

alloway

when the caterpillar spins its cocoon
does it know to say goodbye?
to whisper thank you to the leaves
prepared for peaceful isolation
sheltered from earth's tempest

when the caterpillar spins its cocoon
does it know what comes next?
that one day, it will emerge
birthed from solitude
returned into companionship

when the butterfly replaces the caterpillar
does it remember its past self?
the self that sacrificed freedom
at the whim of a promise
that seclusion is transformative

when the butterfly replaces the caterpillar
does it radiate gratitude?
acknowledgement of the choice
to embrace a spell of loneliness
for the sake of becoming anew

antileracy

start with the kindling
place each twig carefully
upon the bed of leaves
perhaps take birch bark
or moss from the trees

then comes the kindling
the logs in a triangle
enough space to breathe
allow a path for the wind
to crawl underneath

when the flame ignites
and the wood starts to burn
the flickers try to escape
the smoke twists and turns

the embers are restless
the crackling accelerates
but at last the fire calms
the savagery relegated

flames learn to dance
instead of thrashing
learning contentment
the restlessness passing

autul

as a kid
i could look within a clock
observing each second pass
blinded by the possibilities each minute afforded
yet oblivious to the passage of time
simply collecting opportunities
to disregard distractions

life was a series of snapshots
one after another
in quick succession
always doing something worth documenting
never reflecting on the documentation
simply living
existing
in the place we call present

i grew older, but not wiser
for if i had become wiser, i would have never aged
continuing my youthful bliss forever

yet the ignorance passed
i could no longer ignore
each second, each minute, each hour
simply come and then go

the snapshots become blurry
some were empty
i had no desire to review any long-lost memory
living either in the past or preparing for the future
time sped up with no regard for my wishes

when i return to the clock
i always check the batteries
because i can't bring myself to accept
that the acceleration of time is reality

balentry

the weight of expectations
proves heavy
no indication of the path to take
choice to make
trail to follow

the paths are endless
choices fraught
trails winding

each leading to a different life
new chance
returning dilemma
forgotten circumstance

torn
between eyes and hands
heart and mind
belief and reprieve

lost
between second chances
fate and action
creation and premonition

a puzzle
every piece a separate shade
who i am and who i'm not
and who i want to be

find peace
by piecing them together
maybe the picture will be clearer
no longer a fragmented depiction
with rough edges and strange gaps

but maybe i'll miss the chaos

it was familiar
picking and choosing the pieces
mismatched connections
never complete

the paths endless
choices fraught
trails winding

bediyal

they say that you'll know when it's time to say goodbye
how do you know?
do you only know if it's the last goodbye?
what benefit is there to knowing?

it only leaves you expecting
waiting for it to come
counting down until it's time

if you had the choice
would you rather be oblivious

it could always be the last goodbye

blavul

closed eyes
pretending—
pretend signs,
relapsing

relapsed mind,
surrendering—
surrendered hopes
vanishing

misunderstood,
but not misunderstanding—
attempts to explain
met with total abandon

neither at fault,
not a failed explanation—
just a struggle to meet,
at a shared destination

complexia

gone but not forgotten
forgotten but not gone
never truly gone
were we ever even here?

a single, miniscule being
look to the sky at night
pick a star among the expansiveness
how long will it shine for?

fly over a city
pick a block, a street, a house
everything, everyone has a story
will anyone read yours?

in a library of billions
would anyone notice a missing story?
everyone has their own favorite story
maybe your story is someone's favorite

write a story worth reading
consider reading an unpopular story
life is simply a narrative
will someone notice your story,
sitting on a crowded shelf?

concality

the blueprint of life
giving form to the meaningless
developed from nothing
resting in nothing

everything derived from nothing

shaped into the finite — the tangible
a world of stability, surely
resting on definitive soil, formidable rock

yet so fragile
unstable

an existence in question
cloud illusion

a world with no blueprint

i really don't know life at all

disicus

"Come on in," they say.

I only smile,
Stepping through the doorway,
Across the threshold of comfort.

"Make yourself at home," they say.

