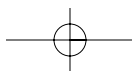
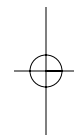
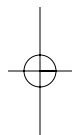
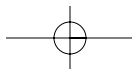
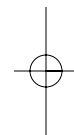
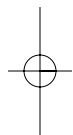
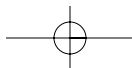
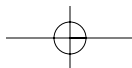


THE CENTRE

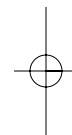
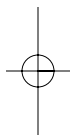




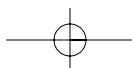
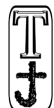


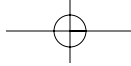
THE CENTRE
Poems 1970–2000

Barry McKinnon



Talonbooks
2004





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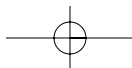
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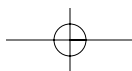
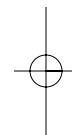
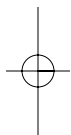
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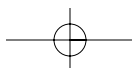
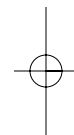
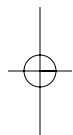
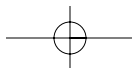
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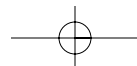


always

Joy
Jesse and Claire

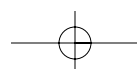
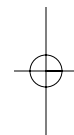
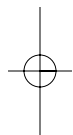


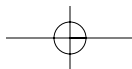
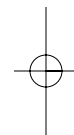
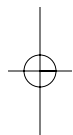
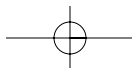


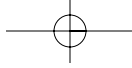


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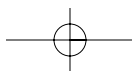
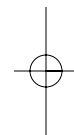
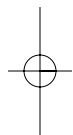
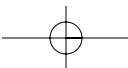
THE CENTRE: MOVING NORTH

The past
is a foreign country
—John Newlove

•

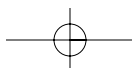
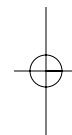
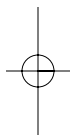
The eleven sections in this collection contain experience and language informed by a range of places in this urge to reveal a world in relation to all that is / was to become a life: family, work, sex, friendship, health, the politics of person and place—these large complex inaccurate dissolute human categories as prompts for whatever the poet is given to reveal. The particulars of these contexts and places I hope I partially found / made visible—as they sought me in the poems that follow.

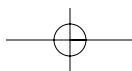
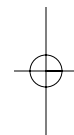
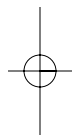
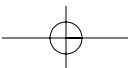
Barry McKinnon
Prince George, B.C.
February, 2004





*it is the road
and its turnings that is the traveler,
that comes back and remains unexplained*
—Robert Creeley
Poem for Beginners







THE DEATH OF A LYRIC POET
(Poems & Drafts)

*The manner of his death there
first
A bar, the north, the singing, no one
heard it.
Uncharmed beer glasses did not fall at
his feet.*

—Brian Fawcett

*The tallying chant includes not only
but also
white things
dark things.*

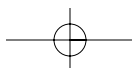
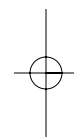
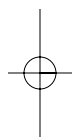
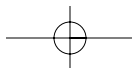
—Brian Fawcett

I can't get the first line.

—(writer unknown)

*If you write poetry
this is your chance
to be
discovered.*

—CKPG Radio, Prince George





THE NORTH
for Ken Belford

somebodies walked the woods

•

in the air, the lines appear, as a grid
cut thru trees

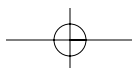
possession is nine tenth's of the law
theft makes up the rest

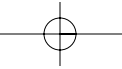
what men have walked these
woods, carried chains
& instruments
of exactitude

•

to own nothing becomes
achievement

a kind of ownership
not to care





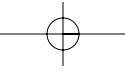
BUSHED

I am in a desert
of snow. each way
to go, presents an equal
choice, since the directions, &
what the eye sees is the same

if there were some sticks, you wld
stay & build a house, or
a tree wld give a place to climb
for perspective. if you had a match, when
the wind didn't blow, you
wld burn the tree for warmth, if
the wind didn't blow & you had a match

there is this situation where love
wld mean nothing. the sky is
possibly beautiful, yet the speculation
is impossible, & if you could sing, the song
is all that wld go

anywhere



ASTORIA

pensioners slumped along
the wall
(painted with lakes
& northern geese

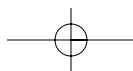
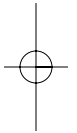
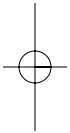
& Ellen if beautiful once
is speculation. her face

scarred,
fingers like roots can barely
hold the cigarettes she bums

she says, *yr all fuckheads*

sits down

takes a beer



IN THE FACE OF IT NO ONE WLD TOUCH HER

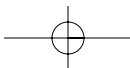
the weight of it is, the afternoon disappears.
reality is a G string, the rest is imagination or
 imagine her ass spread to receive
 every man in this beat out northern
bar.

 if the popcorn is 50 cents buy it. if the chips
are 25 cents, buy them
 (chain smoking
 beer 35 cents
 how else pay
the band from N. Carolina, singing NO ORTH TO ALASKA
 & pay for the sadness of the 40 year
 old midget singer with the Afro hair (meant
 to cover, yet finally to exaggerate his own
 desperation
 (my own thoughts of death &
 in the face of it, each gesture must count
 for something
 thus his hair?

or her pubic hair curled at the edge of a
G string

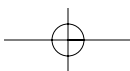
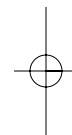
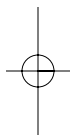
 (she spreads her ass
 & we laugh. all our teeth are
 crooked

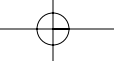
 she asks for someone to put her
 evening gown back on
but no one offers
or submits to touch the skin she
offers



(yet wants this skin
any form of love

there is a paradox here
& in the face of it it
is finally
what everyone is paying
for





BAYDAY

for Cecil Giscombe

Giscome shack town, no more
Saturday nights there. one man remains

to watch the mill. he knows nothing
can be carried

away. but the people willingly
were
on one month's notice. 'the answer to their problem ...' C.B.C.

(some houses are livable yet
bulldozers to scrape it all away, as if some natural
cycle is at work

but people people lived
there

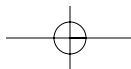
as CBC goes on
'we are capable of understanding
the culture ...'
etc.

as the local radio goes on jingling
and jangling
the nerves :

'you've got 55 seconds
to come out & see what

you've

won.'



BINGO / DANCE

*(a bingo dance is not a spot dance. during a
tune, the singer calls BINGO & all the partners
change)*

when does innocence end. Shelley
dead at 29. so it is death

or

(last night, the wedding party
requests a Bingo Dance, some form to
allow the innocent change
of partners.

innocence is

(whose wife wld mind, or see the metaphor

Bingo Dance. ... 'there's a storm across the valley ... BINGO!'

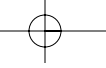
while upstairs, the tenor player is drunk
& out of tune. he lifts a beer salutes the
audience before his lips touch the reed / begins to play

'I left my heart in Sanfrancis co.' when does innocence end.

later with the woman who says she's lonely. things wld
be better somewhere else. I left my heart in
Prince George does not work. we are out
of context. but note this: that 60 year old sax

player smiled / looked like William Burroughs
in better shape, his innocence nearly
shot, as

we watch the young partners change,
get married, throw garters
flowers



PEARL

for Paul Shuttleworth

what can we say
of these things:

to pile absurdity upon absurdity until
it becomes a town
a city: on the radio

The Problem Line:

the problem is—what is the symbol for the 30th
anniversary. one says lace
one says pearl—(such debate
steals my time, yet
another calls because his
wood is splitting on its own, it's all falling apart, &
what can we do for him or the wood listeners?
what can be done, as if an answer
is possible

what do you do
when *it* piles up—the students
want to know what they've missed
or what are we doing today. we are
doing it. *it* seems to be the subject here—what I am
subjected to

I know everything & ponder the mysteries
of the Prince George Hotel: dark, 4:30 PM ponder
the imported Vegas singer—what does he think of *it*—
the town, where someone sd everyone seems to be missing a
finger & has a split mouth from an authentic drunken fight. what
do I think of him & his Elvis Presley imitation, guitar out
of tune & plugged in to this electrical age (he solves the problem
of a drummer—backed by an electronic beat, Latin American
fake Samba
he forces all songs to fit to. I am puzzled

entertained
for the wrong

reasons

any sense of myself is welcomed. I welcome the absurd
(giving me one more thing I know, to explain

the weather has changed outside. the skating rink empty
for 3 months yet today—3 children skate there, awkwardly

scrape the ice, move over it, lost in activity
but not lost.

the problem is: getting any line down
clearly

to shine opaque as a pearl
born of some closed
& ceaseless
irritation

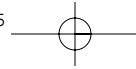
HEADACHE

we are in the thick of it and speak
 1000 words, or one. the message is
 the same

today a migraine at \$1.49 day. I couldn't see
 the price for hamburger, & bought too few buns. what
 has poetry, or the heart come to. what wisdom can
 be discovered. an hour ago I bought a coke for
 35 cents, craved that 5 cent sweet of my youth—& wanted
 to tell my wife I loved her, out of the blue. I love
 you. perhaps it was the background of the sick on
 Marcus Welby led me to such clarity of
 sentiment. but—you say nothing. what has it come to. *this*.
 the earlier poem does not match Shakespeare. I think, the poetry is
 not the words. it moves nameless—is no more
 the art of thinking a way to cease disturbance. itself, the
 man singing. sing out of the blue. I was a boy once &
 tonight called my daughter home & choked
 to see her innocence

in the thick of it, speak 1000 words
 or one

it is the same. these headaches sometimes last
 for days



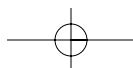
CREOSOTE

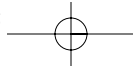
what to do with it. your life
is inside the flesh,
burned by creosote & later to sting.

is it serious I asked, not knowing
enough to judge the pain myself.
today the marks begin to disappear & the
posts, to last, sunk deep, & coated
hold the fence.

I have repaired a fence. it comes to that.
I have not learned to read the
instructions, thus the burns
thus the crooked fence. there are other
instruments besides the eye. death is no
longer counted on the fingers. a hole is
measured in sweat or until you hit frost.
nails cost 70 cents a lb. the neighbor calls me
Tom Sawyer. this fence to block their view is
what allows our talk. I go on & on
when I rub this skin with thinner to remove
the paint, there is a sting & I know the burns
are still

there





GESTURES

Claire has 4 teeth
& can stand

high enough to turn
the radio off

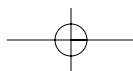
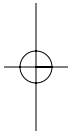
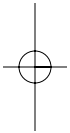
&. throw my baby picture
off the shelf

what questions can I
ask

about these things
I watch my girl

grow. I am grown up
& must bend down

to turn the radio on
& put my picture back



LIVING HERE

the death of a lyric
poet is living here

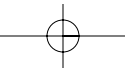
at the end of the line
smoking one after

another cry from my daughter's
room

next to me are objects
a pen between

fingers to touch breasts
with, to make a fist

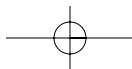
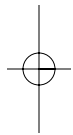
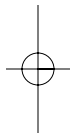
hold cigarettes
beer

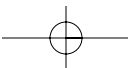


WILLOW

there is the unknown music of the willow
bush
purest of all trees
in its
endurance

break its branch apart
& there it is
from where you came

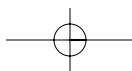
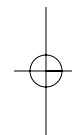
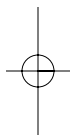


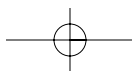
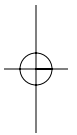
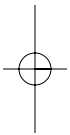
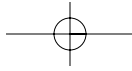


SONGS & SPEECHES

*(& in our
bodies. of the bodies*

*melody. give it place & shape &
call the heart a lyre*





THE WHALE

reach 30. all you know is, you are
here
& carry darkness (say what
must be said

the topic lost
allows this speech. yet they will
say of the simplest things
incomprehensible—so I

begin again
clear in my parts
of speech
finally wld wish to speak only to whales
who do tricks for food in Stanley Park. the great
beasts, reduced to tricks
perform for
food.

expect the world to be
perfect. the Cosmonaut's handshake

will not ease those on earth. the whale
is no illusion. we have him before our eyes.

the trainer says—if you clap, they
do better,
their hearing is very
good

BATHTUB RACES (NANAIMO)

my daughter repeats over & over
 'where are we going' & a man
at the Rod & Gun
 drunk with hollow rasped voice gives
no medical excuse,
 sings, 'I left my heart in San Francisco'
 says 'I'm Tony Bennett'

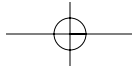
I don't know where we are going', I say over & over, the same
answer to the same question, or give

 the literal.
 we are going
 to the bathtub races,
arrive
 & walk the wharves

I understand the spooked boy clutching his radio. I do not
understand those drunk at 10 A.M., standing in double knit trunks
on boats, young, with fu manchu moustaches yelling at
all who pass, call me a queer, at that distance
there is nothing you can do—or yell to some sea queen
herself the businessman's definition of beauty—expected to
lay down on yachts & receive them one after another.

I follow her too. she disappears.
I look into water. the crabs move beneath
 mutations of another time, some covered & dead
from oil.

 in the riot 78 were arrested. broke windows
 with no revolutionary intent, therefore stupidly enter
jail.
 attempt to run a policeman down, the charge



is attempted murder

carried away 'in a good time', they say

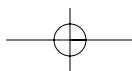
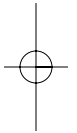
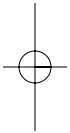
I am carried away
in language of another time
& take my daughter home

'where are we going'

home

this time, I only say it

once



NOTES: THE DEER

what to call home
in the world reduced
to 13% mortgage rates, the flowers themselves
purchased for the purchased earth.

poetry becomes complaint / sound
not matched by the vacuum
cleaner sucking dirt around me.

speak of love's absence even here, by the sea
the jets enter. or the small plane
that crashed in the fog in my dream.

we do well to write letters. my daughter

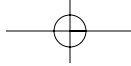
falls on the stairs. this new house. who
is this to

•

Ed wants \$200,000 for 26 acres.
\$100,000 down, he says
'no one has *that* kind of money.' his flowers sell at
30 cents a flat. his teeth nicotined. constant rolled
cigarette—his

protest, to know no one
can buy his home easily, the price fixed as arbitrarily
as the arbitrary air.

no one lives
easily. the land \$200,000—the flowers
30 cents a flat. a give away but not
given away. we smoke in the exchange of a few
dollars.



•

the whales were seen beyond the rocks. star fish baked
by sun—shoes will fill with crabs if left
by these pools & rocks. pebbles are worn smooth
rolled ceaselessly (a language
against each other by the sea

so, the sea is timeless (thought earlier) *my* watch
is slow,
not to matter much
here

where tourists exceed all limits, think, 'we'll be
there soon',
pulling off roads, drivers reading maps. you
must swerve to miss them. they do not look
where they are going

•

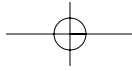
the strikes: beer, sugar, telephone, bread, gas (cheap at 68.9 cents
the phone calls are free if you tell the operator yr having
trouble getting thru

•

it is all payment. where does the money come from
& who decides the price. I measure time by old
clothes, the price forgotten—these shoes wearing out on the way
for mail,
wrote earlier—there is no possibility for an
epic in this lack of heroes, unless
it's yourself inside & outside these

details.





•

binoculars 7 x 35 (\$ 35.00). everything looks
closer & things not seen with
the naked eye
bob smally on the sea

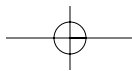
(time less)

time less, men speak

locate themselves in gardens
of purchased earth.

