THE CHEMIST

Which chemical engineer
Made this soup,
So it doesn't taste
Like gobbly goop?

Who was the chemist
Who made this pie,
For newborn children
With just one eye?

Who was the genius
That developed cake,
Flavoured to taste
Like pepper steak?

Who made the drinks
Deep purple blue,
And expanded them
To stick like glue?

Who was behind
Enriched white bread,
That sits in stomachs
And weighs like lead?

What scientist cooked
A decent meal,
Made completely from
Banana peel?

Who are these modern
Chemist druids,
Who extract the food
From lighter fluids?

Are we now
Genetically charged,
With electrolytes
Grown extra large?

Does our body compass
Turn around,
Then stop and point
Towards the ground?

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IN THE MINDS OF MEN

Cubicles spawn and
Cranes skyrocket
Like weeds and broken plants
Sitting, squirming
On this rock garden
Where the earth is polished flat
And the sounds of clicking heels
Are crickets.

Grey dust
Is brightly lit
By uncle Samsung
And old, old MacDonalds.

Strange that empires
Have such benign names
And that by 9:00 am
We are their followers.

So let it begin
With a short procession
To the coffee machine
Where sustenance meets
The brand new mind
Of Darwin.

© Christian Williams 2010

PRODUCT OF PEACE

I long for quiet moments
And cold beverages.
I smile and
Enjoy the little things.
I feel alive and well.
I celebrate every day.
I am the product
Of peace.

I am the one
My grandfather and my uncles
Fought for,
Killed for,
Wrecked their soul for.

They returned
Numb
Staring at their own futures
Bleak,
Yet hopeful
That some of us
Would appreciate
Their willingness to face,
Bend down in a low
Squat,
Then spring out
Into the black void
Of war.

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THE LANGUAGE OF THE UNIVERSE

If an ant had a voice
What would it say,
Would it tell you its name
That it's busy today?

If a squirrel could talk
What would it tell,
That it has no time to chat
It is doing quite well?

If all creatures conversed
About fellows and friends,
Would idle chatter and gossip
Ever come to an end?

Would they want to observe
The comings and goings,
Then recount what other
Little creatures are doing?

Would they finally get bored
Of other's affairs,
Return to their business
Have peace in their lairs?

Would they sleep under sky
Work, gather food
And always be in
Quite cheery a mood?

Would they speak the language of the universe
And be there to teach
The rest of us creatures
With the power of speech?

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THE DUCKLINGS

Small ducklings
Follow their mother
On winding river streams

Strung together
By love, affection and
Sacred bonds.

They swim forward
Towards little waves
Like pearls

Lapping and folding
Onto the river bed,
Cheerfully moving along

To the infinite horizon
Where the warm golden sun
Meets a moss-covered log.

They paddle seemingly forever
Never stopping,
These little ducklings

Soft and supple
That have landed here
Vibrant,

Glistening and twinkling
In my deepest
Deepest dream.

© Christian Williams 2010

THE TRACK

It is being what it is
A black unlovely crow
Sitting on a tree top
Cawing in the morning
Sharing what it knows

Down it goes
Its pure line of flight
Sent me a message
We are both here and gone
Like those footprints in the snow.

© Christian Williams 2010

THINK TANK

In future, developments in technology
Must be radically different
To meet the needs of space travel.

We can not have bulky metal rockets
That seat four people
And consume vast resources.

Food and necessities
Must be made available
During the trip.

We need to re-think and re-design.
Space ships of the future
Must move faster and sustain life.

The ship should be able to repair itself
Retain water and life
So we may be comfortable on our voyage.

We should also re-name the great ship.
Not Apollo, not Voyager
Not Sputnik.

For whatever it is worth
Let’s call it
Planet Earth.

© Christian Williams 2010

OLD MACHINES

A wooden porch
A dinner plate
A rocking chair
To contemplate.

A gust of wind
A wooden creak
A falling leaf
The one I seek

In little moments
Captured here
As sunset slowly
Disappears.

