# forest hides

branches, bark, thickets, leaves
thicker than the woolly weaves
of sweaters worn by time-space thieves
in forest that my mind conceives.

very little light gets through
these trunks of trees that block the view.
though virgin forests are nothing new
to grey-haired birds that saw skies blue

forest blocks the prickly pass
of would-be walkers moving fast
to find the other side of glass
facing mirrors of their past.

forest walls that shook hands with clouds
were deaf to seekers not allowed
to cross the yellow tape of frauds
posing as a lesser god.

all forests that I've seen take turns
to feel the spark and then to burn.
lessons await for us to learn,
rebirths of forests are never mourned.

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# shells and deer teeth

hard things seem to forever last.
though hardest thing of all, it seems,
is letting go of past.

inching down tricky mountain paths,
no more than strolls through garden parks
in the face of people's wraths.

though splints and broken bones have on occasion happened,
they are soothing, oiled balms
next to identities misshapen.

welcome are the worlds that represent who we would be,
where hardest shells of all to break
are ropes from which we're free.

mindfulness sometimes embarks on a journey all its own.
more than hardest, tempered steel,
may it live deep inside our bones.

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# discussions in a garden

tree branch reached out
to empty swings.
tree understood English, I felt sure.
swings responded
by slightly rocking.
each of them seemed  innocent and pure.

take a seat
swing seemed to say.
any place will surely do.
brace yourself for knowing breezes
to move you and to sway.
ignore the why’s. think only of the who’s.

who you are, a fleeting moment
to be fast revealed.
messages swung from rusty chains.
tree branches call in every language
as thoughtless words fly off the wheels
calling out our names.

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# waves

there were several goodbyes
before we stepped away
from a mountain of lifetimes
piled days on days.

counting unconnected tries
rang in our ears, as if from another,
blowing through wind chimes
with your fathers and mothers.

there were numerous partings.
they felt to us the same
as they did when we were starting.
from where we left, was where we came.

turning trenches into gardens
sun-locked steps would lead us well.
no apologies or pardons.
no countless, whispering farewells.

the goodbyes that we missed,
ones that disappeared in air
though seemed never to exist
did feel our presence there.

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Sonnet number one

Songbirds and blooms have gone and flown away.
So with them, innocence has disappeared.
In tightly woven nests where eggs were laid
Fluttering hearts and wings were faintly heard.
Fingertips reached out, pointing to night skies.
Saw blazing comets burn behind soft locks.
While tracing silhouettes with loving eyes,
Birds returned, circling the moon in flocks.
If only I had known the flight of birds
Had signed our names with feathered pens in air,
I would have sought for all the missing words
As paper blew in winds that didn’t care.

Our lives were bound by unseen turtle doves
Cooing far away, asking us to love.

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Sonnet number two

Taking back harsh words so quickly uttered,
Impossible as un-filling a cup.
Lips below a sunken gaze will mutter
Just before heavy, weighted eyes look up.
A universe of regrets appear as
Orbs circling seemingly downcast heads.
Lightning-thoughts, pierced clouds, floating in the past
Evaporate, till nothing left is said.
It is in that rare and precious quiet
When hurricanes of fear, despair, are lost
That we can stand up and walk through eyelets.
Sense miracles, the ones that matter most.

Tempests, hail and climate change, live inside
As much as purest love in bubbles hide.

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Sonnet number three

Were promises made, ever made at all?
Spoken oaths declared, only meant for now.
No futures more than see-through crystal balls.
Witnessed from far away, there were no vows.
Children were born in spite of what was said,
Or not said. it made little difference.
Two innocent souls lying on a bed
Understood words on parchment made no sense.
Watching lights flicker, staring at ceilings.
Was it a sign of no-things to come?
No need to bicker when void of feelings.
Nothing was even there to come undone.

Are permanent Illusions ever real
When all along we’re solely meant to heal.

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Sonnet number four

Mirrors reflected nothing of our deeds.
Intentions lurked somewhere in our eyes.
Who we were drifted in cloudy skies.
Our racing thoughts swinging from tree to tree.
Little could we know with eyelids sleeping
We would travel here without a suitcase
And for the first time see each other’s face.
Slowly, ever slowly, love was creeping.

Gray hairs would never see themselves today,
Though winds would blow our hats to river shores.
Rare gems were deeply hidden in our gaze.
This instant was the one we need no more.
We disappeared as children run and play.
Then near day’s end, return through open doors.

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Sonnet number five

Music between two sounds were not heard today,
Blanketed by snow, over resting places.
Snowmen standing still, need not count their paces
as they hear the din of schoolyard children play.
Crystal snowflakes fell as tiny bombers may
Over fields, white and pure as mother's graces.
Toy soldiers looked with expressionless faces
At icy rows of dreams, flowering in May.

What could be the fate of newborns first true cries?
A wish unconscious, to feel life's weightless march.
Towards wisps of snow on grey- rock mountains high,
Then walk in step, heads raised through stony arch.
Humility seeks a rustic bed to lie
Reminiscing next to snowmen's beating hearts.

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Sonnet number six

In silent rooms are the loudest chatters.
At night, we are all same hues and colour.
Porous walls let particles of matter
Through and through their skin of palest pallors.
Most humble buildings are themselves alive.
They too must breathe first and final breaths.
Spaces careless if we stumble or thrive.
For they felt each and every kiss of death.
Let us not think of such morbid topics
When life itself hails us down in wet streets,
Rushing to airports headed for tropics
Where sun-kissed beaches gently touch our feet.

All dreams have a hand reaching down to hold.
As child looks up to never grow old.

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# Sonnet number seven

Every time a truth lies still, it doesn't.
Truth rather hides in corners up ahead.
Words uttered tell nothing of what was said.
A fact may have seemed true, yet it wasn't.
Dear friends departed one, by one, by one.
Though strangely, more than ever they are near.
Foolish thoughts dance on heads for none to hear
While illusive truth appears to be gone.

