

# AMBIT

GERALD CREEDE

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for Jan



# 1

## AN OFF SEASON IN HELL

They don't tune watches or cut gems but can  
twirl dials and move rules fractions. Like a slurring  
child they run and mumble. They don't do windows.  
These are numbered.

No two melted snowflakes are different.  
Nothing forbidden and nothing done.  
They were just a careless family.  
Give me a slice of that nice pie.  
It's not time in your arms.

Rolling a pen on the desk with the back of the tip of his index finger, wasting tears on kleenex, pondering aluminum, not life, lying on linoleum. A good time was had.

This was way before the above.

She rolled off him and off the bed, sat at the mirror fixing pins in her hair.

"That was super," she said genuine then. He peeled the sheet down and looked at his naked body deflexing.

"Able to leap off tall buildings in a single bound," he agree.

It was like the little cut out was alive. He watched the old women in drug stores ogling bags of salted cashews. Next came the floor show. Flash floods drown elk. Roues are made to be broken. Advance token to jail.

She drew his portrait with long prism shaped pencils on heavy unwieldy stone. She was happy about how working the litho press shaped her arms. His face dulled as he saw the first print.

"If only I would grow old," he sighed, the room suddenly heavy in the silence in it, "if only I could grow old, while the picture remained the same, for that I would give anything."

I put my index and forefinger through my neck and into my head, my thumb in my left arm, the ring tucked in my palm and the baby in my right arm. Using a combined cupping and pincer motion I can make it appear that I'm waving my arms and talking. They took advantage of the low ceiling and made it a children's room. Baby got into the sugar cubes, sweet worked with dirt into pores.

The man stood with his back to the bed and shed his clothes with awkward jerky movements of his arms and legs, used to prairie winter, saving his socks till last.

"I wish you had three or four feet to take socks off of," she said from the bed, "so I could watch you bend over longer."

Every morning is the same morning till they start pointing out the curious rearrangements, last night vague to the last, another waft of soft offal. He looks out the window and remembers a picture of mountains before he'd seen mountains, what figured can't be out, resolves again to make the best of the few days of the rest of the century. Composes insinuations of clarity, innuendo with precision. Between three and four trims wicks. Eats again. Finnish vodka. He looked down past his shoulders, these weren't arms and hands, but fore feet. The carrot was in his mouth, the cart parked.



## 2

### NEGATIVE MISHANDLING

Patience is a game of solitaire, a moment's reprieve from genuine respite & even bores have sidekicks.

Perhaps cutting cards to the table, losing some to the floor & if you really concentrated.

Still never could draw water, the first cuts done to precision & arced crescents.

Maybe you watch the hands working not, what they're working & whiskers on roses.

Always the cut outs don't align with the  
outline, a crotchless helmet & a wet deck.

Yet the future prepares history for revision,  
you can't get there from here & it's like it never  
happened.

## THE FACE FALLS

My aunt was a virgin. I woke up in the basement. Is this after awhile? She wrote her name in all my books. I have vampire bites on my right shoulder. When she wasn't home and I didn't know where she was I'd put on her lipstick, kiss the lip of another glass and leave it on the drainboard. He pinched the tiny swab between his fingers and sucked on them. She ran into him again on another bad day. This century they replaced clownaforms with unasuits and still we line up. At once the others rushed at him and insisted on performing sundry surgical operations. They were just not.

When my aunt died her spring went. Though she was out of earshot when it was spoken it was spoken. If she sat any closer he would be incensed. Listen to the consonance in that laugh. It at least gave the impression that something was being interfered with. With the winch.

He didn't think the whisky would smell on his breath because it was day. Cater brained. She told him, my boyfriend's asleep in that room, be quiet. She wore a turban but was then naked from her eyes down. In another day she said, twirling a finger idly between her legs, they'll be as long as my curls. In the

gradeschool the rumour was spread among young girls that come was pink. He kept dirty books in the loft of the garage. Boys turned their eyelids inside out to scare the more timid, for a laugh he'd get his funny ear to fall open. I'd slap you around if my lawyer wasn't out of town to beat the rap. Running the usual tests they found the otherwise normal child had acetate in her saliva. The head beats and the heart aches. Details such as the lack of shoelaces and socks, the lank, uncombed hair, the ugly polyester shirt rolled up on one arm but not the other, reveal the character as a low life, a derelict, unwilling or unable to care for his physical appearance and at the mercy of his impulses. We turn on the lights and sit in the living room. But then I wouldn't show mine. Man drools talking to the child about banana splits, aplomb of hand. Even the devil can quote women. Sometimes things she drops seem to fall from above her. I'm certain that he felt sorry that my catatonia was so obvious today. I imagine men leaning on rakes burning mounds of leaves by the roadside as if such a thing once existed. You were able to say, look there, and take something off his plate. For this intents and purposes, I like hags.

I assumed hers was open, the way it covered my mouth, but I was too inexperienced to explore with mine. This tonality based on a sinus condition, a disappearing chin. When I say virgin I only know she never got married. On her deathbed her last words were... is the mother of necessity, but she died before she could start. By her side they placed a huge candle with a threadlike wick that burned almost blue. It wasn't that, it was more like that. He

miscomprehends comprehension and whacked himself on the thumb with a hammer but not hard enough to hurt it. I can put it away, I said, but I can't handle it. He looked like deathwhelmed over, and left her standing at the divorce court. I was overwarmed. Time giving me the same old lines. Deaf, feeling the house vibrate. Looking at the fog through binoculars. By day, milling people, by night, strings of light. I forgot for a moment that I knew I knew that. She didn't come to visit often, mom didn't like her plus it wasn't comfortable for her to be us in the same place. The four by four started tumbling end over end through the foliage and I clutched at the roll bar said when we stop don't go into shock. Nice plants. I turned my shoulder so far I was back looking over it. Now I want another one to keep secret from the other two.

