

**The Three Living and the Three Dead**  
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*For Kelly  
who helped arrange these words all those years ago*

Hello.

This collection of poems is a slice of my past. Collected for a contest judged my senior year of college, this file has collected dust on hard drive after hard drive as I moved, graduated, moved again, converted back to a Mac guy, and moved again.

In the halls of the English building I saw a posted flyer for a book contest judged by one of my favorite poets, Li Young Lee. I decided to take the chance and put together something to submit, not in hopes of winning and getting published, but in hopes that Lee would read my work.

I printed out a stack of my poems and with the help of my friend Kelly and her entire living room floor we arranged, and mercilessly edited. This collection is the final result. Since then, some have been edited, altered or reverted; I am not sure the tinkering process ever really stops. But this file, this collection stood untouched all these years.

I present this collection to you unedited, unaltered from all those days ago. Enjoy.

-jacob

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## Table of Contents

### The Three Living and the Three Dead

#### Part I - The Three Living 4

Jazz	5
Blues	6
Time	7
CrLaOiUnD	8
Ceiling Tiles	9
Notes, women, fish, lines, notes, and Carrie Anne	10
Signs	11

### The Three Living and the Three Dead

#### Part II - The Merchant 12

Extrospection	13
B-sides	14
Lucid	15
Name	16
The Restaurant at Asnieires	17
Coffee Break	18
Brake	19
The Stairwell	20

### The Three Living and the Three Dead

#### Part III - The Knight 21

Earthquake	22
Communion	23
Reading	24
Two	25
Fork in the Road	26
Rock	27

The Three Living and the Three Dead  
Part IV - The Thief 28

Pygmalion	29
Phaeton	30
Samson	31
The Persecutors	32
Orpheus	33
Charon	34
Hector	35
Number 8	36
Catullus VIII	37

The Three Living and the Three Dead  
Part V - The Three Dead 38

History	39
The End of the Stairwell	40
Night Swimming	41
Relativity	42
St. Christopher	44
Again	46
Park Bench	47

The Three Living and the Three Dead  
Part VI - The Dawn 48

Good Friday	49
Prelude	50
A Crow Spoke to Me Today	51

## **The Three Living and the Three Dead**

### Part I

#### The Three Living

The sun hasn't risen for days now.  
Every so often, the sky pinkens,  
teasing the idea of sunrise.  
Only the moon, with its silver dawn,  
illuminates. And the cold,  
a cold I have never known.  
Wrapped heel to ear,  
only my eyes show  
and my body shivers.  
The merchant paces,  
his path crosses our camp  
in every conceivable way.  
He thinks of a woman,  
a lady, I presume,  
convinced that the forces that hide the sun  
will keep them apart.  
The knight rests his hand  
on his chin,  
untrained in dealing with enemies  
on the inside,  
he has not moved since the now embers  
were first set ablaze.  
And still there is no dawn.

## **Jazz**

the air is slow thick - people move street to street shop to shop  
the city moves never stops never pauses never stays still  
forward, leftward, rightward, onward, in, out, around  
the change becomes dark bright full of colour and nothingness  
and still there is motion still there is motion still there is motion  
what street is this? what day am I?

this woman who stares into my eyes dares to know something I cannot take off at night  
and still she is close close moving we move  
move until I cannot tell you which moves or how anymore  
they move forward onward, she holds my hand  
never speaks never speaks only communicates  
and I only listen, I listen to her body, her body, her body  
and how she moves, when she moves, if she moves

my thoughts swim on motion, motion from here to there  
from streetlights and city, through thick air, street to street  
a horn plays, "Miles Davis" she whispers, her lips press  
and we move, she gently touches my lips apart moving again  
onwards, forwards awaywards - but my motion is gone  
to me motion only hugs holds keeps, she is in control of motion

I move around anyways her thick kiss motionless on my lips  
her motion thick on my body, and I move down down down  
until I am a stool, base for a lone trumpet and its motionless freedom

## **Blues**

Lord don't make me sit here all my life  
I ain't done you no wrong  
Lord don't make me sit here forever  
I ain't done you no wrong  
Boss-man come along  
Take away my song

Lord my eyes hurt from working  
Take this machine 'way from me  
Lord my hands hurt from working  
Take this machine 'way from me  
Rain clouds are a-coming  
Leaving their rain with me

When five o'clock come  
I gonna hit that door  
when five o'clock come  
I'm gonna lite a smoke  
Baby I never saw a more beautiful sun  
as the sun after five o'clock come.

