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**STATEMENT OF INTENT**  
**POEMS: 2023-2025**

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"national mall"  
Flies buzz over the dirt path

the water is sick glass

white marble monuments

rise in the distance, pillars

before a solemn stone face

and carved into the walls

on either side

is history

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

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

this young  
clump of atoms  
spreading out

dusty sunset  
after  
dusty sunset

all potential  
stored  
all decisions  
unmade  
all comfort  
eternal

leaves fluttering  
green then fallen

cycles cycled on

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

felt good, man

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

this odd buzzing  
electricity  
ascending  
some unknown  
soporific scale

up and up and up

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

up and up and up

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

up and up and up

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

up and up and up

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

up and up and up

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

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

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

he scratched his head,  
uncertain, and said

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

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

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

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

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

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

...Please. Quit being stubborn...

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

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

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

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

"waking"

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

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

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

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

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

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

the only way  
to get money  
is to be seen

the only way  
to be seen  
is to be needed

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

pushed by some  
bright hot impact

someone drove  
across tracks  
at the wrong  
time, bam

resting to the east  
foliage jumped  
and buried its feet

while nearby  
the old river  
rolled on

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

"petty jealousy forever"  
scrolling reddit

pete davidson

just talking

onstage

kind of funny

ariana tea

observant

almost wise

click

scroll

comments are kind

supportive

to the bottom

find one

'fuck pete davidson'

upvote

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

ticking off another

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

days themselves  
past and spent

they zoom by  
pages flipped

another  
outlived

"dude"  
one more among  
another million  
meaningless misfires

cosmic garbage  
carbon accident  
fundamentally  
unloveable

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

my very soul  
must be  
truly  
repulsive

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

"lynching"  
the saddest thing to me  
is his cap

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

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

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

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

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

my fourth grade teacher  
came over after  
and pulled me aside

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

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

except nothing

nothing

they talk of emptiness

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

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

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

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

walk back to the kitchen  
balls sticking to my legs

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

bryan adams

is the canadian

john mellencamp

Or

John mellencamp

Is the American

Bryan adams

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

Columbus, Edison,  
And Steve jobs  
Were once heroes  
Too

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

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

"white guy"  
i really need  
to stop  
referring  
to myself  
in my head  
as  
'mah nigga'

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

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

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

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

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

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

live up to our name and shit

Yea boi

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

think about it

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

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

tug myself  
to a few  
seconds  
of  
clear  
headedness

little drop  
of ecstasy

the good  
kind of blank

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

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

"soft"  
tis the price of my  
motherly comfort

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

get the fuck  
outta my joint

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

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

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

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

the complications  
and burdens that  
come with it

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

do the truly  
brilliant know  
of their path?  
they must

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

“envy”  
i find jealousy  
to be relatable  
i don’t think  
it should be  
demonized

it is the most  
human emotion  
there is

it’s american

the economy  
runs on it  
like  
oil and data

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

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

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

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

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

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

they are  
damaged  
in the  
most  
exquisite  
sense  
of the  
word

they are  
totally  
and  
completely  
of  
this  
world

so when  
the time  
does come

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

she'll be  
screaming  
with no mouth  
forever

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

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

for  
ultimately  
no real change  
is to be

the world is locked up  
by fate and by greed

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

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

and they win  
the title of  
that something

despite having  
done it for less time

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

you are likely not  
very good  
at that something

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

written  
and  
curated  
by AI

harvested from  
the memories  
of the living

stretching back  
to the beginning  
of consciousness

whether they lived  
a hundred years  
or a hundred  
seconds

whether they  
led nations  
or dug holes

there for anyone  
who wants  
to read it  
and learn

one more  
mote of light  
in this vast  
darkness

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

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

he's a living  
corpse

model-esque,  
but,  
you know,  
dead

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

i can hear shelley  
describing his  
straight black lips

he looks like danzig after  
three nights on the bend

it's awesome

It's a sculpture by  
bernie wrightson's  
son

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

it leads me down

a frankenstein  
rabbit hole

it activates old images  
unthought of for years

i end up googling  
frankenstein meets  
the wolf man

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

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

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

crestwood monster series  
by ian thorne

published in the 1970s

the internet is awesome  
sometimes

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

the lowest are for  
like 50 dollars

out of my price range

but i see another one

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

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

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

i buy it

Thanks, Frankenstein

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

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

(i just threw up  
in my mouth  
a bit)

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

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

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

winter sunday  
driving slow  
jerking it  
to instahoes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"nope," he say, then correct me

"what do we do next?" he kept asking

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

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

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

"why not?"

