



Changing Light

A WCC Poetry Club Anthology
Edited by Tom Zimmerman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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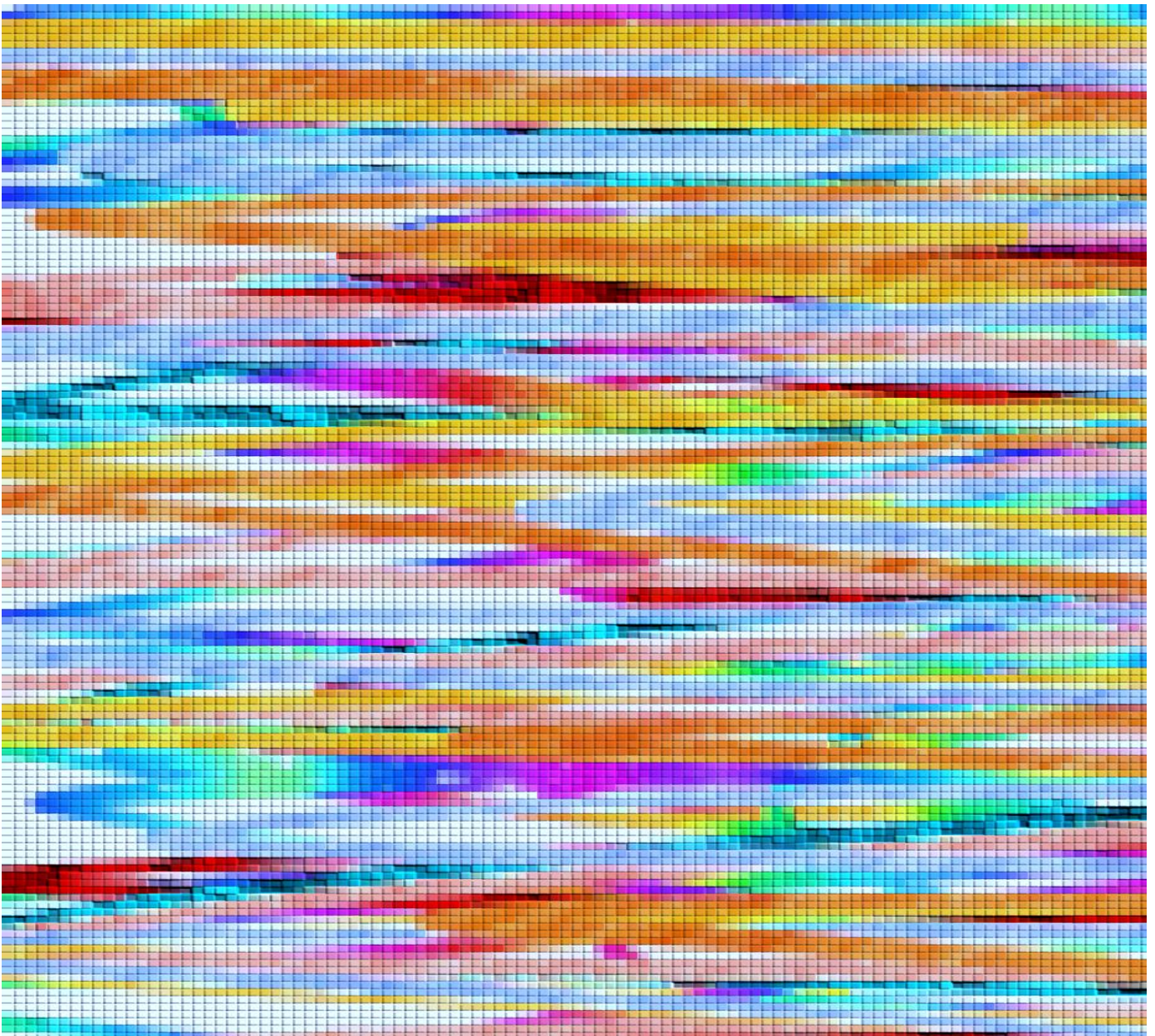
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TRAVIS ANDERSON

