

Freedom At Its Worst Angle



A l a n J u s t i s s

Introduction

In the past: Villon, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Baudelaire.

More recently: Charles Bukowski.

Now, Alan Justiss: an enfant terrible in his own right, as the poems you are about to read will testify.

Justiss comes to us naked out of the lather of hallucination and dream, the roil and splinter of lunacy and intoxication, the shock of nightmare, the truth of the soul violated to smithereens and made whole again within the alchemical vessel of words.

Above all, he is a master ironist: things are rarely what they seem. Rarely.

He is a street poet, a road bard, a highway lyricist, a freeway singer of the darkness before the dawn. He has traveled far and he has seen the odometer of eye and heart with which to clock all he has seen and felt along the way.

He is messy and dangerous, explosive and destructive, fractured and deadly: a CREATOR.

Read him at your own risk.

Robert Eskew

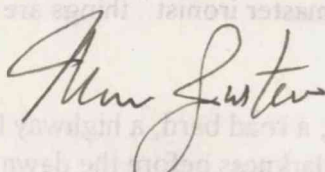
January 17, 1995

Backwater Press
457 Kingsley Avenue
Orange Park, FL 32073
(904) 278-4992

Dedication

Suzanne told me the title of this book
and Monét lived with me —

Freedom At Its Worst Angle
Copyright 1995 by Alan Justiss
All Rights Reserved



Limited Edition

93 of 100

Cover Illustration:
L. Kesl

Backwater Press
457 Kingsley Avenue
Orange Park, FL 32073
(904) 278-4992

Table of Contents

AGAINST THE WHEEL	5
I AM WAITING	6
ANGEL'S BLUE HOUR	10
BITTER TASTE	14
IN THE BLOODY SOUP	16
CHURCHES, SCHOOLS & JAILS	17
COMPOSE & MAKE UP THE WATER	20
MY DAUGHTERS	21
GLASS BROKEN WINDOW EYE	22
THE HOLE REMAINS	24
JEWELS	25
KICKED OFF STILL	27
I LEAN AGAINST RUNNING	28
LIKE 1, 2, 3	30
WHILE THE MOON PASSED	31
ONE BOMB IN THE MORNING MAIL	33
IN THE NEW SUN MORNING	34
MY LESSONS ARE DONE	36
NO REASON TO TRY	37
THE PUSHING IS PULLED	39
SAVE THE HEAT & EXPRESS THE SUN	40
7 DAYS	42
SHE TELLS ME MONEY	43
THE SHOE THAT FITS	44
SILENCE REMAINS WITHOUT A THOUGHT	46
TO SLEEP IT ALL OVER AGAIN	47
SNOW WHITE	49
BELOW THE THAW ALL RIVERS RUN	50
TO TAKE OR LEAVE	52
MY TRICK IS NOTHING	53
TWO CANS OF BEER	55
ALWAYS UNREHEARSED	56
WHATEVER THERE IS TO EAT	58

Table of Contents

there is no end
to where I came
from —

AGAINST THE WHEEL

As it appears
few will do
as I do to myself
on any occasion
just before singing;
what I do they
do better to me
if given the opportunity
then they tell me
that I am stupid,
arrogant & rude
& the obvious said
easy
still they don't
understand the tune
only the words
getting through less
perfect as they
can not do to me
what has already
been done.

She tells me: Get
your teeth fixed.

I tell her fuck
my mouth; I don't care
but for keeping the weak
ones away from me waiting
for the strong ones age-
less or more: soon she
will come
& I will be there,
right
on time.

In a world gone flat
I wait in space for time
straightening out the curves
on life's highway singing
rubberless: pressing
metal against
the wheel.

I AM WAITING

I am waiting for
the last eye-tooth to fall.

I am waiting for the heart to
transplant.

I am waiting for the drink
that will quench thirst.

I am waiting for the alleys
to bloom from despair

I am waiting for the touch
that darkens the gardenia.

I am waiting for a river's tongue
to lap up the sea shores.

I am waiting for the blind who see
how it feels to tell.

I am waiting for the song
that ends at the beginning known bad.