"cause my insides are rotting"

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

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

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

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

"i'm tired, boss"  
the little things

what are they

you know

that's why  
they eat  
at you

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

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

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

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

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

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

As if they’re anything more  
Than sensory inputs

Anything more  
Than the universe  
Clothed with itself

Living  
This brief flash of light

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

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

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

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

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

it's better than nothing

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

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

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

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

800 dollars for an 8 minute video

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

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

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

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

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

"the trouble"  
i discovered bukowski on wikiquote

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

i don't remember the page

i remember the quote

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

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

and that's why i'm writing this

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

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

the sharp reality of it  
comes into stark focus

their humanness

yours

you realize

it was never about them

it was about you

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

“enough”

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

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

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

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

“northern lights”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

we had everything  
we could possibly  
need  
except each other

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and opening the  
notepad

no typewriter  
no quill, no pen

that's all it takes

yeah

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

cooing downward  
fingers moving

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

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

hijacking my eyes,  
my brain, fooling  
Myself  
into orgasm

i've filled swimming pools  
by now

enough to sire  
entire generations

a century of lives  
shot into oblivion

landfills of empty  
astroglide bottles

the pumps get  
weaker with every  
finish

age doesn't seem  
to tame anything

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

she couldn't  
compete with  
those images  
those clips

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

there is no  
competing with  
Such sick  
perfection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"hi" i chirped to him  
in a moment of confidence

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

i don't know where my  
mom was

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

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

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

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

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

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

and it continues to this day

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

“frown lines”  
my dad was tying my shoes

i noticed  
the crease between  
his eyebrows

it was there  
even when  
he wasn’t frowning

“what’s that?”  
i asked him,  
pointing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

stress percolates  
like coffee on Monday  
at 8 am

i haven't drank coffee  
in a decade

somehow, in my  
avoidance of the

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

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

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

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

moved  
by the sound of their

music

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

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

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

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

"geniuses"  
scrolling the feed  
is like walking the street

commonplace, "Gee..."  
annoy endlessly

too many of us  
being too good  
at everything

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

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

this widespread poverty  
of blank imagery

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

one more voice  
in this infinite noise

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So  
I've got that  
Going for me

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

Every bit of money  
Is spoken for

My bank account fills  
Then empties

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

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

Moving, but not

Tired, but moving

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

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

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

but that's not  
important

i spoke to him  
intimately,  
just the two of us

his ginger hair  
pasty face and  
lantern eyes

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

i asked him that  
several times

and he got very angry

"no one will read this"

It's all right  
to feel like shit

Survival of the fittest

To whom has everything  
Much will be given

No one will read this

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

No one will read this

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

Chinese and Russian  
propaganda  
And it works

No one will read this

The spell check  
doesn't correct  
the big words

When oblivion  
is the only  
Heaven

you believe in

“alma mater”

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

I am not visible  
nor am I clear.

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

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

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

My words don’t  
sing or glow.

They just sit.

But at least  
they’re there.

