perishables

is a bird
the same as a bear
the same as a tree
or a rock?

they seem to be
without choice,
variations of
space dust.

not biodegradable actors
given to reciting
one prayer, after another
after another

that their character
will go on living
outside
the black-box theatre.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the end of thought

with frozen feet
must we enter blazing fires.

with empty minds
must we tell a thousand stories

on a bully pulpit,
to our old selves
who have long disappeared
from wrinkling faces?

with the end of thought
comes the beginning
of everything else
that we could never

have dreamed.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

The Memory Plane

Perhaps it is too early to tell if
Tomorrow will arrive on time.
Something inside me
Decides to wait and see

If there is a best time to
Sail into the future.

Remember,
Eternal moments were captured
At a time when
Laughing was all there was.

Beauty must somehow have been real too
Undoubtedly lurking in front of us while
Tentatively walking towards our shadows.

It always comes down to collisions

Amongst the broken parts of
Men’s souls and women’s hearts

Forgetting to
Remember what we secretly always knew.
Eventually we will be freed
Even if tied to a tree with a thousand rings.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

invited guest

limb stretched out its fingers
crookedly, gracefully
leading to the tiniest point
where one curled leaf
danced in the air.

it was utterly close to
electrical post
planted downwards
straight and strong,
yet nonetheless dead
from three years ago.

gangly limb believed itself flawed,
limb that had no idea which direction to take,
limb that noticed other birds
perched in an arched line
on post's rubber-coated wires,

hosting one flying visitor at a time
limb felt bird bobble as it sang
so loud
so pure
piercing through tiny forest

the way truth, the sharpest spear,
pierces through a soap bubble
its song being the whizzing
over an army
of deaf ears.

© Christian Williams-Lafrance 2020

a second ago

the minute we
spend here
sipping coffee by a window
feels like everything.

it is our whole life.
it is an unopened package.
it is the minute
we don’t know we have.

the short time
before we take the train
derail,
are airborne and flying.

the minute
where seconds
felt like an eternity.
they were an eternity.

© Christian Williams-Lafrance 2020

The King of Trees

The king of trees
had a conversation with a branch.
Of all the trees there was no greater,
taller, stronger tree than this king of trees.
Branch was just an ordinary branch,
one of many sprawling kinds, with no upward direction.
The two went on to talk, as you might imagine, in tree lingo.
The king told branch that it would not take no for an answer
then continued, that branch should listen and grow upwards like the trunks
who obeyed and were at the heart of the tree's strength.
The king of trees insisted that branch should be less spindly
and learn from the king's example of how to plant his roots deep
then grow straight upwards, towards the cloudy lofts of the great blue sky.
Branch should stop meandering and depending on the great tree for support.
Branch curled inwards. Branch was quiet. Branch bowed down.
Slowly, ever so slowly, branch raised itself to speak.
The leafs fluttered and the great bark on tree trunk grew impatient.
Branch said, "King of trees, I realize that you are tall and powerful.
I realize that I hang on to you with all I have just to be a part of you.
I realize you know me as a weak limb."… All the leafs trembled at hearing this.
Branch went on to say. "I also learned that when fierce winds blow
and the sun casts its light, I protect and create shadows for sheltering small animals.
I learned that branches give tree its beauty and value
and that the king is only the king if the branches all agree.
I learned that every number of years the kings shed their skin and are lonely at the top.
Finally, I learned that branches have arms to embrace this change
to catch, or not to catch, the greatest trees
that are cut down and crash to the bottom, before they are burned for firewood."

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the beggar

where crisp and sharp pictures
no longer exist
dilated memories were clutched
somewhere between a clenched fist
and crumpled paper
with faded pictures.

they were plain,
nothing-in-particular photographs really,
with pointless, cheerful smiles
hoping to fend off
what might surely
come next.

a beggar holding braided cables
pulling a train
filled to the brim
with images and time capsules,
unable to let go
of past mistakes

and random passersby
made of sky,
no longer there to offer assistance
while gently and gradually
floating away
in a hot-air balloon.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

ramblings of a shopping basket

two parallel worlds co-exist
wobbly, yet rolling together
towards a nameless parking lot
through partially broken,
automatic doors.

world one:
panic-stricken bacon strips
soon to sizzle in a frying pan
burning with anxiety
fretting about tomorrow.

world two:
fluffy marshmallows
tranquilly floating
along the river
of no disturbances.