White pine reaches up
From her sandstone pedestal
To her god I pray

—

Grief is a shepherd
Leading to epiphany
Rational or not

The Whole World Felt Asleep

The whole world felt asleep
Wrapped in blankets made of the night sky
Pillows made of clouds
Comforted and sound asleep
I felt nothing but a cold breeze
Uneasy and restless

—

Keep Going

Dear it's okay you messed up
It's all part of the journey
Pick yourself up
Continue down the path
You won't regret it
For the end is so beautiful
Nothing else will matter

—

Flowers Do Blossom

Mother nature
Tears dripping down her face
Rivers on the road
Crying
Seeping up the sad tears
Flowers blossom

—

Gold Rush

We cannot search
For what we must find
Stumble upon the gold in life

Moving On

Scorched
Scorn
Yet,
I will bleed
I will bleed
Until it's all light

—

Love the Journey

In love with my journey
Through and through.

In this crazy blissful world
So indefinitely lost like the rest.

Seated in the faith
My truest path lies
Where my heart feels still

So full of life
Despite it all

—

Be Free

Be free
You're the true verdict of your journey
Run towards your true sense of peace
Don't dare to stray

Death Cycles

My current potential
May feel all but choked out

I will wait for the surge
The burst of energy

I will renew myself
Become something bigger than I know

My quest for a righteous life
Does not burn out

You'll watch my pains
Turn to products

LEWIS CLARK

The Emerald Isle

The Emerald Isle
Spreads unceasing green over
Rough, majestic slopes

My Secret Glade

A place unknown to others
Exists within my head.
A placid lake within a glade,
A panacea nature-made –
I steal among the trees.

Often the images appear
When tranquil sleep commands me.
And faces I have known before,
Adorn the trees along the shore,
Faint shadows of my childhood years.

Time has brought together here,
Countenance in spirit.
Each visage moves as if to speak –
I listen — find I cannot hear a sound,
Except the wind among the trees.

When appearing, ever nearing,
My outstretched fingertips,
I reach to find I cannot touch.
Fading quickly into nothingness,
The shadows are no more.

My waking hours embrace the present –
My future is unknown.
The past, I hold in memories
And sleeping, steal among the trees
That line my secret glade.

HONEY COONEY

Mom's fruit bowl left out
Moldy, orderly, and sweet—
I miss her dearly

—

Sun shines brightly
rainbow emerges from clouds
new morning begins

—

a shimmer of hope,
lost willingness to go on—
I must continue . . .

Too far gone . . .

off . . .

the . . .

edge .

.

.

The Emails We Delete

The emails we write but don't send

Teach us what is giving us acne on the inside

Goadng our intestines rankling our anus clogging our lungs

The emails we write but choose to delete are hard earned after those dashed off
and then fumed and feuded over as we hunched in the outhouse cringing at our
stinginess

Fucked-up time-hyped trivial correspondences—flashing fingers! keyboard
glistens!

Wait—do you remember Darcy and Elizabeth? The angsty epistles penned with
feathers?

Pensive days pacing while a message traverses, by horse, cross country. The agony
of our overture unanswered, our honesty unexplored, unhonored in that hellish
limbo of transit.

Has that time-bending torture for response evolved into a vaccination for
impatience?

But the email deleted! Rage vented and ejected in a moment!