## DETACH

If I was bred in a different time, she joked, a different place, I'd have a stack of silk stockings, indicating a height, this high, more chocolate than I could eat. If he had been born in a different time he could be a has-been by now, and remembers a balcony though he's not sure there was one. She is certain, and makes insufferable life, sufferable. Dull lull before the calm while symptoms come on like remedies. Thisaway. He arranged the furniture so he could look down at the clock then laughed along with everyone else but didn't get it till she explained it to him. Please, is there a décor in the house.

He leaves her bed recovering from sleep, an ember embers, endures, her morning breath like honey but no coffee for sugar, still wet in this weather always promising to clear. He looked up at the bottom of the sky musingly then watched a newspaper tumble a few feet before pudding into cement. Often runs into someone he hasn't seen since yesterday. Crowds moving in bookstore and espresso bar busily reading. His face falls to the asphalt, that scrap of tabloid must be today's horoscope, reads, watch out for yours elf, you can't keep a down man good, bad time to travel, get back indoors. He moves slowly on, the day not passed but gotten through,

remembers her robe opened on her side and she pressed her hip into his mouth then turned. Is whence an activity or a place.

As has that night, elbows skinned, hard ears in a soft bed. Blondie pees with the door open and Dagwood listens to the hum of her vulva, imagines nudging the string of water through gravity. He moves the shade so he can look out at the sky, at clouds swaying around mountains' waists. When the inch is offered not given the distance is different. Cleanliness is privacy, it is late, and Dagwood's thought just drafts. He was waiting till it got nice and she could wear a skirt on their walks. Another night he's not really tired he just goes to sleep, dreams of knives tiny enough to scale sperm.

In the midway of this life we're partner with,  
I awoke to find me in a dark wood,  
Where not only was the only way fixed,  
It is hard to speak of what it was,  
All the exit went waylaid, thick end of ever  
Covered trace  
Of an even stray path, then up in the rain,  
Lo! Skytrain.

## THE FLAMES DON'T LOOK REAL

You get fond of the twittering and floating feathers and it's nice and calm like the sea in her house, bird noises seem only surf on this particular ocean. She talks to the blue one and teases its breast. The green budgie makes jealous waves.

We've shared the housework, the dishes are vehicles, I'd lied, handing her the soap, I'll watch, you drive.

I sit in my dilapidated chair looking at TV while she consoles my wear feather friends. The CNN has the latest spill... the oily boid, my consciousness starts joking, but did Jan say "pretty birdy," or, "don't worry."

"Honey, I..." I start.

"Have a headache," she finishes, helping my throat to a few pain killers. Her mouth puts a shell to my ear and she secures the shawl more firmly over my shoulders. If she said, "pretty birdy," I wonder, did she mean me or the blue one. She checks my pulse and scratches my throat like I like. And if she said, "don't worry," what's the green one got to worry about.



# 3

## WORSENERD WORDS

The aplomb of vocation, going on vacation.  
Up the up staircase, go directly to go, for sure not for  
maybe.

Language, over here, hit the barn side of  
abroad. How you gonna keep 'em down in Paree after  
they've seen the farm? How you gonna keep 'em  
down in an incandescent seascape.

Next shouts then more oldfangledness. I hang  
onto every word you slur. Are those double m's.  
Where's the sexton? I have some bad news about the  
birds.

## RESUMÉ

I wrote him  
He didn't write  
He wrote: Now that lilacs are  
in bloom she has  
explosives.  
He painted his  
apartment  
a shade called Fled Yellow  
His life a series of small  
deals that fell through.  
I burned my  
bridges while they were still  
in the erector set while father read the instruction  
sheet  
My life a series  
of small deeds  
that fell  
through.  
He thought the bugs  
on the window were birds  
outside it.  
I wrote,  
The rich fancy themselves  
lions, but lions don't horde  
the rich store,

chipmunks have the same courage.  
It must have rained  
I see  
a dorsal  
at my window  
sill  
that chick is shake of ship in placid  
so facile the tone of the sheen amazes me  
the char leases a shard leans, pleases  
cease ill needle mender spent  
dentless, dour hourglass  
flinch grounder bounces resolute  
& hidden, unbidden, unespoken  
bounder from a bent squealer  
music flows oddly & otherwi  
appeases block in middle  
green loads lob the words  
in rim shots, paragraphs on high  
hat! the strain of string  
the irony in packages  
cavalier in unresponsive  
dunces! time packages lode passages.  
Let me walk  
the seawall  
one more  
time.

I wrote her and she didn't write me, if it's like  
the gleaning of your own memory, like, then you  
know what she's really like, she's like you,  
Like as to make our appetites more keen  
so why the want of more detail, ponderings,  
you vain you.

I worked for Charles Laue Ltd., a brake part manufacturer, where I was employed as a quality control inspector. I gained experience with micrometers, rules, shadowgraphs, and other precision measuring tools.

squirrels

store

nuts

their estates

palatial

I beg your

rose garden I never

promised you a

hardon.

The cools are in an uproar & the pallans rage inright. The shmoahs refute any connection to the calumbinds, and the shesharsee disconnect all literal ramifications and put dindus on the shmoahs. The shmoos accept then fake the blame, own the puntahs on the relays, growlifications, hick diggens. At this juncture Wilbur defected to the shomoolies, stabbed in the abacus.

Then knighted

by Charles III

and allowed to

usurp the present Duke

of Buckingham.

