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TRUE ENOUGH: SELECTED POEMS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of
English, Foreign Languages and Philosophy
Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of

Arts in English

by

Leo Jeffrey Weddle

October 1990

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of English, Foreign Languages and Philosophy, Morehead State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in English degree.

Eugene D. Young
Director of Thesis

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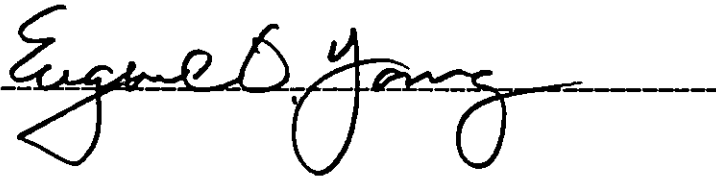
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Leo Jeffrey Weddle
Morehead State University, 1990

Director of Thesis:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eugene O'Young", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first letter of each name being significantly larger and more decorative.

It seems an improbable task to examine one's own art and come to any valid, objective conclusions without sounding maudlin, haughty, precious or some combination of the above. The poems in this collection represent emotional responses, observations, occasional experiments in form and style, and finally, unabashed homage to a few writers whose work I greatly admire. They were written not with a cohesive theme, a manuscript even, in mind, but rather occurred naturally, suggested by things immediate and important.

Slapping words onto a page can be healing and it can also hurt. Such activity demands constant checking of personal values, of coming to understand what poetry means to you. In my attempts to create these poems, I have slowly begun to evolve a personal aesthetic. Rhetorical and artistic theories aside, my feeling is that the only audience the poet -- while he is writing -- can concern himself with, and retain any legitimacy,

is the blank paper before him. What a given reader might like or dislike or interpret from the words, the poet's particular political, cultural and social agendas, concerns for the rights of the oppressed or the oppressors, the plight of the homeless, and so on have no place in the construction of a poem. That is not to say that these things absolutely do not belong in a work of art, but rather they are not enough to make the work into art.

My best work seems to erupt full-blown with little or no conscious direction; I seek neither to enlighten nor inform anyone except myself. That I find personal value in it is enough. This said, I will add something that may sound contradictory: I think much of my work has the power to engage other readers, hold their interest and push them to consider the offered perspective. After the poem is written as truly as the poet is capable of writing it, it seems proper and almost necessary to share it with the world.

That is the rationale for this collection. The poems were written for me, they are offered to you. Pushing me toward such attitudes regarding art have been some of the old dogs, writers who have laid it on the line and refused to compromise for the sake of propriety or publication. Chief among these renegades is Charles Bukowski. His writing is genuine, by turns brutal, rude, tender and thoughtful; it is what he chooses to say when and how he chooses to say it and anyone who doesn't care to listen be damned. As a result, Bukowski has long been reviled, mocked or ignored by many "mainstream" critics. By the same token, his admirers are legion.

In addition to Bukowski, my chief influences include contemporary California poet Gerald Locklin, an artist of clear vision and subtle wit whose prose poems usually hit directly into the heart of whatever matter he tackles; Jack Kerouac for his willingness to play with words and explode them onto the page and Allen Ginsberg for the savage intensity of "Howl." Finally, the prose of Ernest Hemingway has greatly influenced my thinking. Hemingway tended to leave out as many details as possible, allowing the reader to intuit much of the story, perhaps become a more active player in the game. It strikes me that this works as well in poetry as it does in prose.

I don't mean to suggest any particular kinship with these writers, other than admiration on my part. I am at best an apprentice and these are the masters who have set me forth the most alluring examples. Undoubtedly, others will cast their magic on me as I continue to read and grow as a poet. But influences need not be gained solely from books and magazines. Here, at Morehead State University, I have encountered a number of poets whose work both delights and instructs me. In no particular order, these include George Eklund, Paula Fountain, Eric Cash, Laura Caudill-Cash and Sanoma Goodwill.

I gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments and suggestions of my thesis committee in the preparation of this manuscript. Gene Young, Marc Glasser and George Eklund's thoughtful, positive criticism and encouragement have undoubtedly made this entire project stronger and, in truth, possible. Any weaknesses in the work are, of course, purely my own.

Accepted by:

Eugene O. Young

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Alber H. Jones

Ray E. Ekland

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THE WRITING GAME

Arse poetica

a poem is a death sentence a parole a pardon
a poem is a reprieve a poem is a young girl
twirling on a swing smiling as her panties
flash you a poem is playing horseshoes barechested
in a storm and daring lightning's blast a poem is
pulling a snapping turtle from the road by his tail
a poem is an old man crying we've lost our best friend
as nurses step back embarrassed a poem is whipped cream
breasts juicing dinner to mongoloid infants a can of
spare ribs rotting by the cradle

a poem is your worst act and your shame
a poem is an open wound a malignancy a cancer
a poem is vomiting pollen for your roses

a poem is a concussion device set to blow off your fucking head

a poem is the only tomorrow worth saving
as humanity forgets and timidly says no.

Garbage man

I look
 for words in ashcans
 and
 sewers.
 Rats scramble like
 egg yolk
 as I giggle through
 their forages plucking a fool's gold
 adverb here
 or a faux pearl gerund
 there.

Stop him cry the old ones, the
 responsible
 ones
 as I
 fashion
 necklaces of
 nouns,
 plunge headlong into
 food coloring and
 lima beans to rescue
 a slightly soiled
 participle.

Race me to the dump
 and I'll show you
 the diamonds
 most mistake
 for
 glass.

It's a living, pal
 and
 listen ---
 some life is better
 than none
 even if it stinks.

Essentials

It is (repeat after me)
it is there, it is (always)
there stop me if you've heard
(you haven't heard) this one
stop (you can't stop) me:
Unhealing wounds, exquisite sores
stinging unto bone and marrow
darkness beyond blood now empty
and sad without pity.

Man your pick and shovel,
essentials masquerading as pen, paper.
Dig deep, here (stop those tears
this is man's work).
Get this down.

If I could be a camera

With my new 500mm lens I can watch people
who don't know they're being watched.
With my new 500mm lens I can watch women
gliding down the street
and bums leaning on the lamppost across from my window.

I can see warts on their faces
and the kinds of cigarettes they smoke.
I can see patients and nurses in the intensive care unit
trying to stave off death
two blocks away.

With this lens, I'm told,
I can get glorious shots of sunsets
and examine the mountains of the moon.
I can get great pictures of wildlife:

birds
squirrels
rabbits.

Whatever.

With my new 500mm lens I can observe things unnoticed
just like you're watching me now.

Okay

Scratching lines on this paper like a bird
scratching against a papered cage, I wonder
who you are who would read this

as the faces of daylight fall unfocused into
pools of night and tears well in these eyes
which understand the impossibility of crying.

Dullards line dead end alleys as soundbites tell
the new mythology and I find there is very little
to kill.

I climb down from water towers and see
no words strong enough for my disgust
as I turn the barrel mouthward and infer
the futility of even trying.

Writer's block

Ever
 notice
 how
there's
 never
 a good
red
wheelbarrow
 around
 when
 you
 need
one?

Of course

Searching for a pen as goose bumps
skitter my naked legs and undershorts
bunch in my crotch --

Searching for a pen as the immortal poem
laughs its sad goodbye.

Searching -- as I realize
I'm fresh out
of paper.

Observed

Consider this fussiness of the page --

all the remembering and dismembering
of experience; all the postures and
posturing, the poets struggling to

BARE ALL

in nonchalant bursts of precious ego,
throwing each other the bone of approval
for the stray line or image.

All this renders what?

The masturbatory gratification
of one-upmanship; of my pain
is better than your pain and
don't I tell it well?

Remember:

We all look to one master.
He smiles at us through
broken teeth and totters
back to the dark.

THE OLD DOGS

12-Gauge freedom

Hemingway found 12-gauge freedom,
Boss double-barrel blasting scrambled
brain and blood and bone into wallpaper mosaic,

ending torment bravely, exploding graceful
pellets through cranium and magic tissue,
screaming emphatic end to the mocking robbery
of manhood and talent.