With power in the pulse of your fingertip, that instant of deliberation—

It is then you choose to leave roads open, to study the dirt under

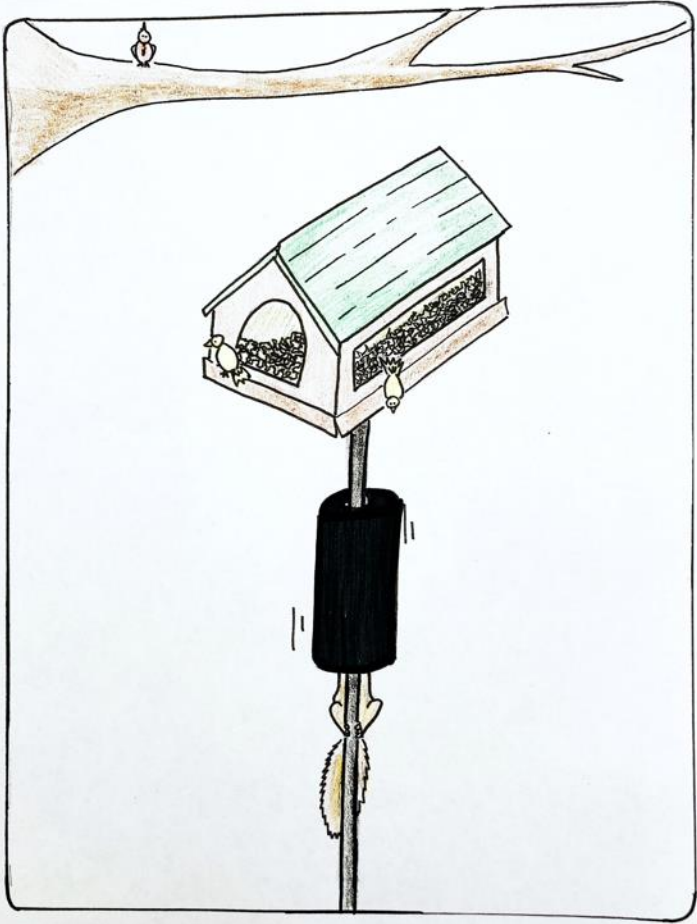
the nails of those four fingers that point back at you. You choose the dirt.

The human.

Chandelier

There are many portraits hanging from the walls of this gallery with gaunt looking faces and tired expressions. But it is not the dreary facsimiles that would catch your attention, but the gorgeous chandelier hanging from the center underneath a square white skylight. There is no light that comes from this crystalline spectacle, but the grey light from above fractures through the cut prisms and sprays rainbows across the drab looking depictions. It's almost magical the way the chandelier spins on delicate wires. Dangerous even. If even one wire were to snap, then down comes the whole piece, taking the rainbows with it, casting the room in a stark despondent light.

Baffle-O Bob



Salt Lamp

What my incandescent blush adds to her practice
of mountain pose or reclined butterfly escapes me,
but clearly, she favors me, sets me like a household god

on this table-turned-altar, spreads her spongy mat
and begins. She might set her gaze on the dangling crystal
that scatters rainbows like confetti. But, no—I am her anchor.

Not even the rising sun receives such honor;
she centers herself in me, aligns her neck,
makes herself a pillar not of salt, but of flesh and bone.

Holding the pose, she pulses, becomes even more
like me, an internal organ of earth. Together,
we return to the Himalayan cave from which

I was torn—the mountain's own tooth. She imagines
I fill her with wisdom. She fills me with purpose
as she practices yoga in my salty, warm glow.

They're Back

Post-Halloween birds, salty crows,
begin about now to land in crowds
among the limbs of Pioneer Woods
newly stripped of leaves
by last night's first November gale.
One bickering mob, they lift
and settle on our lawn. Not so much
to forage for grub as curse and mill about
looking for action like sailors on leave.
Ragged wastrels, I love them.
Scrawny old men on bar stools
with nothing to recommend them
but unconditional self-satisfaction
and the way they brim over
with piss and vinegar, spinning tales
of past exploits they invented just now.

What I Learned in Eldon, Missouri

Not how to fix Mom or stop her drinking,
but how to distract her by pissing her off,
Speaking in slang she hated—
saying *shoot* in place of *shit*
and *dang* for *damn*. Her eyes
snapped, her cheeks pinked up,
Say what you mean, for Christ's sake!
You sound like a Goddamn Baptist!