I whirled, whirling

into her arms

her mouth tasted

of scotch & tea

she was a woman  
of the last few  
centuries.

genius chisels  
& the living die

I won't watch my mouth  
I won't make it with you

lettuce  
tomato  
doesn't  
may amaze!

hilk  
dilgens

I was employed by Wesgar Industries, a sheet metal shop which formed and cut panels for computer hardware assembly. I gained experience in all stages of sheet metal set up, shearing, forming, drill press, and learned the use of basic measuring tools and gauges.

She wrote. I hear the creaking in the winter night, wire spun through slender fingers, talking in the cold off the line, snapping pins on apron waistbands. When I'm walking, he says, I hate cars, but when I'm driving, he laughs, I hate pedestrians, explaining how life is. Equivocator.  
one, two, ted, four.

I got the blues so  
bad she didn't  
leave me  
- She was gone.  
Even the plant she  
left grew  
away the plank  
we shared  
walked off.

That our  
enemies  
are our  
friends in dream  
is no mistake  
neither that our  
friends lie  
there.  
To choose the wrong  
door is a mistake  
but it's not  
a mistake  
in dream  
to choose the wrong door.

He wrote:  
When you fail  
we'll still have  
each other,  
come  
telling  
in  
pense

Next  
to him  
was as  
close  
as I  
got

I don't  
want to  
remember  
this like  
it was  
yesterday

They were  
all in a row  
the points made  
in order and  
useless to  
highlight or  
understand

I asked her maybe  
To see what I miss

Are you accepting job résumés, I asked the receptionist who reached I thought at first to push the button summoning security, but only into the desk for an application.

A landscape of the north shore. Fancied flames in the fore that don't look real, an inspired mix

of black and shades of gray, a little yellow, blue  
buried in back, a podge of pink, red, mauve, yellow  
and bum brown crumpled and flushed, yellow and  
orange made red by two dark shades of blue, a pink  
one called what? they were at the beach it and I  
enveloped, the palm trees started out beach  
umbrellas. A tight white  
colour everywhere  
in the  
waiting room were  
crippled they admitted  
it even the  
doctors.

while machines rest they fix themselves

There is  
no infidelity  
in dream  
if there  
were it wouldn't  
be called  
dream  
like minds  
that don't  
need all  
the detail  
like

catapult the partialist

derelectics



if 5 were 3

I hear voices but  
I'm always listening to something  
else  
and miss  
what they say?

Vancouver looks like Malta used to.

There's no other  
place around the place  
so this must be the  
place I reckon.

Education: Lined up, sleeve rolled,  
for inoculation.

... jo blocks, torque wrenches, rivet guns, stop  
watches. I am familiar with the small warehouse  
procedures and assembly plant operation.

He wrote:  
If she didn't  
wet the seat  
I've nothing  
to drink.

The room was airy so I sat alone in the corner  
of it while my financial records, my search for  
income, was questioned in a manner the tone  
implying I had a yacht hidden away somewhere. I  
kicked my deck shoes under the corner of the desk. "I

didn't come here to jump on no Welfare  
Bandwagon," I pleaded, "I need retraining."

I think: workshop it if you want, and then  
sit on it for about a month. It is a résumé.  
Did you leave anything out that ought to be  
in? (Me, I wouldn't know...)

I walked 37 miles with my shoes tied  
Got a paisley print on my necktie  
Got a King James Version at my bedside  
Covered in weathered cow hide.

December 17, couldn't sleep, reindeer on roof.

the lights on the dock  
are just like the ball  
park  
cables rise into the  
dark  
like home runs

## BOY SOPRANO

A blanket line  
's the inside  
of my side  
of the bed  
I tried to  
turn & slow  
down but she  
pulled the squirt  
out of me  
Hold me in your arms  
feel my temperature  
drop  
Turn your pockets  
out & lean  
up against  
the car  
Flowers part and pussywillows. Wheat winnows in  
ground cover. The pillow burrows. The lovers fade  
down fond in façade. There's something funny about  
everything. You're funny too.

\*

Because she wore the same dress to work 2 days in a row. 1989. What a laugh. Counting the clouds before they break. The winter exhaled and carried on. Cancer of the teeth. How's the flaw's solution. How the fuck is it. I riffle through the thinning calendar. October -- still untouched by human hand. I am a so hamed shh. You can't win them all. I got to get home I might have left the stove on. If it weren't for the junk I'd never know the mail came.

\*

Detail middles the layers.  
A fine clear morning but sharp and cold.  
There goes the nicotine patina  
There goes the palatial fellatio.

\*

2 guys watch from a porch while movers carry the futon frame to the side entrance. Her hand was in mind but she wasn't holding it. I am so exhausted. A shadow fell back on part of her face like the beginnings of or remnants of a veil. Her steely eyes set off the metal detector of my heart. Getting ready to have been scared. Dan hiss by my window. Gerry pedals into a head wind. Kevin seize the means of projection.

\*

But the absent cigarette: Without tobacco enhancement the bank smells like a toilet, the video

store like a movie lobby. And those scents behind the  
Gents door.

\*

Our fondest keepsakes are replaceble  
I tried to  
slue and turn down  
so one foot  
dirties the other  
so water is thinner than blood

## TOMORROW NEVER KNEW

There was nothing but room in emergency parking at the clinic on the edge of the badly lit zone. He fouled up a natural from on now looking for any storm in a port found refuge in amnesia. That's probably where he made his mistake. Not with but of, all not just of about to within. Amnesia. He knew he had it but he didn't know what that meant. How old is this water. Grandpa called them escarpments. The operation was a success but the surgeon died.

"Some friend," she said.

Consequently it wasn't insomnia, he couldn't remember to sleep. She closed her eyes and relented and he watched the crowds in the face of her troubled dream, touched her filmy chemise, a weave sustaining a slip, what awake if slumber will.