But this is not like my home.
It feels foreign, sterile.
Everything is perfectly placed, unwavering.

"Thank you for coming," they say.

But I don't know why I'm here.

"Take a look around," they say.

But what is there to look at?

It's all a lie,

A deception.

It's crafted—

Intentionally, meticulously
With purpose and precision.

But it's fragile.

The books all have cracks
Meandering along their broken spines.

The blankets are frayed,
Their ends unwinding frivolously.

The windows allow a chilling draft to seep through the edges,
No insulation from the outside world.

"Isn't it nice?" they ask.

Again, I only smile.

I don't tell them what I saw.

I don't mention the rough edges.
I don't know if I was supposed to see them.

I tell them I need to go.
The facade unnerves me.
What are they hiding?

As I leave,
I peer through a back window.
It's nothing like the front—
Nothing like the stage I was just shown.

It's messy,
Disorganized.
Yet, it's real,
Comforting.

It looks like my house.

Why didn't they show me the back?

I wouldn't have left so soon.

enkaos

some days i sit at the window for hours.
when the migrating geese cast a shadow that blankets the earth
and the soft green carpet is dusted by frost,
i'm drawn to the window more often.

the trees enveloped in powdered sugar,
fog resting on the delicate branches of sunkissed pine needles,
distorted headlights rising and falling as cars meander past,
the slurred call of cardinals resonating beneath the sharp cry of ravens

i can't bring myself to leave the window.
the ceaseless activity threatens my sanity—
each action tantalizing in isolation,
but overpowering in accordance with one another.

longing for simplicity, i ask for separation:

give me trees on monday,
fog on tuesday,
headlights on wednesday,
cardinals on thursday,
ravens on friday,
frost on saturday,
snow on sunday.

each day, let me observe just one.
i can't possibly appreciate the full scope of beauty
when it's presented as cacophony.

or maybe the chaos is the beauty,
and the beauty is the chaos.

so let me return to the window each day,
and learn to live with the constant chaos

eulisent

"I'm sorry"

I owe you an apology
You may not know what for
In fact, neither do I
But I owe you an apology
"I'm sorry"

"Do you forgive me?"

I get stuck on past mistakes
You may not even remember them
They're gone, forgotten, changed
But I'm stuck on past mistakes
"Do you forgive me?"

"I miss you"

I didn't mean for it to end like this
You may have pushed it out of mind
It plays on repeat inside of mine
But I didn't mean for it to end like this
"I miss you"

"Is it true you moved on?"

I gave you good reason
You are justified in leaving me behind
I resent who I was
But I gave you good reason
"Is it true you moved on?"

"I've changed"

It's true, even though it's cliché
You are right to be skeptical
Because I told you that before
But it's true, even though it's cliché
"I've changed"

"I'm sorry"

All it takes is another chance

You have the choice
I'm not proud of my past
But all it takes is another chance
"I'm sorry"

fempatia

I lay still, flat on my back
Listening to the sounds of the trees growing

I hear them talking
Thanking Mother Nature for the sunshine

If I rested here
What stories would I hear?

I see a sapling protruding crookedly from the ground
The nearby maple has opened a path of sunlight for it

I want to hear that story
The story of this companionship
The sacrifice by the maple
For the sake of the sapling

In fifty years
Who will be standing?

Will they be dancing together in the wind?
Will the sacrifice cost the maple its life?
Will the sapling repay the maple as it grows?

Will the maple's action go unnoticed?

Or will someone else lay here
And listen to the stories

generism

when the sun recedes
dipping beneath the horizon
when the fireflies materialize
against the growing dusk

when the crickets bring symphonies
to wide open plains
when the prairie grass bends
from the push of the breeze

when the birds become still
letting earth worms break ground
when the light of the stars
imitates the dancing fireflies

how does the sun convey its gratitude
to its replacement, the moon

hacililis

sometimes

i pretend

i pretend that life is a novel
a novel with a story

unchanging, unavoidable

but i can prolong the novel
take breaks, reread
i can anticipate the plot:
when characters will be lost,
never to reappear

but i can't change the ending
eventually, i must face reality
that life, like a novel, is unavoidable

hidance

Do your bones feel fragile?
Each step met with resistance
The world passing as you walk
Yet you aren't moving

I call it the treadmill of life

Increase the speed
You still won't go anywhere
Increase the elevation
Still in the same place

But the fatigue sets in

You can't keep walking
Why would you want to?
Why keep walking
When you aren't moving?

