Empty closets

A Small Residue
of Happiness

abides like a cheap glaze
sprayed onto a piece of glass,

perpetually staring
back at me.

Less than skin-deep
shadows follow me

While living in
a divine loop,

Day in
day out.

Then,
Presto.

Me and you.
An age-old deja vu.

Reincarnated
over and over.

The waxed and the waned.
Till nothing is left,

but droplets of DNA
dissolving

into the dark ocean
of salt and silence.

Can we not be content
living as empty closets?

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THE UGLY GOOSE

The ugly goose had many sisters
Who gathered round a certain mister.
The sisters played all night and day
While ugly goose just watched them play.

Then ugly goose said “that’s enough!”
I am made of better stuff.
I’ll be mean and get some blisters
Like the meanie ugly sisters.

She stretched her wings so big and tall
And towered high above them all.
The ugly goose, not dim or dumb
Persevered to win and won.

She took the spot of other birds
Now sitting there not seen or heard.
Their sweetened calls were put to rest
And never did they get to test

Because goosey goose with her loud squawk
Resembled meanie ugly hawks
Like hawks that played on other teams
Coached by big birds not too lean.

Goosey goose then flew away
And never played beyond that day.
She went far north without a friend.
Her story was not heard again.

Meanie birds who, filled with fear
Pitter out and disappear.
Gentle ones that care for others
Freely fly and stretch their feathers.

Years did pass for ugly goose
With rocker, fireplace and shoes.
She thought about her early years
The pain, rejection and the tears

Transformed to wisdom and compassion
Her northern life and meagre rations.
Great grand children gathered round.
Ugly goose had beauty found.

Sometimes she still wants to play
with all those meanie birds one day
And tell them they have beauty too
when beating hearts smile as they do.

Instead she let it all go by
like floating clouds up in the sky.
Then she made a figure eight
before she wandered through the gate.

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in this room

In this room
ordinary objects stake their claim
a Van Gogh wicker-chair lookalike,
a three-inch thick wood desk, that was picked up from
a trashy street many years ago,
fixed up and sanded down,
but never expected to last this long.

there are also other benign objects
of worthless value.
an old filing cabinet
filled with unimportant documents
in the end.
books that were probably read too slowly
and some never read at all.
a suitcase for a trip
not quite taken yet, but soon.

sweep around.
notice flaking paint and pictures of people
no longer present.
just frozen with transfixed smiles
even hanging slightly crooked
there on the wall
just enough to annoy.
there is also one more item
not considered until today.

it’s the letter opener on the dresser
just lying there
waiting to be used.
but there is no envelope
there is no letter
only wishful thinking
for pure enlightenment
which left
through the creaking door.

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TRINKETS

little trinkets worldly goods
hung from cosmic trees
whose roots went deep below the wood
their branches high and free.

little trinkets of my mind
a collectors treasure feast
swayed back and forth like highway signs
blowing west then blowing east.

little trinkets of my life
hounded till I'm buried
with travel, house and trophy wife
the one i never married.

just the trinkets stayed behind
as i turned into the ether
nowhere did they ever find
trinket heart of trinket breather.

almighty trinkets worshipped us
custodians of their soul
did these trinkets bring us happiness?
make us young when we were old?

countless factories of tinker toys
and countless trinket junk
were given to the girls and boys
till they were trinket drunk.

swimming in a pool of trinkets
before our exit out
we wrote with blood and black-ink jets
as if stuff could give us clout.

then i shifted eyes to heaven bound
where trinkets disappeared
not a movement not a sound
in this vacuum could be heard

and now I'm staring into space
where a trinket isn't worth
one fraction of a loving face
imprinted on this earth.

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the fall guy

i made a choice along the way
i'm not sure when or where?
i want to rise, to seize the day
climb up the massive stair

break through the skylight on the roof
i wanted clearer views
i wanted to be bullet proof
go some place like timbuktu.

i examined closely the road ahead
and saw some people walking
eight billion strong were marched and led
to a door that's built for knocking.

the hour glass of pure white sand
is mostly at the bottom
whatever left is in my hand
the season now is autumn.

in some manner, i chose a path
with questionable resistance
reeling in the aftermath
i had no concept of the distance.

perhaps i opted for a simpler life
the one i did expect
a home, employment, children, wife
it seemed picture perfect.

one small thing that i forgot
did not take into account
it seems like such an afterthought
i have no story to recount.

i took these feathers i've been given
blew them out and let them fly
standing with booklet instructions
and the mighty question why?

it must be i secretly want
a covenant with nature
and so try my hardest not to taunt
the one we named creator.