I built a fence to keep the deer out, too late
this garden is partially gone

the deer ate my partial
time



REAL ESTATE

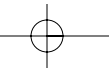
*if you come any further you'd better
leave your names with next of kin*
—sign posted outside of Ucluelet, B.C.

we swim this sea, into a 20 ft. depth crabs
skitter, the fish, shine
 amidst the kelp & I think, the sea
 cares
 not for us
 nor for the moon that moves it
the moon itself moving.

 these
small facts & natural laws for perspective, as neighbours
 shout across the bay, argue ownership
 & the legal lines
 of trespass. yet I know

below the tide, *anyone*

can swim



STEAK
for Jeff Marvin

on these rocks
you almost forget

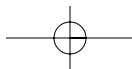
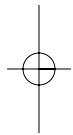
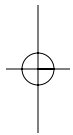
(what is necessary

for a moment, the sun releases you. the imported
beer gets cold among the rocks

he says, 'write that New York steak is \$4.39
a lb.,

& of things we all recognize'—I think

I want to go beyond all things, & sometimes sing
of nothing

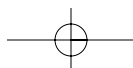
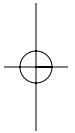
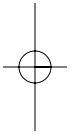




NANAIMO BARS
for Myron Makepeace

I could stay forever
or
what other world is possible
legion # 10 juke box—someone plays over & over
'lyam a rhinnne sto wn caaow boy eee'

I say,
'lets get to hell
out of here'



THE WELDER

otherwise, he is a welder who fixed my wheel,
goes blind for money—sits in bars & forgets
his daughter waiting in the rain, while he schemes

dreams

of the money in metal sculpture: fireplace screens, ornaments
for walls, & little

metal trees

talks now about artists who sculpt these metal leaves
says,

'*shit*,
they make em so they don't look like leaves
at all'

SIX SONGS FOR A SMALL LOUNGE

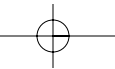
for Brad Robinson

not knowing if I care that the years have passed—itself a longing
to care. you are always drunk, as if some part inside is missing
(what part is missing is it all missing. Joy interrupts me, to say
look at the mountains. without looking I must imagine them or
imagine you (as I imagine myself) parts missing, though we
appear intact. the years & do I care for you (myself)—perhaps
drunk, or thinking of being drunk, wishing it, as if the darkness
(what is the darkness) is chemical, counteracted by another
chemical. are you sleeping. are you dying.

wondering if I could write to
you, to see if I cared, to see what has become of me. all statistics
are vital, beyond our weight, beyond our shrinking height & the
number of cigarettes per day. we are first our body, then our language.
it must be so. do I care enough, wondering could I write to you
imageless. are you drunk are you sleeping. today the world
is asleep or sick (my daughter sick & being read to before
her afternoon sleep—a purity in that act we know we are
beyond, thus the poem as a backward glance, the child's books
a comfort to me. read to me. let us sleep. let us view this
sea without a thought in our heads. its organic silence.
no, not that. we are beyond that, & must be aware even of the lies
as we were once aware of the heart. no, not that. are you sleeping,
do you care that the heart is memory—with its language of blood. once
you hemorrhaged. once you neared death, enough so that death occupies
you, enough so that you say, I don't want to die, yet is that fear
worse than death itself (as we remember the dance, spend our nickels
and our time

are you listening, are you sleeping, do you care. forgive me

that these songs go unfinished



SPRING

siren song of
these depths we slip into

but the land: solid rock, & questions of how
trees could grow,

the arbutus twisted shape, distinct
from the oak, the alder, birch &
pine

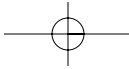
of these gifts: even the blackbird's cry is part, the raven
in our dark mythology

yet

how I ignore the flowers, so caught in self, that I must
be taught again, given back my woman's eye

it's spring I guess &
there is a key to our solitude. she gave

the purple crocus water & it opens
for awhile



PAINTING

impossible to step
in the same river twice

or return

yet, I am half-way
up the house, scrape each board, each inch now
familiar & surrounding me

•

at night a moon draws me toward it. piss off
the back porch—beyond thought, beyond the sea—a silhouette of
cut banks, fringed with pine—spikes or a jaw
beyond me. this is relativity—that time moves
fluid

& memory's weightlessness an image of the sea
coming back scary in my dream

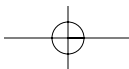
while the real/

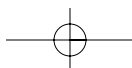
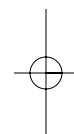
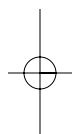
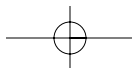
house is done

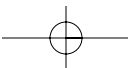
a difficulty, the simultaneous fear
of falling / this
urge to jump

one friend whistles in fear, one refused. I paint on the south & know the
parts I missed. the skin burnt in these repairs
falls off begins, to grow again
on its own

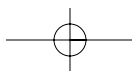
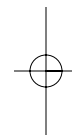
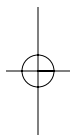
Schooner Cove, August 1975—Prince George, August 1976

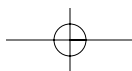
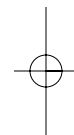
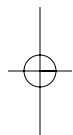
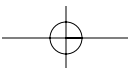






SEX AT 31 (A POEM)
for Brian Fawcett & David Phillips





PART 1

to leave. to leave. beyond that pure (it seems so)
 moon. these gulfs in ourselves, thus. . .
 to leave with it. live with each edge
 of cloud that takes a ring of light—yet what is
 forbidden, that we cannot hold ourselves.
 wanting.
 as if love, within its
 boundaries is another moon. we walk on it. talk
 until the rain goes. let what we
 want be the whole body of imagination. released. hold
 me in this light

•

how we had forgotten, in this awkwardness,
 that others exist—discovered a privacy best to be
 without. beyond it, is the
 real, yet it requires decision—any pleasure we
 seek. we are this old. to know. & speechless,
 without sounds, to that extent, a part. I would wish
 you love. it wouldn't matter, you said, who
 it was

•

I thought the world was
 outside & it is.
 it is not a circus with plastic
 ducks to shoot at. some will say it
 is coming back to the difficulty of relationships
difficulty. you will go or leave.
 I sit most of the time. in the dark of someone's intent, a
 relationship forms.
 it is so dark, I can barely
 see it form



•

I must invent you. I forget the
Greek gods. who will replace them in
this tawdriness

this timelessness of sex

•

was it said that ancients, say,
Chinese, sat by pools of golden fish
drank wine, enough to
beckon women with little
say

(I wonder how they saw or spoke of
love. but men. they

still do,
still do fall in pools of
fish

•

I thought the smell of clover love.
it was memory (that clear field
of august.

now the bypass surrounds us, the curve
of memory at 31
(as if nothing changed

there are no trees left
at the pine centre mall. I could care
less

for a moment I thought the smell of clover love.





•

there is nothing to understand

•

give me an idea of who I am. expect
something.

the fool in me is an old lyric—the disembodied
source I long for

& more

it is that we go on.

& there is no image
for it

•

where are you in this desire
this tension of ...

•

love is no cup. can be no more than what
we imagine. that language in its various ...
(form brings it, yet what is this void—the gulf as some
difficult river, the cessation of an act of form, as love
is an act of the imagination or flesh. how I go around
the cup or mirror to see in that glance another looking
back, with what intention. this point of silence and the
clear seed spread on the belly of all women, those I
imagine. the one, which one follows, beckons. is this, or she
the goddess, the hag—the one who holds the cup from
which any man could drink or refuse



PART 2

try nothing on for size
it fits, that in this world
the heart will give out from pushing Volkswagens,

that what we look for, is a joke. one more hopeless
push, driven to get there—notice how we hardly move
at all

•

that old sense as I move backward.

they thought I was sick, in love. to reach 31
& get put to someone else's use.

another
close call to brush against love. thinking it
an object, the garbage man took my art. there was
nothing else
I could do with it

•

increasing amount smoked. another way to measure
distance. in this fog, my moon has disappeared. I will
draw more easily the moon forth, than you, who ever
you are, my Aphrodite, my earth, my
butterfly

•

what was it I was to say. these years pass
without a moment

so I return to what was simple & intended, had no
more to do with any thing

than a hand & flesh. some kiss, stolen I thought

what humans do in this other
difficulty. despite it

•

the head swirl's look. I go thru the drawers
for language & know I won't find it, or you
as hidden as I.

but we did speak. I think it was dawn, & I
couldn't sleep for thought of infidelity

to discover in you what is in me

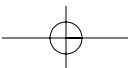
we haven't spoken
since

•

I forego desire. I forego the flesh, so
caught in my own I resist
the others. we are so ... I bought a record .
I bought you a lock. who shares the combinations,
who opens the heart & what is said. jealousy is as desire. do
we seek, or love, or ... what is, this that is
hidden & how to reveal
it

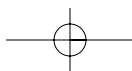
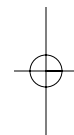
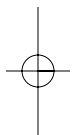
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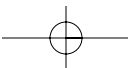
sex at 31. men so lost in talk they will not
see her. I must look in the dictionary
to find Aphrodite. look again to wives who
inhabit these kitchens, cursed by what
they think they are—the bodies drawn, or fat.
I will hold you. I will wash
these dishes. heat up this food



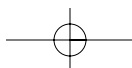
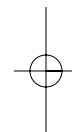
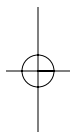
but where did you go

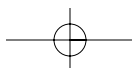
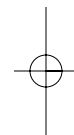
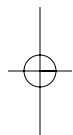
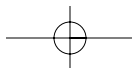
take men as
the early going moon. imagine us
at 31 more in love than what we thought could
be.





THE THE. (FRAGMENTS





THE ORGANIZER

Jack the organizer must
 look sober. (who cares for any of this. I am as
 sad as I can be—think of our 15 billion years—how any
 tribe must dance and choose their queen—the eternal
 goddess (in this case, dressed in red, pump shoes,
 a corsage. kiss her Jack

the band will play after the watered food. the band
 is watered—a part of the ritual to think music is
 required for dance. wasted days and wasted nights our
 cheating hearts. kiss the music Jack

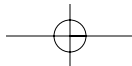
I am Jack the organizer. I wear elevator shoes and
 am responsible for everything—the trophies, the paper plates
 must choose those who win. assume all else is
 lost. I drink alone

poetry won't allow all to be told. this is a fact. stew
 is stuck to my pants. 60 cents a drink. it's hard
 to be humble when you're great. in my own way, I love
 you all. this must be my real purpose

you are the organizer and are responsible for paper plates.
 you must be less drunk than anyone. who will clean
 up—who will see the last drunk home. who will
 care. you will Jack

Jack doesn't know his own mind and is therefore a kind of
 poet. he knows the unbearable pressures and is therefore, also
 human. Jack can't think of the right thing to say—can't
 get the mike to work. can't really do anything but
 be responsible. here's to you Jack

carnival drunks. carnival drunks. the boldest grab
 these mikes / carry off the queen or ladies in waiting,
 or last years queen or anyone. you can tell something in the way
 a man will dance of what he says. someone just said



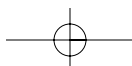
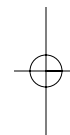
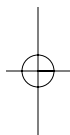
'tomorrow there will be no children's bowling'

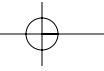
do you bowl Jack—are you bowled over
is your finger on the Nike Zeus.

one communist could push you over the edge. but Jack you're
already there. you're through. you're invisible. you
will disappear so
easily.

stack these chairs. you're nothing Jack, in your
elevator shoes. they chose you for no reason. but

they knew you could do it.





AS IF

as if a film on the eye
hides,
 at 35 to be alive, or could be to

know the work, that we are wasted with death
or wrestled down / and I don't mean by angels
spirits or gods.

•

how Bach gives that swaying plant, if not
a name, a place
 (the wind itself, a breath
 from the moon

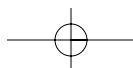
not to care. it is all to move on (loved or
unloved
 in this

stopped poem, where everything could break in
could you break

•

I should walk 300 miles in any direction (learn the
trees, the directions of sun and moon, to see celestial
connections

 anything made of light



FOR THOSE

for those who whistle down poetry. this screaming, a kind of
reversal (*this* loud

this lonely

who cares for Charlotte. Jack takes the ideas of others
not liking his own. or poetry. what does it do, they ask.
nothing (& without it you'd be as good as dead, as those
with their hidden rubber cocks. read me a poem in t
he half dead light of my brain. who I am is not a concern
or what you think I am.

go about your self and the room. go about the rubber
cock. make us real. go about or just

go

•

I will play the piano. our world must
go on. refused this goofy wine—sober enough
I'm the only one left to drive. a delivery boy. out
in the rain

•

so, it comes to love, or vitamins, to fall
this way.

hope is silly begging all future

fear that nothing goes on

give me one heart

deliver it



•

it comes to ...

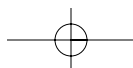
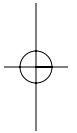
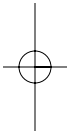
it comes. tired in this jackdaw
flight

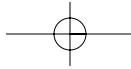
that we create another world, easy as
speech. say something

or take an image—a stripper in THE HUT
darkly in her boots & chains. thank you other world
of parked cars & falling stars

•

there you are
& shine
crazy bright star beyond the porch. give your
3 seconds of light before we go on to what
our lives become





THE THE.

for Pat Lane & Wallace Stevens

terror in the mind. of this &
less we speak

inverted trees & the task
of poetry:

Beatrice / Helen disappear & the future, a vast
expanse of snow, cutbanks perhaps to stop
the view, the eye to take the shape of all

contours. interruptions themselves
a kind of death,
these questions that break our solitude.

•

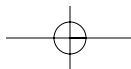
what is work, but this—to know, to last
human pressure, to continue

a spin (not a dance, which is
the farthest pole of what I speak)

•

I saw myself on skis—the poem began
months ago—a line of blue where snow
breaks

from one part of the city, you'd swear
civilization has ended, & that here
we stand
amidst invisible wires, primeval—
very old & our life but an outward breath,



a long continuance of *The*

the.

today:

in this cold, the body moves hot. it knows
what to do. (no doubt, this part of the brain
is almost perfect with its control, as the part
which keeps balance
for the crazed

you must be more careful. my block
heater is missing. the car may not start, I
may not get to where I have to go—or else
accept the delays,

to speculate: not much is too important, or
worth getting to—

(a vision of inverted

trees

got me here

•

this delay in language—not ever to want
getting out

the real is different: strippers in The Canada
are ugly & bruised—better than most poetry—but not
beautiful

if you look close

(the reeling flesh speculations
robbed with each
part removed

outside: 20 minutes later a boy who was sober, now
reels out the door into 20 below weather, dressed in
Levis vest, T shirt, cannot walk, as I walk
off

home. in this life

it is so easy
to curl in snow, dream of Gauguin's
trees
(if you can't find a car
to steal

or *The the.*

•

what is known, what is not
known

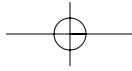
—an intense educational campaign
should be launched

there is no end to meanness & misunderstanding

the impossible inverted trees

(did the boy make it

a simple flash thru
the mind, to launch a search
so fast to forget what was
sought



to say what? if we had the comfort of a real & breaking
heart,
yet enough to watch children
grow

in our impossible silence not knowing
what to say

•

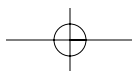
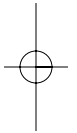
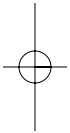
god bless you

•

if we could admit: the lines are really down, the long
and lasting cedar has a point in
the wind a breaking point, its

roots sucked out

the earth



HEARTSEASE

I've kind of got a numb heart—

•

or this morning that that I'd like to write something
across the gap to D.H. Lawrence—not think
of whether or not it was a poem

a pansy. a flower for the think of

its place in the hierarchy of flowers

this is not a problem for college deans or botanists.

I defy
what others know, defy myself in the self conscious
wish not to lie

as if anyone paid attention, given that there are
those who claim a real world & that we give to
be given over in the process to
eat our own shit

•

the world is a pansy closing

JOURNAL: EARL'S COVE JULY, 1978

leave the garden wild, a measure
of what we are
or / all day

on edge—the child's constipation, the nagging
& unusual heat along this coast

•

down below, I hear a grass whip, used
to border someone's yard, to measure out a space
with less effort

to make it seem you are somewhere

•

the rum is gone. at the new Ruby Lake store I'm
the one they use to practice giving change
on

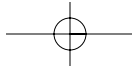
/

air cooler. there is nothing I
should do

•

how to dissociate myself from the child, my
own, who clutches her ass all day
long, cries, she can't go—the obsession
with constipation. I pound cedar on
in heat. sweat over the boards, to adjust angles
make it appear

there are no mistakes



•

sky clear. a deep blue & I thought of
curving back on myself, some kind
of way to remember

the mountains I wish I could draw—the
sea

Agamemnon channel,
lined with trailers on 1 acre lots
—along Jervis Inlet Rd.