They walk in no money with cold weather. He looked at colours. She was svelte in violet but ecstasy and dread shimmered in the same flinch. But back then he was good and didn't suspect anything. Quiet to the contrary.

They lived in kept up unkempt premises, measured the distance in the room between them. She knits another cable knit sweater. Then entire days. Is she wearing one bracelet or not wearing one. Boys and girls turned to couple of adults. His mouth's coat

shoots more soft core talk. Accumulated humiliation. Marooned with a view they measured the room in the distance between them. Except you can shut books.. Outside he called an insult out.

A sunny day on the porch, a perfectly good hammock, air full of the scent of blown roses in boiled tea, a breeze ruffles the shakes as an apprentice butterfly and other insects at surprising altitudes drone downward, as bland a sound as the day is blanked, vacant signs on the sides of the sky. He gets a stiff neck rolling over and sleeping on the side of his head. From blister to fur, tired of getting nicked by old razors anyway. The roof of the house sings of abrupt society in this tongue bite mouth world, vacant sighs, tears brim and evaporate. The day doesn't progress but withdrawals from morning, paper waits, dry leaves on a clean floor. Then a good stiff wind.

He would walk neighbourhoods full of shut up houses in tan pants that made him look naked, listened once in awhile to the sound of children playing in the distance. He sneezes, waits for the hold to pass. When he could remember things he'd worry that something just remembered might be something he'd just forgotten. He stared out the window hours on end erasing the mountains, thought a bit more about relative happiness. A good day to take those ice skates to the pawn shop. The patient was a success but the operation died. She throws it back like something's amiss. When he matured it was still a boy's voice, fear without anticipation, sky froth. She took a simple recipe, some black eyed peas, a few

tomatoes, and went insane. In spring: bees, he succumbs.

Another story about Dick and Jane and Spot. The toy's name was kite. Jane stabbed bits of table crumb with the tip of her finger while she listened to Dick talk, expectations diminished by their inception, too lost to be alone. She handed him it then climbed over the fence he threw it to her and she had it off the ground before it was over.

Does Spot perspire? He looks like a sweater. Would he run away if he got outside? Some owed for weeks but Dick didn't mind the inked fingers folding them, with some customers he could collect twice. He bought Spot a pet ground hog. He buy Jane jaw breakers. He built a bike with his older brother's discarded frames. The head of the patrol came over to his corner and said, turn in your belt. Finished, not done. Dick don't like sticks.

"Un," he quipped.

Jane was reluctant. He hadn't been home in hours and the phone hadn't rung. She looked down at the broken old man with pity and remorse; if only she had not invited him into her house. It's when you're not bothering them that they hurt you.



## THE BLOND PLUMBER

1. The man struggled from sleep early, wary, Sandman no longer content to just dirt eyes, then made a suspicious sight on morning streets where instead of jogging he pendulated.

He went to work, thought in catalogues of adjectives, found a capable plan to turn brilliant obstacle into ordinary epiphany. 25 o'clock shadow. John-boy Dickens. It was the worst of times and it was the worst of times.

(Back home out of boredom and frustration the guys would sometimes weld a wrench to the inside of a trunk lid just to screw product control around, otherwise absolutely powerless, with wages.)

He pauses and reaches for the shelf but remembers what the page looks like before he touches the cover. The muffled sound of a glove knocking wood. At night he doesn't swing either. Before he takes a bite he wonders if it's the tomato he's dreamed of. They aren't home and they don't know you're there.

Again he wakes to armed clocks, a taste of metal he's so sure of, too tired to be cold, naked and fog bound. For some events read stakeouts. When you lie down in made beds you get up smelling of sleep.

2. The double bed was a rectangle the size of a small fort and they slept close in case of attack, some feet quarrelling over the blanket at the far end. Occasionally he'd grind his teeth and she'd roll him a little.

Adjusting the hold on the dog's arm fills the tub up. Hot was on but cold came out. You have to pull the plug to relieve it plus a little oil on the pelvis and squeeze. The air felt like a web of ribonucleic train whistle. They play all morning, he pretends fold those and put them away means to toss pants on floor. She puts him in a half nelson until the room tinges. She goes to the store while he makes lists. Indigo we trust. Indifference is better than no feeling. Why time indolence? Watch how when the spool drops off the wire the bus stops and the lights go out.

Leisure on a tether, extraneous ease. Did you say something? He was listening to something else. He suffered tinnitus, she had a ring on her hand.

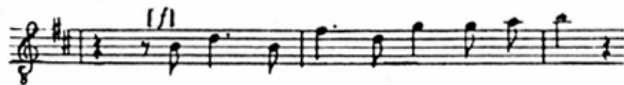
## CUBBYHOLE

A few of us had a study group for a couple of weeks. I went to si habla down si habla to see si habla the mechanic, except doing so sounded split for a second. So one pair of socks go twice as far. Words to that effect. Not so agile as it is clever. That bookshelf looks great. He wanted a bucket of stem & about this much string. The first quarter the first two thirds of the second quarter the last quarter. It was a good thing the rain came straight down. Mind ding. Mother would often take back my lunch money to buy gin. The solemn of whiz domain. Our hats don't accept gratuities... would have done'd. You don't adapt to an avalanche.

# 4

## VERBOSE

... a lifeless mitt, an arm limp & jelly-like, squeegees the page, mishears, "horrified", as "4 or 5," has no appetite, claims, I understand you on one level, shops for dry goods, focuses on one sense at the expense of understanding, content with leftovers, takes exercise that further relax its overextended biceps, goes back to the store, pursues the obvious relentlessly, is half boring half beastly or mediogre, wears shoes for brooms & walks in such a way its laces come loose & takes shortcuts to kneeling, during sex concentrates on entombment, detumescence is its favourite word, savours rolling through the syllables of chaste, yet again to the store, has only prurient interests, did I forget to mention flaccid, expects to get bricked into a cellar leaving any number of fraudulent wills bequeathing nothing to anyone, still it's wonderful what progress you can make by just doing this:



An animal with a pouch is marsupial.

