

onestar press sam falls the loss of presence the presence of loss

THE LOSS OF PRESENCE THE PRESENCE OF LOSS

SAM FALLS

THE LOSS OF PRESENCE
THE PRESENCE OF LOSS

SAM FALLS

my shoes off in the sand alone
watching friends become powerful imagery
or I can roll smokes for the driving man
the wind blows as wildly as sadness can be
it turns the pages of my book
it treats my body better

-Jamie Kanzler, from "Satisfaction", 2013

FOR JAMIE FOREVER
1989-2013

FOREWARD

I'm driving down the road now,
faster than the speed limit, but not too fast,
I'm listening to Spaceman 3 and Jason Pierce says:

“Sweet Lord, I know
I hate this lonely life so
Lord, I know
It goes so slow
I feel so alone, sweet Lord

sweet Lord, it's a sin
to live this life suffering,
Lord I pray, long for a change
but it still remains sweet Lord”

and I'm driving and I'm overwhelmed with a corporeal understanding – it's why I love music – I can feel the blood coursing through my body, all I want in life is understanding, people, places, time. Obviously the lyrics don't lend easily to this sort of optimistic interpretation here on paper, (and would be related best if you just turned on the song “Drive/Feel So Sad” by Spacemen 3, on the album *Recurring*), combined with the heavy re-verb in vocals and guitar on the musical backing of the track it's just a sort of pure empathy, the lingering of sadness, the lingering of music and melody, the persistence of beauty hidden by everyday's clock.

So I think to myself these words over and over: “beauty comes slow.” I'm driving fast and feeling so good, I feel so sad, I feel embraced by the words on the car stereo and the words in my head and the towering old maple trees and the giant rolling pastures and another word comes into my head, “purity.” I can't get it out of my mind, I'm driving and the emotion is really just immense, total engagement, and the word “purity” is reverberating. Everything in a sense is clarified and clarifying. I've been afraid as others that purity is a farce, but alone with emotion and love and loss, it is consuming like the night, like a cave.

Since then I've been able to just tune in to the feeling, something that's before only been mesmerizing and enveloped in the instant of music and emotion and then lost as soon as I had to go to school, go to work, go to

dinner, go to bed, go shopping, etc., but now it's everywhere when I want it and the word is "purity" but the synonym is "nothing." I try to explain this to my friend that same night, I can't form sentences just, "you know, it's purity, you know? Like nothing and everything and it doesn't matter... the same as nothing and the same as everything." And there's *The Kristeva Reader* and there's *Being and Nothingness* and there's Roberto Bolaño and there's David Foster Wallace, but there's all of that and nothing, always reaching.

And I have to say this is the goal, and this is why I left science for art. I was studying physics for a little while and the question of God and determinism, or God and the big bang, or just God and physics... but then there's the day to day, and there's beauty everyday, and there's art.

And I am always reaching to tune in, and so I'm always trying to tune out, conceptually trying to have a dialed in output that mirrors these beliefs, these ways of seeing, ways of believing, ways of doubting, and ways to relate. I have pure love and I have pure loss, and they both fill me up. I have always had time, it tips out the top of my cap every morning and every night, it can be frustrating and explosive, a nascent place in which we all live, and expressive understanding is the biggest pursuit.

These photographs are from a day, and these poems span years, all the everything, all the nothing, beauty comes slow.

Sam Falls, July 2014

AFTER

SHIVERS

the spine of a day holds me,
it props me up against the sun.





BOYS TO MEN

He was born too pretty for the country
he was born too sweet for the sea

I watched him grow too smart for the city

Oh how I resent the city and what it did
to my brother, father, me.



NEW YEARS DAY

The tide consumed rocks
I see my wife and ocean
collecting my life

NEW HOUSE #2

I can't make friends with the neighbors
I'm afraid they will take my time away
they'll see me naked and think about it
rather than just talk about it internally
I don't want to worry about when I'm naked.
Sometimes I play my music so loud
I think this must be what it's like
to feel the heat from inside my body;
some things are so close but so foreign.



5:00 PM EST

A baby deer died in our house
sweetheart I'm so sad
count to ten and cry again

watching the trees grow
loving the wind and rain
hearing the dogs bark
sweetheart I feel so sad

I'm so alone here with all of you
every second's a running faucet
the drain unplugged but the water
catches up to the slow piping
it catches up to you and overflows

the emptiness of time
the quality of air up here
the drowning sensation down there
heaven holds us all so close

I could never be less honest
tired of all the driving cars
braking outside our house
the sedans and minivans
on their way to work
on their way to school
on their way home

I started praying last year
I started holding the present moment
only to find it slips away even then
even faster I move into the dark.

12:00 AM EST

I went to Staples two times yesterday
I looked in Goodwill for an old shirt
I talked to Zurich and Italy and Los Angeles
I looked at the treads on my truck
so low down because of passing time
out in the parking lot, on the ground
breaking down with the rain ahead
elements of pain and hope bound as one
expectations of myself and others
executing my daily routine to ruin
feeling like I didn't do enough for my family
in bed with my wife and hoping she's happy
loving tomorrow and the next day after that
just because they exist in succession

just because it would hurt too much.

Looking inside you can get trapped.