Then I'll step out
On grass of green
And say hello
To old machines.

© Christian Williams 2010

CRASH LANDING

I am an acorn born from tree
I fell to earth quite randomly.

I skidded off a smooth brown leaf
Before I fully felt the grief.

My tough skin and my patterned hat
Sent a message to the rats.

I can't get hurt, I can't be beaten
I'm not too tasty when I'm eaten.

Yet inside my little shell
I feel the pain rise up and swell.

Paralyzed from the waist down
I never made it into town.

Stuck here sitting every day
Staring at the squirrels at play.

My tongue is tied, my lids are closed
While winds climb on my back and blow.

Day and night I sit here praying
For a change but end up staying.

Here I stay before you bare
Barely moving anywhere.

I whisper out to all of you
Who think you might be acorns too.

If watered well, with patience wait
You have one chance to grow up straight.

To be what you were meant to be
Eternal oak, The tree of trees.

© Christian Williams 2010

PERPETUAL MOTION

The front windows
Of this old wood house
Are my eyes.

I see you as a tree
Blowing softly
In the wind.

I see a pebble bounces
And rolls quietly
To your feet.

I see that my eyes are closed
As I drift further along
These memories

Of a forgotten street
And a small child
Running
Running
Jumping

With his best foot
Forward.

© Christian Williams 2010

THE PACK

Dark nights and
Empty spaces
Rushing away.

They stopped howling.

The wolves
Quickly slalom through
The brush

Nervously
Wondering
If we are there

Chasing them
Following them
With a pack

Of matches.

© Christian Williams 2010

SOUL MIRROR

It is a wonderful thing
To feel like a million bucks
Yet who knows?
With risk investment and inflation

That the value may not
Descend, slowly, year by year
Until that same million
Buys a burger and a mirror.

Then we may see
For ourselves
How a soul was
Knitted together and spent.

How each wrinkle
Was part of a
Treasure-less map
Drawn with a box and a cross.

How each blink was a heart beat
Counting down the moments
Here on planet
Where did it all go?

How a life
That can not be bought
In a store
Could be sold at auction?

© Christian Williams 2010

EQUILIBRIUM

Dead tree take heart.
Shaped like a hand,
Your fingers have reached out
And grasped at life's secrets.

Grey wood you exist frozen
Like soft stone
Marked by rigid lines and hardened wrinkles.
You have looked Medusa in the eyes.

Now your body stands up to vacant winds.
As you whistle a song
And rattle your bones
A bird quietly sits to listen.

Your story is written with carved patterns
Pointed to the infinite sky.
Like the straight man in a double act
You are dead wood no more.

© Christian Williams 2010

SNAPSHOT

Frozen in time,
Pure joyful innocence
Captured on slick film.

Shutter speed
One-sixtieth of a second
I was told to smile

Not to think
I will have to look back
At dulled grey evidence

That we really do
Change, grow
Get older.

This photograph
Is a mere swipe card
For the after life

When the mind
Is finally quiet,
When we can move no more

Than the fragile rigid image
In this faded
Snapshot.

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SEA OF GRASS

One second is all it takes
To crash a plane and
Turn your head skyward.

If my mind were quiet
For only one second,
It would fly away

To another continent
To a small village
To become

A supple green blade
Yielding to winds
In a sea of grass.

© Christian Williams 2010

STUFFED TOYS

Great monuments
Have been built
Over ten ponderous years
Little by little
Inch by inch.

That is just enough time
To become a small child
Not quite eleven.
Even twenty is foolhardy
As a new adventure is begun.

In that time,
Two golden pets
Each in turn are gone away

Along with the fish,
The aquarium and
The childhood toys

Stuffed with
Memories and laughter.

Stuffed with
Silly little things.

Stuffed with polyester,
Granite,
And the earth's core
Spinning ever so slowly
Beneath our feet.

© Christian Williams 2010

IN THE MINDS OF MEN

Cubicles spawn and
Cranes skyrocket
Like weeds and broken plants
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The brand new mind
Of Darwin.