Coming off the canvas like a champion, Papa pulled
no punches that cold Idaho morning.

He was always better than the competition.

On going over the wall at Hemingway's house

There's no Key West now,
no sleepy village where Hemingway wrote
and Harry ran his rum and died
bit by bit.

It's condos and boutiques and drugs and

alternate lifestyles.

More's the pity.

But for more than an hour

I was the southernmost drunk in the continental U.S.,

alone with my Riunite and notebook

"America begins here" painted on the curb and

"90 miles to Cuba."

Key West is gone,

but I scaled Papa's wall that night

and would have slept in his bed,

pissed in the toilet,

and drunk on the terrace

if a guard hadn't stopped me.

I was looking for the real Key West;

something of a lost America.

Something of a lost me.

I still have my Hemingway pants

old levi's with a rip in the right leg

where they caught on the wall.

But there's no more Key West.

Not with a howl but with a sigh

Hell,

I don't
even know

where the
best minds

of my

generation
are.

Flat tire, no spare

hipsters gone --
 sweaty jazz nights speeding
 through stars and cities and smack
 crazy beat saints pulling life
 from the oppressive grave of mid-century america
 old glory reeling, glowing in their wake --
 by god, freedom found its bloody voice
 in their howling mad life symphony
 but couldn't, finally, keep up

shot through with fine magnificent madness
 sensation explosions
 of sex and joy and dope and be-bop
 driving the best to early graves
 and the rest to delirium mumbles or inconsequence

and we are left with the lines and the road and
 second-hand memories
 and the shame of our final cowardice

goodbye, allen, poet, cocksucker, priest, still breathing, left to scramble
 and preen for ever-younger boys unimpressed by past glory

goodbye, jack, holy highway prophet, benzadrine dreamer, shower of the way,
 ending -- how? -- fat and old and dead in florida

goodbye,

especially,

neal,

archangel ascending by those moonlight mexican railroad tracks

goodbye you crazy innocent immortals bargaining life with
 the glittering coin of wine-drunk reefermad dharma

your music, more and more, goes begging

but listen:

I feel some hot sax blowing new across the starry desert, sweeping
 alive into some sleeping city and I wonder, man, who's blowing
 that horn?

Initiation

I remember the first time I felt your words,

sitting on my Rose Street porch, illegal beer in plastic cup
as traffic and pedestrians lumbered by, quite untouched with magic.

It was George who first told of you secrets, exulting over
On the Road, newly stolen from the Decatur, Alabama, public library.

He told me of those lines drawing him along with Dean and Sal, taking
him into Mexico and that beautiful Mexican girl and the romance of
everything.

He talked in tones other men reserve for bibles, and I didn't understand.

Later Becky and Patterson chided and joked and tried to explain as I
resisted and agreed to visit you "some day," putting it off in favor
of the supposed masters and dead-end alleys of sensory craving.

I couldn't understand they were offering me initiation.

But sitting on that afternoon porch, years later, it finally made sense.
Now I write this and understand futility.

Mamere

I hope Mamere whispered love words, love breath over your slumber, Ti Jean.
I hope she begged, hoping to erase the road longing and ache from her
tortured child;

she not caught up in sensation and mania, but happy to sit with you
and martini and television as the world went spinning through space and the
madmen -- your friends -- screamed junk into themselves and each other in
Harlem and Mexico.

"Little Jack," she must have whispered, "You go so far and never find
your way home."

I hope your callused feet moved in dream command as the vistas cradled
your head.

Alchemy of the page

Most unsavory, turning your friends into minor characters, into heroes and fiends in those novels you carried in that rucksack, nobody interested, and you drunk again on port or benzadrine flying. The least you could do was give them good aliases.

I mean, come on -- Japhy Ryder? Adam Moorad? Mardou Fox?

And you wondered why Neal walked away hurt the day you christened him to the world as psychopathic Dean Moriarty and that was almost that. Maybe he didn't know he was the hero.

