

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my excellent friends, old and new, who sincerely listened and responded when I needed it. You know who you are.

Special thanks to my mother and father for sharing the reflections of their own path to help me on mine.

## Table of Contents

1. float
2. move it
3. bug's life
4. bopper
5. the swing
6. more over, more under
7. rat race
8. waking life
9. heredity
10. all of it
11. the real deal
12. across the way
13. buddha's palm
14. out loud
17. direction
18. end around
19. this picture of you
20. blue
21. to sleep
22. art above
23. still : with me
24. as she sketches me I see
25. ghost writer
26. smoked

float

ashes float  
gently in the air  
hit the ground  
I am that sound

move it

taking my glasses off

to write  
to think

working to

the rhythm  
the samba  
the people  
the all day long  
the breaking point

when we use up the day  
and there is no time left  
for us to grow

when air becomes water  
the thickness surrounds  
and we swim

whenever the end comes  
all glory and darkness  
it will begin.

# bug's life

and so  
here we are  
bugs to the light  
the warm light  
dancing  
singing  
together

bopper

love the way she sits  
looks my way  
sings into the air  
legs bouncing

(a slave to the music)

what she does  
with a cigarette  
and that song

gets me.

## the swing

there is air between me  
loping gas mixtures defiled  
by living and the vices  
of a new millenium

there is air between us  
a land of silent communicators  
sending messages of love and sorrow  
that amount to ones and zeroes

there is air between  
a thin tether to the past  
as disconnection looms  
from all we know

more over, more under

six feet under me  
lies the dirty secret

the dank truth  
that fools us

into the idea  
people are evil

I shovel  
but slowly

and fall in gracefully.

## rat race

to define and defy the farce  
has far outlived its time  
we must take it down  
with rhythm and rhyme

attendance is mandatory  
and I demand the story  
of every single one in song  
disperse emotion in verse

we are laboratory rats  
and we are rapt  
take the bait  
and get zapped.

## waking life

hope has no respect for the moment

just a cryptic vision  
of what we expect

it is the drivel  
that dad says  
when you can't sleep

it is my own light  
reflected in her eyes  
but caught there

it lacks imagination  
and knows only  
from our thoughts

life is so much greater than  
the words we can put to it

hope is a shattered dream reanimated

# heredity

He lurks in my time.

Unmoved from the perch  
on my shoulder.

Not as a voice,  
but a limit.

all of it

that's my heart    on the left  
sends signals    cries for help

this body    its own society  
transportation and communication  
priorities, decisions and death

this path    its own storyline  
birth and growth  
intelligence, loneliness and love

this finality    no known price  
heaven or purgatory  
calculation, message or meaning

that's my world    a bright candle to show  
the ground    for me to tread

the real deal

she is gone

in dust disappeared

that damn wind takes her far

addicted to that dust

now inhales don't satisfy

the cigarettes act methadone

making my moments real

marking time with something other than pain

and when you stop and see it all

it's fear in the corner

watching      waiting      hiding

## across the way

as I sit beside her it hits me  
these are the last moments  
not revelry or dance  
just sitting there  
falling back into the habit  
of rearranging the furniture and  
talking about the future

if it were music  
its the last track  
and you can't skip back to the first

if it were the moon  
the earth has stopped  
and the stars are ready to burst

if it were time  
clock hands locked in prayer  
eyes closed, expecting the worst

I look up and realize  
that I am not beside her  
but across the way  
unable to span the reaches of doubt  
as the connection we used to enjoy  
has been replaced  
by our own faltering voices

if it is true  
the lies were better

if it is meant to be  
I'll let go

if it is just a dream  
at least I get to sleep again.

## buddha's palm

I'm falling head first      already  
wind sheer      at      maximum  
ready to bust      a palm sized      crater  
into the earth      and      its crust

I see too many divers      crawl into a ball  
and smash stupidly      on the bedrock  
instead of      focused energy  
to make an impact      to live

out loud

I cannot even express ! The road from distress : To this dress :

Joy is hard to handle : It comes : Bubbling : Not bubbling :

Rising : Not rising : Steaming : Not steaming :

It comes striding ! To the surface : Of me !

Ready to pop out : Ready to take it on : Ready to make me . Go ! On !

Even a luxury-filled life : Of parties and private jets :

Can be brought : Down to a bottom : Found the bottom :

That dirt floor : With bones and sinew strewn all over :

That is your floor ! That is it !

And I am not even standing on it : I'm lying on it !