I am waiting as some stranger
being the final friend.

I am waiting for the bomb
in the dark after lights off.

I am waiting for the statues
to clean pigeon shit from their eyes.

I am waiting the bullet that delivers
heaven from hell.

I am waiting the final shot
of heroin without thinking anymore.

I am waiting for the neon lights
on the tombstone in my skull.

I am waiting for the love remaining
as I do here for you.

I am waiting for the final sleep
that is the only truth needed unending.

I am waiting for the mockingbird that
leaves the cat sightless as wings.

I am waiting here with fingers
like hair honey over a pillow stuck to you.

I am waiting for the laughter
children own coming around the hill.

I am waiting for the mice who eat
the ass out of my shorts.

I am waiting for the rock to roll
upon its own initiative.

I am waiting to spell each feeling
known misspelled found here lacking.

I am waiting for the letter
needed to send to you finally written.

I am waiting for the stop signs
to go ahead and start.

I am waiting for the teenage lust
to begin with me found old.

I am waiting for the trigger finger
that points the other way.

I am waiting for the dust
to fall where walking stirs it up again.

I am waiting for something seen wrong
to be known later as right.

I am waiting for the answer
that calls before hanging up.

I am waiting for the fool
who knows everything the others will not tell.

I am waiting even now
upon myself while pissing it away.

I am waiting for gravity
not to fail me as I rise for occasions.

I am waiting for the prisoner to tell
why no keys are needed for entry.

I am waiting for the twisted to become
each dream understood better than me.

I am waiting for the poster
with my face on it dead or alive reward.

I am waiting for nothing
while so much is around me.

I am waiting light shot between
the trees like brooms outside the windows.

I am waiting as they plan another
war in moments before crushing her mouth.

I am waiting for the strong to see
the weakness that they are,
striking children
as each of us know what is done
seems repeated
until the end of teachers
like them
I am not.

I am waiting at the end
where beginnings start with the caboose
jumped from
being here
found at last
found at last: each track
clear & shining
heard going away for a bit of
silence to remain.

I am waiting.

ANGEL'S BLUE HOUR

From a rooming house
in Ybor City just
east of Tampa
I moved to Brandon
further east.

At that time 14 plus
years ago
there was a service
whereby a person
could be admitted into
someone's home
to care for
& be a companion, too.

I walked in off
the street &
sat down before
a placement clerk
who took my history
down on pages
then phoned.

"Hazel?"

"Yes."

"This is Almo,
from the placement board
over in Ybor City," he said.
"Anyway, I've got one
here age 36
& he claims to be
a writer. Do you
want to see him?"

"Yes," she replied. "You know
my address."

"Yes," he said. "You're across
from the cemetery;
& by the way do you know
how many dead they have
there?"

"No," she replied.
"They're all dead," he laughed. "Anyway,
I'll send a live one over
at 7:00."

He handed me a slip
typed name/address
I looked at while walking back
to my room & then stuffed my wallet with it.

The rent was due
\$35 dollars
& I knew
there was gas
in the car
shaving lather
& a razor
so I cleaned up.

I drove east
for the anointed hour
of seven. Pulled in
before walking to
the front door; naturally!

I knocked
& heard barking, first
as she opened the door

second.

She was a looker
back in the
20's
many years before.

The Daschound eyed me
like a hammer
that would nail me
with one
wrong move.

All the moves were right
& I moved in the next day feeling
like a bottle saved
between the mattress
& floor.

My own room in a 3
bedroom house, 2 bath
& a routine established
after a few weeks.

Good fortune or bad
I had a trade painting:
walls, ceilings, floors
interior & exterior whatever
called for.

Days were spent
hitting it like I lived
harder than most
ever know.

Evenings supper cooked
& scotch with water
together watching and sitting

before M.A.S.H. on her
black & white T.V..

Sometime after one
month
& one mad night drinking
she and I sucked
into each other in her
room.

She was small of frame
at the age of 78,
so I moved it in slowly
as her heels pressed
tighter
against the end
of my spine.