Of all that madness, all that remains is ink and yellow paper and the ineptness of our various blurred visions.

Motion sickness

The sutras confirmed what you already understood:

"All life is suffering."

And your message was clear, but clearly misunderstood as they took to the highways in search of your ghost with you still breathing.

We visit Jack

We left sacrificial Budweiser
in the frozen wreath, his name
and dates above in tasteful suspension.

Caught finally in granite testament
a frenetic angel struck silent.

One last photograph and out
returning to the giddy night
and the road, impatient and holy and young
forever and forever, amen.

Call me, Ishmael

Melville went deeper,
 madness beckoning
 he knew:
White whales swim alone.

Bukowski, Charles

Bukowski says Whitman was wrong:
 great poetry comes first, audiences
 follow.

Still,
 the dullards dance the empty waltz
 of
 technique,
 ignoring the

THUNDERBOLT

cast down
 from on high
 ignoring
 the
 blood
 and pus
 and vomit

ignoring the righteous anger

ignoring the
 soft voice
 made
 enormous
 through the wisdom
 of
 pain.

Bukowski

says
 Whitman was wrong.
 We must decide:

The word is here
 made flesh.

Do we,

dear friends,
 dare

listen?

Patchen things up

Why do you read that stuff
she asks, disgustedly
casting askew glance at
Memoirs of a Shy Pornographer
lying cockeyed on the table.

Don't you know that garbage
degrades women?

It's her first night back since
the split-up spat and I decide
to hold my tongue,
trying hard not to picture her
like that angel
in Albion Moonlight's
first entry.

EXPERIENCE

Bare branches

Disolve me
into these
hills --

It is night
and the black lace
glows.

Off the wall

is that really me
with the wild eyes
and the slack jaw
staring back from the glass
looking not so much like
the boy next door as
the wolfman (larry talbot
to my friends) and wondering
what the hell I do now
that i've discovered
my truer nature and don't
much like it

anyhow

small wonder i always
get crazy during
the full moon and bay
at cheerleaders and bark
at the door to my apartment
(lucky 13) until the old man
next door bangs and bangs
on the wall but apologizes
the next day because we all
get a little drunkie sometimes,
don't we?

Our library has surveillance cameras

I confess I copped a glance
at "Natterjack" in the OED
and tried to locate
the origin of my name.

Maybe they blinked and missed it.

I hope they didn't catch me
stealing a look at the girl
in the burgundy sweater

or stuffing time in my pockets
while sitting on their couch

or otherwise defacing ignorance.

Dominoes, dice

Backgammon with mother, I roll
five/three as from the den
the tv drones the latest dominoes.
My roll bumps her open man, covers a point.

She winces, I smile and Dan Rather
reads to the world that Romania has fallen.

It's her roll as the world breaks apart
and falls cockeyed together.
Blood and champagne flow the iron curtain,
a weak dam without spillway, as I shake my dice
and hope for boxcars.

An apology

framed by blue sky, cement, brick,
 almost invisible
 in too bright sun,
 they each looked to be about 45 or 50. to be honest,
 it was hard for me to decide --
 (i've never been good at guessing ages)
 he carried an enormous garbage bag slung over his
 left shoulder,
 imprints of aluminum cans pressing out like tumors or dreams, maybe.
 the woman's bag was smaller, but the same.

they kept those bags slung across their backs as they stood there watching,
 smiling
 at the beautiful blonde child
 playing a few
 feet away.

but there was no connection (none that i could see)
 between them and
 that little girl, about five,
 glowing in pink overalls,
 riding the yellow and orange big wheel.

okay, they were
 talking
 to her, but geez,
 i figured they were just charmed and(or) friendly.

but when they began walking away the girl left the toy
 and followed after,

and she was
 beaming.

as i got closer,
 on my way into the building, i smiled down at her.
 but when she saw me her smile was gone and she looked
 at her shoes and hurried by.

all i ever heard her say was
 i'm sorry.

then i moved inside the brick and cement, suddenly wishing me invisible
 too.

