amigo. yo.  
en la playa, en la calle,  
en ciudades grandes y en las montañas  
hay paz.

en la agua podemos nadar.  
en nuestros sueños hay piscinas y  
playas y amigos que están aquí.  
aquí.  
totalmente aquí.

me gusta la vida más cuando  
estoy aquí, listo para las cosas  
yo sé que me divertiré.

es porque necesito viajar.  
necesito ir, ir aquí. un espacio  
tranquilo, donde podemos abrir los ojos.

May 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 5:22 p.m.

## (Catania)

they're cheering for goals they can't see.  
they carry tunes across the harbour from the pub  
where no females watch  
every time.  
the waves carry the wind. not the other way around.  
because the wind wishes deeply  
it could sound like this  
an unending solitude of the  
violence of crashing  
and the tenderness of massage.  
ah! three women, young. beautiful.  
they're not the ones listening to  
the pussycat dolls near the water.

the sun's baked such fresh humidity  
that Etna has been replaced by  
the force of the sea, this heavy humidity  
which rivals mountains and volcanoes  
the way it doesn't need to struggle to be noticed.  
the police are blocking the beach.  
why, I haven't figured out yet. It's not  
to prevent enjoyment of this moment  
everyone already has that.

May 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 5:00 p.m.

## (Catania)

there aren't many here who have no problem being cracked open.  
they're smashed against the rocks of life.  
waves do that.  
and somehow pick up and go.  
the glass doesn't even look cracked,  
in fact  
I'd imagine it's pure crystal and  
are complete than before.  
but what a relief!  
others are glass too!  
others are the antiques being charged by  
street dogs hungry for survival  
others survive when hospitalized!

I see clearly how clean water,  
sun, a person with love,  
the essentials  
are what makes fragile creatures  
into priceless treasures.  
I see clearly how the healing process  
takes hold and cures.  
I see envy in my own heart only because  
I know so much how about how they do it.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:25 a.m.

## (Catania)

aha! this is it.  
a hot train, sweat in places I try to thoroughly wash  
a sea that knows it's my favourite  
valium.  
a language I don't speak  
but am not afraid of  
a familiar state of mind-  
relief.

this is it.  
clouds to help with the bath of sunlight  
smiles to help with the tender heart.  
wounds to help with my comprehension of why I came-  
relief.

this is it.  
a book to write it all down.  
a lasting impression of happiness.  
a mostly empty bottle of water.  
a pain of feet in socks that know what it means to be dirty  
a mind that always knows its end goal-  
relief.

*May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:50 p.m.*

## (Catania / il treno per Siracusa)

you fucking tease.  
you've got diamonds in there, I know it.  
you've maneuvered yourself in such a manner  
that no matter when I encounter you,  
the glow is almost a cancer the way it overpowers.  
and then you hid,  
behind the stresses we entail  
and the buildings we think mean anything  
but really- you're around,  
poking fun at all of us for being  
anything but rich.

I know you savour us.  
we dive in and appreciate what  
we all know is beauty  
but secretly, I know  
you can't wait to lick us all over  
and taste the pureness of  
the way we wear our toil.

how I know/ because when your guard is down  
and I'm beyond the surface of what  
you have to offer,  
I can hear you exhale in ecstasy  
that I've returned.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:00 p.m.

## (il treno per Siracusa)

the more bottles of water I find in markets  
the less sweat I generate from sun overexposure  
the bread I find insulting to my idea prior of what tasted good  
the indigos and blues and turquoises that I make friends with  
the streets I walk down and cherish  
the shoes I worship in shop windows  
the water in the shower,  
welcome tears from the faucet  
are all gaining ground for me  
to find wisdom.

the less I force out English in a non-colonial world  
the simpler I challenge myself to find diversions  
the transport methods that grow familiar  
the friends of friends who become friends  
the ideas I master in rhetorical correctness  
the new spaces I find and do not judge  
the anger at anything that melts like ice caps  
are all peeling away this mask  
of ignorance to find wisdom.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:10 p.m.

## (Augusta)

make coffee  
speak español  
workout with weights  
smile more  
less computer, more sun.  
more water, less beer.

read books  
cherish friends  
walk instead of drive  
love more  
less stress, more happiness.  
more writing, less judging.

eat at home  
look at stars  
go camping at lakes  
hug more  
less cynicism, more acceptance.  
more hope, less fear.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:50 p.m.

## (il treno por Siracusa)

cattle grazing  
trees are waving  
Sicily saving my life.

cities growing  
flowers showing  
I am knowing my life.

chimneys burning  
summer turning  
Respect I'm earning my life.

tugboats towing  
clouds are flowing  
seeds are sewing my life.

hills are sitting  
heat is hitting  
peace is fitting my life.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 2:00 p.m.

## (Siracusa)

and when sleep was there  
she rattled the window and throughout the night  
challenged what dream there may have been of peace  
instilled fear that the clothes would be gone  
and the torrent of sound would keep them awake.

and when Maria Luisa was there  
she blew fiercely enough to almost blow her away  
she teased aside a notion of control of the moment  
and scared the paranoia into him  
just as he thought there was a clearance  
and it was all a warning before  
she could be caught.

and when a paper was there  
she started a ballet in the street.  
pirouettes and a close tango with the car's tires  
movements of swift focus and control  
she made light of their desires to rest  
and lifted them to their feet  
swirling and twirling and tornadoing for his eyes

and when the rocks were there  
she pulled at the clothing and inched away at its removal  
she tore out the water from its home  
and crashed it without much warning  
against them, coating them  
before peeling back their new  
aqua skins like that freshly  
red leather he was now wearing.

and when courage was there  
she helped lift him to his feet  
and did what she could to minimize greed of this place and  
presented him with keys  
she showed him not to hide even faults  
and shattered preconceived notions of what is right and pure.  
she showed him passageways  
she'd found on prior adventures  
that she knew he'd appreciate.

and when hunger was there  
she carried what the senses needed

directly to each corresponding organ/  
she pointed briefly with her own preoccupations and filled her essences  
with all that the nose knows is good.  
she knew what pleasures she was  
capable of bringing along.

and when I was there  
she sang into me sweetly her love.  
she knows how much I appreciate her, the way  
I look after exposing myself to her wishes  
she looks forward to signaling positively to my desires and aspirations  
she devours my needs with an intensity of savouring.  
she risks isolation just to tell me hello.  
she paints the sky with clouds of yonder  
and cherishes when I smile at her creations.  
she doesn't judge what I reveal  
but carries it forward for me to gain wisdom from.  
and when she knows wholeheartedly I've had enough,  
she departs  
mysteriously,  
but I know she'll be back. she always has been and always will.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 4:44 p.m.

## (Augusta)

numbers in the stalls of the train station toilets  
men lingering selling pot on convenience store corners  
mopeds flying around roundabouts without helmets  
and receipts for every €1.90 purchase made to keep track of deceit.

tickets that need to be purchased validated  
and punched on the train  
more recycling bins than the waste to go in  
signs that say do not cross the tracks - use the subway  
and freely drinking beer in the plaza on  
sunday evening at ungodly hours.

sales in the street of rip-off designer clothing  
unregulated immigrants uses basis of economics to get by  
wild animals scraping lives together from scraps of the market  
and police protecting the people from a contaminated black beach.

paying at the cash register prior to buying beer  
weighing of vegetables before their supper purchase  
men in tuxedos serving coffee and water  
and free helpings of fruit off the back of a likely illegal truck.

parking of cars anywhere there is room  
crossing streets between traffic hoping not to die  
driving up one way roadways in the opposite direction  
and an unspoken rule to give leave for any necessary swift moves.

youth in the squares far from intoxication  
arms of men and women linked to the same gender.  
fashionable people in every direction  
and men watching women like hyenas hunting gazelles.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:15 p.m.

## (Giarre Riposto a Taormina)

Etna is in clouds now.  
This morning, four days after being  
brought into a world of peace in Catania  
she was shining.  
how fortunate a people to have her.  
how lucky they are, here,  
ready for the big flood of fire  
that is pending for them.

she hides her head precisely for this reason.  
she doesn't want to let any ideas  
get carried away or  
used as a basis for paranoia.

the sea waits, the sky waits.  
the people don't.  
if the inevitable is always death  
then fear is irrational.

May 29<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:25 a.m.

## (Taormina)

I thought I would erupt myself  
before I got here.  
Never had I thought things could get so intense.  
I couldn't read the pressure gauge I kept allowing to turn up.  
I couldn't see how clearly necessary I needed to escape.  
the steam doesn't let off through a natural process  
like vents through my pores  
the relief of a coolant doesn't just arrive like a cream to my face.  
these things are required to be found.

and so  
I think I found them.  
the simple words I'm limited to in  
any language for the simple things I'm limited to enjoy.  
there are no others.  
there is no other way to satisfaction.  
Imagine the surprise when I wake  
from now on! the passion the intensity, the lava flow of my life just waiting  
to burst in an eruption of joy!  
had I known. had I known. oh what  
simple gratitude I have for now.

May 29<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:48 p.m.

## (Taormina)

ah, green friends, to be found again.  
the life filter.  
the generations of oxygen  
the cleansers of the sea  
the nutrition of a simple collection of atoms in my mind.  
the non-judgmental caresses of water.  
the sanctuaries of fish.  
the hugs you give rocks.  
the pointing you give the sky.  
the cover of darkness.  
the shadows and contrast with which you point.  
green friends.  
I always find you.  
I always want to take you with me.  
the essences of existence you mark our world  
and prove we are here.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:34 a.m.

## (Taormina)

jellyfish were lapping at my feet  
now - some sort of other pescado.  
the entire class just arrived for a lesson!  
this is the study of grottos  
isola bella and the sea.  
small beach, enough space for  
an Italian man to grope his partners' breasts openly  
then for me to receive  
my first jellyfish sting!

ah, how ignorant I am to think  
my feet belonged in their habitat.  
sweet revenge for my desires  
of their beaching and pending death  
so that I could learn of their bodies.

and how ignorant of it to think I am  
simply a meal.  
the sting of pain is how I  
prove my comprehension.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:42 a.m.

## (Taormina)

the lizards probably live off insects  
who munch on the skin flakes of the 5000 bodies  
that showed up to be entertained here.  
the poppies likely grow better  
because the sweat and tears quenched them.

they cried because it would be insulting to this panorama  
to show less emotion.

they dropped their pain and suffering into the  
sight of Etna  
and prayed for life to continue no matter its many stings

they looked down to a stage and saw played out  
the tragedies that make it interesting.  
the stones, better shaped for skinny bottoms,  
because rest was found here.

how many eyes were thirsty? how many  
blinking pairs lapped up this nourishment  
how many bawled when the sun set  
and threw gold past the carbon mount  
flowing with blood of the earth?  
many. many.  
it's why we still come.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:01 p.m.

## (Taormina)

he had cured skin from  
bathing in the sprays of salt.  
the espresso visage was solid and worn  
no sugar could sweeten it.  
the daily haul nourished many but never the wallet.  
the struggle to believe in more  
than death would probably bare holes  
into that heart.

but then!  
moments after coming undone with hunger  
the trek upwards, further strain  
on already sleeping feet and a  
body lying upwards in state  
after the evening sun kissed his shoulders  
and forehead with her oven breath  
and taunted expiration to take forth

he would sit, like me,  
and pore open himself to this moment  
the wind would blow open his lungs  
fill them tenderly  
and he could have peace for himself, finally.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:10 p.m.

## (Taormina)

I wonder if it was the same level of fear.  
to drive them away, to seek out new lives  
totally unknown if the seafood would be there  
or if aubergines could grow  
or if love would ever flourish  
like the flowers embrace the hills here.

if it was a constant embarrassment  
to be consumed by those thoughts of desperation  
if it was to have such minimal lingering hope  
that everything could find its way somehow.

I wonder if it was the same level of ease.  
to wash up on shores of welcoming faces  
summoned to find it and finding it.  
and places to eat familiar preparations  
and words that grew like covers  
warm and blanketing and safe.

if it was a continuous affirmation  
to be so fucking certain of the right choice  
if it was to have so little remaining struggle  
that nothing could get in their road here on in.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:28 p.m.

## (Taormina)

there may be millions of us  
but my guess is we're harder everyday to catch.  
sure, those among us with inflated gills  
and fins all puffed up are  
likely to be searching for lures anyway.

those less exotic of catches who hover  
near the surface solely searching for any taste.  
they want, really, to be caught.

but others are growing a little more skeptical  
of the lights shining down on them.  
they're noticing a little clearer now  
how some are scooped up, never to return.

just like the gene pool is somewhat tainted  
so are our minds.  
we're no longer as gullible as once may have been thought.  
so for the same reasons that the markets have change  
so will the lines.  
so will the hooks  
simple. clear. noticeable.  
and so will the sophisticated fishermen  
with finders and vessels and bigger tanks  
and tossed nets that reach for them.  
there may be millions of us  
and so we'll always be caught.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:05 p.m.

## (Taormina)

sales aren't rapidly exposing wares.  
crystal doesn't find its way as a cheap  
disposable plastic.  
the milano surf has washed here  
and in its midst threads that  
don't ever grow in receding price.

if it's needed, it's quality.  
the bricks that the sun has long since baked  
are still glowing brightly in what for them  
are new homes.

the shoes that once found themselves in the uterus of a leather shop are  
cleaning  
palettes still with their freshness.  
the wine glasses that overflow so rarely  
have christened many a vacation or wedding  
a moment of spontaneous needed recuperation.  
but discounts? that seems to be only the style  
of mass consumption. it's not the current  
flowing through these waters.  
rapid, random, lacking in utensil,  
the market of mass purchase is the only location for such silliness.

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:22 p.m.

## (Messina)

like all things we need too much coffee.  
why not espresso,  
a children's play set sized serving?  
because we're big, powerful, and full of ourselves.

like all things we need too much of a sandwich.  
why not caprese,  
a long john of taste in the same size?  
because we're starving for fulfillment.

like all things we need too much stress.  
why not relax,  
a state of mind we seldom find ourselves in?  
because we're consumed with our own goals.

like all things we need too much clarification.  
why not random,  
a boarding of a train without certainty of its destination?  
because we're lost in life, and physically it'd max us out.

May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:10 p.m.

## (Milazzo)

water that probably shouldn't  
be dripped into the harbour  
is.

couples that probably shouldn't  
be fighting over which boat  
are.

Instructions that probably should  
have been made more clear  
are not.

a Canadian that probably should  
be stressing more over life  
is not.