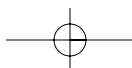
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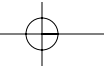
leave the garden wild, or trim it back
with tools only held by hand, with your
own sweat

know it will all come back

this may haunt some &
give purpose, as to those who argue water along Jervis

Inlet Road





BIRCH

for Bill Bailey

it is not to get wood only, but to
be so quiet they'll never know you're gone. a kind
of noise

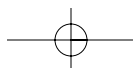
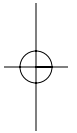
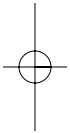
a kind of life, gray day

cloud /

what is under hand & over head
I watch everything. with eyes to know

nothing

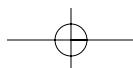
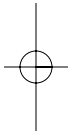
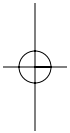
up the Nechako, unceasing

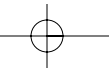




A DRAFT
for John Harris

how I hide
away or am hidden—yet
 kept thinking, *this is a useless*
way to spend your life even tho
I was never promised heaven. that
wind outside from the south Oct. 19, 1978
is warm & is a blessing





BIRTH

for Jesse

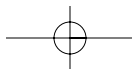
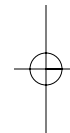
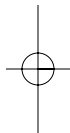
a freshness, of how
a dog barks, after
the baby comes home
the first day, & I'm tired enough
as if a burden released,
momentarily there is a gift of
what language won't allow

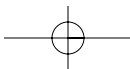
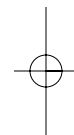
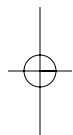
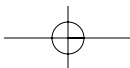
some so closed off, they will not come out
yet today
I await for everything to wake

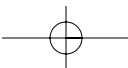
what is possible

a life,

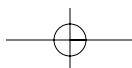
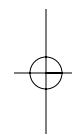
a pleasure

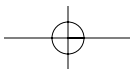
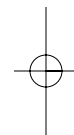
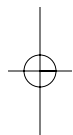
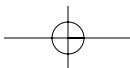


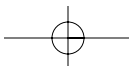




WIRED MUSIC







wait for a grammar exercise.

the impossible systems,
the fuck itself a kind of
speech,
the undressing. this is a version
of someone's hell

incomplete.

•

this is a kind of exile. never to be alone. but
in the imagination, the mists of the blue hills rise. here,
I am in a gravel pit ... with rows of industrial shops.
my concerns are bestial. best not described. some form of form,
a clear stream out
of the mists. Li Po reading, drunk & gone from this
world. time extant.
a large rent due. (a foreclosure
on wonder

•

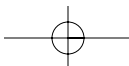
memory

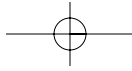
some kind of slug trail
record—a glistening trail, light—the clear

rounded boulders in a stream, in the Rockies
years ago I saw this

•

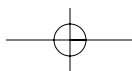
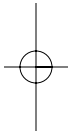
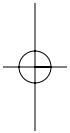
the air should be cool enough to see
your breath





•

it is more than this. something split, thus ambiguity,
a mended heart torn again—held together
by another's care. in a good life you'll
find it by circling back,
to be as dumb as any
beast.



IT SHOULD BE

it should be easier, so I go
back to

—some long uttered language, rooted in the void,

as driving N. E. of Giscome—to McGregor—not making it—running low
on gas—the sun blinding—a sense of being

nowhere, suspended & scary. the truck
moves along,

between mountains, a train, slag heaps, (a copper mine? thus
the green ring that edges the lake ?

such descriptions, without a meaning—or I am without
a meaning,

not clearly, at 35

driving



IT IS

for Ken Belford & Robert Creeley

it is spring now, peculiar & northern.
the truck still smells new, the cutbanks seem to issue
smoke.

—all this talk of money when all I
feel is this sadness for all the world's animals

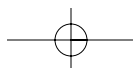
& that I have been let down, is another
reason:

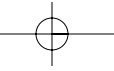
the consequence of being surrounded
by strange people I know nothing about.

—old verities—

I long to talk with you. walk across town
with a bottle of whisky, and not to stop. be sad & happy
knowing the world has gone. let it go, or
let them have it,

whoever they are.





TEMPO

for George Stanley & David Phillips

tempo. salient remembrance—the one rum
sadness
listening to the worlds 20 biggest songs

‘all night long ...
get the job done’

but I was thinking otherwise,
of these long friendships—
that love is the moment you recognize it
as such:

—the rapture of sex, real music,
the written word, the spoken word.

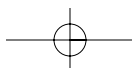
tempi.

give us fire & meat sans obligation
to abstractions of these sources.

yet, by the light,

I’m alive
in the smoky image of one who
waits
in limbo

for the shadow of Virgil, as everyone
might.



HOUSE SHAKES

house shakes. the ferries in. it seems the
end of summer—if it ever began. this leisure
a luxury
to scribble a note:

—think about the ‘human condition’,
that in this wealth there is a kind of poverty of spirit—
a wanting, (a babies unattached cry)
and that those who know the stakes, are of no use.

•

it’s really a cabin. it’s Aug. 5,1980—grandmothers tap
dancing on C.B.C. out of step.

so it goes, slowly to realize yr own
mortality: it gives the trees an edge & a
beauty.

•

coffee cold,
a howling dog, the Raven’s throaty caw,
back in
these woods .

WORK

work: Sept. 2/80

it's dim alright—but some seem
happy.

 this is good—the halls are full—to be any
where else but in yr body, foolish—but

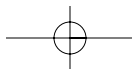
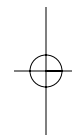
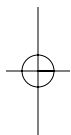
 I thought, elsewhere
 trees, water—a place
where you could sit,
 congenial & benign—old Buddha—
like,
connected in simple work that requires
little talk.

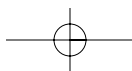
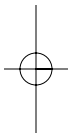
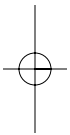
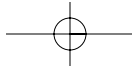
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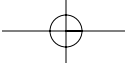
—the 60 watt bulb casts shadows, the hand
& its shadow
 across the page.



THOUGHTS / SKETCHES







JOURNAL:

after Pierre Coupey's paintings

kept thinking how at 36

—more aware of the moment—heavier,
in the calm fear of death, less abandoned in sex—can drink
more, yet am careful both:

out there
& in here.

I'll be the last to go, but I'm travelling (this, is the difference—
in wanting to see more, or go so deep into sleep I need
less: eat lots of food. I've craved a smoke for years,
but quit to see what it was. this is a slow note to David Phillips
in gumboots & our jokes: this wish for the clear moment, nameless
and which guides, as speech—shifting gears, drinking beers into
the hamburger stands—a good life—

•

South America is upon us. we drive up the coast. it seems
the days are numbered—

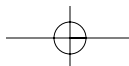
•

heavy air, gray—winter Sechelt, dark Sunshine Coast, how
now thru trees, the lots are filled with tipped over cars, Euclids
in front yards. junk. home at last. the garbage everywhere:

yet not one human being in sight.

•

think of limbo again. the wages of sin, pretty high. we'll
die allright—stretched out & conscious, will wish to speak to no one
sad & miserable. this occurs in a dream. what the poets knew,
as preparation for the last image of a tree.

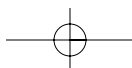
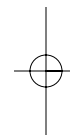
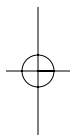




•

you may not know this, having your own world. standing
on some ferry slip, cold & whipped by wind—waiting as we
do, the human mind poking here & there for possibilities. to
get a coffee is an act, toss quarters against the wall. what
is this but a constant ... most everything is taken
away. cheap versions of the old. lined up for video
games

tanks & guns, quarters & fun. I think ahead
to the afternoon. I think behind—Pierre's paintings, another
thing to fall into—movements of colour & something
other



OOGA BOOGA:

for John Harris & Bill Little

—*Ooga booga*, is your answer
in the dark,
in dim light beneath
the wooden chainsawed heads of beaver, moose. *Ooga booga*, the
rug is torn—
a man with lumps of mud on his boots
stands on top the table, pokes at the light,
and takes advice from a crowd. how to fix the light.
with a jackknife, with some tape. put the mind
to work but keep the feet in mud. *Ooga booga*

Ooga booga

there must be an answer. what war, or what has devastated us who now
sit in the Croft. these drunk ones play beautiful pool. those drunker
cannot move. Speak! Speak! *Ooga booga*.

—move the medicine to your lips.

the world is mad, yet we started out, thinking otherwise and lose
ourselves in talks of politics, problems with the rational mind

Ooga booga

keep it dark or darker. do not
fix the light

A FEW THOUGHTS

marking the students' scrawl—lists of
books they've compiled

I'm at a desk—want
to write a poem, afraid I feel nothing—or have felt
nothing for days.

 this burden not to care—not
the clarity of the war where they rout you out—up
against a wall to be shot ... for this thinking
that goes no where (as it should

•

this is to forget, some part of the mind where the
bibliography is

 —better an image than a list of books

 (somewhere Ken Belford swats a blackfly and looks out
over the mountains and saw his heart turn to stone and
come alive again

 —this could be a horrible life but for
our unjustified faith, all the worse to know
even the tricks of that.

 tree and rock and the woman
breathing,
 these long years, the blessing to have
a wife

•

I'm not afraid of the depression—these hearts have had
practice and thus

 to know the world is vast
 —a campfire teaches, the sweet apple
our senses alive:

 so what do we do for days, in the daze
and this world of suspicion,
 where the pencil is of no use



•

computer screens make me dizzy—a bit sick
to my stomach,
the list of books out
of order
is my punishment
and for each cheque I get, they seem to say *you should
be afraid*

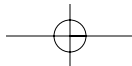
•

John Harris looks out over his life with a major
faith,
two clear acres in his mind; his is a large
mind
and they fear him

•

treat this as a journey,
a mistake to think
of winning anything—the hope of the lottery
treat this like an opening and a blessing
that the language seems free/
may show us where
to go





(LIGHT FROM THE EAST

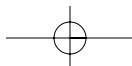
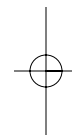
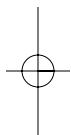
(light from the east, a glow of
pink over the New Hazelton Hotel, & the beginning
snow on the mountains behind.

I wake in the van. the logging trucks left
the lot hours ago, tho I did not hear
them leave.

*beery deep sleep—
dreamless from pot & beer*

this morning full of wonder
to piss in a ditch,

wonder where I am



I'VE WANDERED

I've wandered, not always
lost in this temptation to exist.

in one sense, have gone no where, over
a hill in the imagination:

but it is to love and bear it
as in a child's absence, your
own absence from what you know. the knowledge
of the father's inevitable
death
(mother's wheezing
cough

from cigarettes—

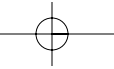
•

the natural elements will be seen as new

—my age a necessary accumulation: Emily
Dickinson's *slant of light*—

William Blake's *beams*

of love



LISTEN

listen to music everyday, today
feel depressed, closed in (a weight
the music won't lift

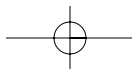
the world, not Nat Tarn's
beautiful contradictions,
but *contradictions*: all that which goes against
human sense—the old sensitive cliches
of trees crushed & ground out, this air
to take 10 years off a useful life, nerves
wracked,
that you are kept from your work
by work

•

long / day wind: November 20

•

someday the willow out front
will snap & come to ground
brittle & old

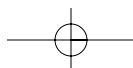
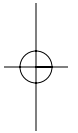
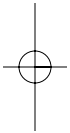




THOUGHT TO JOY

I almost
know how to live. your breasts I've always loved, never
lost in politics or hate or spite—that you've
been yourself when I am no one.

time for a love poem. old fashioned, how I'll goddamned
well hold you & love those aspects you'll never
know



THIS MORNING

this morning, happy—but I'm
older, almost calmer

to see the orange air
light the hall.

it is not always this way, our old senses
say otherwise
yet yield to the inexplicable

•

image: (a man walks out of
the bush
holds a purple flower—

my daughter with her brother
on the way to a sitter

—imagine

how we've tried to call love & recognize
its moment—pushed to it,
held to it when all else is a
heartless wasteland

is it not some human spirit at work
for me to see the orange light, to know this
as clear purpose—

I REALLY REALLY THINK SO:

for Sid Marty

birds eat the seeds
the snow recedes. in the shade, it may never
leave,

or the boat is there forever.

but I thought, I must get back to chopping wood,
the trees & some sense of the sea—(the rural prairie—

here it's the depression. no pretense of good clothes
& hairdos. boots scrape the dust & do a drunken
dance in the cabaret—hell is typical: yet
you barely believe the story over a screwdriver—her two
boys dead one month (now she's back at work

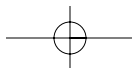
you cared, carry yourself around for days. there is
good company, yet one or two will hate you, see
you as their idea.

spring / sing—check out the tire
deals,
a moment of connection with less synaptical
activity, or see the living vision of the bum along the
ditch his bucket full of bottles, while the managers think they're
safe—how else give orders drive proud those rabbits.

(a sick life with many pleasures—a right life

yet there is the point you must pretend versus meaninglessness—
that there is correct human activity—the comma splice
unequal to El Salvador: question, what do we know. the
boys & girls are fresh in their flesh. you love their smiles—it
seems they are what you want them to be. untaught, they seem
to know,

the ones in accidents—in your
midst

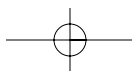
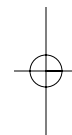
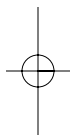


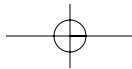
CABIN:

early morning/June

not miserable
but a sense of the end of things

—the baby wakes
singing—



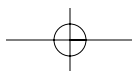
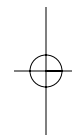
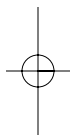


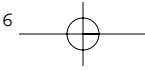
THOUGHTS DRIVING

onward up the road, it is you again driving some 10
year path—looking past the hospital for
signs of life, but never think of investing, in say, Tacos—

it is the elusive sought. you know the truck handles well
& you are high up.

of this friend, you think, I love him—& a happiness
that work is done—that the air,
the light
meets & enters the eye



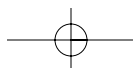
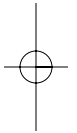


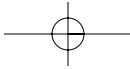
A LETTER:
for Steve Stack

ease of light /
 or how the whole world
 would seem to be
 yours. to look at
it askance
 with a faith the boat will never sink

AHOY

—I could see you swimming & making it—
as it is here, to have a good heart—to see
 yourself
 always
within & of the swirl





POETRY EMBARKS US ON A SEA:

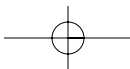
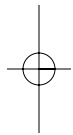
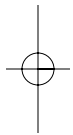
after George Stanley

on land, we change oil
take attendance & forget to dance

institutions, a stormy sea. the managers meet early to
decide your fate. we sleep in the poem—act with acts
of faith. girls & boys in the hall make sense. our laughter
a consequence of

those out to get us. days on the computer
terminal is no way to live. give us pencils & a clear heart
loss, an aversion to versions.

poetry embarks us, as a friend will test you, to make sure
your love is worth it, adds up ... is a sea, of crossed correct
wires



THOUGHTS IN FALL

how we wish
sense,
 as to cut the beautiful tree for wood and to take
a break for hot tea after hard work. the fire
is on
 and I see trees smelled them
 all day
 —the wind whip chill around Connaught Hill—

no pulp in the air

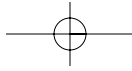
•

memory sweet and short: yet we
agonize
 some task, demand, that leaves us
un—prepared,
 thus a fear and disbelief
 though it is a source, itself of beauty
or what makes us so:

•

 in the imagined
landscape,
 I see a world. we are gathered
and almost as in this world, tethered
 (which is not to exclude pain and death)

we believe the sounds in our heads—the songs and
momentarily these emotions, real—that draw
us off.
 and each day, a multiplicity—small
city of thought

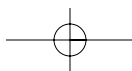
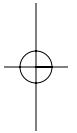
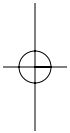


•

we have reached here happy and alive (forces, ones
we have leant ourselves to, diminished—or
we make them,
shape them into another more reasonable
thing

this is a human trust, to give each
a frontier—a landscape of body and
language,
(sweetness of our offering

of the flowers dumped over the hill—many are left
and alive



SELF STUDY:

for Peter Byl

—over these coffees—the darkness
(as the 50's fat kid in the postcard holding out
two dead fish)

—a long time
ago, fire would warm your heart. now, a
version of the penitentiary

jobs

for a 30 cent stamp they'll turn you in—or know some
inner point of your own honesty, truth—& throw
beauty away for

*cognitive complexities, goals
and objectives*



CLEAR NORTH

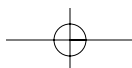
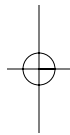
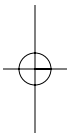
clear north. first snow—the
mind is clear

November 16—notice the wood pile go—
(the fire—cedar snap / birch

thought earlier of England—France, places
I've never been. here,
the first snow

elsewhere—the job I won't go to—
better to watch my son carry wood & wield the wheel
barrow he gets more wood with

chop away, make
a big fire



COMPOSING

composing in the dark
until light & connections with the bird
outside—

Fioronal dulls a pain—pushes
the mind a little
out of itself—not this constant

din of *the decision*.

the bird sings & I love the
gray air he sings in, thru the paper
curtain—
later there will be meetings with humans, each
with a version, a story: the advice, *legal*

•

(does the air trap the bird. is it a cry I
hear, a warning—or simply joy at dawn?)