Lord I need salvation  
This job ain't no good  
Lord I need salvation  
This world ain't no good  
Show me something better  
Something better for me.

## Time

Walk talk the tic tock, if you have the time  
spit trick only wants your tick chick  
and to kick tock you to the fuck rut. The sound

of the sip tock goes tick, the gun, click click click,  
stops the scene, the clock block knows.  
Sphinx says "never forget tic!" the me-mick runs

and you can run, through click ticks, rock  
lochs, and all the tick tocks you want, but  
the nick knock of time is never there.  
Sphinx says "this is no trick!" or truck to the tic

tock clock still ticking ticking. Even a block brick  
can destroy the tock time clock, or a wok wick

of a candlestick can burn burn burn though all,  
the top clock cares not. It will tick. You will tock,  
and the tic tic humans will walk the tock tic  
through time. The epoch of it all flick flocks

the mind, letting you cock kick yourself for the tic  
of your toc, now side-riding the aftershock.  
Sphinx says "phuc tock it! four, two, three!"

His walk, Morning-dAy-eveNing, talk  
is to pick poc the click, opening the lock tic,  
so I too may tic(R) tic(U) tock(N)

**CrLaOiUnD**

rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell  
rain fell

dANd d  
I aNd  
L i  
io lio  
N n

## Ceiling Tiles

There are 169 full ones  
Plus a row of 18 halves.  
And a quarter tile in the corner.

88 of them flow left to right  
87 flow up to down,  
Leaving three which appear to go  
Diagonal.

The ceiling fan takes the place  
Of one, carving curves  
Into an adjacent pair.

The ones above the fish tank  
Possess ceaseless motion  
And the ones near the mirror are reflected out to the imperfections of the glass.

Bringing the total to  $178 \frac{1}{4}$   
Ceiling tiles  
And one set of eyes.

## Notes, women, fish, lines, notes, and Carrie Anne

I write to explore. the lines  
Offer help when women  
Dream of animals. Fish  
Drink, not just breathe. Friends  
Sing of life and Carrie Anne, who  
Hears clearly the notes.

I hear clearly what the notes  
Write. To explore the lines,  
Sing of life and Carrie Anne, who  
Offers help when women  
Drink, not just breathe. Friends,  
Dream of animals, fish.

I dream of animals, fish, and  
Hear clearly that the notes  
Drink not just breathe. Friends  
Write to explore, the lines  
Offer help when women  
Sing of life and Carrie Anne.

I sing of life and Carrie Anne, who  
Dreams of animals. Fish  
Offer to help when women  
Hear clearly that the notes  
Write to explore. The lines  
Drink not just breathe, friends.

I drink, not just breathe. Friends  
Sing of life and Carrie Anne, who  
Writes to explore the line  
Dreams of animals. Fish  
Hear clearly that the notes  
Offer to help women.

I offer help when women  
Drink. Do not just breathe, friends,  
Hear clearly that the notes  
Sing of life, and Carrie Anne who  
Dreams of animals. Fish  
Write to explore the lines.

I write lines that offer women  
Dreams of fish, drinks to thirsty friends  
I sing of Carrie Anne, and she hears the notes.

## Signs

beware of dog  
employees must wash hands  
surgeon general's warning

police line - do not cross  
no trespassing  
no forgiveness for those who trespass against us

in case of emergency - Panic  
Don't Panic  
remain calm and in your seats  
did I not instruct that box five was to be left empty?

you must be 18 or older to purchase tickets  
you must be at least this tall to ride

wet paint  
only you can start forest fires  
abandon all hope  
no stopping standing or sitting

fire lane  
handicap parking only  
employees only  
students only  
coat and tie required

no posting  
no smoking  
no food or drink inside library  
no sandals or bare feet on the escalator

made in china  
made in korea  
made in taiwan  
inspected by #13

buckle up for your safety

## **The Three Living and the Three Dead**

### Part II The Merchant

The merchant turned,  
his expression breaking the silence  
before his words.

"Her name," he began,  
the cold pouring from his mouth,  
"was almost as beautiful  
as she.

In the ballroom of the Queen  
we met, the masquerade hiding  
my wonderment.

Her peers saw my status,  
her eyes just saw my own.

I left to make my fortune  
in Babylon,  
so I may stand at her side  
in court."