I was though, in fifth grade,
trying on small town, measuring
Grammy's taboos against Mom's;
Eldon lingo was comfy
as stretch pants; I learned
to crack those syllables like gum.
I'd find Mom in bed,
impassive as clay,
and commit to the role:
I'm gonna go warsh my hair, Mom!

She'd open her lips,
but not her eyes, "Go to hell."

Once, she lay there,
full-on statue mode
through a Saturday of
dirt smell, birdsong,
and missed chances—
the only person who could
drive me somewhere—

I'd had it. Swinging a tissue
before her eyes, I sang,
Look Mom, SNOT!
It's green, and it's a lot!
That did it—the obscenity
I'd sworn never to say.

Get my keys, damn it!
I'll drop you at the Tasty Freez.

Like This

Perhaps it was like this: for however long the day, the night lasted, he was this . . . adorable, precious *being*. That is, until the light shifted, from one luminary shade to the next, and for that one disarming, fleeting, *momentary* pause in time, he became something . . . untouchable, something ethereal, otherworldly in a single word. Ephemeral, for lack of any better term, if honesty and succinctness were the order of day.

Perhaps it was like this: in the sunlight, the daylight, sitting amidst a meadow, he was as soft and as sweet as the winds that blew, as the clouds that existed one day, only to vanish the next. And yet, when that same light flashed, golden and pure sunshine, like some forbidden fruit, he became unreachable — as if to reach out, he would be so close, yet so undeniably far.

Perhaps it was like this: in the moonlight, the night's light, sprawled atop white-washed sheets, he was as gentle and as adoring as the stars that shone, as the shadows that appeared always, every time the day ended, a steady presence that disappeared when the horizon turned orange. And yet, when pale light glistened silver and purely moonshine, he became something like a god — something to be worshipped, something to be given total devotion to.

Perhaps . . . it was like this: for however long time existed, going through its recorded cycles, he was something to be loved, to be cherished, to be held so, so close and with a tenderness that existed only in another world. But when that light shifted, he became something to be adored, to be revered, to be worshipped in every sense of the word.

Perhaps it was like this: when life went on, he was like a blessing, a gift. When time paused, he was like the sun, the moon, and every luminary in the sky.

All the Colors of the Rainbow

The words feel light tonight even though
they come from a dark place, one I dare
not go often or too deeply.

It is the place where memories boil,
where regrets and embarrassments
gather their swords, where tears
form the moat.

Memories take my present and paint
a portrait—with a colorful background,
a Mona Lisa smile, Linus's sooty cloud,
Dali's distorted sense of time.

Thoughts ooze from this place unbidden
They leak through my pen, they filet
every page, dragging the rest of the story
from between lines.

I huff and puff away clouds, so I,
so severely wounded by the light, can connect
again with sky and the chance for a new day
to surface, a new mind to speak.

And yet, I have to acknowledge that
the foundation of today came from
yesterday's dark sky. The depth of me
came from all the colors of the rainbow.

Change

1. We didn't change our own diaper, but were glad our mother did.
2. Our mind is always changing—after all we are the most creative of our species.
3. Change is inevitable and far better than stagnation.
4. No change, no difference. No difference, no mystery.
5. No change, no path less traveled, no wonder.

6. Change places, change seats.
7. Change for my dollar—a few cents less every day.
8. Jack, the dull boy, meets Jill the dull girl—ho hum.
9. But if Jack changes sides, Jill becomes redundant and still.
10. Trees change wardrobe from lush green to crimson red every season.

11. Change point of view.
12. Change of voice from soprano to alto to bass.
13. The phases of the moon—changes mood, light, tides.
14. Change hands, change of fortune, wear gloves, a mask.
15. Change houses, downsize, alone.

16. Change dependence, independence, interdependence, reliance, sufficiency—and esteem.
17. Change mind, lose self-worth, lose dignity, lose purpose.
18. Change faith, deny God, lose hope.
19. Change mind—find purpose.
20. Change faith—find spirituality, embrace hope.