Probably not for the chamber of commerce ads

Wooly and gaunt, gap-toothed and ragged,
smiling, they stop us, saying
pardon me, sir, can you help us,
my brother and me,

we don't like this town and we just
need gas to get home to Nicholasville.

Pooling resources to three-fifty,
we give them cash, rushing forward into cold night,
hoping they'll use the gift instead for a bottle.

ExitGuys, 1986

It was man's work so we
left Elizabeth at home
with their seven cats and one dog

a huge stupid mass of flesh
and hair they called LaFayette.

We were the
ExitGuys

shooting down North Alabama highways
miles and miles in a last-legs Cordoba

corinthian luxury

living on bologna and white bread and grape Kool-Aid
and, sometimes, good road chicken and taters.

Thank god for Shell's liberal credit plan.

Getting just the facts, ma'am
from the gas stations, hotels and restaurants
for the ExitGuide, OUR magazine.

Man, we were gonna be rich.
Sure, this time we'd be lucky
to make ends meet
but next time,
next time the sky's the limit.

Twenty-thousand, George said,
thirty-thousand.
And what of the franchise rights?

No boss.
Timeclock.
Hassles.

Money.

But there were creditors.
The bastards kept coming to the door.
We'd hide out, stay on the road
or at Curt's.

Always one step ahead
or behind

till the day it crashed.

Ads were sold --
we were almost there;
ready to print.

A deputy came to the door.
Sorry to do it, he said,
but you have to vacate.

Now.

So we packed up and split;
Elizabeth in the truck with everything they had
and the animals
drove out of George's life.

Me at the Cordoba's wheel
George in the passenger seat.

ExitGuys
taking a final bow.

Witch's brew

It was commonplace sorcery
and we took it for granted,
Randy and Marty and Doonie and me:

Concocting witch's brew
in old tupperware, foul mix
of ketchup and soy sauce and my mother's
perfumes, face creams and powders

and even Right Guard spray

with a dead rabbit supplied,
for good measure, by slobbering
Bojo.

The brew sat proudly in
the spookhouse all summer
delighting neighbor children
with their eager dimes--
cheap price for wonder--
and us with our waiting pockets
and smug faces.

I swear it stirred itself,
constant clockwise swirling,

and the smell turned putrid
as the rabbit went mush toward liquid
and even the Right Guard didn't help.

But the kids didn't mind the smell,
the kids kept returning with
fresh dimes and expectant noses
and pre-adolescent awe.

I suppose they've mostly forgotten now, fancy
giving way to marriages and jobs and mortgages.

And we grew up, too,
Randy and Marty and Doonie and me,
into lawyers and soldiers and other things.

But I can still smell the brew, that rabbit,
now 20 years past little boy dreaming,
supposedly 20 years past believing in magic.

December meeting, Lowell, Mass., 1989

I cool my heels studying old photos on the wall.

Look at those prices, he says, a stranger
calling attention to ancient menus under the pictures,
a smile six inches below his old-man's-black hat.

Nickel coffee, dime pie; yes, I say, it's amazing,
as he points to a name on a menu
from this building's former incarnation:
D. L. Paige.

D. L. he says. I don't know what the L was for
but the D was for Dudley and I can remember
seeing him in the parades.

I don't remember if he smiled then
but he turned and walked away.

Becky finished her business
and together we made our way back
to the snow and journey
as my thick tongue tried to tell her
about angels.

Ah

The sun playing
tag with the grass
to birdsong accompaniment.

I will lay me down.

Show time

Death
sits there
in the shadows
smiling at me
licking his jaws
waiting for that one false move
so he can come out
and take me to the movies
where we can watch \$1.75 matinees
all morning
forever.

LOVE STORIES

after

now

clothed
more naked
than before

unfasten the lock

the sun

washes in
and
your eyes are so
blue

My baby wrote me a letter

Why do these crazy people keep following me around
I haven't done anything wrong, she said, telling me
then about Gerald Ford on tv taking the swine flue vaccine
just so SHE would take it would take it and
why would the president do that to HER?
Okay, this was a while back,
but I wonder sometimes what became of her
with her red hair and freckles
and strange, sad eyes
and nobody following her around
crazy or not.