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

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

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

It has two likes

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

I don't think  
I'll ever change it

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

Then

At midnight

My phone  
Vibrates

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

"dude, eat a snickers"

Most poets—

Hell,

most artists—

Nowadays

Are just rich kids

With a hobby

Nepo brats

Who need some

Reason to stay

Busy

Any idiot

Can form words

In a spectacular way

What the fuck is that like anyway

How does that happen

What is the fucking connection

What is the moment of change

Have some bespectacled

Professor bite his lip

As his eyes scan the page

Your genius billowing

Through his soul, he

Can't even be jealous

He's never seen its like

It's just so beautiful

Your ability, your wit,

Your toying with genius

Then you have some award

Given by the gatekeepers

Who applaud and approve

Nodding like wildflowers

Down in some distinguished

Audience among glasses

And silver

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I send him a message on  
His fucking contact page

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

Message:

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

I don't send it

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

My awareness  
Is steam over  
A teacup

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

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

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

Oh how I was

A beautiful light  
Winking my way  
through infinity

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

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

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

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

Stings like sunburn

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

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

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

Knowing you're a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I think of what  
Makes me alive

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

hope  
With every  
New human

Live, live, live

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

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

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

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

She's a baby  
And so were we

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

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

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

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

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

They call this depth  
They call this something

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

Totally  
Of  
This  
World

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

“protest”

I’m attending

A protest today

It’s in the city

My parents met in

My mom and I

Walk down the

Street past a

Cussing, swearing

Homeless guy

We avoid him, and

Neither of us say

Anything, but we’re

Both uncomfortable

Until we’re past him

We walk up to the

Throng, the signholders

They gather on four corners

It’s positive vibes

Everyone stands

And holds their signs

Chants break out

Spontaneously—

No hatred no fear

Everyone is welcome here

Hey hey ho ho  
Donald trump has got to go

Jared goff (in Duluth!)

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

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

Probably not

I'm nervous someone  
Will spray bullets

I stand behind everyone

Behind a concrete barrier

And just stand there  
Hands in pockets

using my voice

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

AI is nothing  
More than  
A validation  
Machine

And that  
Apparently  
Is what  
Humans  
Truly need

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

“question”

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

There is no  
“Coming out”  
For me

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

I just have to do  
What I always do

Continue

“bluegrass”

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

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

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

Wait it out

Gonna wait it out

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

“demo”

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

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

Absolutely pathetic  
Example of human”

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

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

Who wants to be like that

Not me

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

Or a gradual decline  
Into permanent night

But is it all goodbye?

an eternal sigh?

A doorway opened  
To your shining next life?

Are you still “me” or “I”?

Do you even realize  
you’ve lost the fight?

Rise up like a kite?

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

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

The most likely explanation  
is

...so why even try

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

It’s usually the people you  
Think of

There’s not many surprises

And you’re no exception

No matter what you upload

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

Then you slowly do

And then you feel guilty  
For wanting it at all

“senior year”

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

“from above”

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

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

Left east west right  
North up south down

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

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

“bookmark”

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

It has a couple things  
Taped to it

There's a paper towel  
Heart scribbled with  
Purple pen

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

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

I carry it with me  
Like other things

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

I eat a bowl of it anyway

“no room”  
How dare you  
ask for more

How dare you  
Desire

How dare you  
Wish to be loved

How dare you  
Wish for validation

How dare you  
Crave connection

How dare you  
Long for tender touch

How dare you  
Not shrink into the wall

How dare you  
Speak your brutal truth

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

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

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

That's the sun  
The late day sun

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

“disintegration”

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

You'll kill the planet  
With polite courtesy

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

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

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

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

McCartney and richards  
Hearing yesterday and  
Satisfaction in their  
Sleep

Call her daddy getting  
A call from barstool  
One episode in

Finneas feeling relief  
When ocean eyes  
Gets listens on  
Soundcloud

MacGlocky getting 100k  
Views for acoustic

Renditions on TikTok

Pierce brown getting  
A reply to his queries

Bo burnham flipping on  
His webcam in 2006

The impossibility

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

“3 am again”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tomorrow I'll pull everything

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

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

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

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

He does not look at her

Does  
Not  
Look

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

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

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

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

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

“my sin is envy”  
Ocean vuong  
Or ocean vying

Trees moving  
Like oceans

As I listen

Stagnant but  
Comfortable

Resignation is  
Beautiful

Other poems  
Oh my life

Donald hall  
19 years older  
Than his wife

Takes me out of my now

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

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

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

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

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

Click on profile, linktree

3.50 to subscribe  
(It's on “sale”)

5 dollar minimum tip  
In messages

Some questions  
About tastes and  
Whether they're  
Available

Haggling over price  
Over participants  
Hundreds agreed to

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

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

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

“torture device”  
Do the Christians  
Truly grasp  
Their symbols

A torture device  
Is their hope

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

That's what I'm selling

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

They call this faith  
They call this grief

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

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

It's a nice thought

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

“salt and sugar”

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

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

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

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

The likely outcome

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

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

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

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

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

“waited too long”

The problem is

Most creative people

Nowadays

The ones with followers

In the thousands and up

aren't just creatives now

they're mba types

who are decently creative.