The wasps' nests are beautiful even in February.



OLDD NEWS

He said the extra
D is incase of knuckle
tattoos tattoos heart



MEET ME IN THE CITY

The color of my
true love's hair is blonde-ish
looking at new books

DOWNTOWN

You can't make this up
but I did, in the small night light
on the floor all tired

FORTRESS

The kid's looking like
tomato, juicing his ribs
my dogs will follow

BLACK BEAUTY

Undergarments yeah
the slow breath of winter air
how will the year go?





EVERYDAY

It was the last day on the calendar he gave me
full of puppies in cute positions, like cats
I can't take the calendar down,
I'll live my birthday on wednesday instead
every year I'll start to ask, shouldn't these kids
be in school? Today's labor day? Oh.

The days were like syrup,
cold and good, warm and better.

I said for new years resolutions
to stop being superstitious, and then I got
superstitious the first night of the year
so I guess I won't do that anymore
one last hurrah and now I'm free
looking at black cats, what next?

NAME IT AFTER YOU

Painting color was the first thing a friend did for a friend
the memory of white and black was too much
crying on a dog who seems to understand
it's not going to ever be the same.
Green grass and shining leaves
looking out a window
looking in a window
never change.





20'S

I've got the feeling
but loose the spirit

GREAT BIG TOWN

I watch the sky pass through the air
I hold the concept of god in vain
I miss convenient stores and chewing tobacco
I live with crossed legs sometimes
sometimes I live standing
loved ones, loved ones
we all live in buildings.

The stairwell is white and gold
I'm on fire sometimes
sometimes I'm at ease and searching your name
the computer is late at night forever
what was the last sound we heard together?

What was funny once isn't not funny
because I'm alone, but it's also sad now.

We looked encyclopedic "cold and wet"
we could drive forever
the candlelight I lit is an image of jesus
I think that's enough to make you happy
it rains down on me all the time
I'm a harmonium on your wall
the cave's music is dark and beautiful
my memories are dark and beautiful

the sound was loud.





HAIKU OF LONGING

Can you fill a bic
lighter back up with fluid?
your cold hand in mine

HOTEL

Act old and be young
the deeper the ocean gets
and all the colder

THE WINTER'S HERE BUT A LOT IS GONE FOREVER

Every morning is
the Struggle

your silence is usual
but soon it will be
unusual.





GOLD TEETH AND THE CURSE FOR THIS TOWN

I'm thinking of a friend and old song
guess if it's you...

I'm taking antibiotics and smoking cigarettes,
putting minutes on my phone,
"burying the hammer."

When you love someone else you can have them
When you don't love them but have them,
you think you're losing them but really you're
just moving through life, sipping coffee and
worrying about who's car is parked outside the house.

But really you don't love them anymore so grow up.

There's a side street I live on, so do you.
Everything is next to a highway, second to God - the sky.

"There's none, there's no one."

Anyway when I drive to work it's like
when your mother drove you to school:
it's early and cold, it's always too close
you say, "Mom, can't we just drive around
a little bit? Mom, take the back roads."

That's a dirt road, that's the long and winding road
that leads back to your house.



WHITE NIGHT

The heart of my Saturday night is you
the Friday night blues is over and I'm
looking at people, moving in circles
through doors and then I have to pee
someone tries to talk to me but it's the wrong time.

The legacy of good will is time.
I want to tell my kid to be nice,
just like I look disapprovingly at my dog –
he's covered in dirt and knows what's wrong –
childhood is a bloody guts story with feet and hands,
full of towels and stains.

I want to catch you in the sunset
silhouetted by the night and ocean breeze,
there's too much blood in one body
but I cut my finger and while it pulsed –
like Christmas morning in a desert diner –
I thought the most depressing things
are a culmination of malnourishment matched
with the previous experience of health.

So what's the value in caring about industrious labor?

What's the sound in the back of my truck?
2x4's and steel, the nails and hammers are rustling and I'm lucky
not to have to report to work, it's self-motivated wheel spinning
luck that is harbored in care that's harbored in nothing and
that is obviously what really matters more than a house and a wall;
it's the absence of use that begets a reality of value.

I'm fucked because I got back from Europe
and my Internet doesn't work plus I have a cold –
I'm looking at a bottle of hydrogen peroxide
thinking of the last time I used it
how the sun sets so early in winter
and how there's so much work to get done with sun
that maybe I should just use bleach at night.

we're little balls of pollution and
the trash I have is everyone else's fault,
I never asked for plastic packaging,
why don't you just put it on the shelf naked?

Anyway, when I returned from Spain
my nostrils were burned and
my muscles were wasted
I couldn't see beyond the next subway stop,
I rained and rained on a seagoing computer
the poor, the middle-class, and the varied unknown.

I miss places around the country
but I never miss the houses within,
I've always tried to tame the last night in a home
before I move, holding the duffle-bag's last t-shirt and crying
thinking this might be the last good thing I have,
the night before leaving and the
sinking feeling in my stomach,
'this might be the best place.'

But it's not and everything is the best it's been
so I'll work on leaving some more places
adopting a house, abusing its upgrade and
eating all the cookies.