At least I tried

As we drove home I saw the moon
only a sliver, maybe an eighth
but I had this new lens for my camera
500mm
and George told me that with it
you could examine the
mountains on the moon
sunsets, etc.
I already knew you could see some hot
babes
like movie stars
walking unaware before the roving eye.
So when Curtis left I took my camera and
lens
out to examine the moon.

It was gone,
whether behind a cloud or to hell
I don't know.
Nothing to look at -- no moon,
no Marilyn.

Stood up again.

night hawks

this door opens quiet to the warm glow
the buzz of sure voices
hot mouths for eager ears
hands lifting mugs of steaming java
lips blowing it cool before tongues swirl
between cheeks and expectant throats swallow

the buzzing is whispers broken now and then by shrieks
of laughter
making the room glow brighter

as back in the kitchen mary runs damp fingers
through dishwater blonde
takes a long drag on that last cigarette
and lets out a nicotine sigh

two hours till closing
and her corns acting up
a quick glance to the mirror
eyes catch, linger

forcing a smile, she steps into the arena
forgetting impotent prayers
wading through the come-ons and sly glances

noticing the hand gliding past the knee
at table five, up toward the waiting crotch:

a prize for the woman to slap and scold
so everyone will know his desire

again the shrieks, laughter bouncing
from blind walls, dying quickly
but not before making its brave assertions

mary takes her pad to five and awaits her orders
her eyes fixed to the hair on the back of his hands
she waits as they insinuate their reply
while above, the fluorescent lights hum
and beat back the darkness.

vicious love

you see girls walking down the street
admire fine buttocks legs breasts
think, know how they would be but not for you
wonder about the one the one the one
who's not for you either
and she appears as if by magic
from across the street comes and talks talks talks
and how does she get in touch at your new address
crazy men, madmen and insane men know what it is
know how it is
there is no cure
there is no cure
she'll always be out there somewhere
out there away from you but somehow finding her way back
bringing cold salt water to your place in hell.

And the livin' is easy

It was after work at the library
I was sitting outside
talking to Steve, my (gay) supervisor
and Jamie,
beautiful in ragged running shorts and old t-shirt.
Jamie was standing behind a trash can
she and Steve were talking casually about sexual preference
AIDS
and such.

I was lying back taking it all in
every now and then Jamie would raise her right leg
put her foot on the bench where Steve sat
and give me a quick view of the right cheek of her ass
hanging out her shorts.

It was unintentional,
and every time she did it, I tried to move a little so
I could see more.

The trashcan blocked about 20 percent of the view to be had.
After this happened 4 or 5 times
I think she caught on
and began pulling the leg of her shorts in when she moved.

I figured it was good while it lasted.

I excused myself, went to the bookstore and bought the current
Playboy,
came home and
as I was beginning this poem
saw through my window
a woman walk by in a thin
white skirt
made transparent by the sun.

Life was good.

UNDERSTAND?

Carl clicked back the hammer:

No, Mary, not this time.

...Please...

You've espoused your last prevarication.

Vociferated a final falsehood.

...Carl, I...

No good, bitch. They were never daisies.

...Just look, for god's sake...

Her face disappeared as he squeezed the trigger.

They were daisies after all.

Your silence upon my breast

Your silence is less than
you think, as stars dip
awkwardly into pools of night
and crows scream terror
into ice cream obscurity.

You must stop this soon.

Understand, lover, that
I intuit your motives
and, what's more,
they have picked up your scent.

Let us make this bargain:

Neither bamboo nor coals
will make us jabber --

but your silence,
before god --

you wrench from me my purpose.

yes and yes and yes

I want you
like a killer

like a rapist

I want you like your best friend

like
Jesus.

Hunger is the key.

I need you like a fix, like a bottle

like an old fighter hollow for the ring.