© Christian Williams 2010

PAPER EARTH

My footsteps make odd-shaped dots
That are unmapped.
Nameless stones and rocks
Are kicked forward and
Skip along the concrete blocks
Like choppy notes
In a short jingle.

Unrecognizable portraits
Are painted beneath stony ground
Where people wait patiently
For us to wake up,
Look with our true eyes and
Embrace the mystery
With two arms
Wide open.

Fables of our lives may be
Passed around like a dollar bill
From one pocket to another,
Before they are buried
In memories
And gusts of wind.

© Christian Williams 2010

THE LISTENING COUCH

A shout out
To all couch potatoes
Rolling out of bed this morning
Shuffling over
To the tap and mirror.

With toothbrush in hand
You show your teeth.
There is no smile
Attached today
As your mind slowly drifts
Back and forth
In and out of consciousness.

We all wonder together
How did we get from there
To here?
From standing to lying.
From playing to laying.
True,
When the body fails
The mind prevails.
All the same, what is left
When lazy boy meets remote?

A signal was sent
From command center
To stay put on the couch
Listen heart and soul
To every word
From Sam Sung and Toshiba,
Including Tide commercials
Oprah and
Third world tsunamis.

© Christian Williams 2010

gulf winds

anxious bark
light grey and dark
shrouds oldest living tree.

my oiled skin
supple and thin
protects the heart of me.

I am a ship
my gangplanks dip
broken at the knees.

shed just one layer
reveal this prayer
that no one could foresee.

while treadmills turned
and boilers burned
high winds called after me.

my weathervane
so etched with pain
now floats into the sea.

my shiny deck
is but a wreck
soon about to be.

© Christian Williams 2010

SOUL MIRROR

It is a wonderful thing
To feel like a million bucks
Yet who knows?
With risk investment and inflation

That the value may not
Descend, slowly, year by year
Until that same million
Buys a burger and a mirror.

Then we may see
For ourselves
How a soul was
Knitted together and spent.

How each wrinkle
Was part of a
Treasure-less map
Drawn with a box and a cross.

How each blink was a heart beat
Counting down the moments
Here on planet
Where did it all go?

How can a life?
Not bought
In a store
Be sold at auction?

© Christian Williams 2010

BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT

For example, take this face.
Some parts may seem out of place
A nose, an eye, an ear, a throat
Brought together by a coat

Of plastic skin and plasma stretched
With life's expression slowly etched
Painful smiles a practical joke
Lab rats and the common folk.

Lemmings headed for the goal
Fields of gold, the subway toll.
Turnstiles wrap around their brain
Thinking what there is to gain

Walking over other faces
To get to higher, nicer places.
Flying in the air seems better
Follow leader to the letter.

Look back and see these crowds of mice
Putting makeup looking nice
Before they take their final leap
Into blue recycling heap.

Unconscious masses of this earth
Beat your hearts while giving birth
To faces made from basic clay
Discovered in the D.N.A.

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WAR CHEST

In my heart there is a war.
I take position to defend.
Neatly packaged blood and gore
Beneath smooth skin, does not offend.

The general smiles and private laughs
As battles pulse slowly between
These sunken eyes and tired calves
In a war that's hardly seen.

My chest pounds hard like knocking doors.
A thousand lost, play pipes of wind.
This piper’s lungs will hit the floor
As a thousand troops declare to win.

In my heart I feel the loss,
Fish and tackle, fist and blade.
My pride a mere reduction sauce
Boiled down, it quickly fades.

This war within my final hour
Took it’s time to settle in
And change the balancing of power.
Please go tell my next of kin.

Inside this war chest, knives and swords,
Greed and glamour, spear and shields,
Take their place among the lords
As I surrender on these fields.

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BREATHE OUT

Breathing every second of every day
Winds sweep through my life.

Hidden behind these eye sockets
Is the deep impression

Of a small infant.
The beginning of motion.

