

A Cup of Coffee

16 lines

The smell of fresh morning,
Rubbing its brewed invitation
Against the impetus of sleep.
Arise, diurnal creature,
To another sunrise –
Embrace its caffeinated warmth,
And sit across from her,
Whom you love,
And float soft words
Into the swirling steam above the cup.

Before the clang of business;
Pause enough
To say I love you,
And I will love you still,
Tonight, after this day is spent,
After this cup is drained.

An Orphan's Oratorio

49 lines

It is time to write the truth more clearly
than in dream's shaded code,
for actions accrue,
and their plunder ferments time lost,
measuring the drained nobility of my youth,
where I feared no past,
against the courage of manhood
which seeks what spirits would comfort
the lingering array of failures
that accumulate like dust.

The adolescent jealousy of Leland for his ruggedness
and his ease with women,
who, ten years later,
died of cancer, before he reached age thirty;
And Maureen, whose vivacious joy for life
challenged me to skydive,
and we did,
and on her wedding day, the honeymoon plane
flying her and Charlie to Hawaii
crashed into a Colorado mountain.

Of Adriana, who, in her youth,
sang with the natural contralto of a wood thrush,
traded the healing beauty of song
for the long, slow persecution of alcohol;
And David, who locked himself in his clothes closet,
who opened the door only that his wife could slide a tray of food,
who rejected sanity and a green salad
in favor of the muzzle of a loud .45.

Am I, then, of the blood of these,
inheritor of dust?
Call to me, Siren of the heart,
reconcile the rooted tendrils
of these, my days,
and open my eyes
to the red of cardinals and the gold of finches,
my ears
to the swirling, sweet-sounding brook,
my nose
to the musk of resurrected Spring
whose conquering renewal awakens petal and beast.
Lure me, sensuous temptress,

to home,
released, as it were,
like pollen,
to fertilize what soil
my words,
my deeds,
my songs
enrich.

Of Pink, And The Roots of Survival

27 lines

The midnight orchid blossoms,
bright pink,
a phenomenon of astronomical alignment
held within the cusp of Pieces,
arising once every 72 years,
that holds in view but seven minutes,
the shy flower of the night
erupts from a seven-decade cocoon
like a star-burst
of powdered softness and
open-petaled enchantment.

Should any man witness
this mesmeric display,
he may claim one gift –
the momentary manifestation of beauty
within a fallible world.

Such miracle plunges its tentacles
within the fabric of the heart
with the strength and random
complexity of orchid roots,
which maintain life
suspended in balance between the earth and the heavens.

Orchid of pink surrender,
ordain this momentary rapture
with the brilliance of hope,
a blessing of time's hallowed coming and going,
for another seventy-two future years.

Toward Permanence

14 lines

For the first time
he did not send roses.
This common philodendron,
less lovely,
less aromatic,
more enduring.

She exhaled the last swirling tendril of smoke
from the cigarette,
and as she rose
to leave for work,
she decided to risk transplanting
the young roots
into a new pot,
trusting a future garden.

Tuesday Morning Shower

37 lines

Not the weekend soak –
slow, sudsy, salubrious;
Just a short, quick refresher –
wet and melodious,
thundering droplets to awaken cells,
stimulate blood flow to the skin and the heart
and the brain.
Walpurgis work-day arousal,
preparation for the struggle
to achieve
this month's car-payment and
a bottle of Merlot.

What would the shower portend
if I enjoyed the daily grind?
What if the daily grind were
the daily bread?
the daily treasure?
Alas, such abundance is reserved
for ancient craftsmen who made monuments
of stone and sculpture.
Such days of making something living,
like a cathedral or a grotto,
making something necessary and fruitful,
like a fireplace or a bench,
where beforehand nothing existed,
this making,
this creating,
adding to the already overwhelming
beauty of nature –
those days are gone.

Tuesday morning shower
is merely the startle of a disquiet wish
for restitution from my alienation
of nature's sources.
To encourage atonement,
I plant a tree.