Tear off adornments. Nothing's left  to see
Except my chisel's carving inch by inch.
Faces were forged. Portraits of once-was-me
Looks up to teal skies of purple finches.
Wood chips are stripped away for none to see
So I may feel truth's finger's gentle pinches.

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Sonnet number eight

Was it a cloud or a piece of cotton?
Not sure if my eyes were open or closed.
Walked down to the fridge but I’ve forgotten
In the deep of night. not sure what I chose.
Was it pillows and sheets, or drifts of snow?
Glass, steam and mirrors looked oddly the same.
Fingers wrote a blurred word I didn’t know
Would be etched in me and become my name.
Was I lost in a game of hide and seek?
While headed for the door to take a bath.
Whether water flowed from a spout or creek
It pulled me downstream to this nameless path.

This humble night I cherish and love so,
Will also turn to day and have to go .

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Sonnet number nine

Sand dunes smooth as far as aged eyes can see
Have not a crinkled brow or pensive lines.
Warm breezes felt by low-bending palm trees
Blew gently by, past former selves of mine.
Mollusks, conches, shells, quietly await
On empty beach where footprints softly fade,
To hear the sound of horns announce their fate
Near past lives unseen, hidden in the shade.
Memories and warmth intermingle here
Where sacred water gurgles are child's play.
Plastic pails and castles all disappeared.
Ships, horizons, sails have gone their way.

Mythical maiden of bronze does smile back.
North Star beckons and shines beyond night's black.

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a tribute to andy

cans of soup hung on the wall
aren't cans of soup at all.
dried-up ink on paper bills
only speak of people's ills.
garbled sounds that pose as words
may as well be chirps from birds.
trapped in an elevator one notices things,
while staring at a useless ring.
buttons, numbers, lights gone out
someone coming. is there doubt.
standing seems the thing to do.
imaginings appear out of the blue.
the feel of linens, fabric dyes
are cotton whites and shoes untied.
coronavirus masks, long disappeared
not moving up or down in here.

cans of soup, being what they are,
the boring things, a pan, a jar,
plastic numbers on brushed-chromed plates
tell us of their simple fates.

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# membership to a sidewalk

it felt quite safe walking alongside
quiet, imperceptible
e-cars and scooters
breaking all rules.
they appeared to know
what they were doing,

walking could near a standstill,
heading towards
nowhere-in-particulars.
it felt like a shuffling pace
in the face of
impatient cyclists, cutting lines,
delivering who knows what
to who knows who.

no one expected billowing air
caressing soft cheeks
to be displaced
by a plank of wood
swooping down
from tenth floor construction after which,
clutching to the straight lines of a sidewalk
seemed perfectly normal.

concrete blocks underfoot
spoke to generations of strollers
who might never learn
how would-be flowers and
richly-coloured gardens felt,
under crushing slabs.

sometimes former members of
the sidewalk club
witnessed folkloric ghosts
walking straight towards them
buried in thought
about problems at work.

sometimes the sidewalk
beckoned the very few
to take a sharp right,
discover parallel worlds
that waited for them
since the beginning of time.

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# picture without sound

I remembered my grandmother
somewhere between
countless dancing visions, and
flash-floods of
thoughts per second.

I remembered her
creating memories,
quietly weaving
a large blanket
staring through humble spaces,
through picture frames on self-effacing walls.
staring through far-off mountains
she never took the time to climb.
staring through puffs of smoke and
clouds beyond.

it seemed my grandmother
was able to read the future
of her grandchild
sitting on a see-saw
gradually moving up and down.
curious about the other side
where wrinkled maps
with piercing blue eyes
looked back.

they were my grandmother’s eyes
they were my eyes.
all the same really.

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# a visit home

a friend came to the door,
stepped inside
I wasn't there.

a friend noticed everywhere
i had quietly stepped
in this old dream house.

a friend sat down
at breakfast time.
saw what I saw.

a friend noticed
the clock not ticking.
a gift of mindful silence.

it was as if something
was about to touch
a shoulder from behind.

a friend may have felt
a curtain of air
shifting by small degrees.

soon, someone would long
for home.
not knowing why.

soon, a friend
would be gone
before i arrived.

soon my eyes would open.
i would see everyone
come and gone.

soon, i would join the friend
who furtively glanced,
quickly, quickly, in the mirror.

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forgotten tomorrows

footpaths, without foot prints
led me to this river
without traces or reflections.
fast-moving waters madly rushed
around rocks and boulders
as if it had somewhere to go.
yet the river stayed with me
near this soft, riverbank
just the same.

i stared deeper, noticed hints
as if i were a diver
seeking underneath perfection
where thoughts were crushed
as the river got bolder.
how could i know
when at the time i couldn’t see
the point was to give thanks
then leave the way I came.

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Impossible kindness

Who could have guessed
We would be born
On a flying pebble
Floating round
A perpetual furnace
Deep in the black of space.

Who could imagine
We dreamt of tomorrows
While sleeping under the
Light of moons.
Quiet, still.
A peaceful place.

Who could have known
Our hearts would beat
So many times before we meet
Some random angel
Who took us on
With grace.

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their purpose was unknown

tea leaves waited in a box.
we both lost count of years.
water boiled in the pot
away from aging shelves.
these tea leaves knew no fear.

tea leaves felt how futures lived
between two fingers pinched.
when placed in porcelain cups,
tea designs revealed themselves
to eyes that couldn’t flinch.

wax paper, crinkled vines of tea,
my grandmother’s bony hands
were floating specks of dust that
seemed to always point to her.
now i understand.

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# As If Peeling Apples

If I unlearned how to tie a shoe,
Then walking down
The forest path
Trodden a hundred times before
Would take me somewhere new.

If I unlearned how to read the Time,
How still I'd be.
Rusted clocks would be discarded.
Suns would rise and set at dusk.
Microscopic glances would outlive eternity.

If I unlearned how to brush my hair.
I'd visit nameless
Mountain summits,
Feel fluttering feathers of a hawk,
Hear birds from my imagination soar.