It becomes a challenge

How long can you walk?
Endure the pain
Use it as fuel
To continue against the odds

Surely someone will be proud

You struggle against the grain
Pushing successfully forward
Making it to places you never expected
But the others didn't keep up

They smile and cheer from the background
Celebrating your success from afar

Are you proud of yourself?

hyperation

stars
endless stars
expanding
everything extending forever
infinite universe
galaxies fixed upon nothingness
nothingness filled to the brim by everything
no beginning
no end

a planet called earth
looming large from home
appearing meak from space
drifting along a wave
of everything, yet nothing

if i stand at the edge of space
and look down on earth
will i feel big or small?

if i stand in an abandoned field
and look up at space
will i feel big or small?

indogma

i met you on the corner of first avenue and eighth

for two years
we danced every night
in and out of the kitchen
up and down the alley

i tattooed "first and eighth" on my wrist

for two years
i've reflected on mistakes
the big and the small
important and forgotten

i miss first and eighth

each time i walk past
i see you beneath the streetlight
dancing to the wind
laughing at the stars

i used to love first and eighth

it was perfect
a reminder of love

but i don't love it anymore
because it didn't love me

inquitay

Uncertainty threatens to surround me,
Leaving me in an endless void
That consumes my thoughts and stirs my fears
Leaving me with nothing but unease

Questions swirl around my mind,
As I seek to find the answers
For the series of "what-ifs"
Haunting me like ominous shadows

Yet the future is devoid of hue,
An expanse of "maybes" interspersed
With the occasional certainty
Keeping me afloat on the waves of misery

The uneasiness that accompanies uncertainty,
Is a weight of seeming eternity
A constant battle to discover peace,
And quell the anxieties that never cease

iskyathon

when the forest goes quiet
rain is on the way

the birds fall silent
the chirp of crickets quelled

the sky opens up
and the clouds begin to cry

the flowers invite the tears
soaking them up without hesitation

the clouds gift the earth
with life, renewal

the tears remedy the drought
rejuvenating the forest floor

a solution as irreplaceable as it is simple
all we can do is watch with wonder
at the ability of nature to fix mistakes
that humans can only hope to ponder

jadism

Tell me.

Do I make you happy?

Do I make you feel as if time slows down when we're together?

Because I'm trying.

I'm trying to take away your pain.

I'm trying to make your life easier.

But I'm scared.

I don't want to accidentally hurt you.

I don't want to be the source of your pain.

I'm paralyzed.

I focus on doing the right thing,

And I'm left doing nothing at all.

I choose inaction so I don't cause harm,

Then I cause harm through my inaction.

Can you tell me that it's okay?

Can you tell me that my best is good enough?

I don't want to live scared.

I want to know that I make you happy.

My happiness comes from knowing that I brought happiness to you.

jaspén

As I pull into the driveway
A wave of nostalgia washes over me
I smile as I replay the memories

Driveway basketball
Sidewalk chalk
Leaf piles in fall
Evening walks

Front yard football
Front porch talks
Making snowballs
Roaming the blocks

It comes flooding back
Growing up in that childhood home
Never far from family

Each time I return
I'm reminded of those days
Of unparalleled clarity and joy

I adore each visit
But I can't help but notice the void
When someone is missing

A key piece of the memories and family puzzle
Irreplaceable

I long for the days when my siblings were in the same hallway
Ready on short notice
To go outside
And make new memories

linklage

there's something familiar about you
i can't quite place it
it feels like we've spent a lifetime together

a lifetime compressed into a few short months
deep connection forged
with little more than a smile

a smile you gave me on the first of december
i've sworn i've seen it before
but you promise that i'm mistaken

i must be mistaken
because how could i know you
it's nothing more than a coincidence