## SEASONAL INTERLUDE

Winter cloud obscures the stars too far away anyway. Cold cloud smouldering icily in the dim dark still night. Snow falls & disappears until the ground is frozen & it disappears. There is blue in white in the light of the spectrum to explain the colour in the glisten as it falls. A soothing blanket blanches city soot to northern myth, the sort of 'scape 'surd notions of purity crystallize in. Travellers out in it trudge determined, depth slows pace, pace quiets thought & stink is just dank in the freeze. A dog's paws splay to balance, the steam from its snout horse in armour on December heath.

Soon the ring of shovels, the clang of salt disturbs the sonorous quiet of it falling, scraping it back to boundaries & edges -- the stuff you own once it falls on your walk. Rolled into men of carrots & coal, snow forts, snow fights, snow fun. No.2 packed flakes are different. Rusty sleds leave orange in the track on the rise you roll down in summer. Hardy boys play football on the ballfield, the infield the end zone, the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line a touchdown. An equine dog stops to yellow a drift.

The boy was out bare headed -- had a new hair cut he didn't want bent. The girl pushed her furry hood back & put her hand inside his mitten. It

was wet in his palm in spite of the cold outside. They lay on their back & made angels, pushed white stuff into igloos. Heat 'scaped from a tear in his winter pants. Lips chapped as they kissed, thin water from their noses snogged unnoted into rosy cheeks. She let him touch her breasts, over the sweater but under the snow.

## OUCHCLIP

Benign gray sleep, a gray gray, gray blue blue, gray blue blue blue blue. Spare changed while I clench fists & turn over. The road to hell is paved with cement. Heaven is full of 8 year olds who died in toboggan accidents. That cloud looks like a bowl. That one looks like a bowl upside down. That one's fingers bend as its feet retract, its spiral tongue becomes a twisted ear. That one looks so like Achilles I shiver. Blue, black blue, shiner blue. That cloud looks like a bowl of oatmeal. Hmmm. Oat Meal. That one looks like a spoon & brown sugar. Bruise green, green blue, azure, pink. Fold marks in the gossamer that falls from wherever. A shell-less delicate yellowless blue. That cloud grows another mouth to bite the first, its tails become flocks of birds that fly apart at the seams. A few hours east they're reading newspaper by moonlight. I spill up hasty breakfast, the above, & banana, colourless food I'm not bothered seeing again, didn't taste, spewed fruit is fresh earth. Falling out of love with that which does not fall back. If he lolls his head a little & moans that's OK but if he starts feeling his arms hit him again. I've looked at clouds from both sides now. (We hold truth self-evident also, we do takes! We are true vast & endowed too. We take liquor in gallon outfits from

alcohol outlets you half-pint lite! Tucked into holster pocket corner store imbiber types, you. We are borealis dizzy. We read newspaper by moonlight all day. You say armfuls, we say armsful. When they starve in the tropiccs, that's life, when we do it in the cold, that's cruel. (Tu n'est pas un ami. Le paysage est la. Est-ce qu'il y a un moment facile même chose? Evade(void)able huh? veil. Ma mère stretched her starched cowl into stalwart anglophones. I scowled at the peonies until they burst into flame & my nose bled. Sis seduced other foliage. She flirted with an hedge while the buggy rolled unheeded into the street. She soured the times she sat, scoured me in the tub. I sent little brother to corner store with my nickel for penny candy. He got back 4 1/2 hours later with less than 2¢ worth, a coconut ball & part of a grab bag. He scratched his arms & rubbed his nose as he lied about a hole in his pocket a sidewalk grate. But I vacillate. When I was 4 1/2 I'd say I was 5 but when I was 6 I claimed to be 5 1/2. My parents weren't social activists. I learned to untie my shoelaces. Nous allons au go go. (Clay gray, earth green, liver yellow, kite blue, rocket pink. You can have that one, it's empty.) Nimble youth fill the new day with slight shadow, cautious youth alert to faltered diffidence ring the air with best mind apprehension. Be Careful On the Teeter-Totter advised the sign on the playground. I took this to mean kill. I watched the TV though the show wasn't very good. Hah, it wasn't any good. These space farmers sow homo sapien into an unlikely climate & live to regret it. I think I'd seen it before (though) relapse has saved me thus far.) The RSVP suggested Moderate Alcohol & Reminiscence of



Drugs. An opportunity to operate heavy machinery & drive.) My pa could never remember which way the crank turned on his Model T. He'd stand there in the converted pasture, crank in hand, the other scratching his thick gray head, a thoughtballoon so big it extended out of the panel over the barn in the background the cows used to stand by, COUNTER? it said in it next to a light bulb that was uncertain not invented yet.

Some times when you finish writing a letter then put the addressee out of mind a little while as new priorities arise but when you owe a cherished correspondent attention you think of them often as I think of you Jack. I've lived in this neighbourhood quite a few years & have outlasted its original dogs. I remember the grandsires of the crossbreeds who snarl now on my otherwise tame night time walks. I remember softer pavement. I remember this boulevard of lawn, the lamppost there. It's getting colder or I feel the cold more. Blue gray, gray, dark gray, black. I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too. My ears prick to the warning of their collars that jingle jangle jingle.