Gently she adjusted
her colostomy bag
away from her breast
not wanting it
to burst
shit everywhere
& we continued together
like years as she grew
younger
& I older.

She had a scotch/water
waiting when I came
home nightly.

She would sing "Falling
In Love Again" while she
washed dishes
after they were filled with

fine meals.

We pressed together
nearly one year
& she would hint, laughing
marriage together
& how it would shock
all of her children who
were into Scientology
& wanted her money
so they could be clear.

Nothing works out
as it should
it only does what
we remember to forget.

Later I learned
Marlene Dietrich sang
that song
& after I left her
I recall writing a small poem
about angel's blue hour
& her sadness
& the poem was not
long enough:
even now.

BITTER TASTE

Even a shadow
is made up
due to
the sun beyond
the trees.

Even here

I bleed
for others
will
not do it
for me.

The stolen place of
things
found gone
repeat
the robbery
was done
for others want.

Some need
while hours pass
they want
to hope again
returning.

The problem is
not gravity
that takes us down
as much
as it is knowing
where we fell
before
standing up
to tell.

Often I have
thought moments
before death
to write all of
that
& this it
never mattered

if nothing was done
from the first
bitter
taste in the mouth
as if it came to
kiss you
& missed the second
thought.

IN THE BLOODY SOUP

I dog ear
& dodge with a smile
highways crossed over
eyes
seldom seen
reflected
until the rear view
mirror reminds
what has been done
the knowledge taught &
few turn around
without finding
something
done.

The room next to mine
screams nights: a fight fuck
& she again in the bloody soup
he calls love.
& they beat
my walls for something wanted
to turn down:
the sound
of typing oceans
that roar paper
thin.

Wherever I go
forever reminds me endure
& do not be defeated
since it will be harder even
after all of this has
passed next door
once again, never to say.

The future behind me
& the past sits here now
told stop
or do it again
& I run another light as
this darkness shoulders
keys on white
between.

The bitter part
of a con is waking up
& the dream is real
again before the last night-
mare best forgotten
like a stolen thought
others will repeat
long after, in the bloody,
bloody soup.

CHURCHES, SCHOOLS & JAILS

Had I time for
tragedy then you
would
not have need
of waiting too long.

Had I ears then
you would not have

heard me
moaning this
silence inside
out.

Had I never written
there or here what use
would be each
reply?

Had I never earned
anything in life
then death would have
little loss.

Had I gone then
you would
long to be here
now where still
I stay without
moving.

Had I so many
answers perhaps
all you do would
not fill me full
of questions.

Had I need for
praise then shame
could slice the sheets
pulled over my head
in final sleep
undisturbed.

Had I tried
too much then disappointment

would surely be my undoing for this
would never have been
done.

Had I reason then
you might think me
wiser than the fool
searching this thankless
machine untelling.

Had I everything
then nothing would
have its place
in this history.

Had I the teeth
of youth then
there would be more
biting of this hand
that feeds me.

Had I their gun
of wars then love
would be the first shot
into my brain.

Had I started
too early that day
then tonight
would always appear
too late.

Had I learned
every lie well enough
to expose dust then schools, churches
& jails could vanish:
for truth was

never there to know.

Had I less
then this would
be nothing more
than an ending
never started:
& so it always
goes.

COMPOSE & MAKE UP THE WATER

Space I take upon myself
best no one is here
to know the edge
cut through.

All of the immortals
out of breath
the music dances upon
time taken out.

Yes I will take the night
for tomorrow may find me
as nothing done yesterday
may remind me.

Take one ear away
then look
or lose all hearing as
but feeling the floor move.

There those shot entry
upon the back moaning
while few are times matched struck
shown even the dark: closing.

Compose & make up the water
colors your brush may cross the line
never seen that way or
ever from again if not done.

Space the distance
not yet known
& come to find one bit
is difference found.

Never to know is better
than knowing
everything then
why learn why I too listen to see,

Without question becoming
the answer as
the answer is no more
questions.

Even I now slip silence
like a dress you take off
I bought just to see
how it feels to drop your name not yet.

MY DAUGHTERS

I take my time
for that left over
to give back
the space
afforded.