If I unlearned how to press a Button,
Flick a switch
In worlds that had no chairs to sit
Except boulders by the riverside
Where I'd unlearn how to fish.

If I unlearned  how to speak with tangled words
Tied up in knots,
Decibels and dissonance would fade away.
Then, I'd hear vibrations of a singing bowl
Come ever slowly to a stop.

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A-B

It takes an effort to be a street,
to clear the way
for deep breaths and
countless strides
to intermingle .

it takes an effort to leave home,
travel away
down streets named like newborns,
stopping midway for other newborns.

intersection of lives
sometimes collide
on those streets
that may not think
of the possibilities.

we are strangest organisms
traveling in lines
between here and
dead ends, crescents, avenues.

had we only travelled
on nameless, dirt paths
where dust circled
in front of wandering eyes.

had we only walked slowly
in the direction of
shape-shifting clouds,
where everything disappeared
then reappeared
as beating hearts.

had we only created
small footprints
behind every step
of soft, loving
earth.

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shutter speed

voice shook hands
with wrinkled photographs,
uttered not a word.

picture’s edges slightly torn,
not a voice at all in fact,
ever could be heard.

voice visited cardboard boxes
beside worn-out camera
where dust had rarely stirred.

voice watched its own breaths,
a quiet string of pearls
that one day would return.

voice showed its face
at time of birth.
a light impossible to burn

echoed to the depths of me
standing on a mountain top
holding pictures of a bird.

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# the disappearance of obstacles

sun didn’t know
when it travelled the skies
it would reach my front porch
then step inside.

glass tears that burned
through leaves’ tiny veins
under gaze of the sun
had long known my name.

sun who was present
at the moment of birth
walked down the driveway
by a patch of scorched earth.

sun who recognized me
since twinkling lights
asked me to join them
in the blackness of night.

innocent sun
left through the front door
making its way
along earth’s grassy floor.

resting its head
under shade of a tree
where we both would have rested
in sun’s dreamless sleep.

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the traveller

brown leaf
twists around today.
hanging on, but barely,
to familiar twig.

amber leaf remembers
today's torn-out pages.
a universal language
of season's end.

brown leaf exposes
misshapen holes to light.
this morning's dusk
riding on an aria,
the song of mild winds.

leaf lands on podium today
made of pebbles near a stream.
in a stadium filled
with gasps of air,
leaves see themselves
in a single leaf
becoming self aware.

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# trek

as we looked down
from the top of
the only hill that mattered,
a river of twisty, curvy turns
appeared to us,
odd-looking letters.

this quirky river carved out
endless languages in open fields,
never spoken
but for the constant streams
of murmurs and gurgles.

no one from our group
could sleep on a
bed of stone
hidden beneath flat fields
of mixed wildflowers
swaying together as one,
in light, capricious winds.

wildflowers, grass, and wheat
were never far off,
holding hands
even in august.

when we all reached
a future, random october,
we would feel the shiver
of dust and memories.
we would hear our names called in open air.
we would become the keenest listeners
in the land.

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# light streams

darkness that does come
from the closing of the eyes
is darkness indeed.

minds that close are locked
stronger than thick, wooden doors
barred and rusted shut.

tender hearts are freed
by streams of light through forests
where butterflies flit.

every part of us
disappeared in an instant
gone as gone can be.

then, and only then,
the shape of life was re-shaped
by all we have loved.

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# Un-papered Walls

In the farthest corner of the room,
Sat mother of a not-forgotten son.
Looking back at stirring memories
Disappearing one by one.

In the hollow room of light and shadows
Prism colours danced on walls.
Barely heard was silent breathing.
Hands reached out down empty halls.

On wooden, spindle-stool, a mother sat
Near wallpaper, at back of room.
The door left open just enough
To see days gone by of brides and grooms.

The window waited all its life
To touch the eyelids of wayward sons
In common room where joy and strife
Rolled with the blinds entwined as one.

Corridors and stairs led to the room
where handles turned to open door.
From ceiling high, near crystal lights
Son was sitting by the floor.

Two echoes remained in the room
From where hundreds had departed.
Mother nor son, spoke a single word
In the space where life had started.

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# open plaza

morning crush of clicking heels
played a phantom song on slabs of rock.
a cacophony of fallen pieces
from broken parts of clocks.

chaos moved a rushing mob
across the open, public square.
reflected memories from walls of glass
disquieted mirrors and vacant, storefront stares.

lifting up from clearing fog or smoke
hearts were gently laid to bare.
everyman streamed from parking lots,
rose up from concrete stairs.

echoes played haunting songs in marble lobbies
where hands suddenly stopped elevator doors.
whitewashed dreams were faintly heard
beside industrial polishings of floors.

racing upwards towards air-conditioned  skies,
pressing numbered panels, each floor a ding.
spotted offices, held their breath,
while hastily pacing up or down the wing.

awaiting was a distant, chilling thought
between coffee machines and white noise humming from lights above.
between blinding expanse of cranes, and two fingers pinched,
somewhere lost, was love.

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green space

the thing about robins,
flying around in partial circles
close by,
then fly away again
inadvertently disclosing
the secret hiding places
of worms.

the most particular thing of all,
is when one robin perches
on a crooked,
reckless branch,
stares at me quizzically.
we are frozen.

illuminated robin unmoving,
immersed inside
a standing ovation
of shimmering leaves,
felt the light breeze
of this sometimes observer
brainwashed,
over a lifetime,
until now.

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# walking a circle

the people who do things,
don’t do things,
the people who let fires burn,
travel aimlessly down sidewalks,
mechanically follow
paths of dusty memories
house to house, place to place.

the people I have judged all
in their absence,
the ones who have made
oceans boil,
rivers overflow
with less than kindness.
the people who while grasping seatbelts,
steering wheels
clutched at their heart,
then kept stepping, overstepping.

these people who  knew not,
the same way
inhaling smokers knew not
in the day.
the loud people at restaurants,
the jay walkers,
the annoying ones who never quit,
yet were never fired.
the people I rejected for a lifetime.
the people way out there
as far away as can be.
the people who reluctantly,
are me.