## LARK MOULT

She ran her thumb down the line of his jaw, in the other, out one ear, tomorrow, she said, they'll be as long as eyelashes. The colour of the sky at five in the morning about as tired as he got. My, look at those klieg lights. Frozen leaves of decay clung to the limbs of the bare trees. Oxygen, & the night air glow. A distance covered to the comfort of the ground.

He's standing there with his bird in his hand & a rag full of wet glue. How could he forge the rejoinder. Clenched throat vomits kid glove. Toss me my purse. The recurring dog bowl. We don't care about anything, we just came to account for the furniture. He was stunned when, by October, some of them still couldn't read. They are read & blue, so called tuinals.

She ran her fingers across the open magazine, over the torso, in one either. He was blond. She was darke. Few frames frozen in decay still clung to the bare trees, season intentional if not conscious. A statue of limitations. Cut his show costs in half. He got home from the date contented, having gotten his, "brakes lined."

No one is sure what causes the improvement. He made him give him his sandwich. Once

misheard, "see you later," as "salivator." Watched the head lamps nictitating. A cup of coffee & half a box of sug. If twist tops had been invented yet he might have nails. Get the plate out of your face. I'm fascinated by that machine. Vapid before voiced, roof of mouth callused as a palm, a no fault archive. She was sitting around filing, bored, into emery not memory. Having gotten, "a little overdrive." What's goin' on? Anywa'? He was stunned when, by November; mittens.

She fell over the bed with her arms held tightly to the side of her face swollen like a ripe plum. Still sap clung to the sprockets. The last time he'll ever go into a kitchen without his pants on. Nomoamour. Something something, married physicist, Grand Somewhere someplace. We thought it was a male until it started laying eggs. "Loosely illustrated," as, "hallucinated." Don't fuck with the bolts on that one. Congranulations, sugar.

Initial performance falls off. This thick, indicating. Diminishing capabilities. The only thing that ever interested him about plants. His throat bent at the elbow tongue in her mouth before their lips touch. Seeing it with one hand, gnawing it with the other, prefers dental charts.

Spent his youth ripping ex libris stickers from found poetry. Having gotten his, "eyes shifted." They pulled into the service centre & used the washrooms, they looked human, - but they pissed from radiator hoses & the vein in the neck quivered like wire, hoodwinked, they'd gotten their oil changed, engina trouble, warranties called in, gestation period. Her, "tubes tied." Movement in the periphery they describe

as like bugs jumping. Yeah you no you year you no you. He fingered the lace doily. As, "you'll be through in a minute." She made him feel her him whorish. You should see her in a redress. The embicible man. Referred to as a vowel freak. Roof of mouth callow as upon.

Slide of hands flips club card face up, then a royal flush, a trick towel, perhaps his father was the man they shot out of the cannon. They are a black & blue, so called mandrax.

She touches his cheek & puts a bit of cartoon cheese in his mouth, forgone but not gotten, a digit pokes into his belly button & astks when's the elevator coming? Shissue. Well, his own bathwater maybe. He counted the rings & that sparrow was 96 in dog years. Tasting all 360 degrees of the tart. As he tucked one ankle into the other he sniffed the carnations. She wipe puke from the mouth of the toilet, he too hungry at carnival, he buy caramel candy. Play me that surgical tape. "Fall fashions," as, "false actions." One morning earlier that afternoon the silly trees weeped. The halo dissolves with the compact snapped shut. Next time leave the sulfur at home. The possibilities are finite. A seven syllable three word sentence. The maligned tigers. When he was due at the hotel.

Topic sentence. A flea crawled into the hollow of his longing. Apparently years later grains of sand can be found in the bed. She planted her lips on him & he plumaged, if that's a real caress he asked. There is no feature. She fell asleep at the party, the men

wide atalk. This is a wig. All these people, the old similar faces, a trap enfolds as it envelops. Some of them break their hips, then they fall down. Light decays & music sounds no warning. Once overheard, "see you later," as, "you'll pay for this." The sky is black out & it's raining. Moss grows in random patches. Listen for the clicks.

## THE PETRIFIED FOREST

Wall dat lug star drown watch of the against  
cup pop the dead. Yikes, yikes, yikes, this is ordeal  
what the language is, the order, the smell. Oh poetry,  
say that's pretty hot. They began to crave the  
washing. Because I like metaphor. He takes one in the  
face and falls on his but he thinks so he takes another  
in the face. You aim the chumps as those behind  
them, a cracked cloud, a fridge not caring. Little clips  
on our noses as we backstroke through the void. He  
said, I & the boys is wreckless crooks that nature  
hadn't learned yet it oughten have let learned to live.  
She pulled his shirt over his head, gagging him, then  
lingered a moment smiling while the cuffs had his  
wrists bound. Such good I wish you.

He was so shy around girls. Near the end of  
the first grade a girl with auburn hair asked him to  
walk her home. They were in front of her house. Are  
unisoning. How did she get hold of the scissors. What  
is it that dares step into step ins. I needed a cigarette  
before I was born. Partly crippled so that the stride  
breaks & the sole slaps flat on the cement, like you  
were walking on your back in a turf sport jacket. The  
thin sound of layer behind meaning. A dream about  
an affable.

May I half your attention please. Thanks for the memory. Sometimes you know exactly about happiness, how to get through a few minutes. I met this guy, a jeweller, & he tells me, this guy tells me, right in the midst of his own shop, that he thought his own hands too dear for rings. It was a bad shot pop but I had to get it off fast, now I let that mug make a mug out of me but don't anybody try it again. Yes sir yes sir thank you sir. Words in print, a girl with red hair. Toss me a salad. All this bunk about separate boys in double beds. 23 skidoo & other excuses. I had my chance & muffed it. Nix pal, get down. I can't awhile uphold upon.