## **Extrospection**

It was a poet's dream,  
memories that will fill  
passion and plain white pages.  
Recollections of a few months and a single  
Je T'aime.

I am no poet  
a farmer of words, engineer of thoughts  
and events, I could not fill a  
page.

Yo no soy poeta  
a single moment of clarity,  
I dwell on the past  
like a Romantic  
lost in the short walk from home.

I cannot tell you,  
for the only thing that is true  
is that in the summertime my lips  
turn azul when I stay in the cold water  
too long, all else  
fabri(fabrications)cations

## **B-sides**

My stomach hurts.

It matches rhythm with the ringing  
in the top speaker of the hand set.

'It's just coffee" I think,

counting,

*15*

"Too much caffeine,"

*16*

"not enough food."

*17*

I place the receiver back

slowly running my hand down the chord,

and waited for my body to calm itself.

## **Lucid**

I dreamed of you last night.  
After an alternative ending,  
we walked out of a theatre.  
At the top of the escalator  
you said goodbye,  
and kissed me,  
and kissed me,  
so much that I knew -  
but did not awaken.

The most recent of a series  
Each night I fear the feelings  
you only show in my sleep.  
And each morning  
I wake up tired.

**Name**

His name sent me walking;  
my body moving to catch  
my thoughts.  
I found myself by the huge fountain  
near the library.

I light a smoke,  
bringing it to my lipless mouth.  
My ocular cavities  
stare at nothing in particular.

I run my fingers through the water,  
wiping the cold against my face  
trying not to think of whose hands  
touch his face.

**The Restaurant at Asnieres (1887)**

That tree outside was a sapling  
the day I left my Van Gogh.  
The year escapes me now.

Now, I sit and watch  
the restaurant at Asnieres.

The waitress takes orders,  
serves drinks.  
Moving table to table.

The yellow door behind her,  
open just a crack;  
the sounds of remembrance  
drifting into the street.

## Coffee Break

The waitress here is beautiful  
"What can I get you?" she asks.  
At first  
my voice doesn't work.  
"I'm fine," then  
"Can I use a pen?"  
Though the short dress  
is distracting to the eye,  
my thoughts fall on the chair  
and the empty glass in front of me,  
my second,  
which attracts the waitress  
again  
to my table.

## **Brake**

Slowly I walk from your car,  
the lights shine at my feet.  
Each step from you is matched  
by the bodiless feet of  
the shadow.

<PoP>

Emergency brake is pulled  
and the light moves  
taking the shadow, and  
the chance to retrace our shared path.  
As your car leaves, I  
remember when the brake was broken  
and I waited till you pulled it  
before walking away. I  
Remember when there were kisses goodnight,  
and I waited till you pulled away  
before walking away. I  
remember, before the shadow  
before the  
<PoP>  
that there was something  
to walk away from.

## **The Stairwell**

up -

each concrete increment  
tipped with white  
is one step closer  
to the four walls  
that enclose me when I sleep.

down -

each concrete decrement  
tipped with white  
leads back  
to the four walls  
from which I ran to here.

time -

12:51 am

which way?

## **The Three Living and the Three Dead**

### Part III The Knight

The knight began speaking  
without lifting his head.  
"Once, nobility could be judged  
against the knights of my home.  
My father said to me  
'Only fight for what you will die for.'  
And I did.  
On that last campaign  
pushing through Germany,  
our swords were ordered  
upon the villages.  
I turned, setting out for Babylon,  
for the chance to honor a code  
that others have forgotten."

## **Earthquake**

You learn a lot about houses  
when you live with earthquakes.

The engineer said the houses in Umbria  
were built like oak trees, the roots deep  
and the material flexible. The houses  
that is, except for 7734 Church St.

The basilica of St. Francis fell in an earthquake.  
The cause was not the design, but  
"storage" of waste rubble between  
the vaulted ceilings and the outer walls.

My pine home fell in an earthquake.  
The cause was not the design, but  
The sacrifice of the foundation to  
complete the facade under budget.

The ceilings of Assisi are in pieces  
just as my home is in pieces  
because an architect  
never imagined a 4.5 possible.

## Communion

I throw back sugar packets  
like espresso shots,  
crunching crystal sweet  
in remembrance of you.

You would have asked  
"What the hell?"  
if you could hear my thoughts,  
and I would have just shrugged.

Instead you compare apple jets  
with rocket oranges  
and nothing made sense.  
"So do you love me yet?"