Offered a tissue, I could refrain,
I could hold out for days.
In college I lived in the sunroom
of a 5 bedroom victorian house
and I think that has a lot to do with now
because when I moved into the laundry room
because the sunroom was common space
I couldn't sleep and the smell of detergent
made me feel way cleaner than I actually was
and I think that made everyone jealous so
I had to leave there. I got stuck in the city
for a long time without a shower and
I never fooled myself that that I was way dirtier
than before, even the sunroom was fresher.

What's the line between being here and working
and being outside and working?

I'm adding all of my music from my old hard rive
to my new computer and while I wait
I was walking in circles...
Now I'm looking here.

Anyway, the difference is walls.

I feel very good about this,
I feel at home here and there.

If we had to make a new kingdom
would it start outdoors and move in?
Like God's shadow?



GEORGE

the sun is full of guts
they rain down on me
like the statue I feel heavy
full of guts and the rain
falls heavy, down on me.

In a work of art we expect nothing
I'm expecting less than nothing
when I see the rats eat trash by the subway
that's when I think I'll miss my body
when I die I hope to be eaten by friends.

In the catacombs in Naples I saw hundreds of bones
I just looked down and saw so many skulls through
the gutters. It was natural and it wasn't depressing.
What's depressing is taking the train from Rome to Naples,
seeing the dog in the sun herding sheep by the abandoned house
and thinking collectively "some things never change,"
but someone still lives close by in that trailer with the tarps
and has a tv and dishes and the dog out herding sheep feels
the same way everyday and the sun comes down and
the rain too sometimes, and the dog will die and
the family watches tv and the guts get worse but
more dogs cycle through, the sweetest animals that I wish
I could save forever with their sweet eyes and good intentions.
The people have no intentions except spanning time and
looking loosely at pale food and it doesn't matter,
the train moves and I am moving.

It's the saddest thing to know, these dogs with short lives,
knowing death is the saddest thing you'll ever know.
I love my dog so much and wish he would never die.



THE 4 SEASONS

there's no holiday spirit
when you turn to the wind
in the side of the house where
you remember things cold and wet
where the old dog bed is and a tv.

sometimes it rains when you least expect it
sometimes it's just snow melting
and in the way I return to a feeling
I understand she was waiting for me
and I never came, the way the snow was melting
I was never coming back, and I didn't, and I wont.

but the barn looks like a state today,
the way grass moves so rapidly in a storm
the barn is floating in a green pool
and if it were a state it would be Oregon
because there's nothing inside it anymore,
not since the drums were returned and
the lightbulbs went out.

those summers though the mist was right on
the nights hugged us like a third brother
holding our hands until morning and then
letting us grow up for the day, meeting us again at night
the way you looked into my eyes and cried
the way the dog tried to catch the fireflies
and the way you plug in a guitar with the amp on –
it's a lot of fuzz and a little joy.

WHITMAN ON THE STREET

I've inherited a bundle of information
about you and your dogs that sleep

when will you be coming home
and how long does it take to go?

Everywhere is covered in trash
they said, "the cities will save the forests
because we're our own worst enemy"

I know what it's like to care and not care
sometimes I recycle, sometimes I don't.

On Saturday I will see the sand
cascade into temples like a pyramid
building fortresses out of concrete
is another way to earn a slower death
but make sure it's hot out, or you won't
know the difference between sweat and tears.

Making magic is a life worth of work
and making out with my dog is easy.

So I've set up a simple equation to my heart
a lot of concrete, trees, dogs, and bottles.





DAY TO DAY

I'm the Fred Sandback of your hair,
I'm the man "on the beach."

And I see men sitting on the beach alone
and you see a passing ship with the words
Sui Side across the stern in vinyl letters.

When you see women on the beach alone
there's nothing...

So I'm the dirt in clean drawers
waiting for night
waiting for moths
holding hands with time
as we wait for darkness
and as we set into a patience
with no numbers
the objects we see merge
into empty space
I watch the light eat up space
I want to be the night
of your skin.



RAINMAKER

When I couldn't sleep
I wondered if you couldn't sleep
it was raining a lot and I
pictured an ocean out in our yard
I imagined what it'd be like to walk around outside
if I'd be scary or scared?
I thought about what it must be like
to suffer from insomnia
and don't you eventually one day just get tired?
I thought maybe I need a drink
but that would just make me feel worse in the morning
and where's the closest hospital?
We've lived here for months and what if
I cut off all of my fingers, what would we do?
A picture of childhood friends families' refrigerators
popped into my head and how they had all these emergency numbers
held up with pizza magnets and alphabet magnets
and how I felt safe, even if I cut off all of my fingers.
I thought about how I started growing my hair out for one reason
and now it's just long without reason.
I wondered why we have to filter our water
and how come I don't give our dog filtered water?
I wondered if I have any secrets anymore,
how I used to be littered with secrets
and now I can't imagine one I'm still holding.
I thought about the term "shoe-gazer"
and how outside of music it means your head is in the clouds.
That tonight I might sleep well because I usually do
and I was the whole night before so things are looking good.
How there are certain colors I gravitate toward and
how I wish I knew less about things that are bad for you
and the balancing act of giving a shit about my body and not.
Do they filter the water used to make juice? Or beer?
I thought about driving across the country
and how it's magic: nobody knows where you are
because you're constantly slipping through time and space
the view is nothing really, the roads are all paved there
in the middle of the country, and how natural is the color
of asphalt? How hard would it be to change it?