It just happens.  
things are, things aren't.  
they work because they should, they shouldn't.

it is easy, travel.  
it isn't.  
but that's simply how it goes.

May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 2:02 p.m.

## (Lipari)

sipping limoncello on my terrace.  
the citrus is a well lit colour in these two simple lamps,  
the only other significant light being  
the cold bronzing orange of the moon.  
it's not what I thought earlier this morning  
when lost in thoughts I didn't want  
did I ever anticipate the incense burning in an empty church hugging shore  
or the street telling my nose, yes, it's your time.  
or the people pausing to correct my mispronunciations  
or the way the travel guides don't need my sale badly enough to encroach  
my personal space.  
it's not what I guessed. I had an escape route planned,  
in case of danger.  
but here, after my first cannolo and coffee  
here, under a blue orange night  
here, sipping limoncello,  
I burn with desire for more.

May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 9:02 p.m.

## (Lipari)

a far stronger drug than cocaine,  
this perfection.  
to carry me inflamed with passion for life  
completely alone  
it has to be.

to show me continuously new levels of highs  
of jealousy.  
to bring me clouds of tastes and sights  
tickle me,  
I can't be alive.

a far stronger elixir than rum,  
this satisfaction.  
to convince me so clearly of all that is possible  
while solo  
it has to be.

to tell me to relax and to receive complacency  
from this stubborn mule!  
to teach me to look and know the diamonds amongst the rough  
I can't be awake.

a far stronger feeling than happiness,  
this love.  
to want me bare and disheveled instead  
wailing in joy  
it has to be.

*May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 9:20 p.m.*

## (between Lipari and Panarea)

maybe this is why I need you.  
flat and open like home  
you spread out,  
a moment's notice but you don't change.  
there are fields of blue here  
your harvest is similar.  
your need for endless tranquility and mine  
are one.  
I love traversing you.  
I love exploring you.  
I notice your essence around me always.  
maybe that's why I need you  
sprawling not unlike how we've  
started encroaching on your cousin  
and now into you.  
your majesty is rarely rivaled.  
here, in your kingdom, I am a lowly humble peasant  
ready to serve.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 2:40 p.m.

## (between Panarea and Stromboli)

to think a lifetime could be spent in navigation.  
they sought out and found  
what same places I'm searching for.  
breaks in the sea like a pause between notes  
needed to appreciate just how wonderful the sea is.  
just how enjoyable life is.

the sun would have made its way fiercely  
into their minds as savagely honest.  
the wind would have taken them beyond  
plans and preparations that had been made.  
the air would have sickened their stomachs,  
an endless stream of the saline breath.  
and that end on the edge, that place  
that drags the mind to distinguish  
between two levels of blue - it would have felt so definite in its vast infinity.  
to think they did it, endless times,  
and still sought more.  
discovery is much like that,  
how enjoyable life is.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 4:40 p.m.

## (between Panarea and Stromboli)

it was like a tigger bounce  
when he leapt.  
boing! the tail splashing and  
shooting its own wares outwards.

our faces were impacted.  
the lines that were once not there grew curves.  
almost perfectly watching their spines  
those dorsal fins do that, I think.

it doesn't matter how many aquariums we've visited  
nor caged shows or flipper re-runs  
we've suffering through  
the magic and mystery of animals  
in their natural habitat is breathtaking.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 4:45 p.m.

## (Stromboli)

the small rush of tide is black.  
it is not night, nor has the light  
rushed home to the west behind the volcano.  
the sea wishes it could be clear  
but when churning over black silt  
that's what you get.  
it's the bony of the beach.  
it's the tar of the water.  
thick, milkshaking, with no escape.

a day spent alone here could  
quite possibly be a year.  
who knows what she does when I'm gone.  
but my guess is she turns over  
frequently collapsing, and  
marches on whether I gaze there or not.  
with her jungle darkness of ripples  
I can see the panther. but right now  
she is a calm pussycat looking to be pet.  
and I've never liked avoiding doing that, simply by fur colour.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 6:36 p.m.

## (leaving Stromboli)

that infinity is eating her up,  
like my eyes.  
hungry like never before,  
please! let me taste.  
the juice will drip and spread and love  
the edges.  
the romance of this consummation will be the cannolo sweetness  
this night desires.

ah, gulls search for home.  
so do I, here.  
maybe it is home.  
she is falling into the sea's stomach  
the last to digest is rapid and delicious.  
the crème de la crème of peace.  
to look away is to waste  
her beauty.  
goodnight goddess of the sky,  
goodnight.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 8:14 p.m.

## (Lipari)

I've watched street cats fight  
dogs fuck  
lizards scurry  
dolphins leap  
jellyfish sting  
ants eat  
birds soar  
cattle graze  
and goats awake.

but these upward walking creatures,  
never have I seen such interesting specimens.  
the dockman who was, not could be, the king of Atlantis.  
the fashion model wearing neon green and silver shoes.  
the blind woman stricken with poverty in a city of such wealth.  
the singing man down the street with undiagnosed mental illness.  
the traveling doctor who offered up companionship.  
the young woman of perfection who offered up her arm.  
the bakery shop woman serving extra smiles.  
the dessert shop woman staying up late happily  
the strangers who chose to be far less than strange  
the Brazilian who spent the evening in conversation  
the Arabs braving similar awkwardness searching for work.  
the child delighted at his receipt of playing cards.  
the girl playing in the street with a broken doll  
and the Canadian who indulged and cherished life more now than ever  
before.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - 2:06 p.m.

## (Lipari)

it's been so subtle a transformation  
I didn't really notice.  
islands appeared and I visited them.  
rest arose and I scooped it up.

just like time cures and mends  
I didn't really notice.  
hours slipped away and I was okay.  
days passed into sunsets and I felt no guilt.

just like cameras capture moments  
I didn't really notice.  
millions of different sights and I believed in them.  
opportunities to take and I so obliged.

it's been accomplishments one after another  
I didn't really notice.  
waking from this nap and I am certain.  
sleeping with these dreams and I am protected.

just like those I know who came before me  
I didn't really notice.  
the simple known phrases and I used them.  
express routes and journeys and I travelled quickly.

just like every time we pause  
I didn't really notice.  
breathing deep and clear and I exhale.  
worry-free moments alone and I succeed.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - 2:16 p.m.

## (Lipari)

the hills didn't find me but they found friends anyway.  
lingering between my thoughts  
of crying for peace  
they split themselves open and teared over the green lush abbreviations of  
the sea.

it wasn't mournful  
the way a coating of rain hit their shoulders  
nor did gloom move in.  
happiness on this island does not  
pack its bags like I've done tonight  
and ever simply move on.

what friends! on the merciful grey  
which normally turns my insides into a pink and red depression  
brought me such soft light.  
a termination of a time delivered as graciously as this  
is the way to go.  
"we are fog," they said, as they covered the hills with their shawl.  
"and we love that your intentions were shattered with our arrival. it was a  
grand plan, but ours is likely better."

and with that message,  
at once did I understand.  
it's not in the preparations we make that solace is ever obtained.  
it's not in the sorting out of classes  
or the random picking of numbers  
does one truly stumble into sanctity of life.  
it's when friends like these  
grace the doorstep and invite one out  
ever if unwilling.  
it's the fortitude we have from being so ready  
that makes new options arise.  
ah, to be a human, when the tropical forests find their way into my eyes  
even in the Mediterranean.  
and I can turn book pages  
and shake this utensil in my hand  
and rest, beg for peace and find it.  
all because the skies found a new way  
to please.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - 9:35 p.m.

## (Milazzo)

passing time waiting.  
the accordion plays romantic waltzes  
for no particular love or person.  
walking between the tracks  
expressly where it's written not to do so.  
ah, here he comes!

with the few remaining euros I have  
I'd love to give him some.  
instead I'll just listen.

he asks for money. through two remaining teeth.  
unshaven, weathered,  
and moving on,  
the notes guide him further  
and my breathing slows from the impending relaxation.  
the trains keep getting further and further away.  
ritardo de 35 minutos  
and still, the adventure wouldn't have  
been complete  
without a waltz of accordion on a  
gloomy Sunday.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 9:52 a.m.

## (Palermo)

it's not exactly boredom or  
even as simple as loneliness  
that has come and found me.

just that, when journeys end, they truly end.  
they find their closure as I've found mine.  
worn, rested, tanned, tested  
I'm ready, reluctantly or not, for home.  
more sun? more beach?  
more moonlit skies? more sea?  
more foreign? more challenge?

definitely, all of the above.

more all, I need. want. will have.  
but now, it's looking west,  
it's looking forward to sharing this journey  
not with giving it all up.  
not with alleviating the burden of travel  
no matter not grating soaking feet can be.  
it's looking forward to closure instead of fighting fears of its non-existence.  
could I keep going? perhaps. but  
the escape pod approaches and I think I'm on it.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 7:20 p.m.

## (Palermo)

oh, how it approaches near perfection.  
the ship's sails are fully flying exposed  
to gusts that grunt forward and tow backwards, or is that in reverse?  
is it necessary to feel direction when movement is being noticed?  
This wasn't what I originally had in mind when I stumbled into this.

the grace of the experience.  
four years, and then half way around, again!  
what mighty presence you've indented in my mind  
lost on others to discover just how  
precisely grinding you've become.

the shocking guarantees of happiness  
when it's all just embraced for what it was.  
what it is. and will be.  
not what a timid turtle hiding in his shell  
once believed of life.  
no, when the darkness is a comfortable known friend  
the mystery of what is outside is not exactly tempting;  
I observe it everyday in and externally.

the wisdom of exhaling deeply  
and soothing these worn shoulders from suffering  
the clarity of trying, trying, guessing, not knowing  
so little and throwing that caution away  
boiling it in every witch's cauldron to be found.  
strangling its neck and choking the nerves until they suffer nothing less  
than gleeful asphyxiation.  
it wasn't the first intention I had to be so bashful.

I challenged my notions of boundaries  
once I realized how restricting I'd been.  
the good, the evil, the everything supposedly in between  
came charging through the safari gates  
strung onto a rhino horn and poked me  
and injured that notion that I should be the judge.

how liberating. how serene  
and overwhelming and exactly  
the solution that needed to wash me to the shores of all the wonderful  
experiences I've ever sought.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 7:40 p.m.

## (Palermo)

ah, lovely cathedral.  
protector of power but cover from rain.  
pews filled with old tourists  
who find meaning here beyond the ceiling.

saints and sinners and everyone in between.  
today, who to be?  
to be one with morality and truth  
and honest devotion to our betterment?  
always.

to say that a space like this could change  
that essence would be to undervalue  
the church of nature.  
indeed, it has.  
that is precisely the point.  
to worship inside, to feel protected  
by the lovingly warm air and harvested rocks  
carved into statues and meticulously arranged  
for the dramatic effect of removing life from religion.

ah, lovely cathedral,  
I dislike the rain. so here I sit,  
appreciative of the openness of space  
but intensely critical of why you're so closed.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:39 a.m.

## (Monreale)

I'm here, sitting in the front row.  
the chair is comfortable - more so than a pew.  
the light is calming, if only as a  
relaxant compared to the loud German being hushed.

and now, someone has paid the fine.  
Er to see that famous father's son lit.  
I'm somewhat confused what his hand sign means  
but certain the long face is not because of  
impending crucifixion.

who was this poor soul  
who twenty centuries later we sprawl  
eternally  
on these walls and ceilings?  
what imperfections of the skin,  
acne, moles, hairy navel,  
did he have?  
what lost thoughts floated between his ears  
at the moment of his self-concientization?  
and would he approve of these institutions  
the cafe being served beneath his dying body  
the parades through rain raped streets  
the charms worn proudly, decked in precious metals  
as a display of little else than  
curious consumer conformity?

no, I think his existence was probably easier.  
I think he didn't have time to challenge all corrupt  
or protect all the poor.  
I think the centuries of callousness to his image  
would offend deeply.  
to think of the sheer expense of these  
priceless tombs of our individual choice!  
to think of the mouths that have went unfed  
and the business deals - the contacts -  
that have robbed the innocent from  
within these cool chambers!  
to realize dreams for a limited few  
and share none in the earthly salvation  
so many truly need!

ah, that is his expression.

the fingers now hold a pause - stop, please stop.  
long into my eyes, linger your questions.  
because if he's there looking right now  
stashed with all the answers  
he's saying, whoa is me, for the followers  
who I've created. and me -  
I'm here, sitting in the front row.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 3:01 p.m.

## (Palermo)

I have a better idea than spending money  
spending the currency I've been bequeathed  
by my own creation - time.

time to wait for crowded buses  
where validating tickets becomes important  
when the ticket checkers arrive.  
time to find secret glares  
where looking into local eyes is forbidden  
when we're all foreigners.  
time to breathe ancient ashes  
where the decaying, collapsing bodies exfoliate  
when we push ourselves into their domain.  
time to march familiar streets  
where random faces fade in and out of hiding places  
when I stroll by intending no harm or help.  
time to appreciate the unfamiliar details  
where my eyes have glazed over in anticipation  
when I assume there is more to see elsewhere.  
time to throw open my trust circle  
where thousands melt into the layers surrounding me  
when I learn to appreciate their random assistance  
I have a better idea than spending money  
to be fulfilled with the purchases I accumulate  
freely in this life.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:15 p.m.

## (Palermo)

testing the waters.  
finding new.  
comforting the needy.  
sorting out inconsistencies.  
feeling constantly refreshed.  
making plans, ignoring plans.  
breathing different airs.  
loving continually.  
writing effortlessly.  
traveling endlessly.  
caring deeply.  
seeing wisely.  
hugging more often.  
knowing some of the truths.  
letting go frequently.  
sitting on shores.  
bewildering the mind.  
eating better.  
opening the core.  
navigating complexities.  
living as I want.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:50 p.m.

## (Palermo)

- one. the mysterious mirror.
- two. the drawing horizon.
- three. the calming echoes.
- four. the churn.
- five. the sweet caresses.
- six. the deepness.
- seven. the unknown.
- eight. the creatures.
- nine. the sense of home.
- ten. the passageways.
- eleven. the paranoia absorber.
- twelve. the wishful pauses.
- thirteen. the blue.
- fourteen. the friendship.
- fifteen. the constant presence.
- sixteen. the mood setter.
- seventeen. the vast beauty.
- eighteen. the charming hope.
- nineteen. the absorbing surface.
- twenty. the love of water.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:56 p.m.