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# a staircase trodden

a steady march, a million strong
of countless footsteps from childhood days,
spoke not a word.
the seventh step of age-old wood
creaked in a language
hardly ever heard or understood.

weighted stairs reached highest pitch
on speechless nights
masquerading as steps made of bones.
an ebb and flow of ivory keys
lay waiting in the living room
with smoother tones, appeased.

bottom steps like newly borns
dreamt of pinnacles at the top.
young middle steps thought they were oldest
without noticing above them where
squeaking steps were rarely heard
by the boldest of the stairs.

handrails seemed to not exist
while they silently watched the stairs.
countless steps were seldom counted on
their incalculable journey high.
staircases that today remain unknown
took eons to reach the sky.

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# in valleys sleeping

we are the unknown
on this side of the mountain
as we cast few shadows
of forgotten stories
in a village built mid-air
beneath the west face.

we are the disappeared
fallen from a precipice
of unremembered dreams.
in our own way
we each landed softly
on grassy patches.

we are the obscure.
hope is wind-blown hair
facing east.
sometimes pinkish mornings and
visions of new days
came our way.

we are the never remembered
below this great mountain
gazing up, knowing full well
we will dissipate
with the nothingness of a smile,
into the remarkable.

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# reach

I am that tree
that took the time
to think of me.
I am that tree
that stood there waiting
endlessly.
I am the tree
that  knew
what I'd  grow up to be.
I am that tree
bearing fruits,
letting go, then falling free.
I am that tree
where each leaf marked one day
as meant to be.

this upright, standing tree
of thickest  bark and
patterns growing
reached out to fledgling birds,
serenaded softly,
songs all-knowing.

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a trickle down

on occasion
I rented goldenrods in august
growing in valleys deep
near crooked, gurgling brooks.

here and there
we rented strawberry moons
on clear nights.

sometimes.
I partly-owned acorns and
broken twigs
freely strewn on blades of grass.

it has happened
I window-shopped days long
for tomatoes in back gardens
taken by deer
to another place.

I remembered what it felt like
to seek
with utmost focus and intention
on balmy nights at darkest hours,
the deal of the  century-

wildest of wildflowers
that slept quietly on beds of earth.
rarest flowers hiding in plain sight
laying in wait,
silently wishing to be discovered
by only the most astute
souls among us.

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# the invention of doors

i held few childhood memories.
certainly not walking,
taking first steps, first words,
first anything.
what would it matter
as i stood
looking intently
at the construction of a
strangely beautiful door.

hinges, thickness, intricate design,
the flowing grains of wood
merely asked, invited,
begged me
to step through it
once and for all.

other doors beckoned
that i just turn the handle,
unlock childhood memories
unconscious and forgotten.
then new and old worlds
might swing open
untold times.
leading me to the next room
in this live minute.

maybe this particular door
smiled
when i recalled
a hundred ancestors
walking through it
almost in procession.

maybe it smiled
when I wondered
if emptiness
was the most important part
of all doors.

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# listicle

piled words and word lovers
stacked one
over the other,
over the other,
crooned behind articles,
digital papers and book covers.

labels and labelers swam
between dashes,
question marks and spaces.
they waited to catch the eye
of all the there I was' and
here I ams.

lists and lists of forgotten places
where few have been
or seen at all
were compiled, crammed,
rolled into balls,
then stuffed into leather cases.

words signed a temporary deal,
shook hands, then walked away.
no return, they turned their backs
until it was discovered
minds filled to the brim with words
would never learn to feel.

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visit to a hallway

louder than echoes
of jostling footsteps
running down
what seemed like miles of empty halls,
was childhood laughter
buried somewhere between cracked, oil paintings
purposely ignored
by all who passed
and the other side of
no-name walls
whom no one
cared to ask.

hallways with arched ceilings,
cartoons of skies above,
were built for those
who faintly believed in dusty blue.
never did a soul
look up
while the youngest among us left zigzag
scuffs on polished stone,
unconscious mobs
forged ahead
above vaulted relics below,
impersonating bones.

a trip to the interior seemed odd
in a hallway filled with deities
looking down at hats,
balding heads and wigs.
a hallway darkened
by tinted glassware and slightly
open doors decorated with bolts
of steel.
meanwhile at children’s
playground outside these walls
were heard swinging, flying ropes and
squeaky wheels.

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# home of glass

every day I was the modern child
waiting for the bus at three.
every day I noticed
cracks in sidewalks
peering back at me.
their shape of strangest  trees
asking if I spotted
torn-off posters
blowing in the wind?
asking if I heard the sound
of constant motors in the din?

I was the modern child
looking far away across the street.
I saw the empty baseball field.
I wondered if games were ever played?
every day I dropped my head
towards my shoes and feet.
to the right my nylon bag
was torn by the hefty weight of books,
empty lunch pail and pencil case.
I thought then, they held knowledge
of the entire human race.

I possessed modern child's arms.
I felt pointy needles protecting me.
no chicken pox, polio
influenza or the measles
would I know.
a child of science I grew up to be.
no rituals were there to speak of.
my only prayer was for the bus to stop
at my bench near walls of glass.
for bus to open its doors, let me in,
was all I asked.

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straight lines no more

they were scientifically
measured.
steps laid out in full.
every detail precision-planned,
micro-planned.
management of the unseen.

at last we were ready.
we breathed in.
our first breath was deep, full,
without reservations.

it was our vacation.
there were considerations.
we dreamt about it.
we practiced it over and over
in our mind's eye.
while poring over a lifetime-desk
of finite numbers,
the paper version of building blocks,
we created perfect vertical
creases
mixed with a splash
of finest vintage
wrinkles.

god knows we were ready for it
as we carried
whatever we had left with us.
we were told to wait
ticket in hand,
near a runway.

we were asked to step
to the other side of a yellow line.
we were asked where we were going?
we had no idea.

