

"Ghost House"

Vacant windows suck in light,
But inner lamps remain unlit.
Tattered curtains--silk unfit
For desertion.

Veils of webs interred within
Lay dormant in the corners--
Still, the only mourners
In the ghost house.

Edges blunt and colors fade
As winter shades approach
And tongues of frost reproach
The crumpled shell.

I spy this broken treasure
Through the trees, a faded
Gemstone, light degraded;
Now just pale.

Access is denied to me--
The door is rusted closed,
Its secrets undisclosed
To this schoolboy.

Squatters will no longer
Ransack barren bedrooms,
Crushing fragile blooms
Of ragged spring.

I leave it as it was,
Its perfect dust unmoved,
Its strength and use unproved
By grasping hands.

Unwilling to be aided,
It will fall from force above--
Or it may crumble of
Its own accord.

"Denial"

Remember when the blizzard killed that man?
The news reporter arrived at the scene
Soon after the corpse was taken away.
The local news won't show the dead people
They speak of, but I see them in my mind,
Like I see the windows covered with frost.

That morning in December when the frost
Was on the windowpanes there was a man
Who came to the door. I asked if he'd mind
Coming back later; I was at the scene
Of my film where all the hostage people
Escaped. I just want you to go away,

I said, why don't you leave and go away
To some place where the weather's nice and frost
Won't cover your windows and strange people
Don't interrupt your movie. Then the man
Began to try to speak of a crime scene
Or something. I don't know. I think his mind

Was not all there, or something, like his mind
Was broken, shattered glass that fell away
From the mirror in my bathroom. The scene
Is almost over; will you leave? The frost
Had fallen thick the night before the man
Came to the door. It covered the people

Who found the corpse, screaming like the people
In my movie. I didn't really mind
Not finishing it, although the news-man
Said things unfinished won't just go away
Like the life did of the man killed in the frost.
I should finish watching my favorite scene

So I won't seem like the man at the scene
Of snowed-in death whose warm life the people
Couldn't save from the sharply biting frost.
The man at the door asked if I would mind
If he came in to help me take away
The thoughts of the dead and frost-eaten man.

I did mind that he would stop the best scene.
This man and the others should go away
And let people scrub off their window-frost.

"Acquiescence"

A red glove discarded
On a sidewalk in the grey
Rain where dim
Grey ghosts go about
Their grey business beneath
Gaunt trees stripped
Of their robes and quaking
For cold sticks out
As flame in shadow, flame
Enshadowed by the cold
Grey tears of a metropolitan
Elegy for summer
Days and burnt-out bonfires--
A joy of color
Cast off, a renunciation
Of that primeval sin--
Difference--the flame absorbed
To anonymity, a light
Too bright to bear.

"Speaking with Shadows"

Summer flowers fling darkness
behind them; or does the sun,
splashing yellow on the day,
shape the shaking shadows?

The apple's void-echo weeps
Its woes that it can't provide
Sweet life like its maker,
For nothing can feed nothing.

My faceless twin grips the ground,
Cold with lonely horror,
But then I cheer him up:
for when the day fades to night

the light will flee from our eyes
and our shades will be one with us.

"A Tear for Autumn"

Remember when we used to play
Together even when the sun would go
Below the edge of Earth as eyes
Roll wearily into the head?
When you'd dance for me all day
And the wind would make your dress,
Your patchwork dress of colored sighs
Flutter and whirl in the waning light?
Do you recall that as I lay in bed
Asleep, you'd wake me in the night
With gentle breath, yet cool, and I'd confess
This tender love was all I wished to know?

But, of course, how could you know
That when you left I wouldn't want to play
That game again--why not confess
Your plans to leave? How could you go
So soon and leave me there that night
With no good-bye? My eyes
Were open through the night in bed
As thoughts of light ran through my head,
And even when the morning light
Announced the dawn of a new day,
Those rays could only make me sigh
Remembrance of your sunlit dress.