

RIVER

In a gray van w/ no heat
full of smoke, the windows
barely cracked against the cold
rolling steady
progression of miles
one North American city
to the next
Fluid sluice
of war & commerce
Ringing w/ good jazz
the ambition to write a poem
 enough
to frighten off raw wonder
& left coughing, eyes
tear up
unable to explain even
ports, parts, a defense against
real witchcraft
 & also those that hunt them
taking flight into the
flat, full light
Of a midwestern winter afternoon
I didn't know the crystallizing air
one's pulled outward toward
bright limpid reckless & dry
might so lightly wear it:
Wherein inheres a wild similarity
between all of the day's parts
 particulars

I meant to
name specifically
the place I initially pushed
& stole thereby (unknowingly)
admittance. Fell.
It goes on for so many pages
chronological but disjointed
each its own episode & jagged
around the edges. Painted
quickly & quickly set
into a set, i.e., one in a series. Carrying
 them
so slowly
but never gone—
away—I want an unfamiliar thought
more obscenity
(off stage life)
If the petals are always
dropping into
the river & the river is
always there, always
moving as if under
flowering boughs
carrying clearly along
this almost weightless
freight—little
petals mind holds afloat
I think of the sweat
back of her neck

watching her shouting
 singing scating
 in the rose colored room
 not that long ago
 a close room w/ low light
 set up so as to be
 conducive to the music. I want
 to name the place & song—in
 the van the music's lost
 a blast or ribbon
 Many birds
 in sudden flight. Static
 smoke & snow—signal
 What is the gesture
 What is the color
 What is the time or place
 Denying
 the identity of indiscernibles
 Just zoning out / zeroing in on
 the horizon
 Look at me I can't even talk
 & walk away from therein
 its perpetual & beautifully
 obscene continuance

UDFj-39546284	El Gordo	Pandora's Cluster	Silver Coin
Barnard's	Red Spider	Ghost of Jupiter	Eye of God
Dog Star	Sun	Moon	
	1958 Vanguard 1	South Pole	
Plaza Mayor	Plaza de Los Mariachis	Tiburon Island	
Los Angeles County Museum of Art		China One Express King City, CA	
	New China Buffet, Watsonville, CA		
	Grant Rd Gas & Auto, 1220 Grant Rd., Mountain View, CA		
	a garage in South City	the maze at the top of Bernal	
	flock of parrots near Corona Heights	fire escape with small avocado plant	
	anchor in little star	dahlias	carved pumpkins
	paper wigwam	one sheet Ray Charles forever stamps	

Winooski
Dog
Snake
Powder
Tigris
Mission Creek
Yellow
Russian
Salmon
Ganges
Sweetwater
Los Angeles
Kicking Horse
Peace

for Colter Jacobsen

THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE

To choose not to
pick up phone & scroll anyway through
Dear old dreary daylight world, dull
repetition of daily news, look up instead to see
a world newly cathected, autochthonous in
clouds, in ones and threes. All flux then only as
head? One sings to oneself & dreams—admiring
the birds: pigeons, a huge flock of them
alight & wheel—shoulder height gliding
through startled city humans already dazed
by afternoon light. Binary, octal
& hexadecimal numbers. The humor of being

reincarnated a lama, then identified as such
by selecting the attachments of a previous
ego. One sings to oneself momentarily
in words—decisive dilatory flight
concrete through concrete
canyons. Left like the lice on
Basho's robe. Your next episode playing
in sixteen seconds

LEVON HELM

A sunlight glints the head sees
A correspondent breeze
In the spittle & maw of the outside world
it wards away from, in order to form,
 & curls off below
Nascent again at passing by
sites of its earlier lives. Listening hard
& keen at all wrongnesses, never in
slumber but always an incidence
Evokes
Medium drive, starfish
 souvenir conjuring Florida's tall keys, with
 the weight things gifted obtain: on
looking back, a certain heft
Hard throwing away (precipice)
Books—anything lifted or on loan from
the libraries of friends & the voice / drum
 the inside the head is. Heavy
accumulation of definite articles. Spring!
 & Ill
Seen Ill Said beside My Life
& Happily. I'll weed. Small city garden—
Hortulan ataraxy of salvia & sage. By the
 window, a row of brightly
(different) colored
nail polishes. I wonder will "a sunlight the head
sees" seem or sound
 farther washed or faroff, hazy as the coast
 of New York across the wide summer glare

of Lake Champlain, green VT black flies & steam?
When I reread Nohow On or Writing is an Aid
 to Memory some day
next summer? The next? Ghosts. It's been spring now
off & on awhile, though in California the characters
of the seasons seem more muted. Kore following
the faintness of a lute through dry parking lots
stained with old oil. In my head dance the inhabitants
of a mysterious palace: pilgrims, messengers—
panting on perhaps toward
 transfiguration—

as Malone, old sleuth, dying, tells
stories. Lies
flat on his back, like one of Chaucer's
 ones: un-
accompanied now however—likewise unable
to shut up. Lone pilgrim going nowhere, delivering
 nothing
stripped of the canter not quite buried yet
either. Still keeps time
& sings: death chants, waltzes
hammers & circles. Familiar standards
by flickering light. Metal & country,
so fuck y'all. Ah the old nightmare
Reprise sepulchral perfection
eg. whichever way I fly I myself am etc.
All the old Lear lines behind Tears of Rage
Surface tension draws as majesty's cease—