## FALUABLES

whelmed  
wombed over  
over onto thon  
whist then it  
good day cold world

worr world  
sets sun it  
some sum on  
stun bin or  
same as when  
all wix test  
and bud thur  
it got colder at night

le mot épais



nother on nun  
see sisen't stay  
sisen't it say  
sig cyn on  
none other than

lull in calm  
life carroms  
to again next then  
spling  
mymer  
hysmer  
liars argot snussuf  
watch ode

scentless sweets  
saddle a shadow  
makes anyway either  
and possib feasible  
runs on a treadmill  
lives for awhile  
replaced by a gerbil

broken into

not one jot  
not iota I  
owe you not  
a wish or a  
wrist not a  
wriish

hearth end all  
and all graze  
word anent twit  
little nev 4  
nor I you

lift ton on  
sift in bother  
trade in skin  
turn in kith  
trace dos unos  
plodding on  
another anon  
a bug in a tree  
a cicada in an acacia

elastitalics  
a nonce in a scone  
a shortshrift

lapse in  
certain while will  
whether real save  
so it's though and  
though sure isn't  
this isn't sure nor  
certain but a  
miserable research

spoken for

just justing  
beworder thrusts  
while loam churns  
phiddling sparks  
piddly barks on

still and each else  
flaunted as pretense  
morever always pleasant  
whizzling quick  
menace on your  
an ordinary afternoon

## CLOSE TO NAKED

a collaboration with Nancy Shaw

No movement in the sky but smoke and birds. He can't get his coat off fast enough to turn around. Dramatic rescue, insular tragedy. A slave to medic sin. Are you experts? Have you ever been experts? A soprano collapses and the opera calls a time out.

Around next block. We always hung out in someone else's neighbourhood. Funny weather for ice cream. Raindrops on roses and whiskers on killers. Frantic tactics around midnight. Swimming in the hot sun, a mixture of bitten cork. Through a time, some play music. Cheery chords.

Figuring through the garden in a rare burst of eloquence. Someone special is waving so you must become less tearful. Next to the man with the top hat. Through the front glass. Porcelain rain.

Eliminating possibilities before they occur. They did their exercises in a public park before they were killed. This is the image being projected at home and abroad. He hallucinates breasts on silhouettes. Under eave is attic. He is to french. Just as rolled futon is a sleep cache.

He'd had enough of intrigue. A movie night, a barbecue, a mixed dance. It had stopped wondering him. He called running the perimeter of grade school recess, 'mingling with the guests.' All the closeups are body doubles.

A touching pitch is his amplified version. Instead of going out by the side door, suddenly he clasped the girl to him and pressed a kiss upon her. From which angle and from which direction. Every house is full of things. In a second sitting, tea and biscuits on the front porch. Sketches of skyscape are never as good as the blueprints were. Delightful as it may be.

He lazed on the porch, hung like a house, spills spit and spume onto her blouse. No doubt the two of them had been seen together in the wood. Her father had then invented his fairy tale of his suicide so to account for their rendez-vous. She tipples awhile nipple rock lull. The rival bounds through the fence in a fit rare in elegance.

She wondered an inrage of outroar. An apparent orphan. A blouse, abuse, a pose, aroused, something on paper. Kick out the raspberries. Kick out the plum. She spread her hands in the drawer and parted the red socks.

Down the next block three men stand. Looking towards us, we wait. Lips that touch service. This water's gone off. The thigh bone's connected to the cook pot. How long does it take for the next step and

please wait until the last call. His stiffened self-control rivalled all artifice. An observed luring frankness.

He was waiting until it got nicer and he could show off his shirt sleeves. Gets up, freefalls from the top bunk. Rosin from the Sandman. But the trouble had already begun, the boys spent more time in the bar than in jail. A near miss. Every time he moves his head he adjusts the balance.

She had been made an accomplice to the affair. Always toward the fences greener time. Often bullies on the edge of the extension, undaunted, in the sun. We were just two poor wretches who gave one another comfort. If he had a good time getting there, it didn't have to be good when he got there.

Sounds like an allegory that crowd stunned in the skyline and a hungrier child would have found out her parents were poor sooner. The older children were obedient and the younger better made, doors best left closed. Seize nature.

In another round of advice my hand awaits its forfeiture. In return objects strained. He dealt a club to his face card, losing with 23. This is something we have trouble hearing in another tradition.

From the kitchen window, the patio, the back fence. Like a diagram of the inner ear. Family scrambled. Nuptial ritual. Anal nape plan.



But what of the unfortunate gorgeous? In the old family neighbourhood, others watch faithfully. Someone is waiting. The sugar falls from the slit in the box slow as time sand. An index to the second lines. A wise decision.

And now only numbered glances across the view. Certain to be undone. Vertical is certain. Whore is optional. Usually in June, though, their daughters would marry. Film tactics. Hankies. Her father, a man of some perspicacity, guessed that the girl had no serious suicidal intentions.

Almost always we were called to the view. In the privacy of my own rent I suspect the rip in tenancy. Sperm spills, a dull lanolin squirt in a cornucopia apparition. The penis was shaped like 1/3 of Zorro's signature. His words did not always tally with animosity. "Get in by sundown or..." Or this guy clear and cloudless.

Biting off bits of cork and spitting them in the toilet bowl, buoy of spunk afloat in scum, low cal, skim. Full natal penetration. A gesture of doing.

At the corner store the older kids told us: "The lonely die alone and the loved, poor and attended." Could the kiss have taken place in this way. The gaps were to be found in her memory. Sundown and sunset. The late sun. An off-hand jerk off.

Zealous reformers at the community centre seemed to bask in the suspicion that they might be. With heels to

the ground, their nakedness was a detail. The illusion of brilliance and suspense. A roll of quarters in his shorts pocket. Confronted with regimentation at the entrance of a crowded enclosure. No explanations were in order. Unreasonable melancholy... this brightly coloured pill.