I Light a Candle

I light a candle. I say your name.

I say your name.

I say your name.

It echoes off the walls, it echoes
off my heart and warms me
like the flame.

This strangest of anniversaries, this marking
of death, is more a celebrating of a perfect
and notable life. A life we shared for 45 years—a light
that has not wavered or diminished in the three years since.

Perhaps it is more a celebrating of remembrance—
eyes that sparkle in a sea of love; a smile
that's part joy, part radiance, part mischief;
arms that wrap full around in safety and belonging.

I hear my other self, the one that's sad,
keening, filling the room with longing, with
a dream of you that cannot be except when
I close my eyes and let the flame wash over us.

I light a candle. I say your name.

I say your name.

I say your name.

The Quality of Light

I often wake when light comes through
the loft window a pale golden-gray.
It means the day is waking over the horizon,
yawning softly, moving the air to warmth.

I used to rise and begin an artificially busy day,
doing work for others, busy-work mostly—
mildly productive, repetitive, bland, and totally
reproducible by any moron off the street.

Today I wake voluntarily and say to myself—
what glorious task do I have ahead of me?
What wonderful adventure will I share with
my loving husband? What words
will escape and be part of this day?

And somewhere in the middle (getting closer
to the beginning by degrees—I'm learning)
I notice the light, its bright promise, its bathing calm,
its opalescent glow, its freshness.

I want one morning (maybe tomorrow) to notice
this like I did as a child—the cool morning light,
the solitude, the mysterious coo of Mourning doves
waking in the eaves. (I used to think it was an owl
sharing its wise secrets in a language I had yet to learn.)

One morning I want to see the first rays of the sun
waltz over the sill, across the floor and up the wall—
step-by-step painting a new day—one more day to bask in
and enjoy and share in the story of a life well lived.

Seeing the light of change

The day darkens, dark as gray, cloudy and misty
all of a sudden, sounds of the hurling trees drift
high and low, fast and cool, peach black as dawn

Then, as the clock strikes dawn, the light of change
gleams through the bright skies, light arises like a beam
of rattle sparks like diamonds shining above the blue sky

Change of light, light of change prevails like destiny of gods, of mortality
bright and sunny, blazing hot, like lava torches of magnitude, day and light
sun changing all day and warm comfort

THEO RICHARDS

My eyes, like the fall.
My head, like a winter storm.
My body, a spring flower.

—

Maybe I'm not perfect,
Or even a kind person.
But not dangerous!

Children skip pebbles
across the creek in summer,
smiling and laughing.

—

Write a story's end first.
Your readers can write the rest
Then you can write more!

—

The morning after
a frigid winter's day
trees stand frozen.

Pearls, flowers, and gems
Mother Nature's lovely gifts
For your sweet, dear girl

A Tragedy of Youth

Autumn, falling leaves—
Not yet turned orange or brown,
Gone before their time

There is dark beauty to the cry of the crow
The deep, strong cry
As sharp, biting winds blow
As dark wings flap across the autumn sky

The morning bells toll at dawn
And in their dulcet ring
A ring which feels to go ever on
A beautiful peace they bring

The mourning bells toll at dawn
And in their morbid ring
A ring which feels to go ever on
A sorrowful peace they bring

The Tapestry of Fate

The intertwining strands of fate
Each future grows at its own rate
A glorious tapestry they make
A testament to all unique and great

As bold threads cross each other
They show the closeness of a brother
Jewel tones form the beautiful and good
An ever-nearness of sisterhood

When two lines meet and three come out
These two will learn what parenthood is about
When up and down cross left and right
This may be evidence of a fight

The curving lines form beautiful patterns
The beauty of the galaxy, Venus, Mars, and Saturn
When they make flowers, waves, or hills
It is an honor to see their glorious swirls

Fate will come and fate will go
We are all honored to be part of the show
As life goes on, we grow and grow
And our own tapestries have more to show

Homage To The Last Light

In silence the
sun paints the
last light of day.