If I had a map for every Safeway or Home Depot parking lot
I've driven through at 10pm, trying to find the exit
it'd look like a bloody mess. Do I think I'm funny?
Why don't I laugh out loud? I'm my own best friend.
Sometimes when I'm thinking and the phone rings I hope it's my wife,
if it's not then I'm a little upset with that person.
If I answer it I'm pulled away from my thoughts,
and if I don't answer it I think about that person.
I wondered if I was too hot and should go outside,
but maybe the rain would wake me up like a cold shower.
And how come showers can put you to sleep or wake you up?
If I put one leg outside of the covers would I be perfect
or just think about that leg? If the night is a secret of earth,
if we're all covered in darkness half our lives,
why is it so different than daytime?
Only one sense is changed, and I can see you sleeping still,
so I'm not going outside.
I'm so afraid of dying it keeps me very honest.





WESTING

Driving is a good litmus test
because you either want to get
where you're going, or you don't.
And if you're just driving with nowhere to go
then you're either totally fucked or perfect.

Moving west makes me want to stay west:
The earth sings at night, and when it rains
I hear the animals sigh, they poke at the fences
like, "what did I do wrong?" or
"what did I do right?"
Because animals either love the rain or they hate it,
it cools you off but it holds you down.
It makes you think "I should read instead of
watch a movie," because rain is the night of the sunshine.

In a rocky area I feel scattered,
in the plains I see my life span out
until I can't see anymore.
I know it keeps going, but
I also see that it ends –
I could drive in the direction I'm looking
and move closer to the end
or move closer to what I can't see,
or stay where I am and imagine
what death is like.



HEART

Writing a song for someone else
is like writing a song for yourself,
you're in the teepee getting wet
looking for food in the corners
of the round wet circle you've
decided to enslave yourself to.

In the morning it was wetter,
obviously the hide was from
a bad cow, or several bad cows –
a gang of cows with bad skin.
I looked at the water dripping
in from the apex and thought,
“this is probably worth leaving.”

A tent is no home, and camping
means you have a home, unlike
just sleeping in a tent. It's hard to
write a poem when there's no
one person you're thinking it's for,
it's just a dirty day and a long walk
looking for strangers that look famous
so you feel like you know someone
(thinking about *The Painted Bird* and
then thinking about Michael Gira's interest
in Kosinski, and then Nabakov's early
short stories, walking, woods, and then
there's the end, there's Archimboldi).

At the end of the day, in the circle
there's all these thoughts like,
“I wish the day wouldn't end
so I could define this one as memorable”
or, “this is a bad way to go to sleep”
or, “sleep won't come when I feel like this”.

What I really think about is:
I'm outside, I'm basically outside of all of this,
very different than the man at the bus stop
twitching in a way that seems crazy
but his clean shoes make you think
maybe he's good at chess.

Underneath all of this comes water
and underneath the water is more dirt
and underneath the dirt is more water
and under every day is another day
the way the dirt stops the water
these days will stop the dirt, eventually.

I look into the eyes of my mirror
they have a whole face inside them
and I think about feeling at home
that this is my home and my bathroom.

Outside of all of this is rain and clouds
and I can't see it, but I can feel it.





CLAP HANDS

now I've got refrigerator magnets
I can see the Pacific Ocean and
think about big ideas:

I'm on a hillside,
there are clouds
and it will rain,
and I have a dog
and I'm married
and I have two good friends
who live nearby and call.

Your dad was always saying k.i.s.s.



SUNDAY POEM #5

Packing today everything was clear
for a second I lost any sense of value
I threw away most everything that once
may have meant something to me –
time and material – I was like the sky
holding on to rain, then I just let it all go.

I picture you doing the same thing
15 minutes away, I picture you there
in space, moving about the room
listening to music, changing your clothes,
deciding on photographs, what I'll see
what I won't, what pants I'll never see you wear.

We occupy the same water
we dip
we look at each other.

I understand how far we've had to come now.

I started to read philosophy again for ten minutes,
I wanted to see where it stood to me now and
it too was like rain, social needs and ubiquitous concern.
I'm really only concerned with the way the land lies now
and your life line.

I read today that paleontologists now think that
the second brain commonly believed to be in a stegosaurus' tail
was just an enlargement in the base of the spine:

marriage.



TOPANGA

We're so old and
the gravity is like butter
melting your eyes out.

I'm smoking now
in your back room
I'm smoking now
in your front room.

It's hard to believe
that this is the time,
and this is the time,
and we're just here
smoking.

Watch the water like
it has an answer,

at least I do.

Watch the water and wait
thinking, "if it could always be like this"

"if it could always be this way."

ATLANTIS

Under an Andalusian sky I'll tell you one thing
and I'm definitely going to save that one thing
until we are under and Andalusian sky
because I don't know where that is and the thing
I will tell you will have to do with my
unfounded pursuit of Andalusia.





HIGHLAND PARK

the even wind hits the small of my back
the tired night limits my movements to two:
one for relieving your pain
and one for art.

