

## Public People

### Things She Did

Grandmother played Solitaire.  
Cat looked on intently,  
cards moved, coffee sipped without care.

Memory of her hair combed  
gentle, but her voice raised with me,  
hidden, laughing vehemently

“God damn you,” she gave up.  
“I’ll call your dad she said,  
hang up then pretend to talk.

Always ready to watch a ball game  
worked each day; tireless dedication.  
A McDonald’s janitor age eighty-one.

Two hundred degrees, far too hot  
liquid frustration of coffee too common  
cup with lid, spilled through the top  
the cane held in hand, walkin’ and stompin’.

On Christmas she finished a jug of wine  
glass after glass wine consumed  
but just as in everything she felt fine  
never alone, never doomed.

### Lucy

You; a love named Lucy  
who practiced philosophy.  
How she knew herself,  
the true self and nothing but the true self  
or so she thought  
until she tripped, fell,  
hit her head on the stove top  
this self at a sudden stop.  
Sitting in her Garden  
the log rolls in her memory rotten.

Her last letter read:  
In my notes I put quotes  
in my thoughts you tie knots  
nevertheless prevails this text  
a shrugging of Oedipus-Rex.  
I only destroy in my dreams  
murder monopolies and business schemes.  
My blood is ink set for type  
for this money I trade life.  
Systems decay into new systems  
today’s stupidity tomorrow’s wisdom  
Stultify wildly; there is progress  
choking the air this fog is dense.

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### The Check

My boss mailed a ten dollar check  
what a sign of disrespect.  
Now is not the time for posturing,  
this monetary wound but a sting.

Little window envelope, home address,  
payments and billing; does not impress  
the exchange of money not poetic  
ranting and raving the young eccentric.

I took offense it has been said,  
after two days work went unpaid.  
Time investment, no small deficit  
this loss not cash check or credit.

### Menton Harbor

Palm trees line the street.  
The small boats, mostly  
fishing and sailing brands,  
lay on the water like  
leaves fallen on the  
surface of the sea.

The bell tolls, but not for thee;  
'Tis for lunch. Sun high above town.  
Mountains cast shadows down,  
the bell rings again  
for fishermen and sailors  
to come in.

They hurry off the dock. What awaits them?  
Cold beer, a siesta, maybe  
the warm embrace  
of some young child.  
A taxi passes old couples too,  
a dog; none notice my boat  
slowly slip beneath  
the water.

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### Attention Bicyclists!

Awaken from a nap  
on grass to the sound  
of someone sneezing.  
Confused I heard them  
say *Achtung! Achtung!*

Half awake I should  
have rolled over in  
the shade for more sleep.  
Tactical maneuver  
broadcast loud speaker:

“Idea police, ideas please,  
uncover them with your  
mind shovel. Dig deep  
in anyone asleep. Maps  
of dreamscapes will be  
filmed.”

The phone is ringing.  
The phone is buzzing.  
The phone is clicking.  
The answering machine picks up.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

“Get out of the way”  
a flash of a man passes by  
in and out of traffic.  
A woman glides past  
with a loaf of bread in her  
basket.

Ring. Ring. Ring.  
A father lets go of his child  
wobbling past me  
unsure of his future, for a second.

Ring! Ring! Ring!  
I must be the only person  
sleeping on a bike path

I finally answer:  
“Hello.” The phone poem  
an open line with  
dial tone deep words which  
reverberate. ...