Stretching out time
Into a vast chasm.

Slowly, slowly
I am reminded that

All people, things and
Accessories of this world

Will one day ache of heart
And lose their breath.

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DEAR LIFE

When the heels of my hands
Press together
Into the shape of a cup
They possess almost anything.
Water, sand,
Tears.

Two hands form a cloak
Around my face and shade the room
As the sound
Breathes louder
Through cracks
Between my fingers.

Unshaven cheeks
Rub like sandpaper
On tender palms, various life lines
And personal astrology.

It must be time
For these bony knuckles
To turn the handle
And go
Into the next room.

© Christian Williams 2010

HIDE AND SEEK

Empty street
Remember me.

You helped me find
An empty house
And hear the creaking of a door
Whisper in my ear.

I Ran and hid
I Counted to ten and dreamed
With my heart pounding
That I would be first to kick the can
And win the chance to play again.

Walking home
Sidewalk of solitude
You stayed close by
You held my hand.

Empty street
Wait for me
Make a space that I can
Stroll and linger
And remember what it was like
Not to think
Of the end of the road.

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HAITI FOR A MINUTE

Just for a minute,
Forget it all.

Forget what you ever heard in schools.
Forget to speak or manipulate tools.
Forget the fact that you cheat or lie
Forget commandments and to comply.
Forget to read, forget to know.
Forget the bridges where rivers flow.
Forget to walk the longest mile
It took to be in full denial.
Candor, truths, caring, love.
Forget it all. Remain above.
Forget the innocence. A child will.
Forget it all and just be still.

Feel for a minute
The small expression.
A frozen face, a human lesson.
A person buried still alive.
The miracle of breath revived.
Feel the pain, another's face
Disjointed somewhere out of place.
Ready to finally wave goodbye.
Call it a day and close your eyes.

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A HUMAN HAIR

The sky doesn't hide
Smoke stacks or birds
Nor does it muffle
The cries I've heard.

Cell phone waves
Flow freely between
Invisible suffering
Of those I've seen.

The sky doesn't hide
The brewing storms
Slowly creeping
Taking form

Above my head
A swirling mass
Above the graves
Of those who've passed.

The sky doesn't hide
The thousand planes
Filled with people's
Hopes and pains.

Sound barriers, lights
And broken lobes
Roam freely
All around the globe.

The sky doesn't hide
It doesn't weep
It isn't ours
For us to keep.

The air we breathe
The space we share
Is resting
On a human hair.

© Christian Williams 2010

LUCK OF THE DRAW

Cubic people
Are playing cards
Where queens and jacks
Are seeking to trade treasures
with the mythical
King.
He rarely
Shows his face.

We the numbers
Wait in line
Deep in the deck
For frail fingers
To tap our backs,
Turn us over
And bring us to life.

Through empty space
Random moments
Fill our day
With birthday wishes and
Broken sentences.
.

© Christian Williams 2010

PERPETUAL MOTION

The front windows
Of this old wood house
Are my eyes.

I see you as a tree
Blowing softly
In the wind.

Pebbles bounce
And roll quietly
To your feet.

My eyes are closed
As I drift further along
These memories

Of a forgotten street
And a small child
Running
Running
Jumping

With his best foot
Forward.

© Christian Williams 2010

SNAKES AND LADDERS

1969
Armstrong stood on the moon
With a silver space suit.
He looked back at the ants,
Tiny nothings and
All of us here at ground zero.

I reached the summit
Of the Empire State building,
Looked down at toy cars and
Blobs of molasses
Slowly trickling
Towards Nowhere Street.

Masses of people
Are stuck together
Like glue.
Yet they fall apart like sand
Flowing out of
A broken hourglass.

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THE WORLD IS OUR OYSTER

A snowflake fell
Inside my head.
It melted in my hand.
It taught me lessons
Of the dead
As it disappeared in sand.

Water droplets hung
From the rafters of my past
Poised to let go, free fall.
Tiny bubble thoughts
Finished with a splash
As they unleashed their precious salts.