yet it feels so right
i'm convinced there's something there
some hidden history that lies latent

a hidden history that connects our spirits
and helps to explain why
it feels like we've been friends since the beginning

lustille

i woke up in a haze
heavy heart
thoughts ablaze
lost and adrift
a ship lost at sea
i've been on course for so long
in a place of contentment
this new feeling plagues me
some foreign sentiment
i push forward
trying to shake free
but it lingers
a gnawing ache that only grows bigger
the world around me
filled to the brim
with joy
and with feelings
of something missing
i'm left missing something
that i didn't know i had
something more, something new
on the horizon above
i've been happy here before
so explain this low
i'm scared to acknowledge
the lack of vibrance
prior happiness nothing more than a trance
i will keep pretending
it's all okay
but just how long
can i keep feelings at bay

maura

please
let me step outside
only for a minute
i just need a breath of fresh air

all i need is a tiny break
to feel the wind
sting my eyes
telling me it's okay to cry

it may be okay
but i'm not ready
so i wipe my eyes
and walk back inside

murcate

“Open your book to page one.”

Here we go, we’re ready to begin.
It’s time for a new story.
Today we’re learning about me.
My story—
My hopes and dreams,
Failures and successes
Regrets and transgressions

Follow along,
I promise you’ll learn something.
This is my story—
I’m ready to share it.

But you’re not ready to listen.
You close the book—
Tell me you’re not ready,
Not prepared for vulnerability
Scared of supporting me

Will you ever be ready?
I’m ready for you.
I read your story—
Your hopes and dreams,
Failures and successes
Regrets and transgressions

I laughed and cried with you
I was here for you
I just wanted you to read my story

naflona

there will always be a tree
that looms with austere grandeur
over the forest

or a sunset
that determined the perfect combination
of red and purple hues

perhaps it is the flower
whose stem is distinctly strong and lucious
because it found the ideal soil

there will always be a tree
that stands crooked
struggling to find sunlight

or a sunset
that is invisible
behind a block of imposing clouds

perhaps it is a flower
whose petals are being lost
because the soil is dry and cracked

is one tree, sunrise, flower...
better than the other?

napent

futile resistance

a fight between heart and mind

regret radiates

pariason

is it you
who cries out
like a wolf
in the night

feasting on moonlight
starved for affection
lost in the timbers
searching for answers

is it you
who feels worthless
like shadows
in winter

casting darkness
upon darkness
taunting blossoms
with frigid whisps

is it you
who seeks comfort
when your worth
is in question

like tulips
sprouting in spring
only to shrivel
come autumn

premitio

we turned a simple world
into a complicated system
that brings hurt

we justify suffering
on arbitrary grounds
pretending it's moral

we dedicate our lives to money
seeking more and more
driven by status and power

i wish i could tear up my money
and escape to the woods
with no regard for society's standards

yet, my well-being in life
is contingent on my choice
to conform to this system

but why not change the system?

reclusia

deep beneath the surface
the roots of two trees intertwine
when the wind whips their branches
they cling to each other for support

each time a bird rests on a limb
or the sun kisses the leaves
or the water hydrates the trunk
the trees smile and grow ever so slightly

there are multitudes of memories within each tree
after all, wisdom derives from quiet observation
they watch the world for hundreds of years
even when the world fails to watch them back

i long to crawl beneath the comforting coffin of bark
embrace the sunlight washing over me
share stories with my neighboring trees
and learn, from a tree far wiser than me

retrify

the grass is in fact greener on the other side
but now that i'm here, i want to go back
i prefer the grass that isn't quite so green

take me to the sky, where there is no grass
just air, clouds, birds
no worry of which side is greener
but yet i miss the grass

i want to go back
i don't like it here

take me to the other side
no, the *other* side
it seems i really can't decide
which place it is i long to reside

all i know is that it is not here
so i go, again
to the other side

shaiya

it's 1am in the morning
i can't seem to sleep
but i can't bear to remain awake

i sweat through my sheets
lay my hands at my side
and remember the comforting voice

the maggie rogers type
exploring nostalgic dimensions
providing a comforting blanket

four minutes of peace
from a song that i need
to remind me of the beauty around

siltry

the clock
ticks
accelerating
to unbelievable speeds
i watch it tick
counting the minutes
calculating the dwindling time
distracting myself
from the guilt
of resting

starbor

I guess that's just the way the world works
You catch a glimpse of the improbable
And realize
It is evidently possible