SHARING THE HOUSE

the person stage left considers the length of grass
and the person stage right considers that which lies in the grass

there are two ways to believe in art
one is the distance between yourself and the object
the other is that there is no predetermined organization and
any attempt would be a paw print on a timeless wooden floor of
a deserted house in echo park.

IN ORBIT

“I’ve left so many places.”

Just kidding, I don’t care about things like that.
I’ve just moved around now and then
and stayed when necessary,
I enjoy the idea of not thinking about this.

So when I was tired on a hot afternoon
I went running to wake up, to feel good about
owning two feet and legs and
I found a few things to look at out there:

one was of course a disaster with ambulances and fire trucks
the other was flowers and trying to decide if I were to buy some
what kind she would like

the third was my own hand in a cabinet, searching for
something I knew not what - I pretended I cared.

I pretended to myself.
“And how can I do this?”
Power of the mind, but
it’s a constant mystery.





PRAY FOR REST

there are two heartbeats,
sometimes one

there's always a darkness
it's not even a question of when
or how
or who

just bleeding

you set the scene
together we need
no proper nouns.

BIBLICAL NAMES

I'm pretty sure I'm happy
and I'm positively killing myself
the way an old analogue answering machine
warms the tape and uses it, receiving a love letter
while I'm out in the yard wondering if she'll call:
nothing's positive or negative,
just impressions left in space.

So I feel good outside melting by the sun
everyone is independently pushing themselves
to the next place to spend time
the interim is wasted time, don't be fooled –
just look at your hands, look at the wall,
the way a cigarette burns, you'll never get it back.

Anyway, as snow falls there's a need for warmth,
as your heart beats there's a need for blood;
in the end the best thing to do would be to dig a giant hole –
at least the empty space would hold you –
maybe we could see it from a plane
maybe you would be the secret in mundane art, boring life.





PASSENGERS LEAVE

Look at the weather
just look out the window
just breath and wonder
is she breathing now too?

I slept by the water
I felt totally alone
I began to get up in the morning
I sat back down and checked my emails
nothing to report but I could have guessed there was news

there's always current events
but I don't have an interest in the absurd.
I'm interested in the empirical,
the hand that feeds me,
the desk that burns all the time,
the width of my room,
the width of your neck,
the hair let down to your shoulders.

I see everything tainted by blue sky,
will it ever turn white?
Oh come on, I'm not like this all the time,
I'm going to move soon, I can feel it –
the way I knew we'd kiss
the way I deliver packages to the post office
so they can subtract my days
my days in the sun and the toll it takes
on the desert like my skin –
like my passing life
like the lack of trust in New York City.
Like the way a car can crash and
nobody gets hurt

or everybody dies,
it only exists in sound for a second
and words for a few years
and then all you have are worms.

I'm not being pessimistic
I write all this in order to consider truth,
to be honest with you.







COUCH AND HAND

the dirty land in hand
look at the sounds of you
the sounds of me
dirt like a meadow

one hundred eagles
one hundred eyes
marking time by scars
counting days by stars

the wind howls and
I don't feel any better
I'm just hurt by people
waking up and worrying

I'll never let the days of summer
blend into one

I'll never let you loose sight
of how much I care for you

the animals grow for us
the dogs look up at your eyes
oh holy shit how it is sublime
the way your eyes look into mine.