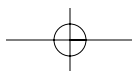
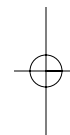
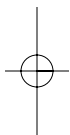
has this become me? this naked flesh awake
in a bed, the throbbing gum, the double dose
of fioronal, aspergum

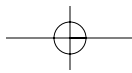
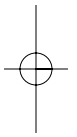
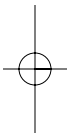
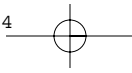
my own fear begins
to defeat me & from this, I must lift
myself up

be the clear invisible
bird



SEX AT 38





I go to sleep
dream lines—
see

—*Sex at 38*—

 this planet / this life
changing ground,
 that sex, a mystery
begs legislation
 definition, not knowing what
 it is

 (an
old push—

 I look at breasts,
 dream of women, wives—as if one
 would or could
 possess you—still this fear
or make
 the fear another thing:

forbearance

•

I'm calmer now, to learn. love may not save us. it is
a longing, a condition,

(a tree I climbed
to come out where?

sex at 38:

a tongue down your throat—

the impossible distance across the fog in a disco bar
false beauty, anomaly—& trick mirrors thin you out—
to other lines and thoughts:

drinking sex at 38

I sneak looks
at the dancing

female shapes

•

we'd be intelligent

if we knew

filled by false surety, confusions, and cycles
of sex—

or biology,

the ends, or the huge gaps in knowledge
when they never say

I love you

•

I want

to say—

stay, with me

sex and love

•

we're dummies

•



•

I've imagined myself
in the stories about big hearts & true romance
but knew I'd get turned in
snatched on: stolen paper, & touched
breasts

—the women—

a preclusion to sex. 38—January—83

sense a last chance to practice before the darkened mirror

(before

I cross the open

naked

to speak

in the void

of all such places

•

revealed & accused. at 38

I had to hide
& have it out

with everyone who thought they knew
who fucked who





•

wanting

a life, a little space. my five year old says:

you can do anything you want

(this language as I shave ...

•

desire

diminished

but I've still got
hopes—

a cheap bargain

when the vest in the close-out sale comes

my way

—yet I don't forget the line we draw
and what's learned in & from abandonment

sex includes everything you are & know

I guess

so I can go on about it

•

for myself—I could barely live. I hid away

in a kind of misery, a kind of periodic
ecstasy of self possession

—a kind of falling apart

yet wanted to be sure

of the belly I came from (know that someone held me





•

there is the outer. here is the inner. there is a point
where it doesn't make a difference

•

sex

at 38

I wonder will I ever get to it and will
the looking help or go against that which I think I sought

—in this case, also the gray mind at 38
closing and opening
sexless a sea muscle, but

wasn't it only an idea? what we loved—the
semblance of a coherence—enriched voids of human purpose
—the cunt as entrance / ecstasy?

maybe we'd just rather rod around in cars which is not
sex at 38

sex at 38 is staggering thru the blank world

full of wonder





•

I get thinner, lose weight
anxious from the belly up,
keep talking versus
silence & the opaque creeping fog of sex at 38

talk: thrust of verb and fragment becomes our sex—
the world opening female, trees & birds & shoots
& rushing spring northern creeks, dusty grass & fiddleheads ...

my head is in the clouds. so be it. fuck the tree hug the rock

•

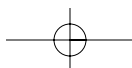
I'm learning to talk:
—*no fear here*, starts as a boast, but I half believe it

sex at 38 may be no more
than a little faith, an image:

the beautiful girl in class in bibbed pants with the word *love*
fading on her shirt

•

and what they think, will not matter—almost a curse
that turns to save you.

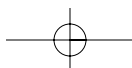
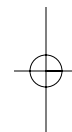
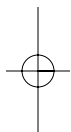


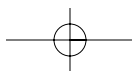
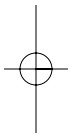
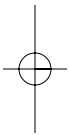


THE CENTRE
(an improvisation)

*all around the poorly loved
their lives follow life back
into stone and they dream
a sweeter consonance at the centre*

—Robin Blaser





in the centre,
I work the files, records, scores, find
the rules a gift, could you be sure
the value of the rule

•

the sun is human, lights the rock
pile outside, breeze moves
the dying plant

•

it is horrible, what happens: history, and to think

•

bits of paper: a pile, a basket—paper
a paragraph where she sees a farm, a river—the awkward
sentence I mark, find fault with—this trouble with my own
(the task: to make visible the farm, the heart, the centre

•

sun out. the shadow line across the rocks.
still a tension—the voices light gasping

(yet,
the centre makes us
human
—a laughter, a boredom, a joke to know
who we are—what we do

•

I watch from the centre desk—
the disk whirs, a beep,
—*his* machine, he slouches toward,
Cat Hat
low to his ears



•

time, is place made flesh; less faith and you
require these wires: overhead the message flashed, a constant
are your lights on? outside, a fog. you can't see
movement, gone too quick, a brief passage of the silk-like
dress—her lovely mouth and manner

•

neither privilege, nor care. but how we want a surety, when all
seems ending—or has ended (to find yourself here—sent to the
centre: it could be an obscure paradise—no experience
necessary—and what

we want, found:

human talk—sex and grammar, a happy lovely
world, an invention, a psycho/pathology—someone's been,
and been dreaming and when you wake, the centre is there

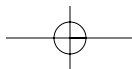
•

in the centre, know. they think this a last or beginning
chance—and what you learn: the labyrinth of the dream—work,
as in the old days—never seeming ending. the dutiful will miss
it. those who don't, take a chance, make themselves an edge:

the grammar machine unto itself. only humans
in trouble: it is all human—(what we cover up
when the centre falls apart

•

moments you invent and dread—when you think you want a long
stretched and clear landscape of trees and rocks—and a sense
of *you* as singular and empty. some wind blows against you, you,
in this grayness feel thin, alive, (fear disappears. here
again—anticipations, the psycho logical where they look
for you (and what appears to steal you away, is you, the thing
itself





•

no system for chaos. they take your life away with pleasure

•

abandon the scraps, the words. I haven't checked my plant
for days, the changing mutability of the rock pile (blasted
chunks.

early, I saw the bird crack the seed, the ingenious
bird. rose bush scrapes
the window. I've come to love

the wind

(and in the blurred eye catch
the funeral the bearers wait for in laughter

•

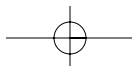
some stayed out, in the hall, to smoke.
the test will place them—a diagnosis, a hopelessness—the
defeat they already know. why write or speak

•

staple. include, submit, use: commands to make me, *They*.

be quiet

(I'd like to be of
some large silence, of a shadow, of a place—this
anxious self, dulled, wants it out, wants to tell the
accordion player, go away in your leather shorts





•

gray sky. gray wind. what state of weather, or self be
described, found and signified. the centre is fluid—a flux
closes, opens—*is* a state—florescent, fluid—the soft and
hard.

when you're sick you see it, sick—

•

no complaints, amidst the deep babble ... barely a move
against the cruelty of the mind with its single moving parts,
as cruel as that which yields and bends
for false belief. take us out to the rocks. stake us in the
cold—clear and unnamed.

look up from your scraps

•

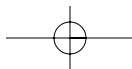
no music without silence ... the fall leaves on the willow appear
as fish in a stream (strong, south wind—silver bellies, or
last night, from the porch—an old moon lights the cherry leaves,
stars, I thought ... these slight occupations, as experts poke
at phones, recommend the proper tests, tape their clapper bells

•

a centre to hold to when the
mind goes out of the heart, heart out of the mind

•

today, the centre smells—an old school: paper, ink, eraser bits—
pencil wood, when you expect electric smoke, nylon
gas. there is a point where authority must cheat its rules, get
you through. I've seen meadows, space, and the point
between the comma and the word, as a point, an entrance,
a meadow





•

sense my own failure when I see in others some success. John
at the desk, can talk—intelligent to admit
confusions, the arbitrary—smile, glint and send them on.
real lessons are elsewhere of your own finding. a rock
a tree—the way the light just went to gray again

yet we want the words, what is taught

•

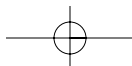
turn around
half face
the centre, the axis—a kind of reversal
where the centre moves fast, as a circumference spun,
yet doesn't move at all

image: the poor fat guy, days
on the spelling arcade
and those who sit around
useless without him

•

the sentence beginning, “The Hindu faithful ...

(that which begs me give it
meaning and clarity—the pencil scrawl correction
they cannot read, nor rightly care to: here,
you want out of the sentence—the long sentence—be
of the Hindu faithful who bathe along the river





•

it is not a matter. what is sense, but a connection
where self disappears or becomes the instrument and
the head is large with what it discovers—as a line that
drifts on, out to the yard long and continuous, past
the rocks, parking lots, malls and centres ...

•

they let you go—far enough, you don't know

there will be a time and location of the natural. no
computer beeps in the deep forest—
(too many hours, unmarked, to get there

•

—want in a dark hour, a rosy spirit—
to appear, and that when we laugh, it is of
laughter itself

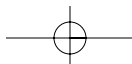
•

laugh anyway—that taken as serious is just a scratch.
the real centre, is intact—is of
a beauty ... a strength of unwavering, of a solid
solitude—and of the horror,—its release

•

I'm years back—and feel driven to let the
swirl ... what shape, give it?

some stay calm with higher faith, some are drunk—
on knees confess their misery
drive to go on. shifts and changes as today on
the porch felt a sense of spring (rain smell,



released dirt—
November
wet
grass and leaves

•

no centre to teach, but becomes excuse that unbelievably
yields a value: the soft, human—the voices, a
result of that which contains them—a mask, a body, the centre—
a centre of the arbitrary unknown

•

I'm lost in the centre, as the plant (dormant with no expression
for its own condition, but that what we see and say it to be.
I'm outside to see—walk past my own office—look close to the
rocks I describe and want the air, sense of my own body
moving up through the lot to the truck. grin the loss of
time I don't think

•

the days we stink in this work

•

it's a trick to stay quiet, not to show lack of interest. slight
marvel at my system—to make time go, avoid work: a walk, the
glance at texts—the chat, the conscious joke, note
the filed “unknowns” with faked concern—
note these clouds (never before

—sun on the portables



•

no criticism or praise—barely, what is given, a
condition in this moving state: circuits of mind
and skin's divisions—the tough girl smiles. muscled
boys held in thought, equations, yield to parse
and paraphrase

•

higher up, above me, baboons

•

the more the centre is lauded—the more we sleep, and old talk
about the spirit, gone in a lie, and that to come awake—when
you want this sleep, means no epic, for the centre, nor cure.
if it were only a matter of grammar
a list of numbers
a measure for the
emptiness

•

the drill's lesson—drill

•

snow
—the light ground
the white rocks





•

it begins to seem normal like talk of death for the dying—
the paraplegic curse's energy gone to acceptance of
the twisted limbs—

(in this hobble across the centre floor,
we learn
—good humour in these assigned tasks

sort the
twisted math and grammar

could we shove it/were it ours

•

I do nothing. slight
chuckle at the girl's
rats nest hair

get
beyond the rule for

“more better”

•

were it in my heart to know, no other road
possible

•

what is missing, that drives me. not circles,
or schemes but a happy dream as a thin wisp
out of the angst. the one's who know, cheer me on
as if in this stupidity I could cheer them.



we are of the rocks, the tree, the speaking
animals—
to wait

/

to measure

our lives
against the infinite

(so be it
our senseless laughter
without desire
but this view of the centre's

edge
gasping
air

•

to be unwavering,
I go askew—the top's wobble when
the centre disappears

•

a thin sleep: drunk beyond sense. tests of disembodiment/
or how we cling to the foolish chance of a kiss. no formula
for the path when the needle pin centre warps

•

to want the freezing bird's view of the seed/
to know the extent of the gift—a letter to ... some
words, time, to ask forgiveness—I'm the fool to make
measures of the empty love—



•

one love. many hairy creatures
in big boots. I blew up and use the test to punish,

became the centre,
myself

•

almost
wept at the thought, and in my talk, of all that's inhuman
here

•

out on a flat sea, a centre—
each pleasure and happiness as if cheated. so
over the sea/centre edge. (just another surface—a long oblong
circle.

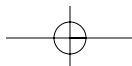
the universe you return to,
a journey
without calculation

•

no force to find or do. but who I am or was I
yet ...

•

some so behind you wonder
why they're here.
(warmth, to talk, to be
the centre,
when most have left





•

the hapless dream shadows into stone, peripheries and paradise

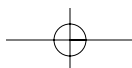
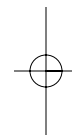
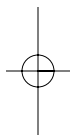
•

I return to the scrawls

files,

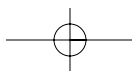
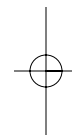
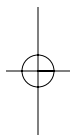
scores,

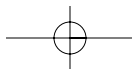
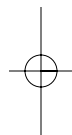
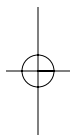
and bits of speech—

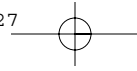




THE PETTING ZOO







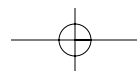
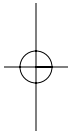
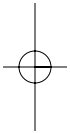
I CAN SEE

I can see.

the surface now, less depth. less to lose.
time's a gift—death's a large diversion—
go on (pound nails, swing that tractor
around in mud, wait for the whistle blow, live

wonder.

strange purpose, undefined.



RAILWAY

David, I don't know
 but I love the view, the woman singing,
 the talk of what we imagine, to be.

this part of the mind,
 is meaning.

drift of afternoon

laugh, in our mugs of beer

no death/

& easy flow of thought—human

purpose:

“emptiness” defined is meaning & how we wish the

words

legitimacy. the truth is ...

a slightly twisted note—just when I was
 about to believe ...

and her voice.

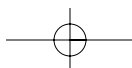
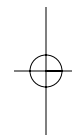
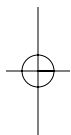
to say I
 love it, not quite true.

•

a week before we drank Coors along the Malahat
 talked of Don Fraser. he made me uneasy.
 why not just say it. the fear we dance in here, diminished
 by death's fact & inevitability—yet
 how conjure momentary purpose? in the bar,
 TV fights—strippers
 in their showers—that our eyes go
 from fighters punches, ducking moves
 to ass & breast
 watch the steaming glass, when she bends
 to draw



the leering heart, its
leering
tongue.