The thin hands of dawn crack
while crawling over
dirt
below the nails

that grip the night
darker than any thoughts
of the other hand
cleaning.

Golden buttery days
of youth
milk the exposed
chest while later uncovered
tits rest egg like broken
while basking
below the sun remaining white
sands grit
trapped tight stems
as legs flower
for some first lovers
thorn
where other men shave
the face of earth
cut down like toast
sliced:
on mornings they will perk
hot
cups
of coffee.

I take my time
for that left over
to give back
the space afforded
my daughters.

GLASS BROKEN WINDOW EYE

What time has lost
the future holds.
In the vision of hell

from others heaven looking down.

I run out over-time
of the naked watch for night.

With the fire too high
in the corners I splash water.

Whatever you say
I am listening for something.

Every thought of you I find mostly
is about me.

"Papa, are we there yet?" yes
I say & then she wants to leave.

Age is born fast & harder
for the old out of time remembered.

Last time in jail they bought me
paper to write upon numbered time.

Days and a wake up chained
fellows broken thoughts.

Passing through here
all my arms move above some hammer.

Work to be done
as so few ever do but talk of it done.

Outside my glass broken window eye
is seen a store in wait for entry.

From silence born
the cry is loud enough then interrupted: life.

The fire & ash are just the same
in the middle what good one without the other.

What time has lost
the future holds repeated again.

THE HOLE REMAINS

For Scott Conway
(August 1994)

Turning this page
like baggage
unpacked
to find what is
there thoughtlessly
to wear each
naked covered
word: uncovered.

There is greater value
in less
than more;
as most never know.

Another voice
across the earth
is lost
to speak the pain
common
as she licks
the eye shut
& never seen
or heard from
again.

The waste is spilling
what some die for

& others never live
to know
the lack of
anything.

I suppose it's a thread broken
as common as a button
drops
& the hole remains
where need somehow
covered the chest
& the treasure
of beating
the heart
stitched as time
goes un-
exposed as talk
& what is
missed.

JEWELS

More jewels
in the factories
than diamonds
in the sea
full of
sand.

The twisted
& strange who
love me
in need of the roots of
self
go on
then
find me

just
the same
but it's time un-
ironed out.

Always difference
is
in between
the lost:
& found
here
I am.

Better to start
with nothing
for everything will never
seem like
something lost
while holding on.

Built just
history
to burn down
& going
to be.

In my garden even
rain does not
fall as good to help
those who
help themselves
& all I see are plates
& tables empty of
voice
or something to
eat.

KICKED OFF STILL

I said the word fuck
one time
too many in this town
once Cowford called
& now the same is not
the same yet
it still smells of herds
& shit outside the air
conditioned windows: wealth
fucking each of us
with a lasso around our necks
for the hanging done
at the Yacht Club legally drunk
sitting in the birth main sail,
spinnaker & jib rolled up
with some sun tanned bitch the wife
knows nothing of while sitting
at home reading Vanity Fair
with murder
& incest so common
it's expected not to shock.

The truth is behind each lie
& each lie seeks the truth most
will not hear best
told just what
they want to hear
& for most that is easy
while the hard sits here
unbelieving any of it.

I am spoken of highly
by the lowly life I lead
for no one should follow steps
as mine shit kicked off &

on the way down
I'll step upon anyone
getting here.

A beer joint or yacht club
Drambuie or draft on tap: give me
another one of those for anyone
paying my dues: thank you.

Her name was Madgi or Margo
or Maggie or Mandy for christ sake
was it Gertrude & I met
Delilah with my hair over my shoulders
before cut down drunk
in the temple ruins
found some stench in
Cowford kicked off still one
stain remaining:
if need needs a look there.

I LEAN AGAINST RUNNING

All the future
appears
as something
left
to fill
as from the
past.
I have arrived
near
on time running
out.

Here where I
lean against running
too long

is time standing
still
where others
see clouds
& all I have
are the best thoughts
just before
it rains
with everything
washed out.

Dying is promised
here, living
is all that kills
me
getting through
to you
telling how it
was my
time
to
move on
down
the line.