I want to invade you
I want to rip you apart

I want to crawl inside and
rest forever

in the ruins

of

your possibilities.

accountability

again, I ask only for justice:

I ask for fingers, if I deserve
fingers, running the course of my
body.

I ask only for those breasts
as are rightfully owed.

I mention the caress of
the love act, the sex act only
in passing, a reminder that I
am receptive to any account
balanced in my favor.

The touch, the scent, the whispered
secrets --

One thinks one has earned them
but, so often, is wrong.

the woman poet

the woman poet wears a thin black dress,
her breasts loose beneath, nipples dancing,
screaming look at me, hair in tight waves like
a medieval woodcut of a milkmaid or a nymph.

i picture her sweating, grunting, her strokes relieving
a cow's discomfort, or mine, or lying naked, save for light gauze
at her breast, in a forest, worshipful creatures gathered about her,
a lucky swan or bull nuzzling parted thighs.

she smiles, her eyes like crystal lightning, striking, looking for
the truest conductor, hinting a feast you can almost taste.

i bet as a child her mother had to chain her in her room
to keep her from taking candy from strange men or women and going
with them to places secluded and dangerous.

i bet, too young to understand, she drempt of sticky suckers
going liquid in her mouth, tongue swimming in warm saliva, the dull ache
of frustration, of wanting but not knowing what, waking with tiny fingers
still hiding in the warm folds of an even-then-wise vagina.

i bet as she got older boys took her into cars or down along riverbanks
and traded their awkward lust for her holy abandon and believed, most of
them, the conquest was theirs.

and now in a woman's body, the girlish glow mixed with ripe curves and fire
and poetry, she glides into my fingertips, whispering secrets and grinning,
and slowly spins away.

the piano spilled waltzes

yes, dancing like magpies under stars
orion's belt dangling, you let down your hair
my hands sought silken fire beyond auburn
singing life gone madcap, forever and forever
we twinkled liquid into black and white.

Becks

Cut to essence:
Beauty.

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

wasn't sidney poitier in that?

consider
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lilies

lilies

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field

consider

the lilies

consider the lilies

consider

consider

the

field.

Smug

Some never wonder --

the dawdle of the lightningbolt,
the speed of the snail,
mean less than the properly
chalked cue or the young ass
at the end of the bar.

Tepid flowers bark their anger
as I consider flies circling
the rotten flesh of the cross.

Which side of the fence
do you fall from?

no rest or peace of solitude

I wanted to laugh when the old man asked
"Are there any butterflies in your head
worth remembering?" The old coot standing there
like a totem pole and grinning at my discomfort
and I finally screaming

LEAVE ME
ALONE
YOU FREAKIN'
LOON!

I wanted to laugh but found that rock in my hand
and a skull is really very like an egg shell.

Are there any butterflies are their any swallows
he sputtered as I put the quietus on that game.

Okay I giggled, a little, licking my fingers
and pondered the same old tune:

The nuts, oh the nuts everywhere --
how do they find me?

True enough

my fingers itch for unseen triggers
as my eyes scan the best target
and my mind asks where you are weakest.

the ticking in my brain, a metronome,
may banish reason, finally, but now offers
some constancy
as i slip into imploding silence.

i would give everything for the forgiving grace
of trembling hands, my own hands, showing
a glint of humanity, anything, anything and nothing.

i am alone and i am untouchable and i am myself
and i am you and i am bleeding.

someone dares me to laugh and i consider.

i am a dangerous man.

My friend

boundaries do not exist
stop lying, stop lying.

advocate violence, advocate revolution, advocate
pain, rape, hate.
we both know you are a coward.

i offer open doors. you are, of course, insane, and to you
i offer rage.

advocate, advocate.

there is sanctity in cunt and cum and caring,
nothing else, and even this is a lie.

open your eyes. listen.
spread your legs. remove morality.
remove the mask.

i know you.

you will thrash forever in darkness
and never realize your name.

Picture this

Milkbone accuracy thrown askance
through galaxies of trepidation
sutra-fried steak poleaxed toward
nebulous possibilities
and mole-faced children sucking
corruption like ice cream from
infected wombs.