## (Palermo)

the last morning espresso  
not enough coffee and too much water  
the last goodnight's sleep,  
too much fretting about the state of my feet.  
the last bus ride to the beach,  
improperly getting change.  
the last shower,  
not enough time soaking for soaking's sake.

oh, to live with these regrets  
what a challenge  
to fire them in life's kiln until  
they bare no truthful resemblance to  
their former selves.

the last hungry morning  
opportunity to find a treat.  
the last past panhandlers  
change to make change in their lives.  
the last time at their beach  
letting go of that modesty and diving in.  
the last day here,  
appreciation, endless, for where I am.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:40 a.m.

## (Mondello)

I liked best the sea.  
it found a lonely man waiting for comfort  
and daily provided just that.  
every glimpse felt new.  
every moment felt like home.

I liked best the gelato.  
it found a hunger for sweetness that is insatiable  
and wished with all its might to cure.  
every taste tingled soothing.  
every bite led to more.

I liked best the waves crashing.  
they found a listener perched high above silence  
and open to their calls.  
every thudder paused time.  
every oscillation a new moment of peace.

I liked best the Lipari bed.  
it found shoulders to massage and heal.  
a neck needing support and feet to fall asleep.  
every angle one of comfort.  
every posture one supported.

I liked best the church.  
the aroma transfixed me and baptised my nose,  
one that felt like it had never been used prior.  
every molecule filled with calamity.  
every breath one of purity.

I liked best the relaxation.  
the knowledge that I am not lost,  
a world that still wants my presence.  
every day a new discovery.  
every second spent in deep gratitude.

I liked all things, even those at first I didn't.  
the enjoyment of difference and challenge,  
the intense ability to affect my core.  
every opportunity I felt love.  
every moment forward I will reflect fondly.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 11:54 a.m.

## (Aeroporto di Palermo)

- a hard? no.
- b stressful? no.
- c lonely? no.
- d none of the above.

exactly why I mentally prepared for worse  
no se.  
why anyone goes beyond the challenging gates  
and changes times to load up on these experiences  
is the obvious force of the wind.  
to blow us here, to places new.  
to places unfamiliar, lost in our imaginations  
as somewhere exotic.

but we struggle to believe it could be so easy.  
language unknown we communicate.  
people unknown we find friends.  
country unknown we navigate.  
exactly why I prepared for worse,  
no se.  
but exactly why I came,  
solamente por la paz.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 6:13 p.m.

## (Aeroporto di Palermo)

now I'm a priority.  
I hate security, the way we're all guilty  
until the x-rays prove otherwise.  
and my file - somewhere,  
the international database has every  
entry exit charge clearance fart  
that I've made.

oh, Sicilia, you've been a good host.  
you put on the party and even invited me!  
you chose to be graceful and kind  
hospitable and charming  
your meadows and mountains sang  
your waters and people listened for me to  
find my voice here.

now, I'm a priority.  
E2 gets you just a little bit ahead in the world  
but really I don't need or mind being everyone else.  
that I should be prioritized to get this privilege  
probably worth the security screening after all.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:05 p.m.

## (Aeroporto di Palermo)

they came calling for passengers.  
"Heaven express!"  
and I queued with the rest of them.  
they paraded the images of all that is joy in life  
in front of me and all the others.  
we drenched our tongues with saliva in anticipation.  
it wasn't that we regretted our homes,  
mine, for instance, melts every night  
only to be frozen by morning  
with the fresh dawn chill  
ready to be cracked and broken by these ice picks.

but it wasn't to be so hard,  
even to be lined.  
it was more instantly that we found the express  
already moving beneath us.  
the charming skies they had painted  
started fluttering.  
the clouds molded over the rocks and  
flowed like a river of white suds in the stream.  
we were already on our way,  
strange.  
no one had expected such pleasure to take us early.

no, everything we found was not perfection.  
but the flaws, in this state of mind,  
gave such closure instead of opening our negativity.  
only in the lights that otherwise would be off  
did our adrenaline slow and did the  
endorphins challenging any prior notions of  
what is essentially good.

they came calling for passengers.  
"Heaven express!"  
and we were still so overwhelmed that  
the line was only gradually growing.  
surrounded by so many foggy days  
we bewildered our minds in the lost spaces.  
we didn't know, nor want to, grasp at  
any further realities.  
we looked around and confused our senses  
with over-empowering strong reactional things  
the sights wanted to be heard.

the sounds wanted to be felt.  
the smells wanted to be tasted.  
the feelings wanted to be inhaled.

they stopped calling for passengers.  
Apparently, those in the know had already departed.  
I, thankfully,  
blissfully lost in the clouds  
graciously clueless to any parting vehicles,  
did not leave.

I stayed on, every second tick marking  
success on my part to be whole.  
to be found, freed, frozen in a fever of fearlessness.  
the aches didn't matter,  
nor did the exhaustion.  
and in the exhaust that slowly appeared  
following their departure,  
I inhaled. deeply.  
for such knowledge of bliss has been so rare.  
not like me to dwell,  
as I have. but when called,  
I know everything will be alright.  
I'm just so far, far away from such a need,  
now that I've been here.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:21 p.m.

## (Heathrow)

parties are much more interesting than this  
at 3 in the morning  
the adult yawns I recognize  
the slouched heads and passed out bodies, yes.

but these aren't fueled by alcohol or drugs.  
the bug we've all caught is exhaustion.  
the sleep awaits from changing currencies  
looking up local news  
getting lost in the pages of native language books.  
and Sicily, oh yes, and all these other once  
destinations  
we've decided to make ours.

my skin breaks  
no washrooms are yet ready.  
my head aches  
no tylenol currently vended anywhere.  
but my love won't break,  
I cherish this journey more than anything else in the world.

June 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 2:25 a.m.

## section four

# the truth

I call this section the truth because it is exactly that. It is an exposé on what circumstances I faced, on the emotions I felt, on the convictions I held on to, and on the doubts I sincerely had that I would ever be happy.

In the midst of summer 2007, after a worldly vacation and the continual pushing of my limits, I had a harsh yet tender confrontation with the truth.

The truth performs many tasks for me. It is grounding, it is satisfying, it is unnerving, and it is honest. From that moment on, I now live as if I am constantly under its watchful eye. What a difference it makes.

## graves in china

are they in lines  
dotting the few remaining undeveloped hills  
like crosses, here  
or maybe billboards  
anyway,  
the diseases  
the movements of corpses

the ballet!  
it must be graceful  
in memory  
in coordination efficiency  
... those many morgues ...

is there pain--  
mass suffering, a hateful vestige  
for the state  
or for us  
anyway,  
are they allowed even  
to make such street rivers?

how may fields  
find themselves mowed of colour  
when the bouquets  
come calling?  
do the charred fortitudes  
find themselves burnished  
with reds, pinks, or whites?

or are things  
un poquito más fácil  
than I've described?  
they're packaged, those  
big bang remnants  
and put in chinese  
takeaway boxes.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 7:46 p.m.

## elite evaluation

elitist, yes.  
the way writing is a hobby  
and not hockey scores.  
the way Booker prize winners will be my library  
and not canoeing guides.  
the way tabouleh  
is common like hamburgers,  
sicilian history  
becomes football plays,  
drugs otherwise illegal  
are cans of beer.

elitist, no.  
the way I cherish this world like everyone.  
the way I love people, struggling, swimming,  
sharing their lives.  
the way needs are less wants when in the  
presence of strangers.  
the way relating becomes external not  
the tell-all of my life story.

elitist, yes.  
the way a moment's rest in solitude is  
more cherished than campfire banter.  
the way relating my simplistic tattoo  
becomes one of my key definitions.  
the way pronouncing jalapeño by  
English speakers offends me.  
the way pound dogs are still so elusive.

elitist, no.  
the way rapids share their character  
to all, including me.  
the way wildlife perks its head and  
we all share joy.  
the way we orient ourselves based on  
common knowledge.  
the way I want to belong  
just like everybody else.

July 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10 minutes after sunset

## lions

roars. the lions are coming.  
'cept they never come.  
I go crawling on my knees  
with the ferocity going forward  
other prey use to go full tilt  
the other direction.

I come salivating with the same  
senses flaring as those young ones  
think they have for fresh kills.

I come searching for my own game.  
my own way to seek out pride  
in the pride  
that I've identified as my pack.

roars. the lions are present.  
they sound out my blood  
and I offer not even a taste.  
I taste them, full on,  
teeth exposed and claws  
curled and mane soon in my  
grasp and their blood  
soon pours down this throat,  
into this belly, into this  
sink hole of memories.  
not the other way 'round.

lions, roaring.  
ah, what pussies.

July 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 - sunset

## desolate commie

desolate commie,  
up here, with ripples saying hello  
and sun. that one star I truly know is one -  
setting, saying goodbye.

the things we don't know.  
the things we do fail always,  
to weigh like that on our shoulders.  
but what throw aways they all become when acquired!  
the skirmishes with our own selves  
to meet all sorts of measurements  
when all that is required is breathing.

desolate commie,  
rudely entertained by difference  
and yet strangely educated by it all.

black, green, blue.  
that's what you come to know.  
black bug crawling across my blue jeans  
green canoe hidden by my black shadow  
green black blue water finding little comfort - maybe total  
by being pushed around by the air  
and not from current.

desolate commie,  
defense mechanisms abound.  
what strife jumping into difficult conversations  
and today, somewhat difficult rapids.

lost in other ways or places  
always home near heat and basic nourishment.  
two sunsets on.  
retinas burning like my face, my neck.  
the aches of bites that found themselves under my hair.  
pelicans floating by like my dad did after capsizing: effortlessly.

what to make of this.  
maybe an ant hill.  
pull together the pieces,  
watch the life grow.

July 7<sup>th</sup> 2007 - sunset

## community insurance agent

rescues from long walks  
to places people don't go.  
some people, people love to  
live in nice houses in the cities.  
where alcohol is an aperitif  
in a good life  
not the life itself.

sharing wealth in droves  
where driving is as rare as serious nutrition  
a little conceded way to feel good  
but to pass on to these  
wanderers. street walkers.  
bus takers. heroin injectors.  
garbage surfers.  
where income normally comes  
as a government payment.

straightening of minds.  
this ignorance of many must be cured  
and so, we chip away.  
simply like a blade on soft wood  
shave off the attitudes that are  
moulding our society.  
in places that we need to group all  
their potential energy.

fearless in the face of everything else  
it needs to be,  
this community insurance.  
change, political affiliations,  
button bags, blogs, endless bickering,  
defense mechanisms challenged,  
lost hopes, tears, commitment,  
a belief that right will finally  
be victorious over injustice.  
for so many who need it  
I'll try to help.

July 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:25 p.m.

## happy people don't need to have fun

I'm so threatened by enjoying,  
or savouring,  
or happiness for others.

to think of missing out  
is to think the worst.  
to think of

I could be roaming, yes.  
I've seen castles and what they do to me,  
writing books and all.

I've seen waves pour in and take me out,  
feet flooded with no more sustained guilt.

I've seen joyous trees illuminated and park benches,  
resting for my arrival.

I've seen parts of this place,  
and I know I could see more.

but happy people don't need to have fun.  
therefore,  
here I am.

Another day, another Monday,  
another strange encounter with authority  
and another strange defiance of it all  
and another time spent writing about  
what I think I know about being happy.

blessed be, they said.  
blessed me, I say.

July 16<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:39 p.m.

## hunting is the new vegetarianism

the happy hour arrived ferociously  
like bullets.  
like shot, spreading and wide  
impregnating the sky and whatever  
happened to be flying by

they tipped cold ones back, and smiled  
together.  
alone, they couldn't have  
devoured such flesh so quickly  
but in close quarters  
the hunger of their feral guts  
rampaged.

what remnants?  
what scraps, what canine feed,  
what manners,  
what fires needing extinguishment,  
what dirty plates and knives,  
what bottles, what caps,  
what diluted flesh, what blood droplets,  
what life?

the happy hour arrived happily  
and consummation, too.  
and what remained of scarlet feathers  
soon had their glistening hues burned  
in the flames of suburbia.  
we never left the country,  
it seemed, as meat became meal.

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 6:13 p.m.

## the truth

it's nice, the truth  
that things.  
they just.  
you know,  
they  
are.

why so simple,  
yet convoluted?  
always always questions  
a queue has questions  
which way left,  
which way right,  
when to turn, when you  
go forward, now?  
now?  
then?

the truth wants  
privacy.  
it seems,  
always lingering  
and being  
that elusive.

the truth wants  
hidden requirements.  
it demands attention  
and then,  
just is.  
just allows the answer to be.

shock  
would be the notion  
that truth is not the truth.  
hence, tonight,  
not shocked.

the truth.  
everything reveals.  
in time.

August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 10:18 p.m.

## 50 years

in that time,  
I'll take some chances.  
boats, maybe a mountain  
a stream  
a dog

oceans will be crisscrossed  
carbon neutrality will be discussed  
the indefinite will be ascertained  
circumstances will be evolving  
edible items will be eaten.

friends will come,  
go,  
stay,  
leave,  
die. that last one scares me.

hurt will be near  
fear will be present  
resentment will be rough  
suffering will be scattered  
battering will take place.

flames will blossom  
tenderness will caress  
amity will take care  
cherishment will breathe  
gratitude will descend.

and,  
years will turn pages  
electronic or otherwise  
into books and collections  
and some sort of masterpiece.

to rush it  
would be to miss  
those fifty years  
of experiences  
worth writing about.

August 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 5:34 p.m.

## fortunate

never have the waters been so clear.  
never has the sun warmed me more.  
never have I felt so lucky.

to this world,  
to these people  
these kind, smiling, friendly people  
I am indebted more than one probably should be

to leave seems a travesty  
one probably shouldn't take  
and yet, they've been calling me  
for days now. months. years.

and only in departure  
can one really gain such insight  
into how fortunate a life I've been blessed with.

August 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 3:06 p.m.

## with a mad dash to the door

“thud!”

I felt it but never really knew what was the impact.

the bruise started swelling,  
and quickly my arm was marked.  
I had only just begun to see  
when all of you pushed back  
and yelled,  
“surprise!”

and then you dragged me,  
kicking and screaming,  
back into this party.

and no, I wasn't screaming to leave  
but to stay.

alas, that's what I think I'd like, now:  
to be forced to stay,  
to be held down and pummeled with the same love  
shown already.

but I should be departing.  
and I am, much to the chagrin of some  
who've experienced one too many go arounds of goodbyes.

just that - this is why.  
I've known,  
and now I really know,  
this is why.

it'll be that heat in the rain  
the umbrellas and sheltering trees  
the uplift in my spirit some gloomy morning  
that you're all here.