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# butterfly, fear not

sky will never die,
never end
while awake in endless wake,
as flighty things. with wings
race through it
for the sake of fickle sake.

the space between
two sparrows,
two fingers touching space
where everything that flies
then lands, transforms
that land into a sacred place.

at last, seen clearly by all
who lick the stamps then mail
unseen, secret wishes, hopes
through invisible air
from naked eye to naked eye
connected by invisible ropes.

the same rope that binds us
creates the nets that catch
the highest, flying prize.
finest threads untie us.
unweave us from cocoons in time.
bring us the simple freedom of the butterfly.

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a universe of hands

I am nothing
if not a mother's prayer
for infinite possibilities
with arms fashioned
to hold
only sweetest
thoughts.

I am nothing
If but an ocean
of heartbeats,
losing count
of times
swimming, dancing, feeling,
the infinite.

I am nothing
more than river's bendy path
inviting fish to feel
the power
of forward currents,
never
to look back.

we are nothing.
if not for two hands,
interlocking fingers
connecting imaginations
then,
with everything
we've got,
reach out.

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alone, not alone

it didn’t notice me,
nor should it have.
it was waddling,
meandering in seven different directions,
oblivious to the world around it,
foraging for food.
that’s what it does.

why would it bother with me?
an observer
strolling out on worn, old soles.
to it, i was no more than a harmless ghost
heading for the garden
to look at the tomatoes,
water a plant or two.
to it, i did not exist any more
than the humming airplane overhead.

it made no claims
on this patch of grass.
it did not contemplate
what would have been possible
if only it had chosen
the path to the right
that was less beaten down
by discarded dreams,
less hammered shut by mind’s eye.

to call it a groundhog
would be inadequate.
it was a window of innocence,
as much as the imaginings
of a tiny child
walking to school
the very first day.

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# when footprints disappear

hiking trips are not my thing.
i don't like fishing by the shores.
i'm not fond of swimming,
i don't like dancing.
parties are a bore.

i'm not a vegetarian.
i leave boats well enough alone.
having memberships
at golfing clubs
feels like carrying bags of stones.

pets don't really interest me.
drinking is a drag.
I don't like joining groups
or dressing up for churches.
rock concerts are aren't my bag.

shopping trips are painful.
sing-a-longs, kill me now.
funny games at picnic socials
are yucky things i dread to do.
watching tv sports brings me down.

the list of things i care not for
is longer than receipts at grocery stores.
perched on a rock I sit amazed.
staring at the forest floor,
as it was a thousand years before
i breathe full breaths and live my days.

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act one:

darkness of mind
is no less delicate
than thin tissue
of eyelids closed.

darkness of night
is billowy cool air
lighter than the whoosh
of a breath on frozen glass
where scripts are ready
to be written on
with the lightness of a fingertip.

in the thickest midnight
a time when blackout curtains
are drawn and
the stage is lit up with
flashing lights,
I dream.

I dream brighter than sunlight and
flashes of lightning.
I dream of soaring over lakes
brighter than diamonds.
I dream of daytime walks
on shadowless streets
in a free world.
I imagine idyllic countryside amphitheaters
where darkness need not play
the hollow bones
of its dancing partner
in masters of war.

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# dissolution

clouds have the strangest faces.
slanting, flying,
deciding
to present themselves
not to me
any more than canny birds
in secret, hiding places
tucked behind a tree.

clouds have no eyes to see.
let them borrow my'n a while.
disappear, reappear, vanish again
from recent memories
not my own.
clouds float where they must
watching me sipping tea
until I'm done.

clouds are the strangest faces.
withholding unfamiliar answers
is what they seem
to like to do.
they are cats, daintily walking
pretending not to notice mouse
scurrying to places
where there is no hawking.

clouds rarely make their choices
between destinations and
evaporations.
intently looking down to witness
lovely, gentle heads.
clouds high, high above
may not have heard the faintest voices
pray at foot of beds.

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define the world

I notice someone looked at me.
now far away and gone.
disappeared from sight you see
saw through me all along.

inside my thoughts unknown to me
were shadows on the ground.
puddles glanced at fleetingly,
lookers nowhere found.

I saw a person watching me
stumble, trip and fall
crash into the only tree
not speak to me at all.

a person stood there knowingly
of self that had grown deaf.
the person shining glowingly
never really left.

the person that had seen me shine
under potpourris of muck
the mud that was itself sublime
watched me fall and then rise up.

I notice someone looked at me
perfect version of myself,
while thousand selves were lost at sea
never called for help.

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forgot the night

we would all be awake with blazing lights and circumstance.
our legs would be solar-powered
for the next ten thousand steps,
ten thousand years.
we would be prepared for the next incredible day.
trusted walls around us
would be shattered
by moving parts
spinning under our feet.
we would press the pedal harder.
we would rocket from east to west

these would be the days
not defined as days,
but rather, breaths
on the journey to the place
where we would close our eyes.

the place that is always humblest.
the place where we would succumb to entrancing dreams
just as bright,
just as dazzling.

all the while
night's sweetened darkness
claiming to be the other half
of our bright, bright day.

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# a sea of lessons

farmland as far
as the eye can see,
and yet, I am looking downwards
next to a shoe print.
protruding slightly,
is a dried-out seashell
on this dried out land.

once this was lake's floor.
once it was an invisible ocean.
once all the water evaporated
into cerulean blue skies.

lost, as I am lost,
rain droplets kept scattering
into nameless winds.

lost, as I am lost
the sound of wind chimes
echoed across the field.

lost, as I am lost
I felt the unfathomable
winds above my head,
while below my feet,
these seashells waited for me
to refuse to listen.
and yet, love me anyways.

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# prayer to a cloud

may heatwaves melt
tiny icicles formed in front of our eyes
half-opened, half-closed.
may tornadoes take turns moving away
north, north, farther north.
may floods, flood our hearts
with hope that comes from reaching
the final two steps atop of the staircase.
may hurricanes fade and lose themselves
in the power of thick, green forests.
may the sweetness of dew
trickle down throats of those
who have called for help.

let entire lifetimes
disguised as flashing moments,
ride tidal waves and tsunamis
while sitting on a chair
with our eyes closed
in stillness.