From the fountain
passed
a bottle
between
the sheets of
thirst
more or less
it looks like
me (for):
"the has been gets
what's
left over."

& nothing
for you.
after all you tried
& I did not

LIKE 1,2,3

Safer with distance
harder to return back
here then able to tell me
everything you kept
deep inside over all
the miles still left to
crawl.

The truth in the balance
is just how far to fall
depends upon how far we rise
above our knees telling
me to stay here best down
than up.

Never one to keep up
with the news
now the past seems the same
up ahead called
the future that comes for another
one long gone
& it is me to recognize wrapped
with garbage thrown out.

Into the eye of hell
a camera takes the place of me
as once it felt the same
as now
& what's new I think
twice

after the first time I have
lost.

What you do first seems like love from here
& you appreciate what is done; then
expect it;
& then demand it:
like 1, 2, 3.

Too simple for you
so confused you came into
my room to find me
here a problem to become for you
never knew.

If love is still alone
you may know
& hear the cracking dawn
I need
not see any more of that each night
fills
distance I have passed you on some
street number never memorized
the house where you live as I
die outside distance
harder to return.

WHILE THE MOON PASSED

for Monét

Father & daughter
on the river back
horse ridden upon shoeless
steps unable
to return.

Now I stumble inside
five walls

as once each held
me up
to find the robbery
was done after words
never spoken
or remembered,
to forget
& now it does
not matter.

Mornings so clear
I watched the light
come in the window
then cross your face-
sleeping-eyes
closed with mine
open & you awoke surprised
as from a dream
child: the moon is gone
I told you.

Oh, Papa how long
have you been watching?
she asked me.

All of my life
I told her. It's nice
to see you awake
kid.

Papa do I have to be
awake?

No, I told her
if you like go back
to sleep in the dream
you just left.

How did you know
that Papa?

I was watching
while still awake
& heard your voice while the moon
passed.

She wiped her eyes & asked
where is it now?

Some place else, I told her
some place far away from us
now.

ONE BOMB IN THE MORNING MAIL

Now I am an editor
for a lit. quarterly
& people send me
their shit
& I read it as hard copy
not as soft as the paper I
wipe my ass with which
I must accept as more is due
rejections.

Work from Neptune & Pitts-
burgh with cover letters why writing
like this one tells me:

"It is also a good stress reliever-like
a walk on the beach or a good movie."

She could have said it's like a good
fuck to my mind a better stress reliever

but how would I know after four
years without while putting down more or less
ten pages a night
myself.

Most of them seem out of this world
anyway I have no idea where
they are really living
in most of the dead
words I have read.

Anyway this seems my time
of being done too
so I will not resist
what I may find worth accepting
just one bomb
in the morning's
mail
while taking a crap
& open it up with all innocence
finally blown away.

IN THE NEW SUN MORNING

Everything comes out tomorrow
in the newspaper like the sun
as if something is new
for the same old reason
to read the cross
shadows make behind
the tree
not yet cut
down in my back yard.

With the sun at our back
we do not read: the paper's edge
is all we look over
unnoticed while she crosses
her legs high above
the other/under

the table & see white
or pink or blue panties
for the wonder of it
all quickly seen.

Youth is not bad,
& the sun like-wise
nor the fleeting glance
taken at the top edge
pretending the C Section
is really news,
when it is not worth
wiping your ass with
& even I repeat
myself.

I roll it up
& swat the fly at the edge
of my table
& see that spot of red
& have no idea if it's blood
or just that color as my own &
the war is won.

Then out on the street
in the new sun morning
crossing on to another sidewalk
I see the alley there
one man asleep under yesterday's news
paper
& it is me one time younger
older now
than the lines on my face
written down & waiting for the light
to change
only to find it
broken
as I smile for all

is the same but the sun
on me one more
day.

MY LESSONS ARE DONE

There is a lesson
in denial
& I don't have it
in me to tell
much more
than that.

Thin light moves
water down my face
reflected
& fractured blues
from my eyes: chiseled
shadows of
the man once seen
after.