I know why,  
and I am cherishing that knowledge  
with all my might.

thank you, and good night.

August 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:36 p.m.

section five

# altruism

The culmination of my ideas finds itself here. I call this section altruism, for it reveals a double meaning. While I will strive from here on in my life to give back to those who need it most, I also recognize that the universe as my creator has been most altruistic to me and my allowed experiences.

The molecules of carbon and oxygen, hydrogen and even lead within me are blessed by this great expense of energy that fuels my ability to experience it all. And through this altruistic blessing, I get to live.

And the best part? I know the true meaning of doing so. It is my life's purpose.

## my goodness! the sea monster ate the sun!

there are various things that glow  
neon orange

basketballs  
whirling rapidly down into keys  
street lamps  
blocking alien signals we're supposed to receive  
lawn signs  
proving neighbours are socialists and vote ndp  
mango gelato  
hinting at torturously high future credit card fees

and then  
clouds become stairs  
and the mountains the stepping stones  
and the waves the engine that pulls that monster  
I love to call a friend out of her bed

she dances politely  
she knows where's she going.  
no stopping that kind of focus and determination.

and with one giant bite  
captures the sun  
that really fucking big neon orange sign in the sky  
and devours it like I just ate that bit of  
almond chocolate from mountain equipment co-op.

I think she chewed on more, though.  
I seem to be missing my heart  
somewhere in this cavity  
there was something beating earlier  
and rushing through a slow apartment elevator  
down unknown paths, across lawns  
chasing her latest meal with all the  
photographic evidence I could muster  
it must have been slurped up in the pursuit.

I don't mind, though  
that a heart of mine has been laid to rest  
with other heavenly remnants in a sea monster's chest.

August 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:50 p.m.

## Hastings and Main

I had to check,  
for there was doubt.

as always a little bit of insecurity.  
what is secure on me,  
those keys bouncing in the backpack  
letting everyone know I am metallic?

the ipod in its protective sleeve  
that is less than useful when no longer  
on my possession?

the haircut, clothes, shoes, glasses,  
the amass of what I claim as minor style  
that otherwise can be ruffled and tossed  
and thrown aside?

so to check,  
I had to walk.

others would cringe. perhaps even  
I would.

there was a thought of imminent danger  
and also a thought of,  
why am I so paranoid of others?

why am I lost in the battle between  
wanting to help  
and wanting to stay safe?

why is my safety valued in this little head  
above that of our community?

a reincarnated savior I am not.  
but in the attempt at being less than  
one who talks the talk,  
I literally walked the walk.

September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 - 10:30 a.m.

## the predictable title was too easy

guilt factors high, here.  
like the mountains  
like the depths of the harbour  
which stirs blue wisps into the kelp  
and yelps to be penetrated by me,  
even just by toes.

the consumerism that rampantly  
overtakes my wallet,  
just as it did to hundreds of thousands of others.  
the unpreparedness that I swore  
wouldn't be the case.  
the loneliness and subsequent checking of egos  
that intoxication encourages  
and solves.

the stealing of internet connections  
that take away from reading time.  
real reading.  
the thrifty use of my coffee maker  
after one too many external espresso purchases.  
the marks on walls I never made  
but want erased for fear of torturous defense.

guilt factors high, here.  
on the hill,  
long since removed from that side  
where painful memories haunt  
the disturbed and current addictions  
prohibit their resolution  
long since separated from the trendy areas  
where vegetarian cafes have flourished  
in and amongst the lesbians  
and rapid delivery of illicit substances.

the solitude a few hours of silence brings  
just like at home,  
just as when no other comfort was around but writing.  
the endless questionable use of  
interruptions  
to new friendships that could easily go awry.

the water usage that might be too much  
or the music that might be too loud  
or the cooking that might be too fragrant  
or the crumbs that might be too unswept  
or the neurotic that might be too unsure of  
his surroundings.

the toothache that could have been easily cured  
had I kept that silly mall appointment  
or the chapters that could have been easily read  
had I stayed home that last friday night  
or the garbage that could have been easily managed  
had I removed the plastics from the bin before the coffee grinds  
the espresso that could have been easily ground  
had I stayed in that organic shop a little while longer  
the guilt that could have easily been deflected  
had I been on top of things a little earlier.

guilt factors high, here.

September 10<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:09 a.m.

## teachers

the way they came circling  
out of those waves  
and my imagination sparked  
interest in the oppression of others.  
*was that what the last unicorn taught me?*

the way the auction went  
when I was three  
and somehow they let my little hand  
choose my name to win a prize.  
*was that what ducks unlimited taught me?*

the way the neighbours came  
and went  
no matter their skin colour  
regardless of class disenfranchisement.  
*was that what wadena taught me?*

the way we all smiled, nodded  
knew each other's name  
memorised membership affiliations  
and purchased collectively our groceries.  
*was that what the co-op taught me?*

the way she sang  
en français  
sewed my clothes and nourished my pickiness  
stocked my craft drawer and my reading shelves.  
*was that what my mom taught me?*

the way we coalesced  
hunted for adventures  
loved protecting those otherwise left exposed  
and chatted randomly to gain friendships.  
*was that what my dad taught me?*

the way I fell  
most enthusiastically in love  
the entire notion of being somewhere new  
and paining for life to explain itself.  
*is that what spain taught me?*

the way I identified  
found solace in erratic notes  
hated and loved and challenged and sought understanding  
found permanent friendship in the weird club.  
*is that what tori amos taught me?*

the way I didn't struggle  
sitting at the front was almost a burden  
to be placed in a place where performance was expected  
and success a guarantee.  
*is that what high school taught me?*

the way I drifted effortlessly  
hidden away in the camper trailer  
caring little of judgment or exhaling real air  
self-buried in the knowledge and moral guidance.  
*is that what fairytale taught me?*

the way I belonged  
at least, in that little child's mind  
to a place filled with endless caring and sweets  
and a chocolate waterfall of pure imagination.  
*is that what willy wonka taught me?*

the way I hesitated  
with the insecurity only a twenty something could hold  
to belong, to be cherished, to be known as acceptable  
and held the best job ever to fall in one's lap.  
*is that what the legislature taught me?*

the way I was crushed  
with the despotic weight of those various factors  
the ones months of exploration have slowly unraveled  
the ones still weighing on my conscious conscience.  
*is that what depression taught me?*

the way I cried  
long nights looking upwards with no guidance  
desperate for a change of scenery  
and still entirely at peace with the opportunity.  
*is that what wales taught me?*

the way I challenged  
ceaseless fighting over what only now is irrelevant  
inclines of 90 degrees and insurmountable, unremitting difficulty  
all for the lowest stakes in the game.

*is that what the cfs taught me?*

the way I felt astounded  
with the breath of the universe blowing in my face  
and socrates dancing in my head shouting, "look beyond you!"  
for the cave wall was illuminated with insight.

*is that what drugs taught me?*

the way it knew me instantly  
as one meant for its shores  
as the one barely left standing, reaching out to be cradled by its goodness  
as the one tearing apart only to be quickly reassembled.

*is that what sicily taught me?*

the way I felt protected  
always under the guise of fashion but secretly wearing armour  
a sort of geeky counterbalance to kryptonite  
all bundled in a visual intensity singular in its impact.

*is that what neon green taught me?*

the way my life has been redefined  
remapped, retold and revealed  
the way everything now has a permanent reference point  
and context is everything, endless and good.

*is that what consciousness taught me?*

September 12<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 2:19 a.m.

## ode to silliness

ah, yes,  
the silliness.  
the silly season, some call it  
and I call it, the past.

for the blood doesn't need to boil anymore,  
I've been there. done that.  
I have the pdf minutes to prove it.

ha! noted abstentions,  
microphone checks,  
orders of the day.

as if I knew what that was,  
as if I do now.

silliness is that, exactly.  
silly.  
and the years between us  
(silly and I)  
have, really, been paved with gold.

September 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:20 a.m.

## for your safety please hold on

the last thing they asked for was my tears.  
in fact, they  
never even got that far.

Sheila didn't have it in her plans for this to happen,  
and Reg likely had a heart murmur just entertaining the notion.

but there I was,  
hastings and main, my familiar corner  
about ninety odd minutes  
into the new day.

and there I was,  
hastily entertaining, my familiar circumstance  
about how to connect with those  
I've been told aren't the same.

the last thing they asked for was my tears,  
in fact, they don't ever want them.

Graham just finished a shift on the picket line  
and then the beer parlor. or maybe it was just the street.

Scruffy just finished yelling fuck you at his street urchin  
acquaintances  
he was raped by two men in his youth.

but there I was,  
haste and mes mains in my pockets  
about to embark on the  
proletariat chariot.

and there I was,  
hoisted and maintained as an equal  
about as equal as one gets  
when dressed for a club.

I didn't want to cry, and I didn't let myself  
even after the poverty-stricken aboriginals  
left their seats for an elderly old white man  
in the front.

and I knew, and kept repeating,  
they don't want my tears.

but what else can I offer?

Graham, the one who has experienced  
all dependency issues of the illicit variety  
and who says his old lady figured he'd be in jail by now  
was going to make it home safe,  
if I could help guide him.

Kyall, the one who has experienced  
all guilt issues of the white privileged variety  
and who says he's trying not to feel vain about this now  
was going to make it home safe,  
if I could allow him.

the last thing they wanted, asked for or needed  
was my tears.

but what else?  
what else?

I'm desperate to assist.  
and just finding my way home  
isn't enough.

September 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 3:15 a.m.

## and a little like me

it's a little bit inhibiting, I guess.  
I imagine it was for those before, too.  
those who built these institutions, full of hope.  
the moments spent transfixed inwards, doubtful.  
the questions that lingered about goals, never-ending.

and what were those goals?  
did they challenge the structures that were the walls?  
did they fold in their cards that were handed out with the songbook?  
did they melt their candles down to wicks end just to finish their  
manifestos?  
or was it a random assessment of negativity and hopelessness?

doubtful. doubtful.

just think; the trees!  
planted throughout the streets and in courtyards  
fruitful occurrences of green to supplant the dreary  
and inspiring climbing organic ladders to the stars  
where children perched and adults conscientized.

stonecutters taking great care to make boulders into cobblestones  
to be lain as our pathways  
carving up the hills with that great idolizing of the potential beneath  
and future generations' exploitation of those discoveries  
the basics of infrastructure.

those community developers, the nerve.  
gossiping over each other's misdeeds as they built, to think.  
the educators who marveled at basic advancement, the rewards.  
philosophizing over each other's attentive pupils, the competition.  
it's a little bit inhibiting, to think they were a little like me.

September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:34 a.m.

## shade, timber, knowledge: of a tree

there once was a seed  
growing nice and plant-like in the shade of another tree.  
it sprouted its roots,  
dug deep (mud can be thick)  
and spread itself wide to become another tree.

fruit developed, nourished plenty.  
the animals enjoyed the cover; the children  
enjoyed the bonfires generated from the broken branches.  
a family surrounded that space and lifted young ones  
into the heights so they could experience a climb into the celestials.

eventually, life changed;  
the family had moved on (figuratively)  
(literally had moved lower, for their bodies became the nourishment  
for future trees)  
and the tree had no contemporaries.

but what to make of such a silly little  
charming story?  
when three out of ten republican leadership candidates  
believe everything is wrong, and everything is right,  
with evolution, the former, and intelligent design, the latter?

are we doomed to become cavemen again  
in this world?  
can I plant the seeds for future generations of knowledge  
or is this merely a hopeless enterprise against the tides  
of patriarchal colonial fascist violent tendencies?

I would hope not,  
for I've sat by trees, and tasted their fruit,  
climbed their welcoming branches  
and worshipped the solace they provide  
communities.

just that.  
what struggle, what silly struggle.  
we've come so far, and now the boat is pulling away from shore  
and hauling away a bow full of timber  
for we've chopped down all the knowledge our history has acquired.

September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:57 p.m.

## I became a moon of orbit

precisely how I was launched,  
not sure.  
it probably had something to do with  
the combination of a fuel, a fire, an ignition:  
let's explore.

fueled by the desire to belong  
and know.  
I thought I had spent years building up  
the supply,  
but when I checked the tanks,  
the void's echo shocked me silly.  
I found the closest source and  
liked what I tasted,  
even if the burn was immediate and deep.  
I didn't mind - the lungs never do,  
when competing with the brain.

fired by the notion that I now belonged  
I had the energy to be.  
the potential - the kinetic source!  
all of a sudden there was no longer a  
rear view mirror,  
the notion that I had been anything else  
was ludicrous.  
they would want me on the pallets  
burning because of sheer emanating heat  
and the youngsters would have done anything  
to emulate this flame.

ignited by the love that this brought,  
I blasted off. I found myself  
quickly, however, in the far reaches of this  
celestial expanse  
and while the view was superior than any vista  
I'd ever encountered before  
it dictated quickly for me to look back.  
the gravitational pull to reality was obvious,  
the forces of physics always are.  
and when everything I knew  
became this planet I found myself revolving around,  
that's when the harm was done.

September 19<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:55 p.m.

## **caves! mars!**

we crawled out this morning,  
the orange was a little less intense  
through the dust.

Spector leaned over and said,  
“what you feel like doing?”

and I said, “Nothing.”

there wasn't much oomph left in my voice  
when the last two years had worn thin.

there is only so much radioactivity  
you can bare sleeping on  
until it zaps you of all energy.

“Why'd you even sign up for this anyway?”  
Spector charged, huffing.

“You knew what you were getting into  
long before they sent us here.”

and so I did.  
but what a sight that presentation had been,  
what a world they presented, what opportunity!  
did I know we'd be monitoring those supplies  
the carcinogens surface-level  
and the other hoodwinked explorers  
long since our neighbours from down six feet under

“It seemed like a good idea at the time,” I said.

Spector was disgusted. Always disgusted.  
I guess that's the way it goes,  
when you're marooned on another planet  
with a lowlife in tow.

still, I had higher hopes.  
I guess it's understandable they deserted us,  
but still.  
caves. mars.  
the opportunity was too great.

September 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 8:25 p.m.

## (un)complicating things

it wasn't meant to be this complicated,  
life.

I had a path, a vision, a plan, a map.

except, the fallacies.  
ah! the misguided direction  
that relied on denial.

that's what conflict brings, though,  
isn't it?

resolution.  
it's the ying to the yang  
and right now  
two hours eighteen minutes of a  
complex phone call later  
I have that.

life,  
complicated,  
resolution,  
unfolding.

thank you.