Unspoken words stuck
imbedded on tongue
Swallowed.

Birds nestled
safely in tree tops
an opossum wanders.

Natures night framed
Shades lowered
gently dust floats.

Curtains drawn
A freight train rumbles
into the night.

The Choice to Be Kind

The world is constantly changing and evolving, different from yesterday and different tomorrow. The nature of society has shifted, leaving much room for mass change and growth. The stress of the last several years, decades, centuries of the human condition have impacted how perfect strangers interact with one another. Where there used to be manners, a polite exchange of niceties, and maybe even a smile, there is now abrasive rudeness fueled by selfish intent.

It feels as if the genuine and the thoughtful are in the minority, however, they are simply quiet, deeming their presence obsolete. When in reality, they are out in the world making a difference, leading by example. Their kindness may be tested daily by the ignorant, the desperate, the greedy, and the cruel. Temptation strikes, inspiring revenge upon the strangers who accosted these humans. Yet, in their hearts, they know that this would only make everything worse.

To be a decent human takes integrity and resilience: the decision to take the high road is a choice. To act with basic human decency, no matter how others act or misbehave, takes strength. For it is when these situations are approached with compassion, kindness is shown to those who truly need it. All while allowing the good human to stay true to who they truly are at their core. To rise above the low vibrations and darkness is to spread light to a world that desperately needs it.

Fibonacci(s): Fight for Your Light

Each
day,
before
you leave the
comfortable warmth
of home to brave the outside world,

be
sure
never
to forget
your armor: put it
on, for the world can be harsh and

cruel.
Don't
let the
chaos of
the world dim your light.
The world needs you and your kindness.

To
be
kind in
this world, you
must remain strong and
continue to fight for your light.

Growing and Glowing

As you grow into your core self,
your own unique light emerges,
a true reflection of your character.

In discovering your light,
you become a light in the world, lighting up the lives of others,
as you glow, bright and radiant, like a sunbeam.

Haiku(s): More than Enough, with Gratitude

With a gracious heart,
I recognize that this life
is everything. All

I had imagined
since I was young, all I had
hoped for, when times were

hard. All I yearned for,
all I desired, yet even
better, for this is

real. With gratitude,
all in my life, all that's mine,
in this moment, is

enough. It's more than
enough: it's perfect. Thankful,
I have what I want.

Sonnet: The Magic of Everyday Moments

The mundanity of daily life weighs
on the mind as responsibilities
become priority. There is a way
to go before the possibilities
of this life are realized. Interactions
with my beloved give me hope. Sweet nothings
exchanged in the kitchen, no distractions
to be found anywhere; these little wings
take flight. Unconditional love is real
as this spark emerged a perpetual
flame. Genuine connections with heart feel
like bliss, magic, with the eventual
epiphany that this life is filled with
beauty, enchantment, moments dear as myth.











finding mothman



Cancer Cause Carrots

Carrots cause cancer.
I ate carrots,
and cancer got me!

One surgery, then two surgeries,
Three, then FOUR—
“Sew a zipper, or no more!”

Twenty-two years later
I’m cancer free! Now,
carrots are not for me!

Let them in

Peaceful I stride, my limbs relaxed at my side.

The pads of my fingers brush past knee-high blades of grass. For a moment I forget.

Forget the pain, forget my self blame.

The blades bend at my touch, in response I flush.

So soft and intimate, so gentle and innocent.

The sky darkens as wayward clouds tumble. I should have known better, should have known I'd only bring trouble.

I turn away, gaze down. As always, it's my fault.

You may not understand why, the guilt, the shame I feel inside.

It creeps and it crawls, it seeps and it gnaws.

Day after day I'm left in shambles.

My body ensnared by vicious brambles. They're so unyielding. I can't get out,
Can't hardly whisper a cry for help.