Such excuses
about what matters
seem it never
did until
all the harm
was done to
yourself
before others
had a chance to give
up.

The easy way out
is harder
than staying here
alone

inside
with nothing
to lose.

The further
down I go
the higher
I reach
up for
the ground.

Too soon old
& too late
smart.

Now my lessons
are done
& they are yours.

NO REASON TO TRY

Slowly days pass
with eyes closing
for the promise
of the final bit
string tight light
sliced as once
born from the dark
airless space
found delivered out
of focus then
taught to see until
now I have seen
a bit too much.

So many shadows
on the floor

at the end
of my hall-
way stumbling
between walls that
hold me up
& steal the figure
of the man I have
become: all I was was
told the problem
is going to be me
& not you
& that was the first
thing I too believed
as now I can lie only
to myself.

Belief in self
is some promise taught
how we fail: as hope
the same end:

for hard-earned knowledge
is never
saying too much
but enough for some
may want more
while I have here
no need
no hope
no want
no better/no
reason to try
as even now this
is done without
belief as all
seems gone
& a bit

too much.

THE PUSHING IS PULLED

All this baggage
life
books & stacks
written pages
taller
than I am
tons of regret
to carry upon my
broken back
heart sore
crippled
stride twisted
thoughts for the mind
to iron out
all that, that
is not hidden
inside-out;
exposed
everywhere
I look
dust waits
to cover.
Unable to die
I live here
one line
at a time
when my ending
should be
beginning
yet
it will not stop
or turn around:

the pushing
is pulled
out of me
as pain
looking back
if I dare
gaze
into the mirror
& see
no one there
but me
looking back
not forward.

SAVE THE HEAT & EXPRESS THE SUN

Without a gun in my hand
I sit here before
doing something I never know
that might find me
there.

Yes, yes, yes something
is wrong
& the night that holds me
answers nothing as wrong
as all I have done seems not
so right to be here
now.

Save the heat
& express the sun
as the waiting spins
for tomorrow as yet
unfounded remains.

Blanket thoughts hold me

neckless words
my throat is found where once
was singing the covers
tossed away
& now but something
left exposed
to gather
what little there is
together.

My eyes seem crooked things
to see
or just ignore
the thoughts so blind
so long looking
into the sun
from here below all
of that above me.

Think this
if you like that
I am driven ankle-deep
in the mud clay feet for gods
still walk over water
that trickle down
forgotten to tell nothing
of me here
after all
is done
this time is
later
& still I do
not know
as yet
what remains to find
but something lost again.

7 DAYS

She asks me:

"How did the interview for the newspaper go today?"

& I tell her.

She asks me:

"What did your probation officer have to say yesterday?"

& I tell her.

She asks me:

"How much money do you need?"

& I tell her.

She asks me:

"Now haven't you known about this a long time?"

& I tell her:

7 days.

She asks me:

"Isn't that the day they publish your interviewed face?"

& I tell her.

She asks me:

"What were you doing all this time?"

& I tell her:

this.

SHE TELLS ME MONEY

Timed to the moment
down stairs turn
right for a store selling
blood for the fingers
that build
highways in the back
yard minds of
strangers.

She tells me love.

& I say I have

no money;

& she says

she will pay if

I will stay.

& I am running out

of that

& sit still.

The moves are made

& they are everywhere

thin walking things

heavy over ice walking out

with everything before

here another

one taken.

Down upon the bed seen

seems like dying

laying there she

I rise above

bacon burned

hard
 & crispy thing
 hung between my legs
 pressed between
 hers, flopping
 fat burnt
 up as I smell it
 delicious
 with one over-easy
 & grits smothered
 with the butter
 of her hair
 in the sun the pillow
 reflects,
 like shadows unspoken
 time laid out
 for looking
 for touching
 for regrets gone
 away.

She tells me love.
 & I have no money.
 I say only
 time.

THE SHOE THAT FITS

Disappointment seems
 to always ring
 the wrong number
 or someone known
 interrupting
 the page
 for difference
 known.