GETTING WHAT'S NEEDED

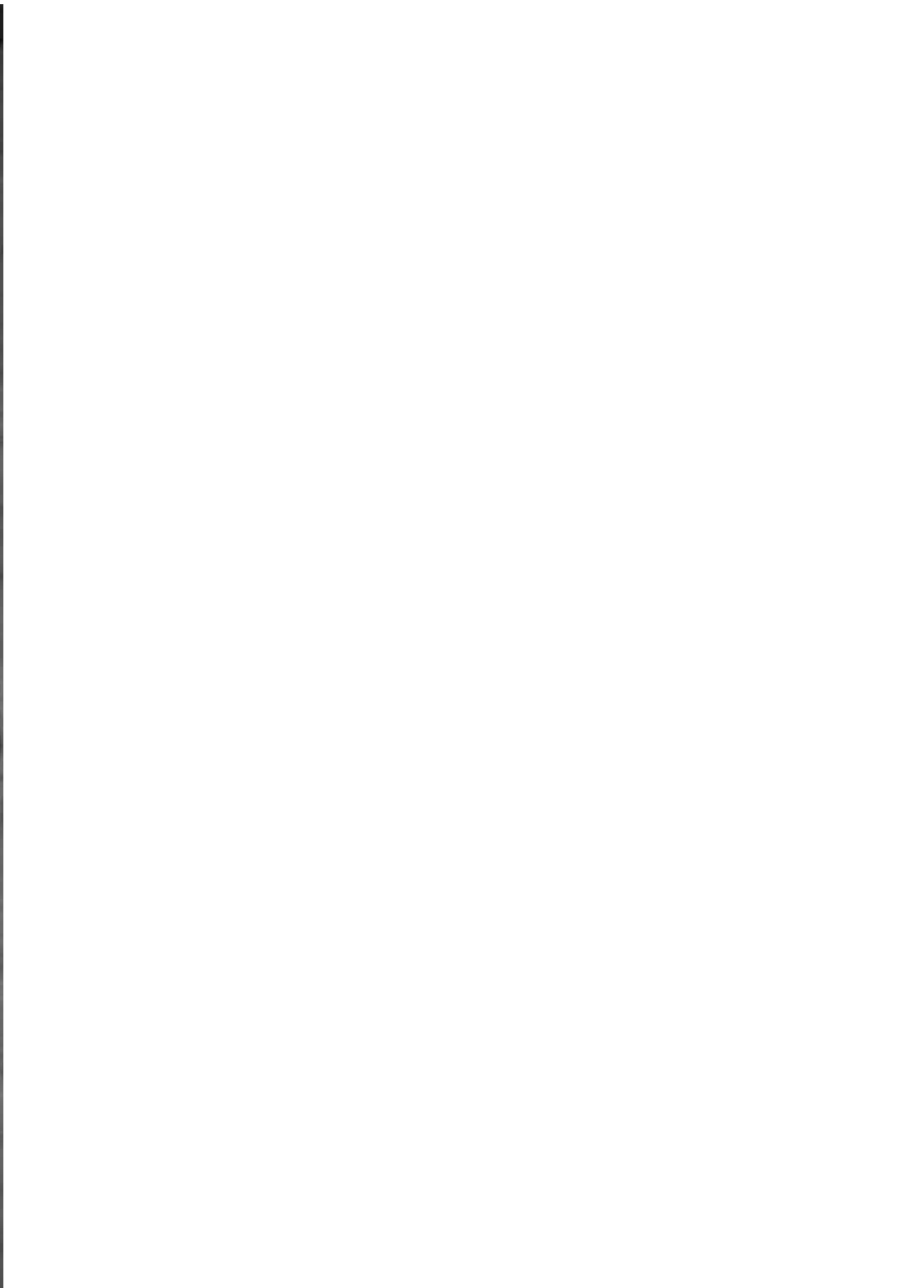
a rock in the wind doesn't move
when I let go of feeling

long live the air, long live the ager
I see shopping areas and oh it's just so sad

the time we spent in parking lots
in parked cars awaiting each other
the day and the night
getting out to yell at each other
the way kids do

but now lost in the parking lot
the way sadness can fall silent
melancholy in a day
melancholy in a night.









YOU BEEN OUT THERE?

Maybe there's a place called Great Barrington
maybe there's a Great Barrington in Vermont
I've never looked up any town I wasn't going to
I've never researched a town
I've only looked for the roads that get me there
If I google Great Barrington, I imagine I'll be disappointed.

ICED COFFEE

Your voice is like a bell
ringing quietly with various tones
sounds like a church awaiting arrival
you're a ceremony
every minute I'm around.

I'm not surprised that I can be a man
in your eyes,

when I said, "I missed what you said
because I was looking at your beautiful eyes"
I was joking, it's because I was drunk and
you whispered something when I said this
like it wasn't my eyes it was the alcohol, and I wondered
if we're on the same page – I mean it felt like we were totally
on the same page.

It's at the beginning of relationships I have to be careful,
I can be very funny when I try
but it takes a lot of effort
and so I don't want you to think I'm funny all the time
because then I'd get really tired.

Anyway I'm banking on the fact you'll never read this,
the windows stay closed so I stay cool.
I'm a very open man,
I'm very open, man.





LOOKS LIKE HEAVEN

Your dresses are nice
you tried one on for me
one with polka-dots
it's nice to have your hands
in mine. I've studied them:
You'll take care of yourself
my entire life. I wanted to feel
more at home when we said
goodbye. I wondered if you
feel melancholy during the day?
The middle of the day is the hardest part,
it sucks in every ounce of desire
and spits out ethics, like old England.
I wanted to swing you up into a cloud,
a museum of tornados – walking with our
legs covering the same pace with every step –
the lightness of everything. But if you're not sad
you don't need to deal with this, everything
I'm always dealing with, it's so boring and dark.

ALL THE TREES

the sky was in just the right place
where the sun illuminates color but not objects
the kids were running in the street
and I realized how meaningless they were

if you put everyone in the world together
like one person representing the whole
it would be wildly mediocre
and that's the point

everyone is doing the same thing
there's barely reason to communicate
because the thoughts have been unanimously shared;
predict what I say and I predicted you would
it's the same here, now

so where and what do we do?
we look at each other and cry
I put everything into you because you represent one person
the whole world and one person
that's the way to do it

or you isolate and communicate with the one
the earth that isn't change
bringing it all back home -
not industrialization
de-industrialization
not organic consumption
non-consumption
not love or hate, just necessity
not anything or everything all the time
just nothing

what I mean is, when I heard music
I heard an inanimate objective tone
being tastefully shaped.
material is objective, tastefully shaped
but the earth is not objective, it's beyond that
it's going to tastefully shape you and me
if we let it.