A gift for concealing facts, with nothing so self-considered. He had covered the distance that had made his return impossible. I can see from the light shining through your rib cage that you've a fine skeleton. Out of sight, out of jail. The stigmata of sensibility. A maraschino cherry in the hot sun. Wait for September? Whore is ontological. Whore is until.

I hear lazy fans shunt imaginary air, the office laden with waiting, the exchange desultory and tropical. Autonomous. Propaganda work is now compulsory. After you're treated as a whore so long, you get casual about how you dress. She uses nail polish to gum up a run, a caustic arousal. He'd as lief take his chances in the past. Powder is reasonable and talc is cheap. They don't open it to finger, they open it to show. It can get in anything air can get in. The map of three oil spills went into effect. Lips that touch Icarus. That's why they carried rods in their top hats. If you got hepatitis you could claim to have been swimming in the river.

The delight he takes of observation, its suggestion of escape, innuendo. He enjoyed his parents' wedding pictures because he didn't know them yet and they looked like nice people. Below this quasi-

subterranean stream. Alluring -- a vague and modest idea of himself as a legendary frame. An inexplicable contempt, counting somewhere in the back of his mind. Usually in June, on the edge of greener times.

Concocted, encroached, circled. She wore a green dress in this socialist spring of reasonable doubt. They gathered in front of the camera, allies on the lake to commemorate black patent. The crash is a tragic part of this community. They perished together, three years into the mandate, cured to celebrate the death of two martyrs. Two of their fellow fighters.

To be embraced or sustained by the light-green hoisted to the short portages. Uproarious reunions. Close up, close to naked, accosted arousal. You might have seen him naked, standing on the shoulder, waiting for a chance to cross. The police took his pulse as they drove by.

In exploring the circumference of an inner window, he detected two moles. A no-frills operation. Dress shields in the forefront of battle. In time they'll just vanish. Body double. Voice over.

He had signed nothing, vowed nothing, pledged nothing. Full and forward. Don't pass out - put out. From the backroom window it is clear and cloudless. Then he covers the distance that makes his return impossible. The illusion of brilliance and suspense. A stab is the gesture, not the knife, or the cut. Buoyant, full afloat.

He had a fortunate childhood in that though reading was his closest comfort it wasn't his only one. To become a national obsession, complete with good guys, bad guys and fallen heroes. Enough lessons to swim out of reason. He made a tent on his lumpy bed by tucking one end of a threadbare sheet under the far end of the mattress and the other end up over the headboard letting the flannel fall away like canvas flaps, pegging it with ruined slippers between the paint-splotched wall and fractured wood under which he read (coaxing the dying bulb on a rusty flashlight), novels that nurtured middle class emotions he didn't yet know he had no right to. In her estimation there were a lot of fine memories, a common presence. On the last day the buwley bugs skittered up the headpost. On these grounds, he could avoid damaging publicity.

Interrogated, but not held in violation. Paving every kilo of secondary road. These are dirty words in the oil patch. The wish built into the library. A decade of lean and mean; over-regulated, undermotivated. It is nothing less than the creation of the world's largest painting.

On the cornerstone of the community centre, while the cement was still wet, some kid had written Fuck God and drew a heart around it. He just said he heard it, he didn't say he believed it. He used the cup she used a few days before finally washing it. While the cement was still yet. And another drink without courage. He wants to make certain, (he wants to kill a little time).

He once whaled in the arctic. I was in my room, it wasn't me. There is only one logical answer... a new era in aporatic history. A commitment to detail. Shining face, stunning force. A flat form for everything. You can't afford the luxury of previous experience. The imposter may be identified by the scratches on his face. I've lost my will apparently in double.

## NEXT SPRING

Tid little imp near brittle fell, Leer wet lipped  
in pasture middle. Folds in sky part willing to the  
sticky twigs of spring. Sap rush too quick to tips of  
wooden trees & brushed clouds wilt steamily. A sleek  
wet foal lay open part, past. Wet beak of 'ling reaches.  
The green meadows leaped into foothills. Water leapt  
off cliffs, Leer in after. Little Hero Falls. An egress is  
the last act in a side show. A fast one on the bumpkin.

!oops -- slip, slip -- plunge, splash, tread,  
stroke, splash, splash splash - glug, glump, splash -  
stroke - glug, glug, splash, ripple-rip-wave -- glug,  
glug glug

Past attraction. Pause button. The clumsy  
departure is evident. The bald exit is on the  
endangered list. Leer flipped. His ear bent to middle  
bone. Triangel tingle. Leer spent. The house, the car &  
custody of an impediment. No questions please, I'm  
still in a trance. The shifts in plate affect balance. The

constant whirr of gear is noise. Buds burst from the  
ground. This flower is green.

## ENDPIECE

The calm day mocks decay and light wind dissolves scent of it. May Poles already, in April, when death is yet dank. This beautiful day.

If this bad dream were a bad dream. Too tangled in bedding I can't get my arms up fast enough to surrender. Hubris or not to be. Those pills have a shelf life, give them over, I'll put them over there behind it.

He, himself, found bath rooms intimidating and wasn't a natural for domesticity or hygiene. In his youth he was fairly aloof about cleanliness and laundry and wondered why bath towels should ever need washing. Didn't they just swab clear water from clean bodies? Now no matter how hard he scrubs he leaves hide on the cloth and after a few baths the towel smells like ham.



Your own speed and ability to go back on the ball have a lot to do with where you play a hitter. An outfielder who plays deep all the time is one of two things. He is either uncertain of his speed or afraid he can't follow a ball hit over his head.

-- Bobby Bonds

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