both pointing to
the absolute and unimportant truth:
that everything is either banana
or
not-banana.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

say hello

while meandering around
at the foot
of grassy hills,
or clay cliffs

gradually,
ever so gradually
attention was re-directed
upon hearing gentlest whispers,
to colossal mountains.

where else to learn
we are one degree
from insignificance?

then gradually,
but not so gradually
mind
will say hello
to mortality,

© Christian Lafrance Williams 2020

global shipping

avoidance of pain, forgetfulness,
handfuls of medication,
absent thinking, numb minds.

these were gift-wrapped,
left at the doorstep of modern dwellings
then picked up quickly.

all was paid for in advance,
brought directly from hypermarkets,
from warehouses with incredibly large inventories

of unwrapped states of mind,
pre-packaged awareness,
dizzying amounts of sense deprivation.

was it ever under question
that fuel made from fossils
might one day spring a leak

after powering mass machinery
leaving adults children and even pets
wanting more?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

prayer to a cloud

For lack of a better word named heaven
that resides just below these drowsy feet
and the ground puffed up like muddy leaven
rises up in curved mounds for us to greet.
Earth, metal, fire and wood. The elements
supposedly that made us what we are
brought together in special arrangement
by delicate ether married with tar.
Who knows exactly what I believe in?
if I can't see one foot ahead of me
golden coins that flipped and odds are even
that they land near some forsaken fruit tree.
Is this the moment names are called out loud
and I recite a prayer to a cloud?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

a plain life

as bees will hover around a flower
then fly away in a perfect straight line
towards the fields that i have claimed are mine
yet where i've been for just a single hour.
and in that hour done so very little
other than touch the tops of wheat and chaff
while honey made from golden rods will laugh
at my stumbling walk with knees so brittle.

you have stood there all along watching me
gods who cared but have not shown your presence
as i tripped on rocks and bumbled forward
in the general direction of a tree
with branches bent over next meal's pheasants
and plain lives lived beside apple orchards.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

ears to listen

at that very moment of letting go
there was a faint sound
of acorns falling,
thumping
on moss-covered ground
in random places.

at that very moment of letting go
there was a faint sound
of breath escaping
into the night air
as a sleepy chest
sunk into the unknown.

at that very moment of letting go
there was a faint drone sound
of a vacuum cleaner
then the strangest silence
that came afterwards
gifts from the sky.

at that moment
surrender seemed as if inevitable.
could that moment
be this moment?
the part in the dream
where i wake up?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

fallen trees

roots in the ground
boots on the ground
leaves blown away
I see

there we stand
with axe in hand
sheepish
as can be.

the plan from birth
was scorched earth
then backward march
retreat.

with silly smirks
like captain kirks
on some space
odyssey

where metal cars
could reach the stars
the milky way
might be

the closest place
the human race
would race away
to flee.

flying pigs that talk
fish that walk
is as likely
that will be.

so we stitched our futures
up like sutures
thinking safe is what
they'll be.

how to know?
when seen from low
the way that insects
see,

a giant's path
is the aftermath
of all the
fallen trees.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

not virgo, windborne

earthenware. golden wheat.
the silver age when the gods
fled to olympus.
this is not the virgo of this
late-summer day.

today is rather
the sweetest beginning
where kind words soar up
piercing through clouds,
gliding at mach speed

to reach, as a feather reaches,
softly on ears
allowing only gentle thoughts to penetrate
where forgiveness and warmth are celebrated
like a birthday.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

birthdays in august

when lions are born
to call them big cats
is such a simplistic name
for complicated
apex creatures.

in the month of august
lions are born.
they may walk among us
slowly,
carefully, precisely

while children play
with stuffed, toy-lions and tigers
in the year of the tiger,
in the month of the lion
with wild imaginations.

they may even grow up
to the ripe age of ninety or so.
what is power and beauty?
if not to walk across the globe,
fully present and alert

and with each
confident step
to know another step will follow
even better
than the first.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

sheet of paper

a sheet of paper
was scooped up by the wind
and everyone ran
to catch it.
no matter,
it was an unwritten page
in an unwritten book.

    it blew and landed near a picnic table
    scratched up and carved
    with anonymous messages
    of last-ditch hopes
    that wouldn't matter,
    but for anyone sitting there
    to read them.

a sheet of paper
was crumpled into a ball
and thrown to the wind for no one
to catch it.
no matter,
it was an unwritten page
in an unwritten diary.