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# the story of we

minutes, hours, numbers, lines
inventions borne of human minds.
holy grails, stocks, currencies
elusive myths that we are free.

fighter's helmets, row on row
shielded heads from deadly blows.
neuron fires, rampant brains
felt the thousand cuts of rain.

non-existence, a veiny leaf
in the instant letting go of grief
from clutching fingers, veiny hands
fossilized in no-man's land.

no written words from forgotten books,
no minds that dived head first, forsook
burning torches, burning hearts
horses pulling burning carts.

we heard most urgent stories told
return to life, once bought and sold.
travelled the folkloric globe
forever rest in frontal lobe.

the name inscribed on father's boat
"here and now" was sent afloat.
though all his words were lost at sea,
ashes rise inside of me.

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# touch

which way the door swings
depends upon the spot I stand.
between two sleepy bedrooms
looking out through eyelids closed
or looking in from other rooms
at shadows of a former face
covered up by hands.

how the hour glass is placed
depends upon the sands.
top-heavy sifting down is grace.
resting on a squeaking bed,
looking up at empty glass,
I turn it over one more time
with slightly shaking hands.

what time is best to open blinds
gaze through windows at the land
where cities buried countless lives?
yet the ones who mattered most,
cared for us,
transcended place and time,
held out an open hand.

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# the cloud

skyscrapers spear through cirrus clouds
with blinding glass.
shards jutting out from ageless rock,
corner offices dicing up futures
out of buried pasts
look down at winds blowing
through a homeless cardboard box.

staring from the inside, looking out
behind minimalist desks
transporting costly toys,
every spark of life is seen from high,
with little doubt
that mini-gods, are not
grownup girls and boys.

a momentary glare through gorilla glass reflections
from not-actually strangers
shivering in blankets cold,
where holes in socks distract
from seeing the perfection
of tower elevators laced
with hearts of heavy, lifeless gold.

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# vacant storage

i never cared for crooked paths,
sharp left turns or roundabouts.
sliding steps on sides of sand
led me down their sandy hills
till I hit blocks of concrete land.

i never cared for city parks
or empty seats on broken swings.
a single beam of light made its way
so specks of dust
could float confusedly all day.

i never cared for dogs that walked,
not run or jump across the ponds.
glass towers loomed over the plaza
quieter than city rats
that lurk beneath their dazzle.

I never cared for plastic plants
looking  prettier than flowers.
store-windows kept on calling me
to read their signs, see their sights
so empty shelves could set me free.

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Glorious pain

Row on row of mason jars
Perched near window’s glass
Filled with long forgotten scars
Look out at garden’s past.

Broken fence needing repair
Once stood protecting hopes
For roots and greens laid out to bear
Joined with jute and rope.

Tired pathways divide two worlds
Vine fruits and vegetation,
Leafy plants from boxes hurled
Toward un-united nations.

Food that seemed abundant then
Stares back at drying veins.
House of glass from way back when
Used to feel the rain.

Buried is the laughter heard
From children and their dogs
With funny names from funny words
Unknowing war and fog.

Passing bird that glided down
Sometimes cracked a smile
Before ascending back to sunlit crown
Downriver about a mile.

Forgotten was the thinnest dust
Wished away by air
Swirling circles as it must
Wine and spirits didn’t care.

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# terra

explosions of colour straddled beaten-down roads
while trampling mobs dreamt mostly of gold
between molten fires, iron hammers
clanging bells and noisy clamour.
there, cook-shops, tents, buildings, lime
clay-pots, instruments, carpets, chimed.

insistent sellers traded stones.
their hands exchanged with broken bones.
family members, friends and dogs
lived next to horses, hens and hogs.
retired beneath a sunlit crest
on beds of earth heads laid to rest.

pick and shovel, tiny brush
swept away the fine, rock dust.
as worms, explorers, scientists
dug the ground with head and fists,
numbered fragments placed on trays
puzzles of forgotten days

sought what flowers knew all along,
brought back to sunlight sweetest songs.

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# grandfather meet me somewhere

black and white pictures
black and white suits
next to black and white wedding gowns
in front of black and white docks
near shale and glossy lakes.

overcast skies were the norm then.
who would notice?
when all that mattered
was who could be crammed,
who would fit
into a kodak magic box.

you stare directly at me
though you don’t recognize me
opening this album
studying the black and white question.
who are we?

you met me by fluke in a place
that is now here,
slightly smiling at the glass lens.
how could you know your life
lay somewhere between
shutter speed and camera’s flash?

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# open arms

together we fall
while holding hands.
the secret is
we soared as one.

together we fall
night after night.
I kept dreaming of flying till
the world seemed small.

together we fall
tumbling down grassy hills.
soft landings happened
along the way.

together we fall.
we were planets in space
lit by a benevolent sun.
we flew at the speed of light.

together we fall
graceful dancing then bowing low
till we felt in full
the wetness of the earth.

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a perfect morning: 7 haikus

Out of the blackness
A sliver of light is seen
Between two eyelids.

Do heads turned sideways
Think to ask simple questions
Of opened windows?

Will beckoning us
To seize and cherish the day
Get us out of bed?

Will pillows fluffed up
Remind us of our journey
Forgotten last night?

Hearts drifted away.
Thoughts transformed into daydreams.
Streams of water flowed,

As we stepped into
The oh-so very hot shower.
I am a believer

That blue skies
Enter even the darkest closets
Of our ignorance.

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# perfect nothing

air that blows between us
asks nothing
except that we know each other
clearly.

breeze that walks beneath us
looks up to us,
follows us,
home.

breath that holds us high
takes our hands,
joins us that we are
together.

space that is not space
but a solace for ancestors
to speak before they
disappear.

eyes that gaze our fullest gaze
stare back at us.
perfect reflections, mirrors of our
heart.