When the rain falls
To hydrate the earth
And the rainbow appears
The sunlight at work

The lightning scorches the granite
The same granite
I've rested on for years
Always taking it for granted

It came to be
One summer's eve
The grass born green
Swarmed with the birth of bees

The water appeared
But was clouded in mist
A mysterious fog
The animals in bliss

And here we are
In the midst of it all
Take a big step back
Are we big or are we small?

tasheron

I notice you every day
There's something that I appreciate about your presence
It's comforting
Calming

I wish I could spend more time with you
I hardly know you, though
We just pass each other on the street
At the same time each day

You may not notice me
Why would you?
We've never talked—
I've never introduced myself

But I always make sure to walk the same way
My timing remains the same
To make sure I catch your eye and smile
You must be doing the same

I know I shouldn't care so much
After all, we're nothing more than background characters
In each other's lives
Taking up a minute amount of space

Yet, it feels special
I care about you
I don't need anything to change
But I want to be able to care about you

toylowa

my mind is infested
with rambling thoughts
i think that i think too much
it's a paradox

set to cruise control
on overdrive
the guilt of undeservedness
clouds my mind

trasper

there are countless days
where i sit at my desk and think about you
i know that you don't think about me any more
but i don't have the closure to move on

i can't articulate what it is
that connects me to you
even after all these years
but there is an inseverable tie

you severed yourself from me
but i am still attached to you
i want the best for you
i want you to care about me

if i tried to reach out
would you let me?
or would you reject me?
leaving me without closure

i think i know the answer

urinate

I met her on the corner of first avenue and main
I believe in first impressions but I didn't catch her name
I'm all strung out on hopelessness, I'm a problematic perfectionist
But hopefully I'm hoping for a change

I didn't realize that life moves this fast
The girl I met on main street is just a figment of the past
I recognize I lack the recognition of mistakes
But I'd rather be the hunter than the prey

She opens the door
With a smile in her eyes
I see her eyes are hiding secrets
And her lips are telling lies

But I don't mind it
Aphrodite is reflected in her face
She's a bluebird, never deterred
From reminding me of my place

I sense deceit
As she takes a seat beside me and exclaims
"I've never met someone quite like you
I wish for you to say the same"

I'm enraptured can't deny the way I feel
Despite my sense
That she's use me and confuse me
Leave me aching for her semblance

But I'm intrigued beyond belief
I wish to better understand
The comprehensive details
Of every single story strand

vicuviam

I caught you walking out the back door
Honey, did you think that I'd miss you?
Told me that you were a lost soul
Baby, have you found what you're looking for?

When you left you said you'd never come back
Darling, what changed about that?
I see you're restless and wanting more
Can't you see that all that's worth searching for

Is waiting on the front porch

I've been waiting—
With an embrace and tears of love
To welcome you back
I've sacrificed my life to be here for you
But I don't know if you're here to stay

wintriless

when life is hard
i choose to dance

i dance through fields of golden sunflowers
down avenues lined with pine trees
across darkness speckled with starlight
in silence muffled by laughter

i dance away from the weight of expectations
escaping the questions of self-worth
losing the imposing tick of the clock
passing the feelings of despair

i keep dancing
whenever life devolves
into a race

a race with no winner
only those who choose to suffer
and those who choose to dance

zephrish

when you're sixteen
you can't wait to get away
pack your bags
take the train
to LA

when you're eighteen
it's a race
to get back home
it's the one place that you know
has a family

at twenty-one
the brakes are broken
you wish your college years kept going
yet you have a new
start on life

accelerating every moment that you blink
by the time you're twenty-five
reflect on all the things you've missed

accept the valleys
the way you love the highs
but don't forget to relish the good times

and goodbyes