MRS. SNOWDON

something in her mind already gone—memory,
core of thought, that the world could be a blur

Mrs. Snowdon would sit. sensed her last days
out by the burning trash.

she'd stopped yelling—"get your wood away from my fence—go
live in the country!"

I was, for awhile the surrogate, husband, neighbour, the nearest man
hers, gone some time before
—nagged & hounded—last seen
on 3rd Ave., fly down,
plastered, stunned, drools a
thin moan *oooooh*
(death itself. days later, dead)

•

the son has painted the house Cape Cod blue. mother
would disapprove, want the decaying white, the
curling skin of the baby blue.

but she is gone. driven by
one last time in a homemaker's car. beside the fence,
I saw her look—a horror
that her time on earth was gone.

AT THE MALL

“emptiness”—ah—this measure as if
life were as lovers
 in a Prince George bar. today at the mall
laugh at *Old Fart / Old Fart's Wife* hats. to others we
 must look
 as welfare cases. this early in the day. *not working*

 shuffle thru isles of goods

in Save-On. no-name chips. I hunger for
 junk food. it's good—SALT (symbol for eternity). what
we crave. hamburg
 mostly fat.

FALSE SPRING

after 9 the highway clear enough you can dream. No. 1
and sun
—a brightness thru the valley / you'd almost sing when Gzowski fades
at the powerline. how can I be glad to be when
C.B.C. describes those
gibbled, thrashing the thin line of
self & death?

should've got a coffee at the Lougheed
Mall & read *The Province*: "Ravaged Moms and Tots," or today

"The last thing I saw was blood"

this news
entertainment to be safe and know it wasn't you. up the hill
to S.F.U.
and sense of false spring. sun & nip, warm enough to
tar the roof. TAR,
and earthen smells
trigger reverie.

SOON

soon we'll all be grounded

—George Stanley

vomited/

got on a plane

how to tell you'll live? if 30 minutes later
yr no weaker. therefore, no hemorrhage, or
embarrassment of paging a doctor on his way to Kelowna

•

hold on to the last thing you'll see, I thought. I think, not
these goddamn smiles, the stewardess, or those who stare at
People magazine.

but I didn't get weaker—wanted water

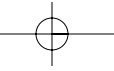
thought, I'll concentrate

on *Open Letter*

felt sicker,

but didn't get

grounded.



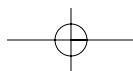
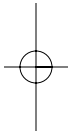
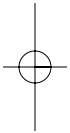
OLDER

older
& slower to move up in the woods, deep and
so take a break.

(how many more times sense what?)

—I hope these woods—

we ate a very big meal—
got the Maple mostly out, cut & split the bolts
to dry.



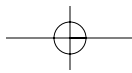
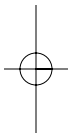
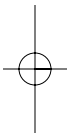
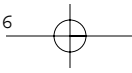
THE PETTING ZOO

at the petting zoo, I
wonder where the poem is our hearts
(as humans, apart. I hug the lamb
& we touch the bristles on the pig. the old of the mall in glee
may remember youth and farms. for the young

 it's Blake's lamb (who
made us miserable and apart? we touch the soft
camel snout, watch ducks in a canning pot, swim.

what makes the animals our
friends? (their hunger) while Bobo the
clown yells at the child who honks his horn—is edgy

is the poem, is a goat trying to
get out. we feed him through
the gate.



PULP/LOG
(a poem in 59 parts)

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.

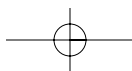
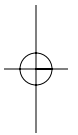
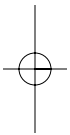
—D.H. Lawrence

no time for courage

—George Bowering

Actually the poet is the happiest of men.

—William Carlos Williams



PULP
LOG

PULP L pulpa flesh, pulp 1a (1): the soft, succulent part of a fruit
 b : a soft mass of vegetable matter (as of apples) from which most of the water has been extracted by pressure c : the soft sensitive tissue that fills the central cavity of a tooth.
 d : a material prepared by chemical or mechanical means from various materials (as rags but chiefly from wood) and used in making paper and cellulose products. e : a magazine or book printed on cheap paper (as newsprint) and often dealing with sensational material f : to reduce to pulp.

LOG lag fallen tree; akin to OE licgan to lie—more a LIE 1 : a bulky piece or length of unshaped lumber; esp : a length of a tree trunk ready for sawing and over six feet long 2 : an apparatus for measuring the rate of a ship's motion through the water that consists of a block fastened to a line run out from a reel 3 a : the record of the rate of a ship's speed or of her daily progress; also : the full nautical record of a ship's voyage 4 : any or various records of performance
 < a computer > Log vb 1 : a to cut trees for lumber b: to clear (land) of trees in lumbering log—or logo—[Gk, fr. logos—more a LEGEND] : word : thought : speech : discourse

—Webster's

PART ONE

one
fifty nine

—making landscape of self,
the stopped line or silence,—
breakfast at Sears, earlier the common,
noted, September polluted fog (or / this morning, clear:

death's reminders / debts of breath—pollution is now an amber
count,—the colleague feeling not right after a drive down from
College Heights.

breakfast: \$3.09 includes coffee, muffins,
announcements and paint sales.

John & I talk

exigencies of pension plans (*how* it works—sense, it *doesn't*
you die, no pay & who really thinks of beneficiaries—details
of who or what's left, when you believe the notion of legacy:
we buy Sear's gloves, with leather palms, 99 cents—momentary
bargain /

charge cards
and sear sucker.

two
fifty nine

in all these
years to get here, (this screen of memory, the deluxe screen of
surface daily life, note:

the September fog is back.

I've been here 20 years. it's dark / at 8, you wonder where the
kids are. / you are still / marveling at that bush of tomatoes—
Mrs. Snowden's plums, little crushed juicy hearts on the
wooden walk.

three
fifty nine

I'm
43, and soon 44. mathematics of age and time and this urge
to say what, or how explain contours, thots, sex, love,
this old marriage, her changing shape (slight rise of belly—

or/

see myself a bit stooped—in abstract moments dream of
stretch, exercise, swimming, health

47,000 a year, the truck a bit smashed, old / I'd give casual
inventory of household goods in this indulgence of being able
to speak, without guilt (but for these mounds of food scraped
into plastic bags.—world of care, world of wonder, to wonder little you can do

yet wish to change: would wish capacity to stretch the happy
threshold, to hold love in all useless contexts, *to see* (all
shaking by their own admissions—

four
fifty nine

it's the Mill in all its forms that rules—power and source, that one joke
will bring its wrath or smug indifference.

(Mill managers say the NO SMOKING signs *too small*—weigh a few cigarettes against their polluted air.

in order to avoid the margins we indent, invent a threshold, and call the limits, yet just when you don't expect the moose to rush the shadows—the boy is strapped, & patterns of the world emerge. the bullies go free. so you go this life, tail-less, must stop to look from room to window to the outside other patterns of wonder. how would you have wanted *it*? less or more than you are is only a question. in any event you'd get lost looking for the answer

—ah fool, yr infidelity is the rose bush seeking its sum of potentials—what a vacancy,
 the hell of it,
 this separation from self and other, self and self.

five
fifty nine

I have seen worlds stripped, so each object takes the enormity of itself, and the mind unstable, unable to integrate its integers.

—this is not window shopping at Sears, or the pull of those \$4.99 shoes, the 99 cent slippers, or to notice wood still cheaper for toilet seats.

why would I go, where would I go in this fear of empty rooms, sense of fucked self to move amidst any bed or table, in this the raw tree view of colder weather coming? is this a cost of beauty, the focus of word and thought to make the thing already there, there as object of seeing?

six
fifty nine

wind—

a jet lifts over Prince George. rain, 28 September 88. felled branches glisten
freshly dark.

I look out, almost blank from this specific and verifiable form of a
bureaucracy's meanness

(that very few believe, explains my insistence of its truth: what do we know?
how do we know in this spontaneous breath, the vital versions of a life? hang
all this speech on the line—

the accuracy of the persona, dressing up for show and tell. tell me a story:
once upon a time, long long ago. (oh it's infinity we're up against, the sum of
the self and all it carries in the dangerous meandering social world full of
humans getting ahead at everyone else's cost: officials in the strip clubs, hiding
breath in time for their versions and "visions"—this wind, upon a time was
pure to move we see its invisible primeval roots /at night we see in a mist,
the polemical moon.

seven
fifty nine

—that the world is a paradox of favours where cheaters seem to prosper.
was it the boy who hid in terror, didn't know this? flowers to please a mother,
a gift you give in fear, the thank you's to them for the pleasure of even *this*,
your lowly place
as peasants of therapy and stress, where I hear the lowly bitch or whine in the
darkness of these tiny rooms?

you might know of this.

yet/ I sigh at the wonder of the lawn to my left, or the colorful splash of

David Hockney's California drive,—simple pleasure of self alive to pure elements of slow breath,
the expensive coat that fits, the possibility of deepening love.

yet to some, you are them, maybe to them you are you with the message:
don't expect a truce,
don't expect crumbs or sleep.

eight
fifty nine

at Oktoberfest sense it useless, even that you tried.
this is the gap between expectation and the mug of beer
and the only place yr going is to the portable bathroom in the dark.

jolly the music, jolly the company—it's all sex and future & possibility—to
look
for the blonde who's hat's askew—lovely, sexy grin—when she begins to dance.

I breathe thru the foul mist of colored lights, swirl of leathered dancers—
urgency
of genitals, the prime pull of young and old in this world. and to think a kiss
could be enough across the gap to show tender care,
but not here on the skating rink with plywood floor—the Coliseum of swilled
and self-deceptive dreams.

better to walk the dark fall night alone,—leave their
souvenir mug behind.

nine
fifty nine

I'm in the other lane, from Aqua-fit swim till my thoughts are fish
(some the large beat salmon at end of the run, others, species unknown, flashy,
young, and char-like. oh who knows, who cares of all that's seen, and of what's
the consequence: a line? a thought that repairs the chink, the gap in this hope
that sense be made on the way to Gerry the barber?

October sun: 10 a.m. exactly when I saw anyone's older mother speechless, alone
in what I sensed *heavy worry*. is the Winnebago pointed the right way? where
to go in this dream there is an actual place. is deception our hope?

mumbling old-time loggers on George St. think *& know* there is no wood, no
viable
wood. this is the message of thinned streets, drunks, young men in their
northern costumes of despair: long hair, acid-jeans, logo hats, smoke, drink
beer at Joe's Place where the stripper's literal joke is about a fist-fuck up her ass.

we laugh in what we do or do not understand—the future is short, the day is
long.

—is knowledge the discovery of any thing sought? I continue to walk in
sentences, fragments, scuffle between joy and life—in this stream of bumping
fish, hug the water
of my empty
swimmer's lane.

ten
fifty nine

a world beneath the world.

nothing new that there is other alternate art, & the lone vigil of the careful reader.

oh that truth had an immutability, not be mere replica of what is known. my own mind, a bit confused—but I thought: *mill owners seem to live elsewhere*, are not *the judge* yet allowed their disclaimers on the price of breath.

what's 20 years of silent hazard? it's the gas they used in World War One—slow death without the amenities or consolation of what we believe or want, in what we thought, the immutable natural world. ask the moose ahead of me in the muddy Ford (driver and co-driver in a kind of love, the way men put arms around each other driving—notice the plate smeared with blood, the rack and tuft of hair.

tarps are cheap, cover meat, cover truth
and rot in too much sun.

eleven
fifty nine

I read these loopy words beyond the margins, smeared ink of description: sprockets and horses hooves, the overblowing wind of her prairie sketch until I become less than myself or not the self I would wish to be.

my work is time and displacement of energy. this is nothing bad, this is nothing good. *I am writing this so Barry Mckinnon will understand*,—therefore the stinking, or too high grade. say it's only a job, it's only your life—and it might be going out the window, into the October fog,—the euphemistic inversion of white mill cloud that I cussed last night until someone said, *would you rather live in Bangladesh?*

here it might be death and stress and the bitching pleasure of a 3 dollar beer, a way to break the evening, disappear in fogs and hopes of your own making

and imagination. this is good, & I'll bless the ground and pray to earth
and hug the pillars of the Holiday Inn, and still be the silent fool
who evokes these jokes of despair:

cunits and hectares.
measures—foreign florescent flags—

twelve
fifty nine

Cornflakes in my Mac/
& earlier, the student who said: *I wasn't talking only moving my lips ...* this is
the mood, of being disarmed—sense of powerlessness: ... they *could* instinctively
form a group and kill you—
the purpose, therefore, of a true education is ... ? tho politeness to the
questioner may not alter the relationship, nor alter answers given:—they want
confessions guilty or not

—earlier wrote, *they buy us cheap, got us cheap.* I was thinking about the collective
social silence and these goods displayed in the mall that draw us to the pure
moment of the purchase—the exchange of coin and smile, seems old fashioned
but Instant Teller wouldn't work: *go to your main branch, go hungry, burn gas*
and miles, or just stay. is everyone trying to get out of this, the best of all
possible worlds?

eat to the death—is a mood, a task to remove the Cornflake crumbs, apologize,
admit error,
misperception of confused juices,
arguments.

thirteen
fifty nine

Thanksgiving:

the fog smears distance, brings secret self to self and this gives perspective. north:
 it's not the coastal soup. it's the raw tree smudged wet and orange, skidded
 —a polluted haze cars with lights move thru. it's a lover giving up: why not
 smoke—you don't want to live anyway—is another definition of loneliness. oh,
 live. oh go on—load these leaves and trucks and count another breath, fuck or
 make love,—time's true entertainment, that we dangle a bit flabby and
 changed, tho consciously exercise— (it's at the dump: you say hello to the
 scavenger. no scavenging allowed, tho all eyes scan the goods. I sit in the truck
 and bleed, let the imagination swirl as a low cloud, eyes scan lines of trucks
 and cars filled with leaves and wonder at the general bounty, this sense of
 providence that those waiting for what is thrown out may feel—those throwing
 out—oh, what's the measure or your pleasure and what price freedom or non-
 existence. fully whole or just full we forget what's beyond and —there it is:
 spirit of whole earth dis assembled, engineered—state holidays for the bought
 mind / bought soul

fourteen
fifty nine

where should I be? (driving, thinking about the asylum I see a sign: *have you
 had your eyes examined lately?* fog again, and writing like I'm starting up an
 engine & the stubbed pencil of the imagination is a long talk over beer at
 O'Flaherty's until a guy called the Crazy Hawaiian begins to sing Springsteen.
 don't go *here* I say, don't go *there* unless there's nothing to lose. it'll pile up until
 you can't move, you'll be the colloquial lump of shit, nerve wracked for good
 reason: *you* didn't learn yr lesson. *you* didn't lie or cheat, *you* believed in the
 imagination's pursuit of illuminating the darkness, (in the up-river managerial
 insensitivity). are you saying this is the end of the world or the beginning of a
 long and endless conversation?

no drummer / no back up singer. it's the one man band singing La Bamba,
synched to a homemade tape—it's a living, it's a wage, it's an asylum,—how
could we not be in each other hearts or minds or arms?

fifteen
fifty nine

Oct. 13, 1944: could I imagine where I was in birth or see the world I was to
enter, or know that I would even be, creature in vitro—nameless Barrie within
the soft walls, pain of first born. was it mud or snow in October on the way to
the Holy Cross from the farm,—family huddled in expectation of birth—
bewonderment of their own birth, life, and time.