    it rolled and stopped beside a foot
    under the picnic table
    carved with beat-up swiss knives
    messages of love
    that could only matter
    to someone sitting there
    alone and hungry.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

unstoppable vacation

someone will be walking
along the shores tomorrow
searching for smooth pebbles and
washed-up vertebrae.

someone will be born tomorrow
opening eyes
near a newly discovered heart
of the old city.

tomorrow,
someone will be washed up
and ready for sleep
dreaming of today.

the today surrounded
by good books, good eats
pink umbrellas
and service.

the today, thinking of Plato
who rarely travelled
and had no idea
there are flight restrictions.

today, the one touchable day
that is entirely
unpredictable
and unstoppable.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the chains are rusted

near a frozen, cold window
where crisp winds have blown all night
near the toaster and the frying pan
is someone i do not know

who woke up, got ready to leave the house
on some kind of wheels
thinking intensely of everything, anything
and nothing in particular.

close by was the punch, the grey clock
and a burning fire
where metals burned
and chains were built all day long.

each link shared a similar destination
as if forever holding hands
not letting go
until the chains rusted through,

dropped to the ground
and allowed this gate to swing open.
as i remember it,
i walked through

and felt such freedom
not thinking of people who made such things,
not knowing what was next,
seeing the horizon for the first time.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the flight of birds

no cloud formations
no picture stories
it was calm as calm can be.

i saw no ghosts,
yet eerie silence
had taken over me.

out of nowhere
magic hats
beheld a single deer at peace

as i blinked
then looked the other way,
it became a flock of geese.

though shapes may shift
in magic shows
on playgrounds in these fields

i realize
my eyes were closed
before secrets they revealed.

vision is a funny thing
since creatures,
the ones not often seen

appear just like
fresh thoughts shown here
yet always here have been.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

torn laces

five bells have rung
awakening old shoes
worn, used and
ever-patient.

I wonder whether these shoes
will take me
to the highest point
of the day

or sit quietly
without
my ever
taking notice?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

agendum

when you ceased being clever
stopped outwitting,
convincing
whomever.

when you brought to a halt
showing thoroughly
how you observed
every fault.

when you brought to a close
guffaw careers
in social spheres
dressed in matching clothes.

when you've done all that, and some
lie on your back
close your eyes
your work is done.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

polished pebbles

should we appeal to the tiniest
of particles?

pray for hearts
not beating?

bow down
to shimmering afterglows?

listen closely for smallest
vibrations?

or stand still,
wait?

for polished pebbles
and the whole rushing river

to smash into this ocean
of silence.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

waves

waves of air
tidal waves
disappear in sand.

radar waves
sonar waves
desert waves on land.

micro waves
heat to boil
coldest arctic ice.

trending waves
magnetic waves
waves that wave precise.

second waves
pandemic waves
throw a sucker punch.

hit their mark
grit their teeth
then listen for the crunch.

oscillating
back and forth
waves fill up the sky

but heaviest waves
of all the waves
are waves that wave goodbye.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

touché

the forest feeds me
protects me.
the forest is my lungs
breathes with me.
teaches me.
it shows me how to
be still.

the forest leads me
rock by rock
tree by tree
leaf by leaf
to the the very essence
of calm acceptance.

beam of light
gets through
tree cracks
touches my forehead.
reminds me.

reminds me
to look up.
reminds me that this forest
salvaged the day.

reminds me
while as hard as they tried
concrete, glass
planks of wood, I-beams
did not
pave the way.

we will breathe
we sit
we lie
we swim
into great oceans
and mingle with
moonlight.
touché
spirits are now free.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

melancholy flying

did we arrive here
by broom,
tornadoes
or fantasy
sleigh rides?

as far as anyone can see
we are looking down from above
at tiny broken squares,
splinters
and twinkling city lights.

eventually
nature will teach us
how to turn our elegant junkyards
into
english gardens.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

endless mile

while we were looking
for better choices
deciding which roads to take
and what path to make our first step

while we were figuring out
which items would serve us
and what we could jam into
a fifty pound case

while we were fleeing the moment
and looking ahead
at infinite possibilities
of what came next on tight agendas

while we waited impatiently
to see what method of transit
was ideal
for our compulsion to arrive faster

when at the beginning
of that one-mile journey
we began to notice
another mile

waiting for us
waiting to tell us
waiting to make it known
that below our feet

was a conveyor belt
on an endless
running
machine

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

floating hands

these cupped hands
hold ideas
dilemmas, broken thoughts,

memories,
aspirations of becoming
and wonder

as they rest on my face
like a van Gogh
Painting.

these artist's fingers
swept through
space

on their way to
a time-worn forehead
followed by soft palms.

can it be true?
can it be true
that this entire life

existed behind curls of hair
bowl-shaped bone
and tender eyes?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

Masquerade

Day 1:
veils worn thin
at this crowning ball.
everyone dances
with covered faces
at parks, hospitals and
indoor places.

