

---

*Of Loss and Hope – Five Poems*

---

*A Gloom of Fog*

A gloom of fog surrounded  
Enveloping us in a soggy cocoon  
A scream vibrated in my ears  
And I reached towards you  
But felt only a damp emptiness  
I called out  
Whirling, searching, aching  
For a reply  
And when the mist left  
I stood alone

## *Funeral of a Friend*

eyes cast down towards fleeting feet  
something wrong, or maybe very right, about  
laughing children scampering past an open casket

scolded by a black suit  
they sulk away  
quiet, hidden, gone

like my friend

## *An Hour Before*

They told me to  
    leave  
“Your strength has not shown through,” they said  
    whatever that meant  
“You might be better off  
    in a less rigorous environment,” they said  
Slouched on curb, legs sprawled into the busy street  
    rereading  
        & rereading  
            & rereading  
Cars sped toward their destinations  
I had plans, dreams even,  
    an hour before  
Numb to the chilling evening & departing sun  
    rereading  
        & rereading  
            & rereading  
A car came close,  
    too close  
        I jerked my legs back  
“Move!” the driver said  
I clutched my knees, shivering in the cold,  
    as the stars arrived

## *The Puritan Work Ethic*

I pour the embellished details of how I left my job  
Into the r/AntiWork and r/FinancialIndependence message boards  
And feast on the praise from their users and bots  
A closed loop of surging dopamine  
As the day ebbs and new comments slack  
I reread the most exuberant compliments  
Their words burn into my memory  
I sleep on the soft pillow of their adoration  
But in the morning, I awake with no job or place to be  
I sit, staring alone at the empty walls of my room  
What do I say, when people ask what I do?  
I confer with my mountain of time and wasteland of productivity  
The long-sought-for goal finally achieved  
I battle a new opponent: What now?

## *You Look Gonzo*

I looked up at her,  
beauty swimming in denim.  
“You look gonzo,” I said.  
She stopped and stared  
down at me, lacing tired shoes  
“I don’t feel gonzo.” Yet,  
a smile invaded her face.  
And she kissed me.