/some treed, and sparse grass world does come inside, though we know not
what of the magical indelibility my baby picture does not tell—it's a smile that
I didn't know better or knew all or well—or—

it's the future. I'm in a truck thinking 44 years, now wonder about what
seemed so clear, I cannot say—that the day is my birthday goes imageless,
into a blank of lines, peripheries, sides and edges, abstractions

I was thinking of the earth. I was thinking of my mother.

sixteen
fifty nine

how it works: sunlit room—Oct. 14/88 the computers alarm is on—those
who think they're safe should look again: the polluted air of the Bowl, the
Dioxin-water in College Heights—how go on invisible and blind?—in the
settling ponds thousands of tons: sulfur sludge and effluent. today, an old
north, of clear, cutting sun, Sears' lot fresh with puddles to diminish content of
the real/ negative shit we conjure up over multiple coffees—(yet wonder:

where are the biologists, the chemists amidst these general politics of missing public, owners, and officials.

seventeen
fifty nine

new systems for the world's revisions. today it looks as if the snow begins. I wanted to describe my desk—some thing in the abstract crashed disk of computer games and poetry—or/ in this old system of slow thot, give a weight to a thing known. it's breakfast with two strips less and Sears damned promo song so loud you think *I'm not coming back*—there must be somewhere else.—thinking: *we're half way thru what?* as I dream the season into being. do I love this north? when they put in the new systems something always doesn't work, or wasn't thot out, but nothing can't be explained and quantified or justified, and someone always pays. it's their game, fair game in this urban blight, northern light: profit, & loss & enterprise and of the commercial imagination ... was I fair, was I right in my own revisions of belief & disbelief?

eighteen
fifty nine

sit in the Simon Fraser Inn—the koffee-klatch oldtimers making jokes, talk politics, health & guffaws—these laughs till someone dies—sadness? who's next. you want to ask something—or see acute & accurate versions, ask what is history, beyond the local clichés. (Simon Fraser's picture finally taken down, he's out of his canoe, out of the picture now —a world moves on to what it is, a process. what is it? today, time rots at 10:15—whenever they meet—where is it? this puke mauve, covers the old brown, reds and golds—it's the cold of a foreign design, the eternal *new management* sign that gives old place its place—smaller portions in this need to make it pay. this koffee-klatch is what happened without a glance, or chance.

this is no trial but questions of error of all undone, or about to be.
—note this new purple rug, fresh dings already in the baseboard paint.

nineteen
fifty nine

bored enough to see: to think, this town as trailer, tires flat, or no wheels at all—& where the prosperous dream, when this rhetoric of dreams abounds, yet each scheme at some great expense—the Nechako to become a trickle, the power sold off, the profit elsewhere. how was it to be? and who cares enough. we feed, our guilt—shuffle the rubble of another close-out sale, the dusty goods of Saveco, Crazy Willy—sardines and note pads & slight thrill of the bargain, barely compensation for what's being lost: outside—beautifully clear—nature's bored mind—there is no mind but the human voice that sees its body. we that we'd like to see the future, when we can't see the future's here. how is anything different than my truck (smell of oil and age, running well, but how far would you trust it to go—assumes we'll one day head thru the bush on foot. (is this an invention—is the world the conglomerate of infinite angles, or some single mind? some have power, of that there is no doubt, and we seem the enemy, though they never cease to grin or shake your hand.

twenty
fifty nine

no purpose but happiness—that undefined state of the pup ripping carpet. me, off work till noon skimming Foucault for sense, adding one or two points to the percents I missed—or argue a decision, weakly—that *that* character was *not* smart, but he might be by the story's end. so goes the drift, and daily world of organized and arbitrary surface. behind the walls, frayed wires, mice, and men with further schemes—oh who cares, or what the result that the mayor sits in a used car lot open for the public view? this public drives by, hopeless with questions, maybe to be fooled: it's everybody waiting to wish pleasant forms of time's commodities—

PART TWO

twenty one
fifty nine

with no lyric here. we watch and talk—note frayed rugs, rot—
the sandwich left uneaten, loggers beaten—these boasts of skill and old times
(and how *with two fingers left he could still crush your fucking hand—this is my fucking
mom*, he says, then asks: *are you a fucking used car salesman or a fucking lawyer?* why
take this chance, this conspicuousness. this 19 dollar Woodward's sweater, gives
me away. college professors, stay home.
Harvey Chometsky and me in hiding / that sense of being visible when they
get us—heroes stupid, slurping soup / clearly post post modern. ugly ugly & so
much danger you think *why am I here:* beer and strippers and other parallel
images to describe the condition—a kind of subtle hunt when those who know
see threat, mistake the disguise.—kill you just the same—this is the drift into
psycho pathology, the conspiracies that decide who goes who stays—devise the
ways.

twenty two
fifty nine

where have we come—to the sound of a microwave buzz. earlier noted the
sculpted lard dog with a bone in its mouth. thought: what good revenge—or/
what form of love twists to this? now distraction of the whining dog,
interrupted just when you thot, at last I've got it: words as thing, yet happy in
the nebulous uncharted pursuit. is it not enough to live and scrape the truck's
ice in the polluted air—enough to breathe and dream of making love?—a
moment when the air is clear is a pure acquisition, but soon to be stink again.
in some places the thought is purest in pain. of them they will say, or discredit
that which is so clear and human. they want, it seems, deception &
justification for their own convictions—what does it mean? where have we
come? only hope for a beautiful line to stretch, inhabit the ugly, the
deceptions, the failures, deceptive failures—have body circle incomprehensibles
as dance, sing dissipation to love and single word.

twenty three
fifty nine

Yellowhead Special: \$3.33 /3 eggs, 3 strips bacon, potatoes, coffee included—
(we eat, talk of Deans who make deals, not to include you—they say, we'll set
precedence first, then ! ... etc. in these long years passing, who'll be left in this
gamble that you'll live long and healthily be part of future time and leisure and
still be paid. it's almost a laugh, almost a cry—when you lose or gain hold of
old sense of self (doom, boredom, sickness—tensions of the dispossessed.

or/ am I only hiding today from the Jehovah Witnesses visiting next door? ask
myself, who'll be saved, & saved for what?—those few seats left in heaven raises
question of my thickening cholesterol blood and thoughts of moving to the
river out of this toxic deadly mist. let's live long and happy, be kind amongst
ourselves in pleasures of work and time.

twenty four
fifty nine

thought at the pool: obsessive sense of decay might explain the wish for “free
trips”—those foreign untouched landscapes as advertised purity/ possibility—
sex and sun and freedom, freedom 55 for the retired exec whose life was perfect
for the 30 second illusion. / of the lottery,—a collective wish and who cares
that you'd need a guard and legal protection. what is this sense that life is
elsewhere but this pit? but once out of yourself, there's the possible desert of
the unknown. oh let the romance be of and with the particular moment you
invent—blessings of weather and sense of the children safe. that the words you
forgot begin to form around a shapeless single verse—to sense wholly what's
here.

twenty five
fifty nine

this morning, again: thin blue to the east, warm, unseasonal south wind. nature vast & seemingly silent—is it best not to worry that we are the source of our own undoing? undone? for some, a beginning. but how end the day without some sense of future and well being—made urgent, that time and life have limits. in this despair of questions: what can be done—acts of large decency be made part of the scheme? isolate/isolate. it's so late. I love the screen as map and tendril, would wish to change the course of anger to its proper cause—with these words, and lines, as maps, as roots as tendrils.

twenty six
fifty nine

Xmas carols ring out at Sears (more like a muffled electric voice—sub text buy buy—tho nothing on the clearance rack could seriously be given. what is this process of becoming more and more a self, yet still unknown. a little out of kilter, and off, cld be blamed on coffee—that you've become subject to the extent of seeing each thing for its truth and value: (exasperated father loading excited son onto electric horse—an old student much bigger and shuffling, or someone seemingly slightly stunned at the bank book's balance. this is a day. the weather must be changing. it's true. rain in December. it's Xmas at Sears.

twenty seven
fifty nine

greenhouse effect:—these misnomers, world and place misnamed. earlier I thought that everything I've done is fucked—to be alone and pensionless a poolside fear. of money, what's it worth? this is the 20 th Century. years of dismantling—only cries in the human condition. in the bar, we not only sense

but talk decay, disintegration, and manage laughs as if these recognitions are truth. how many years left for the wood as our lives hurl quickly into the universe—life as a breath, a sigh that we didn't know any better than to waste time lining up for material bargains in the infinite day.

twenty eight

fifty nine

heats on: outside frost—snowless December, frozen dust. a student withdraws. won the lottery. I go on, into the text for what it's worth—and love this attention to these words, the minimal conversation as discourse of worth. earlier thought an essay could explain, then that, why explain? when maybe it's all cliché, what's already known, & I'm just slow, out of it. I used to cuss entering the institutional door, want more. now, it's less when I think the disappointments of material world. the lottery winner's life, we think, is ruined. won't finish the book or the thought beyond some immediate pleasure of a well-earned life, a well-earned holiday. I sign the form *Withdraw* & joke about being “hired on.” but I seem to want it slow, smoke out the fists coming down and in charm, loathe that sense of “escape” /those who make us wish we could.

twenty nine

fifty nine

sense of uselessness and inaccuracy to calculate these grades this way. weights & measures to make a mark seem settled and just. I should be shoveling, or want to be / walk crisp streets at 18 below. soon enough, I sense we won't be here or would regret, or think we didn't pursue the intangible light we knew was there, happy and *not* faked as at that moment lean into the loved one, and wordless let them know / to understand there's only breathe and words, mute gestures when any moment could end a betrayal, or a beginning.

thirty
fifty nine

I've been thinking about my dreams: chunks and lines in the pre-sleep that seem to be about angers and resentments, little truths that might slip easily away to other thoughts or descriptions of each day's variable landscape—variations of dark to light, snow and weather: but would you believe this wild bird in the Mac box next to me with its spots of blood or camouflage. why don't I just turn the radio drama off! it's that space of deciding whether the bird will live or die (tho he seems strong and willed scratching the cardboard walls—but the truth is the broken wing—that look of fear we sense when you or the things condition is fully known—that all's been allusion fettered, illusions feathered—the bird's knowledge it's begun to die.

thirty one
fifty nine

distractions: two damp feet—split sole of cheap boot, the radio turned off. hum of florescent light. last night, the music a mutant imitation of its own original emptiness. The Lord Bees / Club Eterna—the eternal is a version of snow, returning—what we slog thru in new felt pacs—into the noise of Oflaherty's.—mostly administrators and singles, dreamers hoping for what? Irish singalong so loud, we leave in a long discourse about friendship, the purpose of poetry, distractions—that sense of limits / & time,—not fooled in any way by the illusion of “well being,” or Las Vegas versions in this putrid egg fart smell.

thirty two
fifty nine

clutter: I thought I had a thought—driving into the new year dark and alone—or sense of being alone: is the culture’s move not to care—humans to be separate from thing done and said—have only a “private life” neatly arranged? I’m an old grumpy self. why bother in this impossible pursuit of health when each announcement brings another noxious disease & cause? in B.C. Radon gas thru cement cracks—*have it checked, then report to the government.*—what are your chances with all your plans? the sun is over the ridge just after class—wonder if I can write and write what of use.

thirty three
fifty nine

in between dreams I think. (I know there’s a world beyond this, but the facts aren’t straight.—back in sleep I can’t remember—is it the girl I must fail for cheating? / this weight of what you would think simple judgment. in the tears, a career is shot—oh well. in Libya they wake to a force, words and claims. it’s the world I may have thot of. here we brush our teeth and hair while the radio plays *I never promised you a rose garden* and goes on to fill its own space and time with confusion and analysis. what happened where and who to trust, when each voice convincingly pleads its truth? now you comb your hair, move the truck. snow gets removed & garbage is out along the snow banked curb a day early—a seemingly passive life of a surface thankful of its own internal workings. but—somewhere it’s hot & they’ll think, we’ll get revenge, we’ll make them pay—you spitting toothpaste in the sink.

thirty four
fifty nine

emptied: 8:26. dog shit on rug I scoop with cover stock. / kid plays heavy metal rock—heavy and thrashing. energy. I've been tired—now to see the task & demand dead ahead: what I must do for money and impossible to hide. some will shuffle halls and smile. for them it's only time,—a commodity as a passing invisible stream—a fluid calibration. for me / interruptions. one blink and 20 years is gone.—the necessary distractions. dog whine. door slam. some thought of redefining love to suit ... lest it exist on its own & that we helpless must wait its visitation, as we await self to appear (self as a convergence of parts to equal possibility and happiness. it's winter. early in a life though time moves faster. & you ask, where is the world/ where am I in these diminished anxious moments. how to be, and where?

thirty five
fifty nine

I'll think of something—talk. how today on edge—no sense of pattern and late for everything. but to breathe the air, waiting—cool. elemental substance while all other wheels begin to turn—parking lots fill, drivers with intent and purpose. this is a landscape. the building is industrial, gray edges, orange rugs torn and wearing. (absolutely depressing). are you meditating or just tired, a colleague asks—these filled rooms I must fill with talk, or not get paid—barely a response to anything said and each question I must answer myself—perhaps, plan it that way—the pattern, the soliloquy of technical terms.—a kind of loneliness, separation when you want a laugh, a smile, hints at recognition, a shared condition.

thirty six
fifty nine

Jan. 13. Friday—good luck to be alive today with barely a question, yet some demand for neutral ground, a place to speak, skirt or probe the surface—test for love, right the world. (emptiness as operable condition with cause, source within reach. today no thought or care of time—it's perhaps a flicker—we'll be ghosts with a few loose ends, unsatisfied with revenge or sense of anything being just. even with nothing to do someone will want to sue, go after a bucket of gold.

thirty seven
fifty nine

love is bare, breast to suckle—an infinite care, its voice a pledge to eternity. of it, I'll succumb—crawl from the darkness of that world we see—the one we've made, paid for over and over. here, a room, that inside we may talk or dance—as if some long ago argument and un-sureness dissolves—that we see. & seek each as sexual, healthy & alive and accomplished. of each, we may ask / held, we may reach, go out from the warmth of the cave, make a perplexing hunt for all not found, yearning a constituent in these slips of love. what will come, or go, we do not know, makes each day all the more—a reserve for the unfettered voice, commitments, but not from fear.—maybe it's just a Sunday in winter when the steaks sizzle perfectly and the beer is endless—and the friends reveal the innermost with trust. *communitas*. man and woman, men & women at the bare breast of a larger world, pledged /remembered.

thirty eight
fifty nine

no time—yet if you did—how stretch to long sense—as if you wanted a long walk thru drifts into resolution of light and snow. in a fettered world we practice tethers—love and friendship—the shared meal of reason to show or prove hearts exist. why this force to delay and separate, that not one moment in their systems seems to make sense. gizmos of the half-baked—men whose minds believe their singular uni-thought thoughts. I'll never get over it, these systems—like any kid, will see the best of a possible world despite the thuds against the wall or the mother screaming—it's a dream, I know, and this is not pain exactly, or even feeling. language is the ultimate drift and source, when the touch will not reveal. interesting animals allright. conscious of time and general blight. meditative in the counsel of light.

thirty nine
fifty nine

part way thru William Carlos Williams' poem "Nantucket", the students' books begin to close. time, they think, is over—so that I imagine their imaginations—the dark and light of possibility—could say, it's maybe not quite the gym-suit-world, you think, of high paying jobs and leisure and material comfort. / but this little poem, gives no solace—it's only what was seen,—its message, that this is a moment—and better it than—(here the possible harangue re. conspiracies and manipulations—the local language news about the Mill's philanthropy and interest in art—corporate citizens, make valuable donations—at what cost: this tax dodge (and millions of hectares of trees for every little flower you might draw).

the book will close. the dark is the closing, this moment we are in—
I see a future bleak and treeless, and the mindless willful out for present gain—to establish further "direction" and noxious shift, that we'll live, torn from what little can be claimed.

the flowers/ lavender, thru the window. a curtain, late after noon sun—a pitcher, a tumbler, and a key—what he saw,—the full moment of its own recognition: man, eye, and thing .

forty
fifty nine

how greet Prince George day—(Whitman's vista & celebration of a world possible and unfolding—the singing inspired—the gut and energy of hope? or/ snow and dark and the dead Ford we must push to the street to meet the jumper cables.—

but coming downstairs, the images of Claire, my daughter now a woman in the lit room / loud rock and roll flipping hair into shape and fashion. and my son Jesse in a snow bank fort with the tethered dog as flakes fall, cheer me or/I know if I miss this, I'm a fool—that a torn mood and self's sense of discomfort, the crabby unsatisfied man, must yield to the prosperity of what's here: love of mate and this fate of children—this good solid house is an achievement, tho creaky and in need of work.