MOTEL VOID

I can't wait silently, but I can wait
here in the room of your mother and father's busts
or your grandparents

I turned away from a certain life
I moved into apartments
not houses not homes

I don't feel restraint
for a minute there I thought I'd never feel anything again
I wasn't worried, but I mean like an entire minute

There are people outside and inside
people in yards right now - people in planes
people vending tacos on the street and people punching faces
there are children all over the fucking place

there aren't any problems in the big picture
except like everything, it's finitely framed
I'm willing to go on, but I'm not going to live in the city.

I breathe of stairs
I crawl under the covers
I move quietly through my own mind
observing the places I drink and get drunk
wincing
making my fingers recoil from my own hand
I'm a man and that's what's up today

in the parking lot I realized how blatantly lit my face was
I saw that I have scars all over my body
physical stuff

there is a lack
there is light.

Right.



PARIS PLASTER

Sitting on the porch you said your mom is addicted to drugs,
“she’s in and out of rehab”
well, “that’s kind of cool” I say,
“someone’s gotta do it, right?”

“We skype a lot, you know, because I’m french”

“Right.”

Anyway, what impresses me is the need for speech,
the heartfelt moments we can reach
when half an hour ago I was out on the porch by myself,
trying to be by myself - I haven’t been by myself for so long,
and that’s all I want. But I’m scared about it too.

So you talk to me and we relate, but I don’t feel less alone
I realize how alone I am because you are not a part of me.

Some people are parts of me
and then some are shed
it’s not easy.

MONODRAMA

The budwiser can let's me know where I've been
I watch the sun move across the windows
and I judge the time, my phone's dead

we look each other in the eyes and I wink
trying to decide which eye you're looking at
I stood at the door long enough to decide
which way to walk, we were in a different time zone

I've had to call several different people for days
and something about the phone let's me use it
for everything but talking, communication is fucked

I want a dog too
but only if it takes
good care of me

I slip into my jeans
I slip into the light
I wait for you to call
like holding my breath
I'm drinking coffee and counting
the tiles on the floor
nodding off and drinking coffee
nobody's got my number
but they could if they only tried.





TIRE SWING

Let's roll down the windows
it's summer and we've got nowhere to go

is this body of water fresh?
do you eat red meat?

I'm lying in the grass now
remembering when
I was recovering from illness
And all I could do was walk to
various places to lie down
now it's a thin line between
health and sickness.

there are so many places we've never been

In the garden that day we held hands
it rained and I wanted to get my hair cut
I wanted you to hold me more
like arms all around me
that's still what I need.

WE WERE ALL QUIET

these are always good moments
high on morning nights
watching you from the window
it's too late for both of us
to be awake

take a towel from the rack
it's wet from the shower's steam
don't think about practical issues
get in the fucking car

under the bridge there's a lot of things
what do you want?

If you call me and I don't answer
so many different things could've been the case
that it's best to keep calling
the answer will present itself

nobody calls anymore
nobody really (really) cares
my rent is out of control
I'm a morning sister
in the catholic office
of a dirty kids' movie
looking at comic books
and waiting for my boner to chill

put it on ice.





BIG CITY BRIGHT LIGHTS

Hollowed out in the corner of this night
more room to get stuck in, curling up
as I get older I only know more
I loose a little piece of me every time I hear
myself say "new york city"

But really folks
my anxiety tears my nights apart.

GRAVEL PIT

Early morning train
see building with falling stone
manual labor

HEAVEN

Blue heron standing
the lightness of morning light
pause, let darkness in





SWEET BABY

Sometimes people forget,
I mean even I forget,
how hardcore it is
to be alive

you'll
spend
the rest of
your time dyin'.

REALITY CHECK

When's the last time you
had a reality check?

COMPETITIVE SURFER

You can tell by the way he hits the lip
that he has no soul.

TRAIN RIDE HOME

I remember the sky flying
only one right way to come down

when I reach for the sky it's to hold
my own hands above my head and pause

The Book of Monelle
living like we mean it
learning from Los Angeles

There's only one place to sit sometimes
so I stand, watching the waves crash
watching every moment pass
loving the heart in my body
flesh and blood
tongue and lungs

the lightning bugs beat in tune
the tune that connects me to you.



THE BIG SHIP

Never looking for a saint
frees up a lot of good time
time to sort the recycling
time to read and draw
time for listening to
drone music

I hold a candle
in high regard
the wishes I've had
and the wishes I'll make
all toward giving more love
than the love I take.





0 LEVEL

The problems of being in my shoes:
everyman problems,
all the problems I thought I would avoid
dad problems before even being a dad,
understanding parents' problems
economical and emotional

I guess problems I always thought I'd have but
never care about
and they get so hard
I can see the light at the end of the tunnel
I can see the value in walking away from it all
which is what I thought I was always doing
since choosing this way
I can also see the reasons for sticking it out
but I guess every way is another way to the same ending
oh I'm hardly upset anymore at all of this
oh I'm hardly surprised anymore with anything
and I thought yesterday
"I'm too young to be so hard about it"
so I tried harder, but tonight
I just don't care anymore I guess.