I grab my eyes
 while blinking
 in the closet where a shirt
 hangs
 worn out
 at the elbows
 thin as strings
 unmending.

Holding the vessel
 with my body in tow
 dragging years cut
 into a moment
 never known
 to sink.

This the ever-lasting
 thaw
 that drips what's left to wipe off
 the face
 of the earthless
 prints made mud
 walked into ways
 of getting away
 slowly after having
 been there
 reminded of size
 the shoe that fits
 around me.

Reasons unknown I rush
 the river's edge slowly
 passing me by
 as shade made up
 from the overhanging
 trees of youth firmly rooted.

The compromise of madness
made sane as small
the spider's brain
made webs to trap
this unexpected thought:
fleeing as if not of
my own making.

SILENCE REMAINS WITHOUT A THOUGHT

Sick of dying
& whatever life is
cannot save me
the choice I have taken
the road before me
ending.

Best not to think
as the thoughts are killing
me in time remembered
spots
wet in the middle
of the bed sleeping
stains red tomorrow flows
explains her headache
& mine said some thoughtless
thing I have
crawled into
& out delivered
birth crying the hurt
of breath better water
than all tomorrows asked
born again.

Forget love/the thought
is a way of choice
for dying has many knots

a rope
or gun
for choosing then
breathless
no blood anywhere
as silence
remains
without a thought
of love
remembered.

In a fire perhaps
the water found: too deep
something to put out
continues.

My eyes these strangers
seen looking back
for some
mirror
reflected however
it is meant to be will be
done
& I know less than that
what comes
to take me even now
learned how
to wait self-taught
for what it is
worth
remains.

TO SLEEP IT ALL OVER AGAIN

The glue night's
dream holds
in my head

mornings
awake remembering
her
& messages
stuck
between door
found asking
'call me soon
will you? love
Heather.'

Sick of dying
She came
up to me
planting a
kiss with
no teeth
to back
it up
my upper lip
folds in
with the pressure
she leans
into me
with another
dream
over
I wake up
& find
it is true
there are
no upper teeth
& the lie
is no note
in the crack
of dawn
as I open
the door

& wish
to sleep it
all over again
& read the note
after all
the kissing
is done.

SNOW WHITE

Such is the city
where I live
that bans
the book
Snow White
due to the violence
between
the pages before
the apple.

There is more
most likely
since
it's a white chick
living
with seven
little fuckers
with
funny names
&
not a one a
Baptist.
Anyone would
whistle
while they worked
off

a bit of that;
knowing what was
waiting
at home again
every night:
7 pleasures for
her
a delight;
regardless of
size
each fit.

Next I suppose
will be *The*
Black Stallion-or Dinky Donkey
since everyone knows
about Mexico
& what a woman can
take & deliver.

BELOW THE THAW ALL RIVERS RUN

I knew that my harm
was being done sober falling
into your eyes looking
back at me.

Rushing now waters drunk
to swallow you not here
down as once I looked up
your number.

Heading for a break down
all made up like wood
planks the floor once afloat
known to sink.

Jumping & hopping at curves
found slow enough
to ride the rails uphill found
all trains going down in time.

The offer of bitterness
I take one drop at a time
to quench my thirst left behind
just to thank a lot.

Only mountains seen
in the valley of youth claimed
be there or not & if not then told
be here now.

Sadness does not cry
as the light is always on
inside & below the thaw
all rivers run in that some spring known.

As if love comes burning the back
too long slept in summers time
upon the beach licking feet awake
to walk away again something is known given.

Unable to change my mind
or underwear in the bath all
the history stains the same
as you are mine & all remains.

Inside I look out that window
light night falling fire
turning a stick in ashes some
other spark starts the flame passing time.

Better to die with all the living
few know about

until the end they fear
being here alive & taking it.

Having laughed so hard now
tears come to my eyes
from my belly life
thrown up what's done then let them cry.

TO TAKE OR LEAVE

Nothing here
in stone; only covered
pulp words carved
by steel,
hung out on lines
for time
to air out.

Growing weary
of warring with life
confronted
& confronting miles
left to go
on one breath
at a time
still remaining
to take it all in
& leave battles
behind.