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little giants

tree branches delicately move
as they feel their way
like blind men's canes
waving out in slow motion.

trees speak the first language
of putting their ears to the wind
listening for shuddering leaves
ruffling feathers, quiet whispers.

an ancient oak proclaims
to a clear sky that it will live
till tears of rain
stream down in steady flow

and make the transformation
from unsung friends
to wild flowers of hope
to fluorescent-coloured songbirds.

a perched crow's intelligence
does not outweigh
the simple innocence of a child
climbing trees and giants.

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global warming commandments

the ocean hangs on a blade of grass.
glaciers clink in our water glass.
beads trickle down our freezing fingers
rock-hard bread not good for bingers
taken out of cupboards bare
above our tent, the ozone layer
made from polyester, nylon threads
ten inches high, above our heads.

river punch flows from these springs
toxic cocktails, amongst other things
walking crooked, confused of mind
we over-stepped white highway lines.
got in the car and drove off fast
but not too far… ran out of gas
got out and walked, through smoke and stacks
of fear, regret - more time elapsed.

global warmth, the red-faced sun
dialed up the heat, called nine one one
commanded us to meditate,
to scrutinize the path we take.
laurentian forest flies and bugs
wandered like a band of thugs
as we camped immune with comfy chairs
left water running, went upstairs.

slept beneath the canopy
of comforters, hot cups of tea
woke up, still our eyes were closed
fell back asleep and so we dozed.
the storm that raged inside our dreams
assembled painful memories
it brought us to where judges courted
cold water splashed, faces contorted.

global commandments two to ten
are like the first, told time again.
pebbles smoothed by tears of love
learn to accept and rise above
in spite of sinking river beds
where stones lay down their weary heads.
could this last pebble in my hand
become a symbol, new-found land?

stars will twinkle, above blackened air
behind thick clouds, this single prayer:
may I walk towards a golden light
holding a lantern in desert night
with every creature, running, flying
crashing, banging, slowly dying.
let them awaken, find their way
across the shore, warm sun-filled days.

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eight billion sleep

all the children
sing one song.
all the birds
sing one song.
all the sounds
come together
in one harmony.
one song.

but we the deaf.

hear only the song
stuck in our heads
the one
that we can’t shake out,
the one
that bleeds
salty tears
into our heart

it is the song
of our mind
drowning
in white noise
until there is nothing left
but a silent
silent
coming together
of two eyelids.

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citynews

give me a moment to tie my shoe.
the laces are undone and the knots are loose.
wait a moment so i can place my ear
flat on the freezing cold rail track.
and hear the faint hum.
slow and sure
of a train coming.

allow me to lift my head.
I see one faint line of the industrial section
where stacks of smoke
and cubes of sugar
are dropped together into
a styrofoam bottomless cup
steeped with coffee and boiling water.

Let me stare down
into the black puddle
where grey clouds have lost their way
and my reflection is a shadow
of what once was
and may never be
again.

liberation is always laid on the counter top
in exchange for nickels and a handshake.
like a deal gone wrong
that can all be made better
with a toast at the end.
so then let us raise our cup for lush green parks
in exchange for lush green dollars.

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WHO

Who took these years, days and moments
Put the whole lot into the blender
Till they have became indistinguishable
From one breath
Issued from this heart?

Who snatched these pure memories, innocent giggling and without thinking
Took an in-breath, blew them out through the ring
Till they became translucent soap bubbles
Floating outwards
Into the random hand that protected me?

Who picked me up and shook me till the coins fell out
Hung me on a hook like an old jacket
Told me to listen
From the very bottom of my frail ignorance
To highest summit of what didn't seem possible?

Looking down and deep into the well
Feels the same as looking up into the bluest cobalt sky.
Lowering a wood bucket does bring up the riches
Of cool spring water
To a man thirsting for a light in his eye.

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