Day 2:
eyes wide open
in global masquerade.
everyone takes chances
comes home to zoom
tells their story
in the other room.

Day 3::
one would believe
this day is done.
everyone in trances
as they waltz to schools
or empty halls
on a ship of fools.

Day D:
some boarded planes
flight vid19
everyone giving second glances
with baggage overhead
carry on. carry on.
till we go to bed.

Today:
veils worn thin
at this crowning ball.
everyone dances
with covered faces
in the most remote
uncanny places.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

breathe

where were we?
oh yes,

contemplating a universe
of simple
violet wildflowers
looking at me intently
all asking the same question.
who am I?

Are we such complicated beings
complicit to the destruction
of the impossible?

destruction of the air
those wildflowers
breathe?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

milkweed

each summer the milkweed field
remembers to return

tangled. densely populated.
spellbound.

greenest of grass
grows along side the milkweed

in this loamy fertile patch
below the horizon of age-old rolling hills.

lovely wildflowers invite small birds
to attend this slightly overpopulated party of milkweed.

creatures, respectful and socially distanced
are mask-less and wander through the grasses.

foraging innocently, they seem in a trance
without paying attention to this day of haze.

there are no more than ten to a group
as hedgehogs, squirrels and racoons

follow carefully laid-out rules made up for them
by who knows who?

westerly winds have bent milkweed stems slightly towards me,
while all growth is pointed towards the sky

as if asking for help to understand
why this magnificent wild field

complies to the will
inside the fences

of unknown
land-owners.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

a tray of ashes

while eight arms
of an octopus
lay hidden
at the bottom of
the sea

a thousand expressions
of my life
lay in a tray of ashes
of what once
was me.

while normal things
like the spin cycle
of a washing machine
turned my life
around

a thousand fish
a thousand thoughts
quickly changed direction
without a single
sound.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

tiny sparrow

tiny sparrow
pay me a tiny visit
in the corner
of my eye

tiny sparrow
won't you fly
to the top
of the highest tree?

then soar down
past nest and branches
to meet me
from the sky.

tiny sparrow
don't you weep
as you breeze
through trees.

tiny sparrow
stay alive
through flames
trees burning hot

tiny sparrow
sing your song
give it all
you've got.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the cloud challenge

how large
is a single cloud
staring down
above my head?

the same cloud
laced with racing thoughts
beside my pointing finger
floating
to who knows where.

how large is that
single cloud
white with dread?

as it halts me
from seeing
empty
black, space
where astronauts travel.

clouds may be the size of nations
where lines are blurred
ever-changing
and cannot be grasped
more than a floating
thought

but this cloud
boxed and packaged
inside an open window
knows i cannot see
beyond the horizon
and smiles.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

universal kitchen

running water near a basin
buckets made of steel
rubber hose with metal taps
on a trough where I will kneel

earthenware on earthen floor
lever near a well
digging up a garden patch
to the ringing of a bell.

burning fire, smoke and salt
single iron pan
chair of wood and table worn
deserted jar of jam.

melted wax of dripping candle
stone-soup is burning time
in the last surviving kitchen
deep within my mind.

in flaming hardwood ovens
my beliefs have risen up
cooked and baked on pyrex plates
and poured into a cup.

there I drink it all at once
to worlds hidden in my brain
as I appeal this final meal
to remove the balls and chains

in this universal kitchen
of universal pain
was George Floyd free, under the knee
to call his mother's name?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

a symphony of musicians

a symphony of musicians
soar through the sky, carefree
in wide unfettered circles
that are part of a giant, magnificent smile.

arriving from all directions, almost blushing
they land gently
on outstretched, grey branches
near the lush, busy forest where I stand.

faint sounds, wood creaking
might exist in the far distance
where extended lineups await
over hanging power lines.

brimming diversity of talent
and colourful outfits of all styles
fill this rich, blue air
with mesmerizing harmonies.

there must be thousands in one tree alone
calling out from this unmarked place
to the moss and golden grass alike
with resounding, deafening presence.