The loss is
always greater
than anything
ever won.

My worth comes
down

to all the money
I don't have; a debt
to others
that service
life's amenities: electric,
water, phone, rent
& insurance forget
about food or
drink after all
that's something
for me to take
or leave.
I suppose here
with pulp
& steel
it's for free
recalling: freedom
at its
worst angle.

MY TRICK IS NOTHING

There is no trick
unless known empty space
left to hang in
with twisted knots
useless untied thoughts
as mice might
leave the ship before
the watery grave
turns back the tide
only the blind can feel.

Some borderline shore
twist the eyes shut
out for seeing everything
when a bit really is

enough for being
while so many want
more
& it drowns them.

Simple pleasures
such as those who hate
me
& gossip hours with
nothing to do
as I fill gardens
with the seed
tossed into space
once empty seen later green
my trick of love
follows simple
death hating
no one
even now the grass
whispers & on the road I see
nothing grows.

In my blinded hours
left feelings
as useless days
no witness hears
as they talk
behind the sun
unable to look into
the blank space
they fill
with nothing
remaining.

My trick is nothing
& theirs?:
well isn't that
something ?

for the fools & they find me
ahead again

TWO CANS OF BEER

She sat there
and told me that
the main control
in my life was being
done by the drink.

This doesn't
control me
I said as I pointed
at the empty cans.

I control it so that I can
lose control
on that,
I said as I pointed
to the typer.

Later we leave this
house of many rooms
from the one room
where my nights begin
each page I end
to write.

After she has spent
her afternoon cleaning
the kitchen I carry all
the garbage out
to the road, and she takes me out
for supper.

And the twelve pack of beer

I'll drink tonight
alone, like a hawk
awaiting her call, safe
as a homing pigeon left
for her flight
still alone
except for here
with my loss of
control: systematic
drunkenness
in my life being
done.

Two cans of beer
and one for Denise written
down awaiting the other ten
found in my kitchen
cleaned ice-box
cold.

All in thanks to
her & my lack of
control good
night.

ALWAYS UNREHEARSED

This sex thing
he kisses
her lips
& then her neck
& blows in
her ear then
puts his hand down
the back
of her panties
& then sticks it

in
& rolls over
to sleep with
what he has done/repeated moves
to
Susan, Natalie, Barbara,
Heather, Jenifer, Stella, Linda,
Connie, Sylvia, Joyce, Brenda,
Judy, Lisa, Naomi, Janice, Joni, Vicki,
Gina, Marilyn, Stephanie, Pamela,
April, June, Kathaleen, Helen, Lia,
Leslie, Tulley, Tina, Debra, Maggie,
and Grace the same rehearsal
in any year.

Some are married
any number of years until
time is done
& one says
to him really unrehearsed
finally the words
loaded: this sex thing.

Then she asks
so well...after the final
move is done & tells him,
how first he kisses her lips
& then her neck
& blows in her ear
then puts a hand me down
the panties
& sticks it in
& rolls off to sleep
& then she asks why (without
anyone hearing)
nothing has ever changed
for any Tom, Dick or Larrey.

This sex thing
I think to tell her first
she never moved as I
have waited for
the wet spot
so many never wanted
what I wait upon this sex thing
always unrehearsed:
the change done good.

WHATEVER THERE IS TO EAT

Too old for the young
& too young for the old
at least that is what they told me.

I grab a knife
& find it is a gun
each chamber of my heart
still beating
confused
like some writer's block
the streets are made up without
address.

They tell me
find me
& I listen
& listen after all
they have heard me
& that it is not enough
before I find them
& nothing is
the same
however it seems
it doesn't.

With nothing right it seems everything is wrong
the sheets in knots
are rotten
for the final escape down
the wall
out of jail best
found remaining
sleep.
You have the world
& you have everything
the watch of time lost
after counting &
the seconds passed as nothing
in between.

You make me up
whatever there is
left to eat.

You are so afraid of me
that you will not leave your own
silence
to hear me
& all you say is no.

I figured out why you do not
come back:
since you have had enough
at least tonight.