A speck of invisible dust
Laughing through the air
Floated like a voice.
It taught me to travel
With very little care
About wolfish worlds and oysters.

© Christian Williams 2010

TRESPASSER

Feeling strong,
I trample on leathery trails
That have felt my silent soles
A thousand times over.

Feeling strong,
I am carried away by thoughts that
We can venture out
Into wild fields and
Touch the tips of milkweeds.

Feeling strong
On winding trails
That have never complained
Of dogs, deer or
Occasional bellyaching
About unnatural weather.

Feeling strong.
I return home with
Cold cheeks and frozen fingers.
I remove my hat and scarf.
I roll them into a ball and
Slam-dunk them into the bin
Five feet away.

To the right,
I notice broken lines are
The withered face
Of a trespasser
Who lives in the full-length mirror.
His self-portrait was etched in glass
Just for me
Feeling strong.

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FREEDOM HURTS

“Live free or die”
Is proudly embossed on the license plate
Of an old, scratched-up Impala.
Turning in ahead of me.

When a piece of junk is ready for the crushers
We call it free.

Holding on to a plastic name card
Has defined me
With the same hands that drove a rusted, yellow, Tonka truck.

The name that was finger-painted long ago
In a sandbox,
Is the same as on
This application form.

Fill it out
And then you are free.

© Christian Williams 2010

Saran-Wrapped Heaven

Warhol's soup cans fill up this useless grocery list
While forever waking up the dead
Walking up and down a vacant aisle
Like the Christmas ghost
Clenching onto a clanging metal cart.

I am surrounded by my little processed friends,
Embarrassed bottles of red beets,
Dried cereal boxes that climbed Mount Everest and
Chickens with frozen expressions,
Fresh from slaughter house (to my house).

Oily skinned and perplexed
By which looks best,
I reach out and make eye contact
With the fruits and vegetables.

To some it might be pure joy to know
That we have evolved so brilliantly
From hunters to gatherers
From cremators to ice-cream vendors
From wake up calls to mausoleum-sized malls.

Let us look up to the skylight with both arms raised,
Drop to our knees
And kiss the beige linoleum
Because we truly must
Have it all.

© Christian Williams 2010

Yoga For Beginners

I am struck with contradictions
pressing both hands hard into the sand
while looking up at clouds and grayness.

Thunderstorms in summer cannot reach
the sunshine lodged deep in the caverns of hearts
masked with arteries, organs and functional chemistry.

Here we are nevertheless,

beating down into the slowly winding path of creation.
Along the way
encountering pieces of tin clattering on sides of houses,

encountering brief episodes on irregular staircases
where going up or going down
depend on happenstance and very fickle imaginations.

© Christian Williams 2010

A PIECE FOR ALL

Every citizen has a right
to step on dirt
name it i-earth
and stop breathing
bottled air.

Though few with concrete thoughts
in plastic brains
are ready to change shape
and take the form
of hunter-goddess
minstrel-clown
astronaut-in-waiting

with front row tickets
to the brightly lit
black of night
and milky way.

© Christian Williams 2010

PRO LIFE

I am an astronaut
Traveling in a metallic toy

With gauges and odometers
Headed for the hospital.

Thank God for wheels
That replaced my legs.

Thank God for the inflated tires
That touch the earth.

Thank God for piston fires
That burn inside me and ignite

The fierce desire
To call out

Like a dog,
Sticking its head out the window.

Must revolutions always
Begin there?

© Christian Williams 2010

THE RIVER IS EMPTY

Hold my hand next to the dark, fast-flowing waters
Of this river that wishes to remain nameless.

River that twists around, moves and hides
Behind goldenrods and cleared, sunlit fields just ahead.

Go down and stroll along the banks of fine sand.
Take my hand lightly and test the cold, gushing water with foot and toes.

River that forever polishes broken bones into smooth wet pebbles.
River that carries away wayward thoughts on thin-skinned kayaks.