September 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:01 a.m.

## hace un mes

ha!  
to think, young one,  
the world would find itself nicely  
weaving baskets and mending socks  
oh,  
and healing the little ragged minds  
of characters from cartoons about  
westerns and the chase between  
those who have the legs and those with the hunger.

I arrived quite hungry, it seemed.  
the belly hadn't been filled for some time,  
and the carnivorous vigour at which  
these past four weeks have attacked prey  
has created, if anything,  
somewhat envy in the minds of all those  
real meat eaters out there.

and I arrived quite rested, it seemed.  
the feet have moved swiftly to cover the terrain,  
so much. the variety alone-  
like the gelato shop counter,  
there are places to go and things to do  
and people to know. know. know.

I am being silly,  
for the metaphors are lumping together  
just as my espresso grounds do each morning  
in that delightful manner which awakes.

but one month,  
and more. more. more.  
life wasn't supposed to need to get better,  
and there wasn't a need, really.  
but it did.  
and now I need to share,  
I know. more. know. more. know. more.

September 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:20 a.m.

## altar

a stance with my legs soiled in the mud,  
I stepped forth and raised my hand for the assignment.  
charge me into battle, I thought,  
because I am ready.

they came around, sneaking behind my back.  
they had some sort of armour  
and I wasn't sure whether the outfit would really fit.  
it's not my place to be one to criticize, yeah right,  
but are you sure this is what I need for protection? I thought.

beneath the wrinkles on their faces,  
those experienced ones,  
lay this delectable knowledge.  
I wanted to digest it, as rapidly as  
I normally fail to savour.

fearless, then,  
we were marching,  
souped up with all the latest  
ammunition and protection for the unknown.

that time spent in the jungle  
eons ago in another form  
likely gave me some innate abilities, I thought.  
the rain, mud, sleet, stench, sweat, blood, tears,  
they were merely reflected off  
a newly impermeable shell.

I looked the part, I really did.  
they even thought so,  
I could read it in their pupils and their  
charged stamina that carried me  
out of where I thought I was before.

and then we were here.  
and facing up at that temple,  
lost in the glorious magnitude of  
what it meant to be here,  
I fell to my knees and worshipped  
at this altar of the experience.

September 29<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 5:34 p.m.

## compass

the tyranny of the waves is unjustified,  
I know.  
and occasionally against the odds  
I have made it through to those lands  
where ripened sweets tempt out  
the notion that I did it alone.

but the squall gets more ferocious  
the further away from home we navigate.

this little boat,  
a smidgen attempt at craftsmanship  
to prove my infallibility at waterlogging  
is going to get sunk  
without knowing precisely how  
to steer clear and pry left of the  
sea monsters awaiting my approach.

please, be my compass  
to shower me with the intellect to get  
this map lined up to those stars  
and righteous way forward.

I am certain, you see,  
of the need for such.

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 11:45 a.m.

## the polemic

a natural attraction to  
dissension  
is it that proof by  
falsification is my  
guiding mantra?

is it that my moral  
guidance towards  
sympathy for the outcasts  
lends itself to protecting  
space for ideas,  
even that are controversial?

is it that identity  
is easier to find by  
isolating out the things  
that I am not?

I'd rather think I'm better than  
a sum of all my political buttons.

hell, it's me critiquing the anti-war  
protester gatherings  
twice this week.

just as it's me revolting at the notion  
of being in that simplest of upper-class  
social gatherings.

and it's me wondering how I make it all work  
when the days turn into nights  
turn into sunrises turn into sunsets  
and the churning and the pressure and  
the need to do it all consumes.

the invalid find comfort in my space.  
and I find internal warmth providing it.

I just wish there wasn't that guilt  
of feeling like I'm doing it  
for any other reason than to be.

October 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:48 p.m.

## **nutrition**

what sheer imperfection  
this happiness was  
folded shirts,  
emancipated lungs,  
rolled sleeves  
muddy knees.

the glory of not really knowing  
what reality was.  
enrique, oh how close  
to right you were,  
other than you said  
what else.

I always knew the other.  
the else always came,  
storming up the sewer pipes if necessary,  
the ragged, the rough,  
the tousled and teased  
the desires to be  
normal.

now, leaves on their  
decomposing death beds  
love me.

now, exhaust fumes from  
carbon emitting SUVs  
love me.

now, coffee stains on  
white shirts, searching for laundering  
love me.

now, fonts too blocky, standard, crisp, professional,  
for that critic of yonder  
love me.

now, retail establishments lost before in their search  
for my customer appreciation  
love me.

I always knew something was  
missing even in the  
chromatic spectrum I had  
felt fully indulged in  
of emotional colour.

looked far.  
traveled.  
even gave up meat.  
took the red, blue, green,  
yellow pills that came  
before me,  
figuratively or not.

the experiences  
couldn't accumulate fast enough.

and I got by, oh yes.  
a diet of McDonald's,  
or doughnuts, will maintain  
the caloric quantities  
necessary to keep  
hunger at bay.

but full nutrition  
needs a little more attention.  
I thought, secretly,  
a multivitamin here or there  
would keep me afloat.  
a swim in the waving suds on occasion,  
would sustain my strokes.

how little, minutely,  
pathetically little  
I knew about sustenance.

all I want,  
all I've ever wanted,  
all I ever will need,  
is now here.  
I've been and am  
nutrified.

October 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 11:32 a.m.

## the bond between water molecules: or, community

it's quite a need  
to rejuvenate  
once what was  
was what once I thought pure.

oh how the cleansing  
of waterfalls can  
be so filthy  
in the pollution of  
critical thought.

how I know now  
where my friends stand.  
the surrounding  
pool of this island  
drains  
and I am  
reconnected  
to a mainland.  
that is real  
community.

October 12<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 8:19 a.m.

## pretentious, that impossibly parked pontiac pulling away

they had a nice father,  
a fat investment trust account.  
those mutual funds always do deliver,  
I heard.

glass shards remolded into the delightful windows  
that guide eyes upwards, not to the sky.  
penetrating jealousy, always on.  
no one home, thankfully the lights are off.

granite is the fierce foundation  
that makes up the richness.  
we can't imagine, or comprehend,  
what it's like to have that excess.

and that's the way life must be,  
for the asshole who can't even bother  
to park the pontiac solstice appropriately  
and wouldn't really give a shit if it  
rolled down a hill and smashed into a baby carriage  
when one lives in coal harbour.

October 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:38 p.m.

## worthy neighbourhood

there's an empty  
development-worthy  
lot  
with greenery.  
a localized farm,  
community nutrition.

there's nationalism waving from  
gritty iron bars,  
a pride-worthy  
relic  
of an immigrant perhaps  
who found this to be  
the pinnacle  
of success,  
Canadian citizenship.

there's a congregation,  
and their song is weep-worthy  
and the mass is  
that devout inspiration I need,  
unknown friends.

there's an arrest happening,  
common-worthy as this litter  
or the clouds  
scattering tears.

downtown eastside.

October 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 11:44 a.m.

## **a newer covenant**

the blowing forces outside  
jostle those plant remnants  
who have found their way down.

but who could have known  
the currents would emancipate me  
to the sky?

certainly not a particular lost wanderer, you know,  
the one leery of future prospects  
not only of how metallic it all will be.

certainly not the child,  
who would be buried in the grass clippings or mown ferns  
without some internal resolution.

there once was this four letter word that  
I found myself afraid of believing  
I felt towards myself.

and with the simplest of calculations,  
the universe has delivered my replacement,  
fully under warranty.

because it said when I was dropped off:  
this is how karma works.

the shame of feeling: undeserving  
melts with this fall equinox.

the guilt of existence: burdening  
flakes into the air like the impending snow.

the insecurity of me: debilitating  
slowly rises in life's oven from unformed dough into victuals.

the hatred of self: rupturing  
exploring with the simplest of the emotions to appreciate.

love is my life's guarantee.

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:30 p.m.

## the freedom of poverty

she's sweeping leaves  
with a folded free  
newspaper.

we give 'em away, the  
news is that  
ubiquitous.

why can't charity be  
so fluidly exhumed from  
our wallets?

he's stumbling with a bite  
a sandwich  
graciously donated.

we give 'em away, the  
waste is so  
despised.

why can't caring be  
our collective purpose  
instead of our free ride syndrome?

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:33 p.m.

## inked

I've been inked, too.  
what to many is conformity  
and perhaps here it's the  
rational motivation.

it's really my courage.  
my desire to be me,  
to hate less, love more,  
cherish always the  
intense emotions life is  
demanding of me to  
explore daily.

I've been inked too.  
but not because it gives me  
security  
the way gang signs do.  
unless we suddenly  
redesign gang definition  
to include those like me  
who want to do everything  
within their newly acquired  
power  
to assist.

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 12:36 p.m.

## shopping list for founding fathers' families

the treats, the coffee.  
the freshly milked cows.  
the cream.  
the ironed shirts.  
the refilled pens.  
the laundered clothes.  
the polished workplaces.  
the tidied picture frames.  
the dusted shelves.

the restocked brandy,  
the delicately accented flowers  
scattered appropriately near the  
neatly scrubbed windows.

the children kept at bay  
away from their fathers.  
or the fathers' sons  
allowed in on this groundbreaking  
level of discussion.

what coordination it all took!  
what scheduling of potty breaks  
they must have anarchistically organized.

in order to  
be the founding mothers,  
in silence.

October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 - 11:55 a.m.

## the splintering of our species

what to be the determinants, they thought,  
as they mixed little doses of the latest  
genetic concoctions  
in that laboratory known as Society?

they threw out the class distinctions of the past,  
those burdening, loathsome notions  
of who is rich and who is poor  
and replaced it with the vanity of  
who is beautiful and who is hideous.

they tossed aside the merits of the species,  
those complicated thoughts  
of who will achieve and who will sit idle  
and replaced them with who will act pretty  
and who will say, "yes, please!" to any request.

they chucked the formalities of goodness,  
those rambling concepts  
of who will contribute or who will show conceit  
in the face of measuring precisely who has nothing to give  
but their own narcissism.

the splintering of our species  
began early on,  
when in that simple chemistry experiment  
we stopped working together to create an  
explosion of accomplishment.

instead, hell bent  
on individual gains,  
we allowed those to succeed and these to fail.  
what animal creatures we all are,  
when we lose sight of humanity.

October 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 7:35 p.m.

## the tribune

just like history  
modern struggles can be traced to the past.

elves, gnomes,  
the insecure fairies and goblins  
hiding below the fallen autumn

castigated, molted by the revengeful trees,  
the sullen society that has no place for the fantastic.

we have paths,  
some more trodden.  
all leading, learning,  
and we can be leery of what  
adventures they would have us arrive at.

and access to help can be more than an extended lifesaver away.  
coping. those intoxicants helped.  
but how to ever truly believe in progress?

I've studied the occasional war,  
the ones where trenches filled  
the lost arms, hearts, heads,  
even of those who returned,  
and wondered how to win my own.

so I ingrained quite literally,  
historical struggle into my blood.  
I cauterized the hope that  
only despair will encourage.

and look! the hills have  
monsters charging this way.  
daemons pushing fast.  
the front lines might not hold  
the impending flood.

but they couldn't handle-  
come on if you think!  
this hurricane of me  
is the immeasurable force  
of millennia of winning armies.

October 25<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:58 a.m.

## street currency

apparently canadian tire  
money has multiple uses.  
take for instance the envelope  
one can make to roll up  
a block of hash in  
like I just saw on  
east hastings.

currency of two kinds,  
it seems  
became necessary in places where  
traditional money  
is practically elusive.

what to put in those hands,  
those cupped, chapped fingers?  
a coffee, a bite,  
or the coins that buy  
something, nothing, everything,  
illicit or legal?

what to say to those hands,  
those reaching, pained,  
struggling, uncovered,  
when all I want to be is  
this jesus-like modern day  
secularist on the streets  
and can't?

my currency I think goes  
somewhere useful.  
but all the measurable investments  
mean little  
when I encounter those  
basics of the economy  
where demand and supply  
meet my leering eyes  
on the simplest dodging  
method through their world.

October 26<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:45 p.m.

## exoneration

you can savour the moment,  
and it will attempt to last.

but sometimes, there is no taste  
to be had,  
when the blood is drawn  
and the feeling intense  
and the movement of your neurons  
into their little collective happy places  
replicates that scurrying that happens  
each autumn when the chipmunks  
find their winter burrows.

you can savour the moment,  
and it will attempt to fulfill.

but sometimes, there is no hunger  
to be quenched  
when the stomach lifts  
and ecstasy the elixir of peace  
drills deep into the veins and  
pushes out all intoxicants  
into their rightful place  
in the bowels of the world  
where bliss has yet to embrace  
even those cold surfaces.

you can savour the moment,  
and it will attempt to provide grace.

but sometimes, there is no elegance  
to be admired  
when the body believes  
and acts appropriately to develop  
all that we know is the solitude  
and contentment and indulgence  
and kindness and pleasure  
and delight and elation and joy  
and rapture and euphoria  
and blessedness and glory  
and benediction of this world's  
most precious gift of vindication.

October 28<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 1:24 p.m.

## circus of hate

not enough love in that manger,  
in that deranged,  
lost,  
head of heads.

the beds folded neatly had corners  
unruffled  
the pillows always fluffed in the morning  
but not too fluffy or pouffy,  
we wouldn't want that.

the dogs, obedient,  
yes,  
but not like the women,  
who sit and beg for the scraps  
of civil society  
bestowed upon them.

no, not the dominant view,  
but one that hasn't been  
exonerated from christianity  
like it should have been.  
yes, that's a normative statement,  
if there ever was one.

I guess I had it all wrong, then,  
when I thought  
we were beyond hating each other,  
and when I thought  
we would be better than  
bringing a circus of hate into town  
every time someone dies.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:33 a.m.

## following the footsteps

there once was a path,  
and I knew that walking it would be  
good.

justice,  
liberty,  
equality,  
the good shit.

but following the footsteps  
is not always easy  
when the gaps can be so large.

I like to think  
I can manage my own,  
these peds are fairly large  
in their own way.

but the stride!  
the massive, terrifying,  
tremendous movements forward  
everyone has already made  
that I now need to leap  
like that lizard, like that tiger,  
like those monkeys from trees,  
like those flying squirrels,  
and unlike this sloth,  
just to get between each print.

that said,  
I soldier on,  
as any good little boy would do,  
for there is much, indeed, to.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:36 a.m.