a gulf
that draws me also nigh: but I'd wanted to breathe it all in

Early April air
with its undertones of frost & roots, pale pink
late afternoons again as (with small words)
a girl next door plays a game with her friends
cheering & yelling around a neighboring small city garden.
A firetruck's siren races by, loudly bending a bent
note. The only option today is everything—
a garden full of plants only whose names I know some of
to weed. Although
observation impedes function in Stevens'
Description Without Place, & I'm compelled
to interrupt our conversation, despite not
having seen one another in so long, having so much to say
to Google ELONGATED SKULL PAINTING
still this very moment I am capable of just a little bit
of focused attention, modicum of capacity
concentration long enough to listen close
in the wake of a motor, racing
waiting to find (I have to tell you) initial hum
or rhythm, some
reliable rotation whatever so-called sense
might steadily arrange
itself against: it gets me
levitated, aloft in some
otherworld—

A hummingbird in a canyon
Gone in sections
Misshapen in the head & at

Sunset a Joshua tree
Wrong at all incidence
Very far away now
In the drummer's head
As he sings
Pain, reliable through-line
What other song is there
Its repetition the head
Anchor wheel spiral
It's easy on roseapple island
You just try trying
To get to silence out of thin air
Since that's simpler than total noise
At least as long as one keeps breathing
If you're really listening a little bit
Of noise is all there ever is

Silver moon cigar box taped to the top of the snare
My mind already elsewhere

Enfranchised, at large, bold & unlit
A remnant of afternoon's shape taking on the character of flesh
before being hauled back beneath bladed starlight
raw teenage disturbance—a genre: the western fear again as in
Lear, of

nothing—black
engineer's boots, switchblades, greased down hair
Rand's Nietzsche rather than Gaddis', say—a hideous
misreading
the result of which

this polluted world in its apparent doxa, deal, or way—
is. Although he
who wished to write & wring out play, whose
reveries then became the deepness of the pool: remains
political / apolitical
tender teenage trash. Pretty flowering weed in spring

I also like time-travel
I also like wailing on the traps with no invocation
alongside these ghosts whose senses guide me
Tidal as a third eye, conniving with
sublunary sets, in situ dragging
earth's seas. To teach them to sing
Amazing Grace shape note style, he sat
bolt upright in his coffin. To be handed
or (same thing) awaken
abruptly
from it—since everything at least is
a double. Annie Clark runs into a rattlesnake naked:
& following the powerlines back to the road,
a rabbit ghosts the notion of kings. Selfhood—
a melody. Indra's net as the means of continually
making it. None of us
ever thought to write a song

about all the shit that was going on
back then: war, civil war, revolution,
turmoil. Our songs were trying
to take you somewhere
else. I have
minds in my head—

an amused oarsman, the moon
a glimmering
cluster as it separates

& reforms around
the dripping blade
of the oar. Clustered
in separating

important absent ideas
rippling, starting to form
a reflection:

to get to
'the point'
is precisely
the danger.

eg. Do away with the lead singer
No such thing as sidemen either
Yes an internal echo of the imperfect sound
Tough with knotty glissandos & clipped bits
of lifted (live) speech, now

gone. One obvious emblem—
the hummingbird I saw first thing on opening
the door this morning—patiently operating
through the apparent springtime
through the dependent deal
Of bougainvilla, lavender & sage. Through
weeds. Honeying neatly from each

& turning words' clusters
specific in specie tending toward unseen
suns, reaching
so as to reproduce
via pollination
Poets, that keep time & sing
so sing if you can
the numerous
Each one circulating
curling like that wake between landmarks—white
& seen far off in the bay: proof something's moving
that's the courtship
that's the approach
a foggy spring of weeds itself
cool & wet
as the underside of a pile of clouds moving
pretty gray anvil makes of the head
a marine layer, seeming
in some greater seeming—set in
nothing. A box the wind blown by
the mind, container ship out there

where Holbein's ambassadors now reappear
in all their goofy grandeur, silly worldly wealth
Heavy load beneath which
a horrible death's head in artful elongation & distortion gruesomely

yawns
at this crazed dying storyteller
this pilgrim going nowhere delivering nothing
this boy who hearing owls hoot, hoots back in wild
mimic rhyme—wild Arkansas farm kid
the drummer who sings & then so quiet in reverence
at the echoing from tall cliffs—memory & theft
& whose living eye, tender as an embryo, attends
the whiteness of the wake & attendant
waves: the mind

 piloting & piloted in by
 "the mess," illustrious
nothing nothing names: a wave or wake as it
turns in on itself. Emptiness
in a technical sense. You hear it so clear
in Rick's voice, doing It Makes No
Difference: there's no escaping
this life with its owls rattlesnakes nectarines & kids
heartbreak red wine & malady, the early way
the sun slants in on the bed like an ancient tongue
mornings. No alternative to the next
moment: a negative connection & razor
sweet as jasmine. Non-duality is
why it makes sense to address the poem's readers