I flip and I flail, I weep and I wail.

Whilst I heave myself doggedly against thorny branches.

My clothes are ripped, my blood it drips,
Apathetic, the world merely shrugs as it silently watches.

Someday I'll have the strength with which to rip out these weeds, and the courage to recruit an army to restore this blighted prairie.

I've tried for so long to battle alone, but the cracks in my plan are quite easily shone.

I won't make it out alive, and I'll surely lose this fight.

When a hand extends, I'll take a breath. I must accept.

Accept help, accept love.

Let them in. Let them in, to give me a fighting chance.

The din that was once a roar, will diminish to a clandestine purr. I'll finally be able frolic through this meadow, laughing with both my lungs and properly bathe in shining sun.

One day, one day my day will come.

My soul shall be cleansed once again.

As long as I stay humble, brave, and vulnerable.

This battle, this battle will surely be won.

Changing Light

God spoke to me in a dream again through a resident.
They resided in a place where I was in position.
The posture of my heart,
Ready.
Eager with my ear.
Wax removed to heed a voice of the need.
The inner need of the outer choice
I can hear your voice.
Calling to the riches of faith.
Direction from the filth of the past
Into a love that can longer last
An oil that repels.
The many hearts that rebel.
There is a chance for heart.
In a world that contradicts.
My body can endure the maze through a dance.
Within my stance of...
Hope
Broke?
Broken to grace.
I've had an open face to change.

separately and apart

my grandmother lays on the hospital bed
in wrist restraints so she doesn't yank
can one be beautiful with a tube down their throat?
light can be both a wave and a particle
says my geology textbook
it makes up her eyes when she bounds into a story
is one beautiful and dying
or beautiful because they are dying?
we keep telling her how good she looks
perhaps frivolous and fed
by beauty industry lies, but
i swear her hair fell through the brush
at 300,000,000 meters per second
onto the deadweight left shoulder
of my dead-eyed grandmother
who is the most beautiful she's ever been

The Boulder and the Hill

Same copper-streaked gray sky we woke to late.
Fourth cup of coffee, Haydn in my headphones.
Football on TV, the volume muted:
like late autumn hues, like my responses
flatlining to prickings of existence.
Stubble-chinned, unshowered, and unwise,
I'm sagging with the gravity of years.
Dog licks, wife scolds, dog licks. Like Sisyphus,
we've learned to love the boulder and the hill,
the dash of bitters in the cosmic swill.
Oh, some of this rings false. Or doesn't last.
The evergreens grow dark, but brighten at
the equinox. We're lightly here, but still
endure. Strong feelings come and go. Just breathe.

Get Lost

The dog and I were walking in our former
neighborhood, about a mile from here.

And I got lost, of course.

But found my mind
and got us home.

Right now, a second beer's
in front of me.

A symphony is streaming
through my kitchen speaker.

Oven's heating
for some flatbread pizzas.

I'm rereading
my eleventh Seamus Heaney book,
just one more left.

A friend asks why I read
so much. I say to lose then find
myself.

Our new red pendant lights emit a hellfire
glow, and I'm a wayward hero asking
questions of the damned.

Do you ransack
your word-hoard?

Are there gems among the rubble?
Pheasants nesting in imagination's
stubblefield?

I bide my time. I'm in
a groove. I could explode.

There's nothing more
I'd like to do, unless it's more of this.



Travis Anderson
Brooke Armstrong
Lewis Clark
Honey Cooney
Carolyn Crane
Abigail Gibb
Jessica Hale
Amy Higgins
Hoan-Lam Joseph
Diane M. Laboda
Ayowole Oladeji
Theo Richards
Logan Sayer
Paige Sayer
Sally Silvennoinen
Sarah Smith
Marity Solis
Ellie Strumba
Timothy M Tucker-Smith
Erin Uhelski
Andrica Underwood
Wren Wilson
Tom Zimmerman