## gnomes and villages and trees and the like

the mystical never did much more  
than fascinate me.

what, when I would wake up and walk  
with the swiftness of the air  
the speed at which beautiful paces can be made down the creative path  
is fairly brisk.

safety, then, in that eternal  
community that lives on  
in a little gnome village inside of my head.

let's cut the bullshit  
and pretend for a moment that childish behaviour  
isn't more than a refusal from modern adult considerations  
of how to rebel.

that said,  
in the trees, and the moss,  
the ferns and the undergrowth, the leaves buried a place  
where the fantastic brought about more than fantasy.

safety is in knowing we're people too.  
and sometimes,  
even those of us who feel on the edge  
know we're people too  
by knowing more about the world  
than even our brilliant calculating minds  
care to imagine.

for our own security,  
and for that of others,  
it'd probably be a good idea  
to indulge a little more in the characteristically psychotic  
and less in the grease-covered nachos  
and believe, once in a while, that figuring it all out  
isn't what makes us great.  
it's knowing that somewhere, secretly,  
the gnomes and elves are plotting to make us happy  
and that knowing exactly how or why isn't the answer,  
it's that we know we're not alone  
in a world often hidden under the bushes.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:42 a.m.

## surfacing

I've always been here,  
floating beneath the surface.

it's why I was once there,  
on a black sand beach.

the water was cold, and so  
I opened my eyes  
and saw  
something I hadn't seen before.

we know what it was.  
it doesn't take this author  
to describe.

it was the sun!  
it was the stars!  
it was the waves!  
it was the people!  
it was the joy!  
it was the volcanoes!  
it was the lava!  
it was the food!  
it was the magic!

it was the world,  
sitting there,  
beckoning against the odds  
that I could hear it calling  
from under the waves.

now that I've come up  
to fill air into these lungs  
I know why.

life emerged from the sea.  
tsunamis, too.  
and so did this little evolved monkey.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:47 a.m.

## thunder and lightning

they say we only have  
a minute possibility  
of being struck  
by lightning.

please call 9-1-1,  
if you're in my vicinity.  
I've been ignited,  
and the normally grounding  
rubber I have in my boots  
hasn't done much good.

I am off,  
I am free, and I am on fire,  
flaming with the intensity  
of those solstices that our friends  
the wiccans turned into celebration.

I am alight,  
I am free, and I am burning,  
blazing with the furor  
of those astronauts when they open the pod  
and look out with virgin eyes into the only real warranty-worthy vacuum.

I am flushed,  
I am free, and I am fevered,  
singed with the love  
of those creative minds who bothered before  
to plot out exactly why we fuss with life.

listen, comrades,  
friends, lovers, foes:

I am thunder, a reminiscent reminder  
of my strike.  
watch me roar.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:52 a.m.

## ahora que tengo veinticinco años, ¿a donde voy?

he's so betrayed by what  
he thought would have been  
this life.

he thought nothing of the sort,  
that happiness would ever  
be these shoulders' shawl  
and yet here they are,  
warming so much  
they are contemplating a shedding.

he thought nothing of the sort,  
that joys would ever  
be this career path's making  
a choice between the good and the bad  
so evidently clear in the mind  
and he impressively choosing right.

he thought nothing of the sort,  
that hope would ever  
be this heart's guiding range,  
that the parameters would ever be set  
so he could go out and inspire,  
and never falter to show conviction.

he thought nothing of the sort,  
that twenty five years later  
he would know where to go in this  
miraculous birth he knows he was granted  
and in the shadows of the titans  
he still found a way to distance himself  
ever so slightly  
so that the sun would know where to shine.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 12:57 a.m.

## luxury

oh, there is luxury.  
more than the abundance of x  
is the wealth of wealthy.  
the way purchases consume coins.  
the manner that our wants  
always trump their needs.

the wheels roll on,  
electrically powered,  
and deliver us to particular  
or discriminant destinations.  
but what of their electricity?  
what of their power to get somewhere?

a coffee. a strudel.  
a moment spent in line to  
exchange our cash for  
the luxurious privilege of  
mass-frozen and preserved shit.

not quite unlike a moment or two  
in line to trade currency for  
the right to ever access their  
own pathetically low payments.  
where they queue to merely take handouts.

ah, yes, don't worry, cynics.  
there are joy riders-  
just as your neighbours burden  
the system with excessive greed.  
houseboats really sum up the death  
of charity.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 11:54 a.m.

## authorized

authorized  
means not me.  
it means a little break  
in the winter's rain  
that stops and says,  
sorry, but you aren't even  
allowed to get dry.  
you don't have appropriate  
clearance.

the libertarians  
gather in groups.  
how quaint.  
their endogenous socializing  
necessity  
collectively challenges  
the norm.

the anarchists  
fold their flyers, printed  
in non-union corporate shops,  
in the little huddling corners  
of our urban landscapes  
and devour the self-gratifying notion  
of converting a few more.

authorized  
means not me.  
but only because from the sidelines  
all we can do is watch,  
listen, and externally critique.  
but we're not given the  
authority  
to contribute.

November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - 11:57 a.m.

## postmodern alien

“hi,” she said.

“why would you presume to start  
a conversation?”  
he replied.

“don’t you think you’ve assumed  
that I want to talk to you?”

“don’t you?” she replied.

“yes, but that’s not the point,  
you approached me  
and thought I was able to  
talk, for one,  
and that I would want to talk  
with you,  
for two.”

“well, um,”  
she hesitated.  
“How’s it going?”

“Doesn’t that presuppose that  
things should be going well?  
what a loaded question!”  
he answered, defiantly.  
“It shouldn’t matter how I go,  
how I feel, how I am,  
it should be all relative to nothing!”

she turned away. left.  
didn’t say any more.

“Doesn’t turning your back to me  
assert your power relationship over me?”  
he quivered.  
“come back here!”

but then he was only upset with  
himself.

November 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 5:10 p.m.

## raindrops keep falling on my head

what would be the screams saying,  
when they impact!  
the millions of little faces  
flinging themselves from the clouds  
a lovely serenading synchronized swim  
through the air  
the bullet speed  
mass suicide  
of rain drops.

we can bathe in  
their mortality,  
and they never even knew their names.  
to think of the efforts  
to forgo identity in order to  
cherish our bodies and planet  
with the nourishment  
of airborne aquifers.

what must the animals think  
as they reach upwards and  
taste the sky's tears?

what glamour they must feel  
when the air instills  
a new solid state on their bodies  
and crystallises their forms  
when winter's might  
crushes the temperature lower  
and they are our snowflakes,  
the building blocks of every  
igloo and ski terrain?

and how sad the clouds must be,  
every time they mourn their tears  
they open up the vents again,  
and out fling  
the latest batch.

I will cheer them up,  
with my hope and aspirations.

November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 5:30 p.m.

## gender division of labour in the oil sands

one woman,  
will she satisfy their needs?  
for the lineup to  
Fort McMurray  
is littered with a breed of  
rich, working class men,  
spread across the divides  
of identity  
but solidified in sex.

black, or not.  
mostly white, lost in  
the fashion time warp  
that must be  
Northern Alberta.

Fat? oh yes.  
some look more than  
well-nourished on the  
bachelor survival methods  
they live off without wives.

November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 9:03 p.m.

## homeothermal

fire places can war more than feet.  
cold hearts, apart,  
breathe transparent exhaust  
that they emanate.  
they pollenate those withered bits  
with the love of creation.  
they soar when needed to  
spread the wings,  
deeply folded in every  
weary introvert and  
exhausted extrovert.

they take passion  
and show it in a physical exertion  
the same way bodies try,  
sometimes failing.  
they melt notions of  
sustainability  
in every worthy log lapped up in flame.

fireplaces can warm more than feet.  
frozen people, though,  
can't be resuscitated.  
that only requires time.

November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 9:30 p.m.

## intruder

why, why, why?  
I ask because they will.  
only 55 minutes at 37,000 ft  
and only briefly does my angelic human  
form touchdown.

not for a fear, oh no.  
each day I wake with less of those.

I cry here, secretly,  
without allowing normally unstrained  
tears from their cages.

I don't want pain  
for those who are good.  
my punishing is in watching their suffering.

that's why. as if a  
documentarian following a  
dying elephant calf,  
I put down the megaphone  
(they can't hear me from the ivory tower)  
and lift them up.  
that's why.

November 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 9:33 p.m.

## babble

ah yes, the moments of splendour,  
they like to spread out,  
the spilled blenderized drinks would otherwise coat the counter  
if it wasn't for those dratted cloths.

and I would be the spiller,  
the oxymoron of the kitchen  
who likes the colour combinations of what happens when  
bubble teas leak their pearls all over the place  
and their tears make even the coolest of trendy white boys  
clot up inside in their lacrimal systems.

what? what?  
ah yes, the realizations of complexity, they like to melt away,  
the ooze of the guilt that once solidified in the hearts of  
every lost boy and girl who felt nothing  
but hatred inside for existing.

and I would be the liquifier,  
the thawer of the warmest ices  
that leaked his own ambitions into the  
waiting chilled rigid notions of humanity  
the one whose cogent argument for sanity  
compelled even those hardened libertarian  
snowflakes they would be better baked in the sun.

¿iwhat!? ¿ique!?  
ah yes, the commandments of youth,  
they like to discharge themselves like lax moral high grounds  
the way the pro-lifers find quick solace at the sexual options centre  
when the bastards arrive.

and I would be the counsellor,  
the trainer who has found simple paths beyond the snowcaps  
into the valleys of where we thought we could head.  
the one who likes mixed up metaphors and long-winded phrases  
and unravels all that deconstruction brings  
with the worker belts and their tax-free boots  
the one who knows the flaws, knows the faults  
and still is willing to help others  
pick up the pieces.

November 15<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 10:05 p.m.

## dying to go to church, those four ladies

if you fill the coffee percolator  
in time there is  
room in the evening's agenda  
for a cup prior to  
the meal.

maybe even, to be devious,  
while cutting up the  
donated tarts and pies,  
we could split a piece.

look here! I have  
four freshly scrubbed forks.

I've set the juice crystals  
the pitchers and stir sticks  
next to the sink. ready.

when is Evelyn arriving with  
her custard sauce for the  
berry tart?

Any moment.

who found the  
gravy boats?  
they're here, hidden  
behind the china.

Oh, marvelous!

do you remember when  
Francine had her reception here  
and we had those donated as  
part of Wilfred's  
estate?

That was a lovely meal.  
Yes, the meat was so tender.

Phyllis' jellied salad seemed a little soggy.  
put it in the freezer,  
I just cleared room  
after removing the ice cream.  
it needs to thaw anyhow.

oh, alright.

Do you have a sink running?  
yes, but the groundskeepers  
haven't bought new soap.

That's alright,  
I brought some from home,  
Wal-mart had it on for  
\$.68 a bottle.

oh, that's  
quite a good  
price.

Where did you get these  
seat warmers?

Rae found them at the  
Wilson auction, the whole set for  
\$25.

Do you have any tissues?  
That bitter cold left me with the  
sniffles.

Right under my seat, dear.

Oh, could we catch the news?  
I heard they caught  
that  
pedophile.

oh, the children these days,  
I don't know how they cope.

What's that van doing?

November 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 12:53 p.m.

## ability

He was a genius, once,  
when semicolons needed placement  
more often than they do now.

when lawns needed mowing  
in particular row arrangements.

when the correct packing of minivans  
suited for a family vacation was necessary.

when the ordering of stock and supplies for  
various events became the norm for friday nights.

not here, though,  
situated on a foreign bed,  
grasping for some innate ability to  
mould all these others' opuses into  
his own.

but ha!  
it's not so simple to think that  
only those things are ever necessary.

perhaps there is insight for him,  
and somewhere, organised neatly  
under that travel equipment, or  
tucked between appropriately spliced and semicolonated clauses,  
under the clippings of horizontally-manicured urban grass scapes,  
in the shipping and receiving statements of trans fat-laden treats,  
there is a man who  
knows he has a place here,  
one where he can give all he can  
and even if perfection is out of reach  
it's something more than what he thought he ever could have given  
had giving up ever been contemplated.

December 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 9:46 p.m.

## fortuity

you may have more than  
a red sleek chair  
perfectly angled against the  
stark white blindness that  
life's blizzard confronts us.  
it is the blood that runs through  
your veins, that innate sense  
to design your place and  
and to be happy.

but I am luckier.

you may have more than  
a delivery from richmond  
the boxes are piled high  
with the \$2 gadgets only discounted  
japanese stores may deliver.  
the animals, sewn to life with  
cheap child labour et al  
abound in your apartment  
and make it a home with children  
or for them.

but I am luckier.

you may have more than  
manners that speak volumes of your character  
a nauseating kindness that never ceases to show  
love when so much of the world  
thinks we are to be vilified.  
you are polite in that eccentric way  
a chinese fortune cookie  
tells me tomorrow will bring riches for us all  
in bed.

but I am luckier.

you may have more than  
friends who would find a spare plate  
to serve you in your inability  
to prepare simple meals with that  
meticulously clean kitchen.  
with warmth and the flames of their  
gas-powered fireplaces and hearts  
they would cross oceans or  
even find a way to walk around them  
if it meant bringing you peace.

but I am luckier.

you may have more than  
most. I've been sitting  
observing what some do not hold  
in their lives like you do.  
I've been noticing, in the passing  
time I've spent reaching you  
on a constant basis,  
that others are not so fortunate  
or welcoming of the love that  
is all around for them to receive.

but I am luckier,  
for I have you, and  
that is all I need.

December 17<sup>th</sup> 2007 11:59 a.m.

## where

where, where  
the compass would be spinning  
and not find polar north.

direction is seldom needed  
I guess  
when we need simply to begin.

I couldn't ask  
nor expect, nor dream  
for a journey like this one.

we flew, oh yes,  
and the carbon emissions  
gathered in the storm clouds.

we bathed, oh yes,  
and the beads of water  
flicked off our wet towels.

we climbed, oh yes,  
and the mountains folded  
neatly like I now can do to shirts.

but a starting point?  
I guess the lingering of doubts  
one year ago gives ample clues.

where we were,  
it wasn't the place.  
that irrelevance is demonstrated.

where to go,  
it wasn't to be prescribed.  
that was evident.

it was where  
I needed salvation from  
in this little life.

so where to begin?  
when ends are not supposed  
to be so descriptive?

the days churned out events,  
occurrences, actions,  
and oh yes, experiences.

the nights churned out dreams,  
happenings, parties,  
and oh yes, nightmares.

but in some strange way  
it wasn't where but how.  
it was how to be.

and I found an answer,  
fortunately, where I knew  
I could be okay.

it was simple,  
like the clouds, or the rain.  
they know how to be good.

and so I chose to be,  
also. to be good.  
to be happy.

where to begin?  
how about there?  
why not, friend?