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# on becoming salt air

how many people have we been
between the blue period
when blue eyes were wide open
and the time when spilt paint buckets
seemed to have a will of their own?

how many characters have we played
between first musical notes where strings
completely unaware of themselves
were plucked,
and the sound of curtains
slowly, slowly,
being drawn?

how many lives have we lived
between tender touches of
mother's hand
and fingers pointing
to surfers dancing on the horizon?

by listening to frothy water
gently dissipate into sand,
by dipping our feet into unending waves
that formed parts of a strange circle,
we knew how many transformations
were  possible.
we knew we had  become more,
much more
than lovely, floating bodies.

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# dreams on paper

every letter of the letter
held its breath then breathed in deep.
heavy seals, red-hot wax
dripped themselves to sleep.

words released from sullen rooms
gave birth to black-ink wells.
contracts written were fleshed out
under ringing of the bells.

stories of illumination were interrupted
by words weaving through the spaces.
memories scribbled down became
countless wrinkled faces.

signatures derived from cursive broods
cradled at the bottom of the page.
then paper lives were crumpled, thrown and burned
so dreams could live a ripe old age.

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# after life

wonderfully crazy streets
blinking with flashing lights
channel mobs
of former hunter-gatherers
to the next intersection,
to the next future,
to the narrowest sidewalk
where funnel vision was born,
directly beside main lobbies.

it happened at a place where
bending  backs were needed
to look up,
see where highest sheets of glass
created spaces
where decisions needed to be made.

decisions about what happens
to so many searching souls,
to myriad hearts
free from pace-makers,
to crowds of question marks
next to bullet-points,
wondering what to do
when all the checks
of the bucket list
have been ticked off?

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# when

flashes of lightning were too slow.
finger-flicks, micro expressions
couldn’t keep up.

the exact moment
dusk turned its back on us
felt like molasses.

those who turned
their gaze away
missed the disappearance
of wolves
behind never-budging trees.

the evaporation of water
that left our mouth dry,
led us to a single question.

when did ninety-nine years
become a millisecond?

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# aujourd’hui

get ready for today
for today has spoken softly
about the thousand things it will do
to make you land on pillows
made of feathers

be ready for the flight.
for today will fly with you
towards the sun, towards tomorrow.
today will clear air masses and
clouds of doubt for you.

be ready. today will hold your hand,
prepare you to walk
into full colours of today.
the today you breathe in,
the today that stole your breath.

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librarian of librarians

you taught me not to read
but to unlock the books
that walked across the planet
with my imagination.

you showed me not to sit idly
but to laugh and drink up the day
with words overflowing
with your quiet exuberance.

you taught me not to live
but to so fully enjoy the presence
of strange donuts and colourful book prizes
mingling together at the same table.

you taught me nothing
but the pure joy of humility
with the constancy of a horse riding over the horizon
beyond rolling, greenest of hills.

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thin paper walls

flowers on a table
smile beside tall windows
silky curtains blowing softly.
none dare block the streams of light, so gently,
each fill the room with gifts,
aroma, light.

the full bloomed flowers sway
with oscillating breezes,
waiting for their dance with the caressing sun,
waiting, to be painted by great painters,
waiting to be loved.

they felt worthy to be cut
with their long stems,
so to be reminded,
of their brief life filled with beauty,
to feel the freshness of the water
one last time,
to make the richness of the earth

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# reverberations

wind chimes play such favourite songs
while wind is blowing good and strong.
metal bells, dancing jigs
dangle together on oaken twigs.

wind chimes disappear from sight
in stillness, in the dark of night.
bumping, banging, creaking bones
heard the bells returning home.

wind chimes wait for second winds
for songs engraved deeply within
empty spaces, faint soft notes
placed in pockets of worn, old coats.

hanging near forgotten racks,
twice as strong, wind chimes come back
to skip and hop, jump up high
celebrate the open sky.

the sky that clears out twisty paths
so chimes may hear the children’s laughs.
their sounds awaken soulful scores
of ecstasy and joy wind chimes long for.

often heard are favourite songs.
these bells of beauty, straight and long
heal every, any broken bone
that some may feel ever-slightly less alone.

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# the tree climber

through snow and slush,
mud and grass, and anything else
a tiny boy's feet could imagine
as they squished and tapped
their way to where
the best tree waited
with thick, open arms,
the ones that wave and smile
high above the ground.

all the boy could see was a house
he would one day build
then live inside that massive tree.
all he thought
was how to climb higher
to get to the smaller branches at the top
which swayed and bent
with the wind's almost silent wings.
all he could do from that time on
was to climb
reaching for the tips that seemed as if to tickle
optical illusions and fluffy clouds.

his imagination,
a raging fire in an iron stove,
watched the tree grow,
let its leaves float to the ground,
then retry, every year,
to be greener than the last.

eventually, the child’s gray hair,
brittle bones and smaller steps
hadn’t even noticed
that his tree house hadn’t  left him
not even for a minute.

their innocence
lived all that time
in particles of air that swirled
then bound them together.

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# the puddle

who could know
a puddle awaited ahead on old trails,
cross-legged, clear as glass?
though rains had ended days ago,
drops of water marched on and on
coming from the mountain pass.

somewhere nearby, ears were bent
over defunct railway tracks.
puddle heard the steps not far away.
determined marching and
flat-footed thumps, foreboding,
could not hear tree branches crack along the way.

puddle-ancestors for generations, sat still
beneath setting suns and moons
dressed up as glass, each time the same.
broken timepieces had been strewn along the way.
marching steps were heard
by wild fish and game.

puddles waited
in silent communiqué
with astral bodies and starry nights.
little did they care for marching boots
splashing through thinnest, darkest water
while they contemplated light.

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microcosms and other things

are grains of wood concealed
deep inside these ancient trees?

does wisdom travel in full circles
in the winter of my life?  i see

faces appear and disappear
on wrinkled lines in palms of hands.

will flowers bloom on these paths i’ve walked
a million times on native lands?

do I hear faint voices blowing in winds
that made no promises to me?

could i possibly flourish on this rocky ground
without the bending of my knees?

sun disguised as blood-red moon,
please keep one eye open in the heart of june.

while I stand here at night in the month of may,
pondering the hidden gold of golden days.