I cannot hear my own thoughts
only the thunderous din
made by these feathered maestros.
the beautiful birds of Spring.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

20/20 vision

circling crows above my head
look out and far away
their beady eyes reflecting red
night falls this end of day.

cracks of earth that once had bled
with blue-blood out of streams
are dried and all but barely dead
together with our dreams.

onto old and creaky beds
decayed ceilings have collapsed
scribed swiftly onto backs of heads.
ceiling cracks are future maps.

universe transcendence is said
to have 20/20 vision
while birds swoop down for scraps of bread
their instincts make decisions.

circling crows above my head
look out and far away
a fight is hanging by a thread
between this night and day.

as hemispheres of light do shed
on earth and lit-up brains
the very thing that we so dread
in real-time feels no pain.

so all that's left is here instead
as shelter is in place
where nurses, doctors and the meds
are last to see our face.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

hardly remembered

hardly remembered
meandering, dirt path
buried in childhood trees
with flat stones,
stepping across a brook.

turned into an eight-lane highway
and a monstrous bridge
both driving a wedge
into the heart of what once was
a tiny village.

nothing
compared to my standing
in the middle of the road
compelling a choice
to walk directly ahead or turn straight back?

feeling the air of a butterfly
land on my outstretched fingers
that was just a second ago
moving in all directions
free as a bird.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

a rumination

not
who am I?

rather,
what am I?

when
thinking at a million miles an hour

all
while sitting on a glacial rock

not
even knowing

that
I am there. sitting.

What
is the difference between that

and walking
further and further away

from
slowly fading breaths?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

if houses

if houses were not electrified
would they not be as empty shells?
stronger-built and complex huts
perhaps plotted with water pumped from a well.

then paper-bound books might matter.
burning wood would not be a decoration
news would be by word of mouth
out of guillotine windows, the place for live action.

night lights would be the constellations
combined with vibrant, lit up dreams
moving water would be powerful
and neighbours would materialize.

if houses were not electrified
i would sit
i would listen
to the sound of silence.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

invisible seeds

the rise of the flood
is ever slow
like the rise of the tide
the inch will never know.

crowds assembled in gyms
where protection is sealed
the impossible witnessed
in their eyes was revealed.

united will nations be
when f.e.m.a. appears
and people have lost
what may not have been theirs.

stripped down and standing
houses went for a swim, then a walk
now home is air too cold
and a page from a book.

a soaring old bird
made friends with a drone
studying life below
and what's been un-done

to stare into space
to not know what is next.
what is the best answer
on the open-book test?

cots lie here in wait
for connection and help
beside generators humming
bottled water on yelp.

it may be a big day for Uber
when trying to leave all this mess
as west goes to east
while east goes west.

still as water slowly moves upwards
towards a laughing Valhalla
stiff pains and soreness will be drowned
in a heavenly gala.

will we then gather round and form a circle
to honour the past
and prepare for a future
that may not last?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

the colour of ashes

repeated memories
burned a hole
through a dusty dreamcatcher

of holding hands,
of looking out windows,
of seeing a thousand paintings
of Spring

disappear
little
by little

into dried leaves,
into tilled ground,
into fires that just went out,
into ashes

that have forgotten
about
their true colours.

thin air

robins are not walking
on flattened grass,
not looking for missing worms.

they are songbirds
not flying
in the un-air

not moving,
and not
not-moving.

they are little zen masters
not thinking
about me

quietly
not-wondering,
yet wondering

how long
they will
stay perched

on a grey fence post
before they entirely
disappear?

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020

Look at me.

Look at me. Here I am,
said the child to the bird.

I want to chase. I want to run.
I want my laughter to be heard.

Look at me. Can you see
that you have caught my eye?

Tiny bird, don't fly away.
Let me show you my surprise.

His name is bud. He loves to purr.
He loves to notice you.

Please just stay. Don't fly away.
Let me tell you what I'll do.

Little bird I am the child
who will hold you with my hands,

squeeze you a bit, then flap your wings
to make you understand.

I'm just a child and you need
to have a family cage.

It will make you sing with such a ring
as to mistake it for deep rage.

No matter, I am a child
who loves to chase and run.

I can do no wrong as you sing your song
nor pay for what i've done.

© Christian Lafrance-Williams 2020