They are market artists

More than they are word

Or paint or body artists

Maybe even more so

They are the steel-shine eye

The car salesman sign

The banker at his desk

The trader holding his hand up

The thousand dollar suit

The wolf and fox smiling

at the naive hen

You can see it right there

On any one of them

“If you can't fuck your friends

Who can you fuck?”

This gold rush

Of attention

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

That's why we're having all this trouble

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

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

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

“sometimes”  
It seems life  
Is just

Love  
And none of it

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

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

But there it is  
Above the clear pants  
Partially unzipped

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

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

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

Her pubes are  
Very kissable

“Would,” I comment,  
And am downvoted

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

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

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

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

Just not enough  
Battery right now  
I guess

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

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

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

I'm so angry  
Her heaven  
Is reached,  
Why

My own quest  
For proof

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

I notice

A thought

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

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

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

Now they made  
Aluminum body  
Ford pick-ups

Not a bad place  
To read Hemingway

I didn't want to be there

I was not wanted

I sat at a laptop  
And mostly did  
Nothing

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

And eventually  
I was

on my breaks

I'd read off my  
Smartphone

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

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

There's an envy  
There

And I get it

But I thought  
It was pretty  
Good

The old man  
Dreaming  
About the lions

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

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

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

I turn my lamp off

And the fan  
Illuminates  
Its corner  
In blue and green

A dim little burst  
Across the room

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

I haven't seen in years

Then another

Then another

"return"

The rain patterning  
On the bus window

The classroom  
With its many colors

The kitchen with its  
Wooden cupboard doors

The store parking lot  
With the carts corralled

Swings hanging still  
in the sunset

The road goes on  
Under rain and streetlights

Your thumb  
swiping your brain  
Softly numb

Did you stop and notice

You can go back  
But nobody will be there

It was never the place

“celibacy”

I'm 39 years old

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

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

I still wonder if I had bad breath

I probably did

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

That's it

I cannot conceive of a relationship

I want one that's young

Not Drake-young

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

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

Makes it more  
Likely to cause  
Autism  
Or something

I'm already somewhat  
Autistic

Not really, but like  
Internet-autistic

Anyway

I'm horny

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

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

My waitress  
is blonde  
and sunny

Cheers, I tell her  
As she sets down  
My beer

I don’t know why

I notice a girl  
Across the room

Always a girl  
Across a room

She’s sitting with  
What I assume  
Is family

She’s got wavy brown hair

She’s got one  
bare shoulder

Mid 20s.

Wearing a light  
hoodie or sweater

Low cut dark top

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

We could be happy,  
I think

I fantasize  
about going over.

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

Accept your loss  
I tell myself

I eat my dinner  
I read Obama's book

She'd be a keeper

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

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

The Dad is severe-looking  
with a sharp grey beard

Mom is blonde and soft

They don't appear  
to know Stunner

Mom is holding  
A smiling blonde baby boy

I read more

I finish eating

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

The dog days are never over

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

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

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

I realized I spilled beer  
down my shirt  
At some point

I leave

I sit in my car  
Contemplate  
The fences

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

I back out,  
Pull out

As I leave the lot,

I see Stunner  
walking down  
The sidewalk  
With another girl

on her phone,  
Of course

One last look,  
Then,  
So long

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

If I believe I could be  
Materially successful

For any reason at all

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

I'll be content  
And happy

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

Burn the world down  
Type-shit

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

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

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

It's blankets  
Washed, moons  
In the window

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

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

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

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

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

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