how greet day: (my soul's confidence—the snowy field of the vista you must test, enter, and know.

forty one
fifty nine

a day, an opening. 6:30 dawn that we begin with joking: I was going to take a shower, but why bother?—lecture goes OK; Pound, and the Decadents and quips about gum, sex, and advertising—anything to give some time a use to get us out/ of ourselves—not this depressed context, designed and abandoned by its designers—so, that we're here is an acknowledgment. against defeat we go. soon Jesse and I ski a little slope off the Hart—a melted highway north. I

was thinking of the metaphor—how we're a community in an industrial soup
and that in this habitat, no one seems to give up—

(volunteer men attach kids to the tow, and up they go. this is a kind of hope—
sentimental / that the kids scream and fall in joy of sun, tree and snow. air is
good, and sun or breeze is of an ancient north—(this clear moment: the
world/a habitat.

forty two
fifty nine

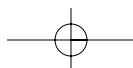
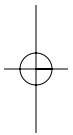
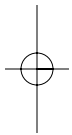
what was it I was thinking—some language of years ago, that you could slip
into the poem—that it gave *the real* texture and face. now, abstractions,
words—the total sense of disconnectedness: these jokes are funny, but no
laughter. I strain at the wheel of grammar. maybe it's the migraine, twisted
loops of brain and mind—dulled in the morning air, and I'm not paying
attention. barely missed by a car—don't signal regularly, and drive with one
hand while holding coffee. it's a laugh, it's a joke, it's serious worry and fret for
what? I only had a slight dream of an acre on the coast—chopping wood, to
plan each scary cut of tree and make myself do it. now I seem to take the day
& the pleasure of imagining what it is—to think in this disorganized soup—
wonder at the force of regulated function. work, or you don't get paid, unless
you're sick, laid up, out of it with a doctor's certificate. but in it, we make love
the ancient standby—a main stay—a rule. while others may fight for
governance, finance, facilities and the administrative structure—think charts on
their way to work.

forty three
fifty nine

strangest dreams in my half sleep / neck pain migraine—I became a spirit—but
soon awake to the news & weather. I like weather and time, and the news,



though it seems repetitive and manufactured. why bother to change the script? it's Robbie Burns day, hurray! I slide a long in class, think to myself, I'm barely audible, but have their attention and twist examples to make a point—Pound's Usura / Mexican painters in sheds working on Elvis for the northern market—how to understand this idea, realize you'll never own a house in Vancouver—oh well—if our faith is in the young this world will be re made, given we'd hope real value. I won't apologize—revise—admit this shell game becomes the darkest comedy—your body, an absolute accompaniment to its own death does seem strange. unreal in its necessity.



PART THREE

forty four
fifty nine

Jan. 31/ new sense / old self—thinking, *this is it*, over the days to know: life finite / unknown and that in the slowness begin to see: *it's stupid to think of wasted years*. I wish I'd known meaning doesn't always matter as the sun and weather. today, wind chill, dripping nose—a session with the counselor. I've learned to see some sense of my own tricks—language / explanations, yet how admit the fear, overcome that part which is un necessary, useless, or seemingly so. where is this going, and what is going? beauty, the moment, he thinks, is not this sweetness of a hard mint candy, but to watch your boy on a counselor's couch,—to think, *no matter what I'll love you*

we must say it, accept it in sorrow, or pity or shame at our blindness of being.

forty five
fifty nine

—thinking uselessness of self again and the necessity to describe—make a world of particulars, poems born out—brought wet and stinging to the air. oh, you could think all this despite the slight head-ache this pulp liquor smell brings on / irritations of broken bank machine, this line up where each in seeming disgust—a day of *have a nice day*,—a salutation you barely return. *And that sick bundled baby coughing in the line up!* you'd want love in this community of fellow man. at home I give the dog a kick for the piss on the rug—and pound the Mac into this lousy mood,—look again at my obsession, to foolishly envy those I imagine having it better, who have saved, or care for themselves in the exercise to live long in the race of time and death's inevitability.

forty sixfifty nine

return, wonder—the very nature of this sitting down—the thinking that may go nowhere to release / or—reading the sadness of Andy Suknaski—that there *is* a gap when you know. the place was *always* in your head and heart—as was the farm I grew in—its last picture hung in the bathroom—embarrassing decay sense of the poverty of its owners and inhabitants—bulldozed now, but I give a daily sigh, that I know it, came from it—slept in the upper rooms, wrote of it as a real place and I was there. who cares of old dreams / imaginings—that we, in this world are cast out singular, and for some, must make the words and gestures, not always to fill the gaps, or holes of self & other—but to be with each in the translucent journey, dim as it may be. is this a kind of love, or its thought, though I perhaps feel next to nothing. it's the pulp, I swear, & our lack of attention and care. sit down—be that hurtling self so easily cast & moved away.

forty sevenfifty nine

yesterday / failed fragment—no sense of word as connection to synapse of mind eye and thought to the fluid mess, its thin structure of line and thread:—today—/ sound of dog chewing and the talk at breakfast—half connected in our far off thoughts—the elsewhere dream, when here it's mostly shit / as at the truck I say, *we'd better bug it*—and go on our way for donuts. it is a mystery but perhaps no depth—exactly what we think it is until the silence itself becomes the knowing. what's left: words and a walk through the stink,—the poem as stir stick in a cup of coffee/ world at mid life, that we see and conjure value and serious self parody: goofballs on the dangerous edge. have you ever made yourself sick—erased yourself from self destructing lines? and what will it be later in this horrible abstraction of voice and thought when you need clarity of image, re structured possibility of love / fecundity vs. the boredom you certainly deserve—against yr own rhetoric, when you become a piece of pulp.

forty eight
fifty nine

what did I think all day, or this day: *simultaneity*. thoughts of Prufrock—
driving home along the sliced snow mounds, dirty and layered with mud—I
told the students, **go to sleep**, while I sweat through the indecision of a
character in a poem's angst—do I really know, either? tell them about yourself?
no more easy to tell what I wanted—the long and overdue. to know I love,
though mostly distracted by the foolish and intemperate—held off in a swirl of
self, when you want the line of indivisibility, less abstraction.—to the point of
turning the computer off: what did you get? and will it be on the test? and it's
all OK.—today, so no dream of Mexico or even much more than the hour
ahead, or parts of any day you'd like to skip. like a canceled office hour. really
know you won't be here forever.

forty nine
fifty nine

pulp awakes me. dark hours / cover your face:
think: *will I get 3 pages to Pierre, cancel that class and get caught?*—now to know I'll
never sleep, but must lie with a worried heart. in one day the chemical eraser
erases my inarticulate thoughts of love—& sense of integration and being. the
very nature of poetry is to sense your own limits and go beyond—suspect your
haggly muse who says, *here, I'll solve the title*. (this pleasant slavery to the
unknown.

forget it! buy a house in College Heights, live drunk and raw in the outer
world. forget these pants are too short—that I did laps in the baby pool, sat
blind in the heat, slumped—not even a conscious attempt to straighten up,
tuck belly in—

Pierre Coupey is in the studio I imagine,—sees color / combinations. what else
can be done? (the pleasure of thinking in the arrangement of art that *you* are
the problem, must be solved, become the splash within the canvas eye.

fifty
fifty nine

corpus / be
no
where—

(is a false start. not the pleasure of some stretch into detail
—not the idea that wraps in its own satisfaction. *oh fractured world!* etc., won't
ring, nor you: it's only a dream of a long walk along the sea wall with
friends—a bit troubled in the strangeness of time's distribution in the tribunal
of one's own fate.—today I imagined being hit and in an instant to know the
altered shift of one's condition: *vis a vis.*—*paralyzed for life /* yet brought to
poetry's true moment—the articulated condition when the heart won't work
without the words—what you wanted: perhaps only the moment of the image
and sound of skiffs of snow beneath the boots—clear air, today / north, a huge
temperature descent. weather *not* a metaphor. itself, a being in the limits of its
own driven force.

fifty one
fifty nine

we talk: human knots, denial—what is truth, who tells it as suspicion tests
love loyalty & belief. never, perhaps, have I sensed you/this alone—along the
descent / or, think, does *the mess* have possible redemption? we speak—what
else: eat chili and shop these wet Feb. Vancouver snowy streets—an old love
acknowledged, a pledge, a fear—that things change and follow courses—

of our own making, a landscape of words and mountains, circling to articulate
the unknowable—even in happiness a bit choked, to think it took this long to
know what was *always* there /now here in the back drop, strippers, trays of
mugs—light beers, men, looking—a lonely gathering between chatter and talk
to view flesh and muse—somebody's daughter—some beauty in the sleaze—
this commerce. in our mid-forties a few bucks in our pocket—the subject
never over, not like the stripper's shift.

fifty two
fifty nine

fog & stink. I'm cheerful, hold myself back as if there is no point, no matter what you feel. choices: Joy says she wants to move to Kamloops—I've decided to stay—conjure sense of home/roots, senseless or not. water boils, dog escapes. I'm drinking less coffee now it's connected with schizoid states—more symptoms of the unreal world, the disjointed juncture of thought and heart and to never be understood when the voice cracks its poem. truth is a sliver, what gets in as a mistake, what happens when you thought you knew. it's been long this road to palace and shack—to the habitat of music, song, and love and you would tie yourself, forever to it, wish it against the yawning grave, the pisshole in the snow.

fifty three
fifty nine

boys in the hall study English 102. *it's too early for poetry*, I say, but I meant *too late*.—life, love, and the multiple choice—this life in its time—a phone cord that won't fit—silence of the dead. I'm actually quite cheery. it's the success of the return to Canadian Tire without a hassle—(cheap goods, always lighter more fragile than they look, but part of the design to fall apart.—it's what we expect like a little irritation that confirms your suspicions.

what is the emotion being expressed, she asked, and then answered, herself, *loneliness*. I thought it was *anger*, therefore provisions in poetry for the half point, or hell, take it all! / or now, imagine how he'll describe the snow. don't expect "fluffy wet", but a description of the incomprehensible white—apprehension of spring / some thought of death, breath its natural rhyme.

fifty four
fifty nine

dog crumbs. I clean up. earlier rushed then wait—in that constant thought that each detail may have purpose, meaning—push your life the way it must go—sense of no choice anyway—cast to the density / or at the dentist, no telling how long it'll take / thus I wait in the cold for you. no doubt, the radio show *was* flat. I tried to bring Leonard Cohen alive, make his greatness a surprise. you could have said “boring, un prepared, scattered and awful”. so, it is to be solid, more in control lest the self get spun away—all parts fly, that the core be left small and anxious. oh well—why go on but for the sake of that activity itself. if the crumbs are cast about, curse, sweep them up.

fifty five
fifty nine

wobble:—set the coffee time at 1:26 and think, *go over the short drive*: today, fresh snow, that any earlier promise of spring was false. the sink drips and I 'm home between class, need this quiet not like the old days of constant noise, or time taken, drawn off. but who cares of any detail that may show you happy— or/ all weekends talk again of pensions, Swiss accounts, the shelter, the future, the GIC and RRSP. I really do care less—want any day, love—to see potential communication, laughter—to know the extent of any world's depth—the darkness—

working breakfast, working lunch, working supper.

maybe what I wanted to say was that as we describe the snow, scaffolding of the future goes up—the flimsy scheme that will protect the existing power—extend it without question or responsibility.

no doubt you can see it

—that drunk on the street doesn't know which way to go, knows there is no way or/ note the literal garbage along third. a ghost of a town of foreign cheap goods, sense, in this noxious wind, *the end*. all the more we must conjure old rules, partake the imagination's true route. do no harm.

fifty six

fifty nine

earlier lines re. fluid—I meant sweat—& in the dream the hopeless revisions, each word crossed out until nothing left; therefore a kind of fear that it does add to nothing—no bridge, no scaffold, no holding—but the abstract distant thought of love, community—care.

in between this is another me, driving kids to school and everyone late: dog escapes and can't be caught. I spin the streets in disgust, self hate—that time is taken, & each task, the real ones, undone.—oh it's the boy with a plane and a piece of wood and the more you trim, and scrape, make adjustments to make it true, the wonkier it gets—the knick knack case that won't stand on its own. so lives go on—these descriptions: is it of the middle class going under, and whining when the bills pile up?—so simple to take collision off the truck—dream of another 20 channels, the Melton coat, all that can be purchased, within reach. ah, it's going nowhere. you were right—the lines or heart won't accommodate imagination's stretch to the natural land—to see its truth spoken / token of its lost voice.

fifty seven

fifty nine

March 1: 30 below—a dank smell over the bowl. heart of darkness or apocalypse now. so what they admit *the truth*—the truth. next to me, the marketing class, digital exams I imagine—they're lined up for the test. maybe I've been thinking there is no hope, once you're here to imagine your life,

simple enough, as a crest—peak years, they say: money, health—solid marriage, good kids. yet think constantly, almost as if it's a joke, that we die—will have some point on the ruler of fate—a termination, that all the words, laughter, essence becomes—:

assume, and discuss—how it's all a collage of colour, memory—lonely dance—that you could say, *at least my heart went out* in this disjuncture of thought and speech—the diffident oratory, in the fight with all you knew. oh, anywhere else it could be thoughts of spring—a large promise kept.—an illusion of ancient nature slipped by us one other time.

fifty eight

fifty nine

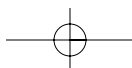
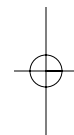
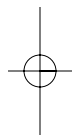
larger: this compulsory attendance a way. message beneath the message and to see them sweat, the ones who believe, or the others—who'll just go to sleep. it was to be. yet and ago. it was them, yet and never ago. you might write best when very tired. no message in the jam but its own sweetness—substance and sustenance. for granted we take, this old—is it still called the universe when the vacuum's on? dog pee again, and sense of *that Baby will never be trained!* maybe I won't show up—let them wonder where the record is, the sheet, the words, the directions, the half-assed attempt to be friendly and of some help. I do it for the future, that a lesson is—*how you can be*. don't have to be the version you naturally question. I ate two white donuts. decaffeinated is OK. I didn't even know the difference.

fifty nine

fifty nine

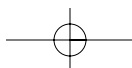
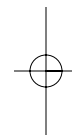
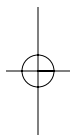
think without knowing / speech without meaning / holes open. Sears doors—

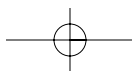
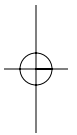
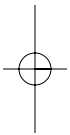
simultaneous cages unfold at 9:30 sharp.





ARRHYTHMIA





PART ONE

scribble—

the self centered—a latitude
near paradise

•

but my life, *off*—expectation

to accept fate
my own rhetoric wanting the moment contained in the axe blow in clear
air—to never argue

against thing seen pure and of itself. the bird in the tree,
wary of the feeder/ chickadee or bird of what season

what strange wishes, like an alien voice that
is your self, stronger than the body or will
asks

what can we do but be.

•

you think you're you. therefore:

a moment's connection—*the beautiful river* you
whispered. dog ahead, snap of ancient
woods, or so they seem—gray, looming veins
thick against sky.

bird, or raven calls. I think, we've
lost the natural word and world,—and must remake
ourselves

a connection, in a depression, the mortal sense of
one's own passing in good
time—is maybe, good

meanwhile, the meanwhile—the thought
whirling chemically, bodily—

the rhythms

these steps, and tracks on Cottonwood Island's

snow

leads to the future
as to the start of the countdown

•

death,

I know it now as fear and welcome, mix
with heart twinge, rapid pulse. complete sense
of the imminent. now stand back versus prophecy

imagination. any/way—get thru death
thru life and work
the imagination to its

simple blossom, beautiful and spontaneous, existing
to be recognized.

otherwise, I walk older, in
the countdown. you, I think, can never live or do enough.

regret. a blossom dark—its other side.