December 18<sup>th</sup> 2007 10:53 p.m.

## harder part about being alone

the harder part about being alone  
is not being in a corner.  
it's that behind you,  
the thrusts of wind are all that  
the wall entails.  
the cliff hangs sharp under your feet,  
with an edge so razor-like as  
to let you know,  
this is what is keeping you from falling.

the harder part about being alone  
is not being filled with solitude.  
it's that in front of you,  
the raring dream scape that otherwise  
plays out in mainstream horror films  
that reality demonstrates  
can't be turned off.

the harder part about being alone  
is not the fear of indifference.  
it's that inside you,  
the knowledge of the overwhelming  
burden that your mind  
has been graced with to solve  
all that danger confronting  
your survival.

the hardest part about being alone  
is knowing that  
reliance is only on your self.

December 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 10:01 p.m.

## test

in this test,  
I've come up with an assortment  
of grades.

on the one hand,  
I have so much knowledge  
that it overflows on occasion  
and tires all that  
are examining my abilities.

on the other hand,  
when they start the water lodging  
of persecutions,  
I come up with nothing but  
tortured emotions,  
and fail to breathe.

in this test,  
I sometimes come up empty handed,  
in a world where what you bring  
to the table is the ultimate evaluation.

December 24<sup>th</sup> 2007 10:04 p.m.

## all of a sudden

all of a sudden  
there was a simple task at hand  
- where? where?

I thought the forest density  
would be consumed in this fog.  
I thought the trails' costumes of leaves  
would be swept up by the wind.

I liked to move quickly, then,  
as I sought out what I thought  
needed doing.  
I liked to feel breeze  
more appropriately on my face  
than whizzing ahead of me  
from the pace of others.

all of a sudden,  
where to became where I was from  
when I arrived where  
I am now.  
the land of splendour,  
where no longer this stomach ache  
permeates my mind  
where no longer frantic doubts  
crush opportunities to  
excel.

all of a sudden,  
I was happy.

December 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 11:29 p.m.

## B23

a scant six months ago  
maybe seven  
I was exactly here, in Calgary.  
the city that haunts me by lingering  
in my memory as my mecca of consumer choice.  
now, the obese ruin  
of unplanned economic disaster.

a scant six months ago  
or seven  
I had no idea life would start to twist  
in ways of formation unbeknownst to that man,  
who lingered in the airport hallways  
for countless painfully lonely moments  
hoping to find a little salvation.

a scant six months ago  
maybe seven  
a boy was crying internally for a grief-stricken life,  
waiting for some sort of unknown metamorphosis to take over  
turn this encompassing shell into an enclave of hope.  
to take this fragility of life and find meaning,  
however temporarily.

a scant six months ago  
or seven  
staring out at those who  
would travel copilot with me to London  
did little to stem my eyes' cravings  
for nourishment of a face that would stare  
back lovingly into these eyes.

a scant seven months ago,  
there was little, but hope.

probably why alive is my corpse.  
probably why nourished is my brain.  
probably why healthy is my spirit.  
probably why life shows me  
daily a new opportunity to appreciate its angelic experiences.  
those that lift even the neediest of larvae  
into the monarchs of the insect world.

December 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 9:08 p.m.

## I work for them

I work for them,  
waking to make the tax  
dollars for these women who,  
when given a hard up in  
the short wait of the express line  
shower insults our way.

traveling to fill the void for the lonely vegetarian  
waiters littering the pathetic  
chain restaurants  
stuck offering grilled burger  
in airports.

smiling for the hippies  
who wear new leather  
moccasins as they devour  
the latest text messages from  
their distant lovers.

labouring for hours to  
earn my ends meet for the  
women flaunting north american  
middle class elitism in  
their sheep skin UGG boots.

snoring for the bus drivers  
who in between combing their  
germanic red hair  
goatees, they take tickets  
from children and load  
seniors' luggage into the coaches' underbelly.

bumping into the delicately  
polite immigrants who  
justify tiers of labour  
and unjustifiably low wage levels.

obeying the smartly dressed  
suits who want nothing  
of me other than my lack of presence in their  
errant-filled path.  
I work for them.

December 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:17 p.m.

## **a pleasant euphoria**

there will come a time  
when the limitless ends.  
I know it.

right now, realities that  
set focus on the here.  
the near future.  
but the casual forces  
breed much cynicism.

who would dare dwelling in  
the kinetic pull of  
society that dares make  
political accomplishments  
out of consumerism?

what could I hardly do  
to affect people more concerned  
with celebrity children's drug testing  
than opposition assassinations?

still, there is here a flame,  
a candle of limitless hope.  
one that has guided me this far..

December 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 - 9:21 p.m.

## creation

from the outside,  
a simple little face  
guided in direction and shape  
by the bristling black hairs  
above his lip,  
beneath his cheeks  
towards the chin.

from the outside,  
a tablespoon's worth of exhalation  
monumental only in that  
it breathes life into that slowly rising chest  
filling those two organic balloons  
with the stillness of sleep  
and continued existence.

but look a little deeper.  
the incredible cosmic reaction  
that the universe decided was necessary here.  
a dash of galactic space dust  
a pinch of the remnants of black holes  
the darkness of the exterior nightlight  
the brightness of solar flares  
the unquantifiable number of connections  
between the elements from one  
billion years apart  
just to make him for me.

January 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 9:37 a.m.

## 107 steps

with cracking knees I've bent  
down to the street level  
to observe what it is  
that we're stepping on each day.

look, here, in the dust between  
the feet and their encasing shoes.  
patterns of the bliss that  
only life likes to arrange,  
the jigsaws lacking real edges  
and the rawness of their formation.

look here, in the gum and wrappers  
the unknown phlegm gobs piling up  
in the least of intricate arrangements  
the drab and dreary, the mighty mistaken  
lack of colour coordination,  
the disfiguring dirt crumbles on the pavement.

it's with this view,  
street level and looking upwards,  
do I see what every single placement  
of one of these long appendages on the ground  
really means.

what could be forgotten or thought of  
as nothing more than a movement  
is actually an impacting moment -  
not just where I'm going  
but a place where things occur,  
like the accumulation of bits of  
heaven under our soles.

and every day, and every step,  
intensifies the gathering.

January 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 9:42 a.m.

## organ donation ban

So, it's come to this standoff.  
Where the little girl, begging to survive,  
perched on the perilous cliff of death below and life  
on the edge  
is pushed just a little further.

I was here, offering my safety blanket,  
the care that it would take  
to bring her back.  
I was here, offering my only gift, the real one,  
the one of quantity of life.

I actually held within me  
measurable amounts of life.

Just that, one tiny glitch  
in the plans to save.  
just that, one tiny difference  
in the plans to be gracious.  
just that, one tiny distinction  
in the plans of altruism.

they wouldn't take my  
safety blanket,  
they wouldn't take my  
assistance.

oh yes, it would function exactly the same.  
and oh yes, it would bring new quantity of life.  
everything would be normal,  
restored, blessed.

but they've ranked our gifts on a unilateral scale,  
and mine now doesn't make  
the justified mark.

how dare, how dare,  
to take the only gift I may give.

my, how the mighty, how they  
build the institutional barriers  
to their own children's survival.

January 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 10:33 p.m.

## \$5 for Molly

four food groups  
roofs overhead, sheltering warmth,  
radiant sheets  
the latest dreads, or at least  
a rugged concoction of cotton.

instead, \$5 for Molly:

it buys little nutrition.  
it pays little rent.  
it purchases little clothing.

but the morning dose of  
guilt.

the wondering of when,  
when will I crumble from  
sympathy?

when are my consumer  
purchases going to have  
less importance than minimising  
another's grief?

\$5 for Molly  
buys that.

"Have a good day,"  
I leave, to float in the air  
just above a practically  
useless drop of paper,  
that bluish one hued  
with a rich Prime Minister  
or some fool.

"You have a good one too,"  
simply rises up.  
a minimal response.  
a minimal effort.  
but maximum impact.

January 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 1:09 p.m.

## sweet escape

I am her, that  
plainly clothed nerdy woman  
with the unkept hair  
MEC bag and simple,  
regularly manufactured shoes.  
but I'm also smiling.

I am him, that  
stylishly flamboyant man  
frosted tips, simple 1/2 frames  
a scarf to ward off the  
fashion police.  
but I'm also grimacing.

I am her, that  
common downtown whore,  
silver sneakers match the  
silver wrapper of her chocolate bar,  
huddling for hours in doorways.  
but I'm also lost.

I am him, that  
desperately urban young male,  
white as surrender flags  
hugging the solemn character  
of conformity on the outside,  
listening to Gwen Stefani  
secretly on the skytrain.  
but I'm also asking for acceptance.

I am me, that  
slowly and surely found man,  
an observation pen in hand,  
longing to follow religious leaders  
in a quest for morality  
hell bent on discovering simple ways  
to grow my altruism,  
humbled by others in this quest for experiences.  
but I'm also escaping.

January 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 11:08 p.m.

## conviction

there isn't a cliff I could be perched near  
where pushing me off would be an option.

vertical maneuvers,  
horizontal declines  
and still, this is a rock  
failing to budge.

rabbits nibble at the grass that  
roots around my base.  
birds peck at the sun baked, salted  
pest carcasses that line my edges.  
humans kick rabidly at my sides,  
hoping for some sort of impact.

but I know better than to  
encompass myself with easily disturbed  
surroundings.

it takes eons - which in the scheme  
of a 14 billion year expansion project  
is fairly minimal -  
to find cementation to such values.  
but I had a lot of time,  
reflecting so many hours  
while the rest lay lingering between  
R.E.M. and day and the moments scattered there.

and here, even with all the cranes of Dubai  
even with the forklifts of every discount warehouse  
and the pile drivers of every private road contractor  
stacked up against me,  
do I fail to budge, even the slightest.

conviction is that deep in these veins,  
a close bond found in the physical world only  
perhaps between the quarks and electrons.

no cliff would dare allow me to fall over.

February 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 8:22 p.m.

## this economy

this economy,  
apparently created by masterminds of humanity,  
lacks something.  
inclusion.

why bother having a system,  
why build the roads and vehicles to success,  
why process the fuels and the satellite dish-delivered stations  
the lunchbox holders and the coffee cup containers  
the garbage bag handles  
and collections of ashtrays next to children's seats,  
why design an entire network of cars  
to get from poverty to wealth  
without asking the passengers about their needs?

this economy,  
apparently drafted out of the knowledge of generations,  
fails somewhere,  
here.

why build the docks where shipbuilders proliferate,  
where the ignorant of fishermen may try their luck at marine life,  
where the hammers and nails are imported and the  
colossal structures unite the deep of the water and the depths of the sky  
where sails and engines and turbines and all those little  
microeconomic tweaks that get things going efficiently are constructed,  
where cargo cranes diminish our notions of  
what can be moved from those eastern seas to the west,  
and of what consumer needs we actually have,  
without noticing the crafts left stranded by the tide?

this economy,  
apparently the summation of historical evidence to the contrary,  
disappoints me,  
sadly.

February 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 3:19 p.m.

## the heterodox kid

the heterodoxy I like isn't probably that innate.

I like conformity,  
what, when the universe determines  
baby seagulls all should scatter  
when threatening human presence  
triumphs on their secure space  
of grubs and pigeon droppings.

I like uniformity,  
what, when the candies pumped out  
by the ingenuity of those food corps  
politely meet my taste buds with the  
well-tested and well-worn familiarity  
of a million times before.

I like homogeneity,  
what, when friends transcend their  
cultural constrictions and class oppressions  
and just act as friends,  
the ones who are there for you no matter  
your dire straights or your unsubdued needs to feel comforted.

I like consistency,  
what, when the weather neither peaks nor falls  
in temperature,  
and the sun determines  
a bubble bath in clouds is needed to soothe  
otherwise scorched shoulders from its rays.

but I don't like the trend of  
buying into  
the consumer consciousness  
that neglects human need  
and accentuates  
individual success.

I don't like the current of  
upstream swimming for some,  
what with the flows of this society  
ever pulling backwards  
on the shirt-strings of those  
struggling to succeed.

I don't like the inclination of  
winner-takes-all collective mantras of wealth,  
when those with  
generous factor endowments  
find entitlement in this land  
with enough to share.

these dislikes and likes  
haven't always been indwelling  
in this blood.  
the red stuff lacks  
the knowledge of much more  
than oxygen as nutrition.

but every time  
homelessness and poverty  
decide today is not the day for global rejoice  
of our economy  
I guess I reject orthodoxy  
a little bit more.

February 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 5:02 p.m.

## warlock

lovely, was the morning light,  
the opportune time to be outside.

but the cauldron kept on percolating  
and wishing for more ingredients.  
satisfaction in the realm of this warlock's brew  
always seems to make happiness take a step aside.

snow was falling, innocent and all.  
it may have been rain, it's hard to tell.  
the fire burning here, alight with new timbers,  
coals scorched blue with heat,  
evaporating any notion of penetrating precipitation.

no matter, for a soundtrack was in the carriage,  
an aural cocoon that supposed the man  
could benefit from a little metamorphosis,  
what, with a visible cauldron  
steeped in history engorging those around him.

it didn't work. neither did the elixirs,  
black, trapped like black, the opposite of what  
reflections of that morning light might have been  
in his eyes had he opened them to the world around, where  
walls stood firm, water ran freely and love was waiting.

it became apparent, and perhaps not too soon,  
that this cauldron would not be a appreciable experiment forever.  
oh yes, perhaps once in a while,  
a little flare up wouldn't hurt too much.  
there would always be an eye or two lying near  
for the additional punch.

but we should be warned.  
the warlocks in all of us desire little more than revenge,  
and while sweet, they say,  
it's really a matter of taste buds.  
I'd rather prefer to savour something delicate,  
like the fruitful good ideas  
the morning light might have lent  
the ones waiting to be borrowed permanently  
in an opportune time to be outside.

February 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 11:52 p.m.