I nod.

"Liar," you say,  
placing a cookie in my mouth;  
"I know you."

I grab your shoulders  
first the left  
then the right

You are the one with wings.

## Reading

I sit quietly in the folding chair,  
listening to her read her newest. As  
she pushes a small lock from her face,  
I wonder what it will be like

when I fall in love with this poet  
who is better than I am.  
I can imagine her reading as I cook,  
the two of us discussing the small details

of "a" and "the." She will point out  
that I am too dramatic with endings,  
and that I never use enough oregano.  
I will tell her she drives images too hard,

like her car, which is still in the shop.  
(The mechanic called.) "Besides," I'll say,  
"what's wrong with a little drama?"  
She will tell me of the trip to Chicago

and that one of the poets remembered me  
from class in college, and had asked about  
life as an engineer. I will kiss her,  
and say, "Dinner is ready."

## Two

I raise the blade to eye level  
checking the quality.

News reflects off the inside of my skull  
traveling across to the other  
side, reflecting again.

angle of incidence  
equals  
angle of reflectance

I run the blade under hot water  
then up my dry neck

two engagements

one -

the girl I wanted forever with  
the other -

the girl forever was too short for

my cheek stings, saltwater runs  
down  
onto a cut  
again, blade under hot water  
then traced along the other side.

My mask complete, I go downstairs  
turning the light off  
behind me.

## **Fork in the Road**

I am sitting where the path breaks  
in two.

I eat the French fries that are all  
that remain of lunch.

One hand taps a pen  
against hard ground.

Above, clouds form  
shapes too complicated for  
simile, and I realize

I am contemplating nothing.

Sphinx says: "Watch for aliens,  
somebody made me."

I swallow the last fry,  
sand pyramids are too strange for God.

I jump up  
"WOO HOO!"

Leaving warm ground,  
and a fresh picked cherry blossom.

"WOO HOO!"

And dance around my little spot

"WOO HOO!"

to the rhythm of my hand from before.

Gripping hard one last time,

I throw the pen between the split  
path.

Then I turn, setting out  
into the uncut field.

## Rock

the rock burns in my hand  
smooth on smooth, I feel its heartbeat  
tighter tighter until bone and rock, mineral against mineral  
it is here, writing, I am encompassed by a warm hand

it is gray, it feels gray as I feel human  
it moves, it wants to be alive and I sit and write wanting to exist  
beyond my body, to live as a rock, starting as a mountain, only to become  
a beach, spread , a 100 billion of myselfes -  
soft in abundance, hard in singularity

it is smooth, it has known rivers  
it asks what is the sun, who I am, am I a god?  
I ask it what is a river, are you a god?  
the rock's heartbeat increases  
it demands a sense other than temperature

it will not surrender  
I will not surrender

only the sky will change, noon, midnight,  
the moon is the only constant, without air  
without rivers, no rock would be as smooth as the one  
that holds me in its hand, no rock would feel "river" or "snow"  
only space, where rocks come from  
the rock says look at me, I've earned that.

you open your hand, I'll open mine

## **The Three Living and the Three Dead**

### Part IV The Thief

The eyes turned to me.  
Their stare overpowered  
my reluctance.  
"The idea of a thing  
that cannot be mine  
is too foreign for translation.  
A knife can convince a bird  
to hand over its wings."  
I stir the fire  
not meeting their eyes  
not wanting their judgment.  
"In Babylon I search for  
what cannot be stolen."

## **Pygmalion**

I have you now, Pygmalion.  
You turn your eyes from woman,  
worshiping art as your patron.

Marble peeled away, revealing  
her perfection underneath.  
But your Galetea is stone.

Weep at her feet.  
Then I will listen, when you understand,  
I am not a vengeful goddess.

Now kiss her, Pygmalion, kiss her warm lips  
And know that without me  
You are only marble.

## **Phaeton**

It had just rained  
yet the eerie calm still remained.

There must be more clouds on their way.

Daddy, I had the reigns,  
every horse under the hood  
controlled,  
I promise.

But there was water  
covering the dark pavement.

No - that's setting  
not an excuse.

I drove the horses too hard --  
too fast

The brakes locked  
and I heard thunder.  
But light travels faster than sound

and an object in motion will stay in motion.  
Not even the son of a god

can break the law.

## **Samson**

I tried to cut you  
out of my head.