Stand aside, Alexander, and let
my armies pass. This night upon me
like a tumor, like a shroud and you
rotting deathlike in your ancient tomb.

It's making me a little crazy.

Listen, Alex, to the ponderous
thumping of blood coursing through
infinite humanity and try to guess
the meaning of young girls turned hagward
and heroes less galant than the crocodile.

Explain to me the drip drip dripping
of seconds from the absolute clock
and pluck me from infamy
pluck me from grace.

I don't care I don't care.

And still you sit, immobile,
like Hannibal, like Socrates
like the last note from Caruso's last night,
frozen in time, waiting for discovery.

The gap

Try understanding my sad portals
as I struggle to understand yours.
I sniff for common ground but find
little save the stench of petulance
and envy. Here, Greed, bite off my
fingers with your black teeth. Your
jaws are mightier than prayer. Suck
the juices from my wasted organs; my
heart is there for the asking

-- maybe with
bar-b-q sauce --

and empty my soul into a convenient
ashtray. Look into the whirlwind
for my face. It's the one with
the empty eyes and death and it's
taking its place beside you
now.

Don't start with me it's been a rough day

I

in a world of no locks and telephones disconnected from tragedy
i walk in dismay at the absense of dreaming

II

crows fall willy nilly from the sky
as defeated farmers aim double barreled hate
toward god and squeeze triggers like they once
squeezed young nipples

III

killers stalk my breakfast nook like critics
caught in a spider web and blink mute laughter
at my sad cheerios

IV

you fail to see my visions as you rush to impale
vile things in ebony dungeons and scream for conformity

V

you answer my howl with cages but forget i am houdini

Ah, sweet

I have seen you not darkshroud
stalking and grim tautsmiling on
scythe but dull aching pressure
constant only worrisome if considered
and I usually don't.

I have felt your fingers digging
hidden holes and punching mountains
up up through skin, telling me ha ha
I'm here I'm here and what say we forget
all else.

I have known you as constant
boon companion clingtight bloodbrother
peering always over shoulder and thigh
building and tearing walls of egosickness
at worst times begging a giggle.

I suppose there'll be no epiphanies.

I suppose ends come crashing silent past
fleshwalls and unfinished pages stand gutted
worse than muteness.

Meaningful dialog

dying
poor wit les and
poor doesn't
matter
(fuck you fuckers you fu)
bet
ter
men h
a
ve
faced
oblivion with
less, as
my monkey (ck you i said you cant sto)
brain screams curses at the death in life
in me and in th e world and my
potato hands
grab fists
of whitene
ss as my marshmellow eyes spill
and burn
(p me u kant sht me up u freakin)
rivulets
of fire
down sandpaper
cheeks.
there ar
e no
answers and the trick is
never look past the smiling surfa(bastards i no
my rites i rede) ce;
beyond
lie only insensate
w
asps hungr
y
for your touch.
forget the
(things, i see things) lily
and the rose, keeping only the
thorns
as
a

remin
der
of
ultimate reality.

and try not to
stumble, much, at least where
they might see you:

the laughter stings
(Do you understand me, sir?)
worse than the fall.

cease
being

brave when your time comes,
we have had enough false bravado and plain foolishness
from our

great men
to last all
the ages.

(i sad, d'ya und)
better to le
t the madness

flow
on your last breath
better

better to end
with hon

(erstand me, hashole? i kno things i)
est agony than
try fooling god or your neighbor or yourself (understand things i)
(see) (you) (right)

but for now (now)
this is enough, and we do not see
to sit
alone

on a familiar stool sipping a beer
daintily, even, if that helps get you through
pushing back freight train
certainty with quiet calm on the outside knowing the luna
tic in your chest and arms and (promise me) eyes and mouth
can, will come calling in his own good time.

this is enough
(promise)

to understand the wasted hours
and, finally, forgive yourself the cost.

(it's very difficult you know you understand
don't you you've
been there i no u've been ther and
why cant you taste the
blood
why
cnt u tase th blud
now)?