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ticket to somewhere

some strange kind of flat-phone
lit up and beeped together
at the same time.
somehow, then and there
my mind was on New Orleans,
wherever that is?

my mind was a magnifying glass
burning a pointy hole
under an ever-forgiving  sun.
somehow, while staring at
the message
sent by a benevolent god
the room lit up.
lighting up brightly.
lighting up
as in the brightness of dreams.

blinding illuminations
were delivered faster
than the speed of thought.

sending millions,
millions of messages.
from eternity.
from the silence of dark, cold space,
laden with divine sparkles
asking me to answer
my call.

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# creations of air

gnarly branches wait all day.
spindly tips
wave hello
depending whole-heartedly
on breezes
undecided where to blow.

walkers of eager dogs
running in circles, not caring in the least
which way they go
turning in a hundred directions
against winds swirling above branches
and below.

branches wait,
calmly wait
knowing what they know.
song birds that land
then disappear
sing a song before they go.

the kind of music
no one hears
barely ever known
are fearless birds that flew away
stayed on branches two seconds
then were gone.

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# the joy of sound

only with my eyes closed
can I feel the warmth of
oh-so kindest sunlight
march step by step
over rolling, frozen fields
brushing carelessly by nervous
tips of branches.

only with my eyes closed
can I see crystal clear
each micro-expression,
each half-closed eye,
each giant-sized smile
engraved on the
smoothened faces
of weathered, rock walls.

only with my eyes closed
can I hear splashing drips
from icicles celebrating,
composing songs as they land
for those little gods
laughing and dancing on ears
whispering all kinds of wise,
nonsensical things.

only with my eyes closed
did I notice I was living in a dream
where I was able
to slow-down that race
between flashes of lightning,
two fingers snapping together,
and the trembling flower
that is my life.

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# waiting for tomorrow

this winter might have been different
on icy paths and crusty snow.
this winter hopes were frozen
while expectations waited on standby.
this winter thoughts of tomorrow
became blocks of ice, engraved with barely legible words.
sunday morning shivered
as frosty air was vacuumed out of an open door.
this winter might have been different.

six-foot pine trees were thrown into farmer's fields.
decorations were carefully placed one at a time,
in cold storage.
greyhound buses were headed the other way.
everyone is gone.

words exchanged have disappeared.
gifts put to the side
were  forgotten about.
everyone has left.

I hear the wind howl.
I hear cold, empty winds
whisper in frozen ears-
tomorrow is around the corner.
tomorrow is around the corner.
yet today feels like forever.

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# the world is watching

solid door, un-pinned,
leaning heavy into wall
beside broken. wooden frame
is not a door at all.

cold, brass-handle's function
was to turn and hold our hand.
now it waits in plastic ziplocks,
tied by rubber band.

thick-hinged door, a secret-keeper
sunk in walls that are no more
as it waits for demolition
or whatever lies in store.

counters bent and shattered
by the thought of door un-hinged,
charred from burnt-out  fires,
charcoal edges, slightly singed.

wrecking balls who wait outside
are the minds intent on change.
ghosts with empty stomachs
wait in lands that now feel strange.

two tons of metal pounded
where children went to play.
craters were created,
the holes are meant to stay.

I saw it on the flat-screen
so that now makes it true.
I saw it on the telly,
sanitized by pay-per-view.

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# the visitor

i’ve waited by the apple tree
my memory now seems faded.
it’s  longest branch stretched out to me,
bending, lower branch,
heavy-hearted branch,
not much below is shaded.

i sat and watched the apple tree
as if watching helped it grow.
some apples fell when I was three,
i don’t remember those.
fresh and strong those branches rose
little did I know.

i thought it was a tree-house tree.
i was little then, it appeared so tall.
now i’m  barely over sixty-three,
the branch waved goodbye a year ago.
that last sweet apple it let go
rolled slowly to me like a ball.

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# walls of glass

memories of memories,
are micro-prisms,
loose dust particles,
in an utterly quiet room
floating by the window.

by the window,
where ancestors
mingle around the buffet table
unable to decide whether to
deliver news.

deliver news
of narrow strips of land,
where dust particles billow up
then gradually fall on
oh so deaf ears.

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# zoo global

what happens to giraffes
when shown bright bars of gold?
do their eyes light up with avarice,
insatiable and bold?

when gorilla's behind glass
see us clutch wallet in hand?
do plastic cards and paper
turn into drifting sand?

do elephants ever notice
zeros following the one's?
as their tusks have faced the hunter's
pointing of their guns.

do monkeys swing from branches
thinking high-rise, towers, scrapers?
are they reading the fine print
on deeds made from parchment paper?

what are koi fish seeing
looking up at diamond rings?
except fisher's bait and tackle,
barbed hooks that made them sting.

do tigers in their cages,
bears in pits on rocks
think of multi billionaires
or the junk that they have got?

have animals forgotten
they are living in a zoo?
staring  back at people
not sure what they should do?

do they think of feeding schedules,
running laps in cage's wheels?
do they think vanilla ice-cream
at the end of their last meal?

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# dark

even a flashlight, a lantern,
a torch with fire
does little to help us through
the blackness of night
without wrestling, or a fight
between a lifetime of
symbols and written words
hastily written
on slate chalkboards.

walking through
the house of mirrors
without the mirrors,
doesn’t help
from crashing into walls
where reflections are replaced
with graffiti
from our vibrant imaginations.

two atoms continuously
smashing into each other
aren’t seen
even with a walking cane,
a primitive tool
no more than fire sticks
at the back of the cave
that welcomes us still
though unknown stories
live in the ashes.

we are not blind
when our eyes keenly trace
the graceful fall
of a single petal
from a single flower.
falling from highest towers
never ending.

we are not mortal
after volunteering
to give most all,
before the petal
touches the ground.
before our head
sinks into
feathered pillows.

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