And I am trying to : Get up ! And I can't :

I've got memories flying by : Mom and dad asking why :

And I can't even begin to define : What my last name means :

That connected name : That ties me to him and to her :

That name that ties me to the uncle : That drinks too much :

And always has : That's a role model :

somebody who never got up off the dirt floor !

They just rake that shit : Clean : Every single day : From their knees :

They rake that shit : With their hands :

To keep it as clean and smooth : As they can :

But they can't : Get up :

And I watch that all through my life : These people around me :

Who can't : Get up :

And now I find the floor : With my name attached to it :

And I have got no vision : Of how to get up on my feet !

Some fool comes around and says, "Just stand up, man. Stand up."

With what ? I can get only as high as my arms will go !

There are no legs on this floor :

These two appendages beneath me : Just make a twin trail along the dirt :

That I have to rake smooth : Every day : When I wake up :

If I wake up : If I ever go to sleep at night !

There is no herbal remedy : For the dirt floor :

What I've got is this idea of myself : That was not even :

A picture taken : It is an illustration :

Left making figurines in that dirt :

Trying to figure out : How : To make my nose look right :

How : to make my ears look right : And now I come to it :

I must pull myself up with my thought

I must pull myself up with my mind

There is no herbal remedy : To send to me :

There is only this dirt floor :

I cannot describe : the road from distress : To this dress :

I cannot describe : the road from distress : To this mess : That I find :

This smile : Inside : That rises : No : That bubbles : No : That strides !

From the feet : Up ! To the top ! Which I did not know I had : This head :

Which I did not know : Existed : And even though : Thoughts flew through it :

And sounds : Flew through it :

Nothing stuck around :

Nothing made any sense :

UNTIL !

direction

not warriors or men

just winds

blowing every which way

## end around

small particles in space  
bigtime mumbo jumbo

the drivers seat empty  
an ashtray full of cotton  
legs and feet  
are more than transportation  
you and the bodies around  
are limp trees  
beautiful flowers  
and luminaries  
the walls are sponges  
soaked in us  
our screams and blood  
caked on and never removed  
when a building falls or fires  
what adheres returns to the fold

birth in the destruction  
the new testament

## this picture of you

it slams me to see you  
your face up close  
still and two dimensional

i feel like an ugly bee  
fat and hairy  
constantly noisy

even with the memory  
of the time I rested on you  
the flower  
whose petals were also strong  
holding me in the air  
I drank sweet of you deeply

it swoons me to see you  
your child in your arms  
even though she knows me not  
I know her eyes  
large and questioning  
always searching

yet I remember  
the pain that arrested me  
the nights  
when songs had no power  
to heal or help  
I sank deep from you sweetly

I now know flowers  
don't grow only for me  
And even fat, noisy bees make honey

blue

i have wished to float words to you  
so that they hung above gently  
and you could take one  
rub it against your cheek  
and when the moment was right  
put it in your ear ...  
where it would become.

to sleep

caught in a box with no sides  
just translucent patterns

remember to breathe

find a way to relax  
under that full moon

sit in the quiet summer night breeze

it is time to let the eyes close  
and dent the pillow

good night

art above

circles in rooms and doors  
mean we are stuck here  
and the possibilities  
are endless

still : with me

smell you on my hands

i've scrubbed them : many times

when : I touch my face : it becomes

more than a reminder

the memory has no heat

compared to : still : in your eyes

compared to : maniacal writhing

yet : i touch my face : again

as she sketches me I see

i tried to bend the candle light (toward her)  
to help find the surface that will accept  
the colors that she must apply by touch

she endures and induces  
so many shadows and devices

juggling the pain anew, the scabs and  
distant numb (the original darkness)  
where she lost her faith in the dawn

its light cannot dispense this ghost  
and the day offers no place to hide

she sets the sun early (each day)  
not that the moon does her well  
she understands it better

the mistresses and men, swirling shapes  
and diffused colors are her only way  
to paint the sky (to remake the world)

## ghost writer

in the back of my mind  
i can see how to pull the knives out  
or count them and climb them to freedom

they remain for now  
glinting from the sun  
or a flashlight

as i am still looking into the facts  
trying to uncover the artful denial  
of a rewritten past

smoked

smoke still rises and spins

i rise and spin  
in this one place  
no markers or time  
just sounds and people  
and sensory exploration

i rise and spin  
in this one space  
no maps or dial  
only the stars dimly blinking  
in my own night sky

i rise and spin  
with much to face  
no right or wrong  
simply another day  
that means everything