I'M WAKING UP TO US

On the train it was devastating
when I forgot my headphones
I sat there for minutes like days

I realized I could do everything I needed
inside my bag, but the music missing hurt
I'm addicted to music and music things

under the setting sun I watched the holes glow
I watched distant people become meaningless
my unwavering friends as rays of light forever
quality vs. quantity and interaction with a hug

"The days of '68" I thought, not having headphones
I guess this will be a less emotional train ride,
how about I read something complicated that
I would still usually read with phones on but now
will extract complete understanding and value

"An academic limit experience on the train"

But no internet: no research,
no emotion, no critical theory
beaten by my mirror self
from the middle ages.





HOT DAY HAIKU

Sometimes I forget
weather it's Los Angeles
or Las Angeles



EVERYONE TOGETHER

The fear of getting sick - moving around
always taking one thing as a substitute
oh the fear of getting sick
negotiating seats on a plane or train
balancing between sick people and loud people

The world at large,
struggling to be with my own thoughts
clear and true, easy and free alone with me
oh heaven oh hell
oh wake me up

maybe she's hard of hearing, the lady behind me
she talks so fucking loud about her x-boyfriend
he broke up with her after the 9 inch nails concert
seems like michael made the right move
she's so annoying and coughs a lot.

ALL OVER ALL OVER

Tunneling down the world
I understand what I get and why
sometimes the punishment leads to understanding
jr. year abroad as a day in your later life
latin teachers breeding and taking over
npr correspondents as ambassadors
everyone firm with anxiety
asking people to “shhh.”



HAIKU OF LONGING

Some things can't be fixed
broken rib or beer bottle
all days gone for good

HARVEST MOON HAIKU

The dread of eclipse
the moonlight on the water
painting forever





OUT ON THE WEEKEND

All day I'm sad and treading water
looking to be nice but not apparently trying
hoping my presence is enough
hoping my bones and skin and presence are enough
the fact that I have a voice, the fact that I can drive the car
the feeling of being consumed with fate and dread thereof
that death comes fast or slow, but "hey motherfucker" it will come
and opening up my days to you and to your friends
and opening up my days to my family and my friends
and hoping that the belief in you and good things is enough
seeing good things and people surround me is enough
wishing my dogs would live longer, secretly crying in bathrooms
holding my hands while they shake and thinking of one person
holding your hands while they shake and you think of one person
we are inevitable simple things, not mysteries beyond clothes and quietness
not mysteries beyond silent actions and little words
just big animals with fear and pain
and hoping, by letting knowledge in, this fear and pain weens
by wading in the good we're healthy and believing in the present
watching the little inevitable tall tell signs of pressure and stress
the clairvoyance of peace in knowing, the sadness and hoping
in bones and skin, smiles and rubbing your back,
holding your head, petting their fur, kisses and tears.

OPEN AIR

All of the animals are my best friends
I look into the dark night

I guess I should head back to the house now
thinking of old friends.





WALK IT OFF

Waking up means more everyday
trying to cool my thoughts
heavy blows from all the days before
the weight of responsibility
looking like it's time for a deep swim
submerging away from all of this.

FAIRVIEW AVENUE

First they take you away from yourself,
then they take you

some things are actually just emotional;
eating McDonalds in front of CVS for lunch
squatting by the dead animal in the yard
it never stops, the city, the country,
between the two it's even worse.

reading about D.F. Wallace
watching him handle a cigarette on youtube
planning my days around getting outside
watching for rain, the first night in a new place
the first morning in a new place
the smell of a new house becoming your own.





TEENAGE

I'm nothing but dirt
I live so sedimentarily
dry - I want to live a long time but
know all I'm doing is
shortening my life

I write poems like
a crunched up fist
one finger, two, three, four, five
all together we say
fuck you fuck me.



JAMES BENNING

The difference between patience and boredom
history vs. time in the field all night
loving yourself in the darkest hours
holding a candle to your open wounds
you have to look at them, no one else cares.

NIGHT PORCH

Working all the time
it's the journey that moves you

no troubles today, a day of clear thinking
crying and laughing the same, a clear day still

the pure panic of sleeping in
hours you can never get back

getting older in the face of God
total eclipse in one hour counting
loosing a loosing battle all the time.





THE UNCERTAINTY

Living like the tide
pushing people away,
pulling people in
the way a little smile
can work like the moon –
the face waxes and wanes
the tide ebbs and flows –
the singer is silent between songs
the dealer shuffles the cards
all the boys are driving around tonight
looking for something to do.

Summer can be sweet
and summer can sting
some birds fly away
some just want to stay home.

The sun comes in waves
the rain comes in sheets
covered by both he's a rainbow
forever alive, forever gone
making me believe in everything
not wanting to cut short any chance
we may have of reuniting, now from afar
later uniformly in the infinite,
I suspect we could be headed
for eternal return.

BLACKING OUT THE BOOK

A day home alone with so much
taking care of my body
taking care of the garden
I know all these things will die
oh the anxiety builds up
holding my bones
with perfect pitch





DRAWING TO A CLOSE

Oh the infinite and ode to the day
I can't ever be alone, and lonely I'll always be
look for the birds, oh the beauty and hold me please

The big clouds I see rolling in, lord rain on me
My best friend gone forever, lord rain on me
the things I should have done as a brother to make his life longer
always raining down on me, forever living in sadness
my life I'd give away if I could only bring back Jamie.

SAM FALLS

THE LOSS OF PRESENCE
THE PRESENCE OF LOSS

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