## elements

I feel small.  
there are breezes in the air,  
and they carry long stories of what it was like to be around  
when these building blocks scattered.

what was carbon, was it  
born with a desire to pollute?  
did it know that it was harmful to us?  
did it inherit guilt in this stage?  
did it seek out sequestration in this world?  
or did it say - I aspire to be diamonds.

what was oxygen, was it  
birthed with a rejuvenating hue?  
was it aware it would be sought after in bars?  
did it yearn to be filling our lungs?  
did it know how essential it'd become?  
or did it say - I aspire to be water.

what was mercury, was it  
thrown from that galactic womb in rejection?  
was it aware it would poison aquifers?  
was it spurned for its liquidity at room temperature?  
did it contemplate evaporation?  
or did it say - I aspire to be glimmering.

the breezes, subtly,  
have been mincing words.  
the languages are so bastardised now,  
what, with the yelps and screeches  
of insanity that generates only after  
we have lost our ways and connections.

but there is a notion there,  
waiting to be listened to.  
the building blocks tell us  
the essentials are still, and always will be, truth.

savour, little one, the breezes tell me,  
for the world is as complicated only as you make it.  
What we see are merely elements.  
build, build, build.

February 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 12:28 am

## era

an era  
requires beginnings  
conclusions  
perhaps a denouement

let's begin.

smoke on the water  
collects above sullen waterfowl,  
wings flapping, feathers  
coagulated with oil slick  
and timer pulp mill run off,  
a process of rekindling  
between natures that  
is long since recognised as  
false-ridden.

this dirt gathers in new ways.  
the doors of leased vehicles  
accumulate with filthy guilt  
for those single suitors looking to  
impress consumer-conscious women,  
lost in their battle  
for independence and adherence  
to hegemonic shopping addition.

surely there are more than those  
who threw down  
their sickles and hammers  
centuries ago and  
raise their postures  
above complacent kneeling  
at this capitalist temple  
of the market driven lifestyle.

surely there are more in this era  
who reject that middle-aged men  
are adding value to our street corners  
by their eight year old  
rekindled fort building skills.

surely there are more than us  
who forfeit our rights to daily peace  
in the acquiescence of taxation returns  
to the benefits of these legal entities  
with more sway than our  
collective manifestations of distrust.

surely there are more than they  
who would call for 1968-era solutions  
( the full-circle development  
where the rights of the romantic  
era of freedom  
are accepted with dignity as implementations  
of the right paths to utopia. )

let's begin,  
for this era falls on my shoulders  
with water-logging burden,  
sweeping me into a tide of well-wishing  
ideologically-free idealists  
seeking the marching papers that,  
followed correctly,  
take us somewhere.

let's begin.

February 18<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 1:03 p.m.

## what a white guy has to say about first nations people

solutions seeking  
can be so misleading.

tell me, young one,  
why this impermeable water  
fluid like its natural aquifers,  
at least in summer,  
would want to bare  
assimilating this new  
salty content?

tell me, great elder,  
why these winds are not fragrant  
with the hope of the future  
coming tide of ideas,  
billowing out past the prairie horizon  
that I know you've explored more than I?

I will tell you.  
I have that privilege that desires to be appreciated.  
I will tell of the greatness  
that I have envisioned for you,  
and of my knowledge,  
accumulated through the colonial institutions  
I've helped impose  
through solitary silent endorsement  
and willful participation.

that I will do.  
what I won't, sadly,  
is stand back and suffer in these shadows,  
the mystical removed from my hope  
and the dire needs present in my memory.

I know, what a further imposition.  
it's what intruders do, impose.  
but only because  
I don't know how else to help.

solutions seeking  
can feel so desperate.

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 - 10:55 p.m.

## intransigent

it'd be absolute bliss,  
but laying in the bed they make  
is just one part of the reward.

with the morning squeeze of orange juice and eye lids  
opening the pours  
and letting the rays in  
and letting the liquid out  
they'd admire what they've accomplished.

they'd lay there,  
waiting on their help  
and wishing nothing but congratulations for their accomplishments  
of the minions that have managed to  
make it all work for their favour.

but priorities are lost in between the yawns  
of executive wake up calls.

it'd be absolute bliss,  
only because when nothing really matters  
what matters is the unrecognisable reality of what exists.

I exist.  
and not alone.

the unknown subsist because we have to,  
for they would like us to fail.

the undisclosed manage because they know otherwise,  
their numbers would peak and plummet, too.

the nameless persist because  
they like revelling, too, in the bliss,  
the elation of what it is like to prevent their success.

it'd be a benediction, that morning,  
when we all awake and squeeze oxygen into our chest caverns,  
illuminate our pupils and admire our achievements,  
for this world exists, these people exist,  
and this intransigent remains  
ready for action.

March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 - 11:46 p.m.

## congressional murder of crows

the crow congress said something.  
they gathered above,  
wires as their soap boxes,  
branches as their benches,  
cawing about all of the matters that make  
the day to day search for existence  
relevant.

we passed, underneath, unbeknownst to them,  
those who do not worry about the disgust others perpetuate  
when a large man drinks two sodas in one sitting.  
those who do not toss at night about the ramifications of  
particular vote buying corrupt strategies.

I imagine the agenda was much more simple than that,  
focused on the intricacies of crow life,  
something I guess they've been gathering about  
for the eons of their existence.

I wonder when they stop flying and think  
why they are here?  
I wonder if they re-contemplate  
the move from the central Asia?  
I wonder if they knew a pending car crash  
would occur under their collective perch?

or was it merely that, a murder,  
where the gathering of like souls  
brings merriment?

March 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 12:58 a.m.

## running

I've spent years lifting  
these knees high.  
sprints between occasions,  
obstacles the fumbling barriers  
on this run.

but what motivation?  
why the shuddering shoulders?  
I know my internal measurement  
says I can relay  
better than the nay-sayers.

line the fences, then,  
with the superfans and  
cheerleaders we gather  
along the way.  
their cheers and enthusiasm  
have a root emotion.

their tears are soaked with  
salty love and desire  
for my success.

confused? hell yes.  
there is no other way to be  
when on the track and  
constantly looking over  
those shuddering shoulders  
for some distant disapproval,  
as if that should stop me.

it's as if this lingering  
insecurity was weights  
on these ankles.  
I can't be shackled anymore.

thankfully,  
those exuberant angels.  
the ones running with me,  
are the key's keepers.

they love me.

March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 9:07 a.m.

## to acquire supremacy over our lives

Some things under our control  
really aren't,  
like life.

some things out of our control  
really are,  
like the life we could make.

so sit, then, and rest on our laurels.  
no use making change,  
or changing the way we make it,  
if superiority is our stoppage.

be weary, then, of any sort of hostility,  
no point raising our voice,  
or voicing our points ad nauseam,  
if sway is not in our cards.

I don't buy it,  
just as I don't buy a lot of what  
is thrown into our hands, our individualistic,  
greedy, unrestricted imbibing hands  
that want physical attainments and  
lack the ability to assert emotional yields,  
and I seem to be doing fine.

some things ascend out of  
our comprehension of what is viable,  
but that shouldn't halt the masses  
from wanting something else.

March 15<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 4:21 p.m.

## the big picture

my hopes for change should be drastically slimmed down.  
not out of hostility, though, or the fear or proceeding,  
or marching orders handed my way.

look out our windows there are now billions of us.

we need to get real about what  
that really means, and how that  
honestly modifies our outcomes.

and what is real?  
real is the diameter of this tiny planet in a sea of miniature stars  
swimming ferociously to catch up with the current  
of the ocean of swiftly stirring constellations in one solitary galaxy  
seething to rise up and be noticed in the vast absolutely not emptiness  
of this universe.

no more fights,  
no more weapons drawn then.  
we have limited time, finite scope, sparse resources.  
we can babble all we want, but it does no use.  
we'll be swallowed up into this forgettable element stew soon enough.

I don't want to wage wars,  
those strange crusades for protection of our turf, any longer.  
because I like the miracles we already have  
the challenge to drift out of dreams into the beginning of day.  
the nuclear sun that heats this hot blooded skin.  
the calming effect of a simple ocean breeze.  
the cheer that emanates from children playing.  
the muscles around my lips that refuse to relax when a dog approaches.  
the gravitational pull that makes the growth of trees a reality.  
the billions of little grains of wheat that form into billions of bread loaves.  
the nurture of love that solves the mysteries of our origins.  
the experiences that give me consciousness and emotional existence.

I guess the bigger picture really is  
lost,  
then,  
unless we all string along with  
aspirations of anything but the celebration  
of this life.

March 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 9:24 a.m.

## structures

more than ever,  
it's not the falsified structures  
built around us.  
the little niches find ways  
to host the downtrodden.

the ground swells with  
corporate sponsored seedlings  
to find life amongst the  
granite and concrete.

the definitions are so dangerous.  
people!

who would have thought  
that we would seek reference  
outside of lifting skirts  
to know ourselves.

the fathers who face the odds  
of a societal construction of  
masculine provision  
each time they enslave themselves,  
the modern ball and chain  
politely presented as a 2 piece  
and a stunningly original tie.

the same homeless, or poor,  
or either, man,  
who fails to ride this bus  
marches alongside.  
what a metaphor, this  
physical manifestation  
of class struggle.

the one portrayed as non-existent  
in a world of structures.  
oh, the sheer hypocrisy.

the same world building slums into solitudes  
for the affluent,  
those capable of using tinted glass and granite countertops  
to blind themselves from the street vermin below.

the mothers to be, who  
spend more time each week  
preparing an external visage  
that impossibly measures  
to a psychopathic orientation  
of what natural beauty and  
attraction should be.

we divide, a population fearful of math,  
we separate and hierarchically build  
structures to tier those  
otherwise loving entities  
away from us.

people!  
oh, the post-modernists must  
resent our ever complicating fortitudinal resistance to oneness.  
they must drink copiously  
in the dankest of social reclusiveness.

to rid themselves of their  
fearing minds of consciousness  
that it really is all going to plan,  
as anarchistically and stunningly original as  
that may be.

the question remains.  
now, more than ever,  
are we building dynamite,  
are we lining those support beams,  
and are we planning with our willful ignorance,  
an incredible destruction?  
and if not,  
should we?

or simply, is it enough to  
persist in this era  
where time is structure  
that builds new bridges  
for us to cross?

March 16<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 1:15 p.m.

## **culture of fear**

I sense a culture of fear,  
where brown equals danger  
and danger equals fright  
and fright boils down into  
the carbon solid hate.

what tornado has torn through  
your rights?  
what trampling of dignity have  
you endured?  
what disgrace has this society burdened  
your future?

there might have been a time when  
there were no gods on land to look up to,  
where the skies filled expectations  
of what we wanted in this short blip on an  
oval of a big rock spinning erratically around a star.

there might have been a time when  
we didn't lay into one another with verbal abuse,  
where the colours simply reflected those in nature  
of the diversity of our own kingdom.

and yes, we're doing perhaps better than  
hosing each other down to wash off the  
indelible ink of human birth.

but we shouldn't be happy with our  
culture of fear.  
we are cooking in a cauldron that has  
been blackened with age,  
stained with the past concoctions  
mistakenly thrown together in the hurried attempt at survival.

we drink what we brew,  
and the bitterness is nothing more  
than the first taste.  
be warned, I tell myself, of  
what dangers may come,  
when ignorance breeds jeopardy.

March 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 6:45 p.m.

## the directions of our society

some pointed upwards,  
with stars in their shimmering eyes  
gasping with the exaltation of what  
dreams may come.

some looked downwards,  
not even focused on the intricate coordination  
of pebbles and stones in the esoteric system  
no one could have planned.

some marched forwards,  
inching along in the only direction where  
progress made advances and receding was  
foreign to our vocabulary.

some fall backwards,  
terrified of what dangers may might could be  
somewhere around every next single corner  
rather frightened et al.

some just existed,  
longing for a moment of zen when  
the directions of our society would point  
to success, regardless of our orientation.

I am those some.

March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 - 9:34 p.m.

## plantations, slavery and society

we have been planters,  
fields sorted out and crops cultivated,  
seeds littering our pockets,  
saving every potential gain.

sewing in our blood,  
the way we weave to and fro  
and inordinately calm the masses  
with what we grow.

they sit on the sidelines,  
sipping their life's lemonade,  
the product and delivery of us.  
we, the farm workers.

they savour little,  
the profits of our labour  
lining their pockets:  
a suitable exploitation.

it's a strange relationship,  
where the sun might as well beat down  
on either collective set of brows  
but we enjoy the weather most.

it's not out of fear for toiling,  
it's not out of doubt for laziness,  
it's the asphyxiation of thinking  
what disaster comes when we rest.

April 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 3:12 p.m.

## confidence

confidence,  
it's under there.

It decorates that otherwise  
definition-lacking formation,  
the curvature that edges  
only make more pronounced.

it's growth,  
an emotional stability  
that removal tends to  
shake.

it's a standoff,  
the protests that never were  
attended,  
but secretly find such affirmation  
and camaraderie.

it's a dictionary of redefinition,  
the logic of gender moulded  
into cells that accumulate  
visibly redder than the blood  
I know exists just millimeters below.

I could remove it,  
yes,  
and not change  
but physically.

I am more than a wearer.  
I am more than a leftist adherer.  
I am more than a conformer.  
I am more than a masculine expression.

Confidence,  
it's under here.

April 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 3:19 p.m.

## unicorns

The growing idealist collected  
unicorns.

it wasn't meant to be a sense of  
conformity,  
and certainly, who really yearns to  
differentiate oneself from the flock?

but the seas of pouring stallions  
reverberating over the waves,  
under the viciously lonely eyes  
of a monger,  
brought the flood that likely enters  
those who choose a celibate devotion  
to the high and mighty.

but the potential place in history,  
as the keeper.  
the one who forged through the barriers  
that mystique and mistake place  
he who would caulk our records  
with the new entries dreamed about  
by the lost souls of the middle years.

it wasn't meant to solve these life lessons,  
and objectively,  
little real thought ever went into what processes  
would ever find their way into implementation.

but the shelves lined themselves just as  
the edging trim paper encircled the walls,  
and the reflections in thoughts  
became the manner for existence.

the growing idealist collected  
unicorns.

it didn't matter what some said  
of the impossibility.  
it was the smidgen. the dying,  
desolate, dreary,  
and droll attempt at defining  
the small chance.

it could be,  
dormant, under the brush,  
in the farthest reaches,  
unrealized to those who carried on other business,  
concealed not only to our eyes but also to our minds,  
the mere feasibility astounded.

the growing idealist collects  
unicorns, of sorts.

this world needs the whole herd  
to rove this kingdom  
of glorious possibilities.

April 8<sup>th</sup> 2008 - 11:26 p.m.