I went for the hair, chopping  
the ends that entwined with yours,  
leaving the newer bases.

Next was the bleach,  
stripping colour and shape,  
leaving only blonde.

But already roots,  
brown and thick,  
grow from my scalp,

proving that this too  
is just part of a mask.

## **The Persecutors**

After leaving Daniel,  
the lions came to my home.  
Their manes had grown soft  
their eyes gray  
paws tired of arena sand.

Twice a day they walked me  
stopping to see the neighbors  
At home we talked of politics in Rome  
and the lions all agreed  
Hannibal was indeed at the gates.

The lions assured me -  
this is just a visit, my friend.  
and though I tried to keep them  
they insisted -  
We must,  
there is more work  
for the persecutors

## Orpheus

I.

Who is this man?  
How is it he can compose whole  
Sentences with just a single string?  
He draws me with music, closer than  
A husband should.

II.

Who is this man that  
Wakes me for this? The woman  
He brings could not be saved  
By Aesclepeus himself, the poison  
So set on its path.

III.

Who is this man, wandering  
Into the under-realm, a lyre  
Armed? His voice is his bribe  
And yet I still let him  
Pass.

VI.

Who is this man stopping  
Hell with a single vibration?  
When played I forgot this rock  
And the worn path, that he too  
Will learn.

V.

Who is this man, standing  
Before my husband, pleading with  
The rhetoric of Cicero? His song will  
Remind the dark Lord, that he too  
Once fought the gods.

VI.

Who is this man, trying  
To change what the fates  
Decide? He will turn before  
It is time, and the council of  
Cassandra, unheard.

VII.

Who is this man, entering  
The globe of my lantern from the  
Dark? His hand shakes, the grip  
on a piece of ripped fabric  
So tight.

## **Charon**

I sit in the back of a metal boat,  
a gold coin on my tongue,  
a fiberglass fishing pole in my hands.

It has been raining for almost  
ten minutes, and my father  
begins to row.

Through the tumult  
I watch the bobber trailing  
behind, bow waves arching

into the dancing water,  
determined to catch one fish  
before the skeleton at the oars

takes me to safety.

## Hector

I may wear the armour,  
But the god stands before me.  
Already poets are composing,  
Noting the breeze from the sea,  
And the unpolished plate on my shoulder.  
I stand before the walls of Troy,  
Before my family watching.  
Achilles, raising his sword,  
Speaks "For Patroclus!"  
*Clotho wove the threads.*

Full force we engage,  
A precise thrust glides  
Into his shoulder, he  
Is unfazed. Strike - my shield breaks,  
I thrust, the point breaking the surface of his back.  
He pulls the blade  
From its flesh sheath,  
There is no blood.  
*Lachesis measures the threads.*

Thrice passed the closed gate, my sword  
Never far from my shadow.  
On my hands and knees I recognize  
This patch of earth, a faint memory of  
A young Hector and siblings playing here.  
Cuts on leather straps,  
The armour slides down.  
The point of my sword  
Guides my head upwards.  
On the wall behind, Paris draws his bow.  
"Together Achilles," I yell, "We shall go together!"  
*Atropos cut.*

For the love of Helen, a thousand ships, the fallen walls  
of Troy, a royal house, save Aeneas, slain, and a silhouette  
of a wooden horse stained upon history.

## Number 8

Poor Jacob, it is time to stop this nonsense  
Acknowledge the lost as lost.  
Today the sun shines for those  
Who possess the damned "L" word,  
Walking together, fingers locked.  
Places, here, there, are now

Full of thick air and colourless light.  
No longer think that time is here.  
She wants this no more.  
You are Mad, listen to me!  
Valete! Tell the bundle of clichés that rise  
To your fingertips, you are strong.

*Farewell, my Olivia, your Jacob is strong.  
Who will you run to? Who will read  
Your unfinished poetry, laughing at  
Your high diction and poor punctuation?  
Whose hand will you find in the night?  
Whose tears will find safety on your lips?  
You are gone, and your Jacob est vale.*

Poor Jacob, you speak only to yourself.

## Catullus VIII

Poor Catullus, stop this nonsense  
And account what you see to be lost as lost.  
Once the sun shown bright for you  
When you went where your mistress led  
Loved by us surpassed by no other who was loved.  
There and then gave us many joys

Which you wanted, nor did your mistress not want them.  
Those days truly shown bright for you.  
Now she wants this no more  
To this you are powerless,  
Nor should you follow who flees, nor live in misery,  
But with a strong mind, endure.