River that races into my heart and fills these rushing veins
With a thousand splashes.

River that is empty
Of memories and delusions.

© Christian Williams 2010

a softer ride

asphalt streets were made to make it
a softer ride.
flatten out weeds, rocks
flowers, growth and all impediments
to our getting there
faster, easier, better.

i am like you
i want it too
roads without potholes
smoother curves, wider shoulders
robust guard rails
a G.P.S. and clean stripes.

you are like me
beating down tireless native paths
wearing old shoes
lost in thought
wondering how i got here?
and where can i be going?
knowing
that all roads are in essence
dirt roads.

© Christian Williams 2010

I SENT ME AWAY

Vehicles are shiny and new at first.
Even so, new tires can become flat tires, as I stand over the culprit nail
And look at the horizon ahead, on this random strip of road.

The same horizontal line of rocks and lakes
That cave men and wolves saw
On land that is home to both hidden relics and speeding tickets.

I am now a pedestrian.
All that can be carried, I at best prop on my back
As I leave the car, the junk, the weight.

I am on a pilgrimage
In search of an an old sleepy bench.
That sits quietly in front of the gas pump.

When I get there I may forget the reason I left,
Set the knapsack down and take a rest.
Then I will drink.

Electrolytes and energy drinks were once called water.
A plastic bottle
Was once called cupping of the hands.

I will drink then and look back at the road I walked on
For what felt like an eternity.
I will see the horizon stare back at me

And smile.

.
© Christian Williams 2010

The End Of The Corridor

I did not know what a catheter was
until I saw them sticking out of limbs
and body parts
surrounded by other tubes in a family of plastics and blood
tangled together like spaghetti
leading to a box of beeps, like it or not.
Green waves of life and tiny lines
go on flowing and ebbing.

I didn't know what a dialysis machine was
until I saw a team of yellow jacketed people
cloak him in machine parts
and gently
close the curtain
pointing the way to the exit sign
as I saw before me an old stubborn pirate
turn into a fleshy stoic
and wave goodbye
with only his eyes.

© Christian Williams 2010

THE AGE OF LIES

Today was not rehearsed.
Today
A spool was unravelled.
A book was written.
An action was taken.
I want my thirteen-seconds back.

Let me know
When you are ready
To look into the eyes
Of creatures
And tell them
That they need humankind
In order to have a better way of life
A better standard of living.
A Higher quality of being.

Beasts that know enough
To stay away,
Let us fry oil
While thinking of their fresh
Cuts of meat,
Ground flesh, pickles and
Powdered grains,
Baked to perfection.

There is a war right now
Between little league baseball players
And bats from caves.
Between first communion photos
And sunken eyes.
Between poster people
And foraging dogs.

Rise up and sing
All together
One anthem.
Let the day begin.

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Floating Buckets

I call out.
A silent song. No more words. No music.
I dip my toes in
Empty space.
There is a vacancy.
I like it that way
So my trembling little heart
Can feel the chords
Of rushing waters
Vibrate and ebb.

Silent songs.
Quiet stares. Deep regrets
Move along
To the next generation.
I cross over to grey-haired shores
Over flooding streams and
Flowing rivers filled to the brim.
Rivers that hide their tears
Buried in the currents.

Rivers that
Once sparkled with hope,
Awaiting to catch
Old fisherman buckets and
Tangled nets,
While freshwater fish
Swim silently free.

© Christian Williams 2010

TREE AND ASH

While in discussion
With a grey bristly branch
high above my head,
I felt its fingers gently bending down
Barely touching
My outstretched hand.
It suggested I count.
Count the days left .
Count my breaths.
Count the ashes.

A storm is building
Between the walls
Of my pounding chest
and the tree's winter hollow.
Between us both, winds blow.
While squirrels are busy
Counting their nuts and acorns
And bluebirds come for a visit..

Tiny fragments of wheat in the field
like my random thoughts
are so light
They float in the air for a lifetime
Before returning
To ageless flower beds
and fall asleep
In this ageless dream.

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