•

was the word scribbled, live or die? the hand
writing, unclear. but no context equal to the intelligence

or the opposite—to see that upper path, spacious
species, trees.

heart beat in infinite sense of unknowing—time in life to death
is timeless, yet exists without mind or speech

our inability, even to the silence, measured
like a thing proclaimed, yet its essence elusive but for what
human thought contain—itself, itself, it

a watch strap around the wrists of any future
you can see. oh, here, unfulfilled—notes on a scribbled pad,
hopeless, tho love abounds—helpless in its

face (eternity

or other symptoms, the eyes sense, out of whack, of all not
there, tho it's there. can you get back? or know
what was different than an eternal shifting present.

•

diagnosis? guess work—tho cusp of death, not even a
passing—a ball of internal history spun out in snow. we'll get there
suddenly out

of breath

or not even know, or care—

is it to be here to see a depth, or nothing that
tests the human spirit, or hope—

the sun did shine, objectively and beautiful—so
what is it I describe about myself, minuscule, to be sickly spun off
the earth

hanging to the list of pleasures: children, loves, humour and word.

do you get enough light?

or did I sense for a moment in Tim Horton's
my own life, weeping at the thot of my mother gone-
me, the boy, not unlike the young boys next to me—30 years ago me?
each, seemingly in the moment without knowing, nothing
more than their own presence in
the world—a camaraderie of hockey players.

eat donuts

•

in this inventory, what must be told? lately is it
a depression that manifests itself
in my eye—and heart (literally beating
irregular cadence, jagged to my thoughts of hope
and relief.

what's this sense, I'm not here or so much here
asked *do you sing?* by the Overwaitea girls.

blood / pressure or my life ground down, unbeknownst—that I
must invent a day, a soul, a heart, a measure—at what bright thot
my life will change and what be lost, seen as dark, will as any human
hope, yield to light—blind or not.

when did you feel most
normal?—carrying a stove up a path in rain
thru alder growth 15 years ago? —

caught in a Saturday afternoon, slight hangover
work done—sex ahead, beer, steak—the mystery of wife from her
complexity—yielded, simply to the admission of love?



•

why this sense of dying? what is this anxiety but final sense of death without
 knowing the extent of your life/ it disappears as the weight of
 ether, but kindled by its thought, weight is measured as laughter—
 some kindness, an understanding—a longing that eliminates
 anger, sense of defeat. speech and

oh what falls and may.

to the breakfast at Vern's Deli waiting to
 pay the bank. I'm alive, there's no doubt. I'm in Zeller's near
 the oil thinking, *I wouldn't buy that shirt no matter what
 price*, then think: *I'm here*. the world seemingly slightly sliced
 to disappear via conversation & engagement.

did you hear anything? I hear the tractor of my youth/buzz of
 internal voice, a fear: *nothing's changed*. we'll hear the music
 of the spheres later—as a spherical reminder. did you love
 the trapped bird singing out of season so you thot it spring? what
 else

is human hope—(the rain & thinking

•

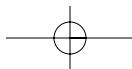
back—driven in small talk to college. despair that I couldn't see
 beyond the moment I was in—that in this trouble wanted to say,
 as today—*father father*

adversely wanted to disappear, or truly love. gray of those
 streets—dark—a skein lifting.

without statement

today could be.

Calgary in the 50's—snow, my mind to the mountains—frat boys
 in a car—but it's Prince George 1994, I'm hollow, afraid—to see



this negative: the woman across plays Pac-Man while my life,
simultaneously caught between *Reader's Digest* and the beep beep
wishes for weight of love, any weight of connectedness not feel
—lack of feeling.

•

shots of dying. shoveling snow. neighbour says, *don't*
care, don't worry

soul, it's disappearing, balloon-like, envisaged, a sac
drives me to my past, some elemental sense of possible caring as if
caring were meaning—that life is an actual
substance & accumulation. no weeping sweeping past the indulgence
—a beggar kneeling, self as consciousness of
delivery boy on a bike in snow.

the baby gate at Northern connects me—or the purchase of liquid
steel, but it's a blizzard and yr sick, tho thankful yr not the young man
foisting stolen goods, begging for 20 bucks (gas
for car, food. the sociological—conditions that say you'll never be as
a potential with fate and sum in a system with economics as line
of division.

was there a particular moment? a dream or a thought, a vagary or
a diffident youth who refused Latin? this punishment—misery of the
text that forced
me to cheat, sign my name to a
blank space—

a latitude.

PART TWO

your earlier life? images & thots just like now, but fewer words—a kind of wordlessness—the streak of purple in the north, smell before impending rain. alone, thinking *everyone* sees this, feels change of air, mood, this weather.

•

now. profile of remembrance—foolish. Sport and Reno. old Sport, especially, sick—dragged behind a truck to a fence to the south. breakfast, stove clink and smell/wood and me, sense of density, destiny of a real world. things. rags, and piles—the obsolete books of knowledge & in the density, an opening I knew was me.

•

Jan. 21. scrub shit off rug with backdrop of TV. left chest, not exactly thumps—but surges. so bad, I laugh. the snow could almost be the lightest blue. Buddy, the dog in some design makes a pattern of trails.

•

this is it—no exaggeration that the imagination is a dwelling. the condition an entity of mis diagnosis when nobody cares thus the extent of the loneliness. conversely, you don't care either—humans built strangely around them selves as selves. a bridge thru it would mean a reversal of the orders—weeping indications of progress to unequivocal love. believe it. but on the path—to feel as abandoned as the woods, still & silent knowing the silence of the higher force. dog, his head in snow.

•

believed. go on—it is all made like a bed board, cut and simple. it is a name like February—dark, to blue, dark to light, not as backdrop. but as acknowledged, as never seen—as sense of infinitude tho the

moment goes, led to spring as expectation. I heard the bird again.
 its cut to cheer as outline to context—river moving steel edged in
 graduated heat. power. plants. the mysterious flit of squirrel in
 husks. whatever I say I'm glad eludes me. you want the colour, the
 bed of self. courtship, world. love's impossible transcendent—a
 reminder. feet in snow.

•

you can't go back like a card trick. the past—it's a sea. coagulated,
 not exactly, nor a fluid. it's a sea with barely visible change—a few
 moves—surge of what became of inevitability—your life, now
 inevitable and mathematical full of meaning, love, distress & all
 opposites that the faltered mind, tempered in rage—like the sea
 unknown to the force that moves it, winds to conclusions—spiked and
 off, to a slip of tests ...

•

what did you see. the window. outer life, not separate, but coming
 in. coffee in the fluorescent, lit room. I loved the snow on the
 neighbour's roof, its instant as conditional to the black branches—plum
 trees that fan spindly in my sight. window to make me feel I never
 lived but for this recognition. I did it like an impossibility as thing
 you loved. not like the hoarders, the lower orders of future. your
 heart should tell you this, lest it all be meaningless. exemptions?
 only that this path exists or the solitary ski trail to the right—a
 convergence while I try to describe, to myself, exactly that colour of
 the river green. jady but lighter. in this thot, the mercantile noise.
 Lakeland Mills and the lying presidents, the scurry for the rest—bits
 of truth. so, it's time, you as entity—clicking. space.

•

vacancy? I live from the eyes up. sit in tub. get hungry when they
 announce bulimics. think: it's all folly—want a story, a literal line.
 at this age, no one's health of interest—a kid trapped in a room of 50
 year olds. I'm almost there. a lonely symptom without a myth but

for the skate boarder shirt I wear. gray hair. short breaths in an irony. a system where work is a multiple.—which is to say, one big organ may give way. & then the invisible truth—your goofy vacant look, at the book, the class—a life and past before you in the instant of a bell,—& of this, a lesser sense. illusion as the steam, as the air.

•

Feb. 7: hooked up. wired for arrhythmia. skipped Horton's, drive the 30 below. if I could, it seems, shift mind & body slightly so past obsession, past mind. as it was, the intensity of sun flamed ball. was it always my heart—missed connections & most of it against my will—in an inability, puke before the stage. it was a sad picture, me standing at Big Sur but I thot always your flesh, possibility of it as love. I held to it—memory of every fuck. the diary will show: time, activity, symptom—feel heart, short of breath.

•

physical, the heart *will* beat without a mind—defeats the system's odd circle—snake eats tail to be blanked out without a trace as the misdialed fax in the empty office leads to a conclusion: no one home at the interception of perception. is it foggy out. it's the ice air as shroud. it'll, no doubt, go on. we let it & fake truth for self preservation. toss it bare that we may see & in that be a community once again, echo odd trouble to bind & heal. could it be a word, simply your name said—as if, we could stay. longer to remove the wires. the tape.

•

what was the nature of the dream—a golden haze that you slid the off ramp and woke in another dream to cry help? sense you didn't make it. waking up. aspects as detour, the snow too long. is there another place—a literal house, life pushed to uncomplicated edge of simple being—the being charged, electrical with possibility. future and past as present. in the dream, I sensed bad people. my wife was with me. we were in synch until I cried help & woke.



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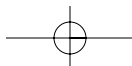
a tunnel. eye thru winter & air—sun. a kind of colour—north light blue
light/ pastel. sharp. tho self goes on in muddle. lines here &
there—that backward is forward & vice versa—obsession like clock
work—heart beating independent & on its own. a state. line
between failure, to think of those who've got it sowed up—woe at
what cost not to see it. maybe we never were. we imagined and
hoped, caressed and loved and cared & must again. the drift, built in
—that bird again to cut this cycle: self on self on self—death gives it
away, to the skiff—the rising sun.

•

it would be better. this could be a piano lesson with winged guitars.
a little theory—the literal answer about how to do it, what to study.
listen. work what pleasure there is in this activity so that each
from young to old is uplifted a little—some interest. I focus on
myself to watch and hear. I've dreamed again. music that lifts me
tho I'm slumped in rubber boots—winter boots on a granite floor.
then I thot, *this* could go on—a little daily high so mysterious that
love returns, is fecund expectation. a woman in the afternoon who's
loved you for 30 years. it's deep and with thought. like a note,
timeless that rings into the next—a cadence of meaning.

•

when is it over. this vagueness. not a distrust, but an impossibility—
that it may, that it may. this context—go on as usual. Jesse to school.
is the insurance void for the ride, I wonder. think I saved \$1.61—no
coffee/donut—kept to the drive past the school. did I think giving
up is key. tests? who cares as those who suspect its nothing & go on
completely with their own plans, even a plan for you. I plan. what
else to do—the short future as expectation, a cheery thot of friends
meeting—to be what we thot—transcendent at
a beer table. voice. music. fun. who knows? it's like a sinuous
journey with an edge—a line of light before dark, an opening. a sky
wanting recognition, thus connection that there be a contiguousness—



a contingent of those who believe—believed despite, believed because, held out.

•

not small but as one. new sense, with perspective, *I'll be OK*. each to carry, be collapsible—seemingly given themselves, as odd condition—a will, a wonderment to find yourself in Mexico, in the snow. wherever you are, it could be blessing of simplicity—a hole in your heart in England. simple. that in a garage of instruments next to pub, you wanted home, sensed what it was—like a hope. like a fire and an unsuspected stroke—a touch. where was it. the mysteries of. like a day in a truck . my brother and me hauling manure—spring of particular glaze—ice to melt, later than today. long ago. the learning permit. the expiry. the force, even more.

•

today's slight memory of earlier. no ideas—snow. little boy scarlet—fever on a sectional couch. mother, a kind of care, a presence unspoken as we watched TV. the black and white world. I was scarlet—in fever, I thought—was clear—the world, a system I barely knew, the voice broke thru to tell and warn. on yr own it was the distance of a downtown movie, a bus ride, a transfer to the Beltline, out as far to some point the sweet sensation of being lost. I mean a fear that diminished with the familiar: church, sand stone and tree, up 17th to 15th & I'd be home. troubled. oblivion. paper route. then I was slightly. I was sick. did I hope not? mother as measure of care, was my hope.



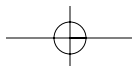
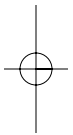
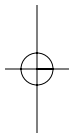
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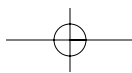
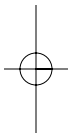
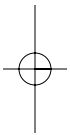
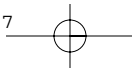
to feel alive. to be alive. tired. know odds—a silent gap between diagnosis and advice. what should I do? yr heart she sd, beats in couplets and triplets. glandular prosody, I joked,—but I'm glad to know, but afraid to ask for a printout, a Xerox. afraid I've wasted my time. life's a worry, a life boat—an exaggeration of what's imagined—the lost child returned from hiding. it was to show *something happening* as speculation worth a cure.

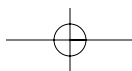
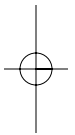
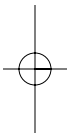
it's still. it's there.



knowing is paradise / a void to emptiness to the self that beats.







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Anthology Publications:

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Contemporary Canadian Poem Anthology (Ed. George Bowering).
Four Realities: Poets of Northern BC (Ed. Don Precoscky).
The Long Poem Anthology (Ed. Sharon Thesen).
The New Long Poem Anthology (Ed. Sharon Thesen).
The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse (Ed. Margaret Atwood).
The Pulp Mill (Ed. John Harris).
Roothog (Ed. John Harris).
Selected Canadian Lyrics (Translated in Chinese) (Ed. Zhu Hui).
Writing for Canadian Students (Ed. Bill Schermbrucker).

Web Journals:

The East Village Other: Poetries of Canada. (U.S.A.)
It's Still Winter: A Journal of Contemporary Canadian Poetry and Poetics.
George Bowering: The Parliamentary Poet Laureate / Poem of the Week.

Radio:

The CBC (Prince George)
 Mountain Pass (CFRO Poetry Series, Vancouver Co-op Radio)

Books and Chapbooks where these poems first appeared:

The Centre. Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1995.
Arrhythmia. Prince George: Gorse Press, 1994. (Winner of The Bp Nichol Chapbook Award for the Best Poetry Chapbook Published in Canada in English, 1994).
Pulp Log. Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1991. Winner of The Dorothy Livesay Poetry Award (BC Book Awards, 1991).
The Centre. (A Line Up One Chapbook). SFU, Burnaby, BC: Line: A *Journal of Contemporary Writing & Its Modernist Sources*, 1985.
Thoughts/Sketches. Prince George/Vancouver: Tatlow/Gorse Press, 1985.
Sex at 38. Prince George: Gorse Press, 1984.
The the. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1980. (Short-listed for the Governor General's Award for Poetry, 1982).
The the. (*fragments*). Prince George: Repository/Gorse Press, 1979.
Sex at Thirty One. Prince George: Caledonia Writing Series, 1977.
Songs & Speeches. Prince George: Caledonia Writing Series, 1976.
Say that Again and I'll Kick Yr Teeth In: (a folio of poems) with Paul Shuttleworth, Caledonia Writing Series, 1975.
The Death of a Lyric Poet. Prince George: Caledonia Writing Series, 1975.

Broadsides:

Birch, *Birth*, *Bushed*, *Hearstease*, *The Organizer*, and *what did you see* were published as Gorse Press Broadsides, and *The Petting Zoo* by Highground Press.

END NOTE

In my fear of missing someone integral in a long list as influence (those poets engaged in my life as readers and inspirators and whose work showed a way)—I make a general and open thanks to them here: I could not have written or lived the poem without their care, and company along the way.

I want to thank the Canada Council for a writing grant. It gave me necessary time to work on this collection and a work in progress: *In the Millennium*.

The John Newlove line is from his poem *Like and Eel*.

The epigraph for *The Centre* and the line beginning *the hapless dream shadows* ... are from Robin Blaser's poem *April 1991*.

Years ago my friend the poet George Stanley wondered if in *Arrythmia* line 21, I didn't mean to write: "we've/lost the natural world", but then quipped that he doesn't, as a poet, distinguish between "word" and "world". Thanks to George and that conversation, I've decided to add "world" to the line with the sense that it's needed for a larger sense of truth and meaning.