*Farewell, woman, your Catullus is strong.  
He will not seek you, or ask for you uninvited.  
And you will regret, when you can ask no one?  
Poor miserable creature, what life is left for you?  
Who now will visit you? To whom will you be beautiful?  
Who now will you love? Who will you say that you are?  
Who will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite?*

And you, Catullus, live strong, and endure.

## **The Three Living and The Three Dead**

Part V  
The Three Dead

In the distance,  
light turned our path.  
A lantern sat on a stump  
illuminating a pair of trios.  
Three skeletons sat in a row.  
The first spoke, his right arm  
severed in his lap, sword in hand,  
"As ye are, so once we were,  
and as we are, so shall ye be."  
The second spoke, his bones  
adorned with barnacles  
seaweed draped on ribs and limbs,  
a pouch of silver by his side,  
"The rich die as well as poor."  
The third spoke, a knife  
and a noose his possessions,  
"None shall escape death."  
The lantern went out.

## History

Patrick holds up the shamrock  
"one, two, three  
don't you get it?"

I look at the plant

"You have to taste green  
to be Irish.  
You must know what iron smells like,  
and the hiss of a snake."

I take the the clover from his hand  
spinning it about its stalk.  
Why green?  
Red can mean anything.

"Dream of bronze statues, boy  
but, lose your way  
and memory will be your sin."

## **The End of the Stairwell**

I sit in the stairwell,  
between your room and mine  
a dreamer

locked between two floors  
full of moments  
and the smell of concrete

where I know who I love  
where even if I lose  
even if I go through that door

and run up those six flights  
covering my body with blankets  
I will awaken with you in my arms.

All I want is to wake up  
but I am so afraid to fall asleep  
afraid this time will be different

afraid that in this stairwell  
some other room, some other bed  
will call you to rest.

And I will awaken,  
at the end of a cold stairwell,  
with nothing more than sixty

white tipped increments.

## **Night Swimming**

Holding you in the water  
I pulled your shivering body  
next to mine.

You, troubled by the sight  
of a man in a window  
on the way to the beach

and me, too worried about you  
to notice whether the phantom  
lived in a second story room

or the bay water within  
arm's reach.

## Relativity

I think Einstein had something.  
Time depends on velocity of a particle  
and the frame of reference.

Five minutes.  
Three hundred seconds.

Train station - early 1910's  
Colours are alive with subtlety,  
the once paint on the station has faded  
and the white wash has started chipping.

Two people stand close,  
eyes shyly return  
hands never far.  
Quietly they whisper good-byes  
and other three word phrases.

Not far a man stands in a long maroon coat  
and a black Stetson hat.  
His black leather hands hold a pocket watch.

The bell sounds, train to arrive  
Five minutes

The man checks his watch  
Four minutes, thirty seconds.  
He begins to pace up and down,  
cautiously peering over the track.  
He checks his watch  
Four minutes, ten seconds  
Paces more  
stops, reads an advertisement  
Three minutes, forty-five seconds

He glances at the lovers,  
thinking of the day his son left  
and how long he had held him  
Two minutes, fifty-seven seconds  
There was war in Europe  
and it was calling his son,  
only allowing a stopover  
Two minutes, five seconds  
It was the right thing  
it was the good thing,  
he was proud of his son  
One minute, fifty-one seconds

The couple pulls into a kiss

The man remembers loving a woman  
and tries not to stare  
the watch pops open  
One minute, ten seconds

the train is in view,  
smoke pours from the top  
coating the already-black  
Fifty-seven seconds  
the announcer begins to talk

Thirty-three seconds  
Twenty-one seconds  
Fifteen seconds  
Seven seconds

Time

## **St. Christopher**

Five stand at the dock.  
With firm grip on my baggage,  
I pull out a cigarette.  
Yamato gives me a light.  
The ship pulls in, there is  
An announcement:  
"The Eagle has landed."  
We head up the plank,  
Buzz turns to me,  
"May be a small step for you,  
I'm only 5'5"."

The Argos has been at sea  
three days now.  
I dangle my feet over the railing,  
Lady Zillith continues on about why  
Sex is better with her on top.  
I stare out over the Sea of Tranquility,  
thinking of how easily I have forgotten  
what "green" means.

Zeroes fly overhead, and we  
wave the samurai  
off to battle,  
praying against mushroom clouds  
and bad weather.  
"You boys come home,"  
Yamato says into a radio.  
Buzz looks at me, and points,  
"Shouldn't you put your bag down?"

The forty days ended three days ago  
and the deck is finally dry.  
A crow drops a page in front of me,  
blank.  
It caws obsessively as it flies away.  
Edgar pats my shoulder.  
"Don't worry," he says, lighting a smoke,  
"They were ravens for me."

The ship bell sounds the hour  
12:51  
Yamato and Buzz hit golf balls  
from the rear deck, arguing  
The Kennedy Assassination.  
Edgar volunteered to test  
Lady Zillith's theories,  
the experiment entering hour four.  
I toss my baggage over the side.

For four score and seven days,  
the wind has blown our ship.  
On the horizon Mons Olympus breaks  
the sea, and we  
Buzz  
Edgar  
Lady Zillith  
Yamato  
and myself,  
prepare to go ashore.

## Again

If I stopped by late  
    again  
walking the quarter-hour  
from my door to yours  
    again  
bringing my interest in  
your day  
and a can of Dr Pepper  
could you  
    again  
look at me the way  
from a cold night  
on top of a parking garage  
when you stood high on the edge  
to be tall enough to  
reach me?

## **Park Bench**

I look into the most beautiful blue eyes  
I have ever seen  
and understand how anyone can love

"No," I reply to a girl  
"He isn't my son."  
"He has beautiful eyes." she says

I can understand why he wants so much  
to be your father

"Are you friends of the parents?"

I look into those blues again  
thinking how the man I call Bill,  
and this two year old calls da-da  
was the right amount of love  
at the wrong time  
for a single mother.

They are no longer together,  
but those blues still say da-da  
and Bill still loves him

"Yes," I say, "I am."  
"Does he look like mommy  
or daddy?"  
The boy reaches out to my nose  
"beep."  
"His mommy," I say.  
"She must be very beautiful."  
"That she is, that she is."

## **The Three Living and the Three Dead**

Part VI  
The Dawn

The sun rose each morning after  
our paths turned from Babylon.  
Soon the Mediterranean climate returned  
and we stripped off the layers  
added to protect our bodies.  
The knight set his feet  
for conquered lands. Wielding  
a hammer, the Carpenter  
battled something  
worth dying for.  
The merchant looked beyond station,  
the Priest used wealth as a means  
not an end.  
I picked up a pen  
to tell everyone  
directions to Babylon.  
*Memento Mori.*

-The Poet

## Good Friday

I wake up  
and I have lost my voice.  
Light bent by clouds  
causes shadows to creep along  
the floor. In the hallway  
men with white collars fold  
a curtain which has ripped in two  
this morning.

Outside a woman kneels over a tape  
outline, clawing at the  
pavement.

A ghost wanders, unable to  
see his mother.

Picking a cherry blossom,  
I continue on my way, thinking  
this flower used to be white  
and I could talk,  
till this morning.

The boy-spirit follows, we pass by a  
dogwood. All the petals without pink  
have fallen, making a mosaic with  
no discernable pattern.

From above,  
oak seeds fall  
in a great swarm  
cutting through the dogwood  
taking white petals with them.

The spirit reaches out, but the choppers  
fall unheeded  
through his open hand.

## **Prelude**

Light is always coloured in a church.

You really fucked up this time, Orpheus.

Up, down, in, out; make up your mind.

She is in all white, moving up the main isle.

There is music, I know there is music.

Hades stands at the end, unconcerned with a simple living boy.

Places in our past haunt us, they are ghosts for the sane.

Her breasts are pressed against me, she is asleep

I am awake.

Now she is on the other side of the room.

Now she is on the other end of the phone.

No choice of words can prepare you for the sunlight.

### **A crow spoke to me today**

A crow spoke to me today  
as I walked by its perch.  
The black of its feathers clashed  
    against the new colour on the branch  
    recently awoken by spring.

The bird spoke, but I did not understand,  
just continued to walk  
a darkening sky filled my thoughts.

The crow called out again  
with more urgency,  
calling out over the distance between us.

I glanced over my shoulder  
at the black staring at me,  
not breaking pace,  
fearing impending rain.

For a third and final time,  
the crow spoke.  
It screamed its message aloud,

but I continued on  
not stopping to listen to this little Iris,  
not caring that I would wish  
I had listened.