

## **Crickets**

they repose in night's gallery  
as white moon energy dances  
through supple black branches  
and tattoos their insect skin

in this secret stillness,  
the rubbing of limbs begins  
their brief ancient symphony  
which stills the ballet of shadows

when the starlight briefly mutes  
their eerie doppler magic  
our breath crackles like onion skin,  
the stone in our throats growing

but the writhing of our bodies,  
and rubbing of our limbs,  
even our gasps and whispers  
cannot replicate their song

## Niagara County

She is her family's joy.  
Sure she was marrying down,  
they referred to her as elegant  
rather than thin hipped  
and her crowded crooked smile  
as giving her character.

He is a loving craftsman.  
Who seduced her slowly with  
the honeyed tone his  
plain speaking voice acquired  
when he pulled bourbon from the  
sawdust covered bottle.

As the cotton, flannel, and silk  
twisted among them  
their first was conceived

He was pleased with the house they chose,  
strong wooden bones and comfort  
wisely located south of the toxins  
sent skyward by Tonawanda Coke, and  
north of the small town lining the canal

"one street back", he told her,  
"a poor man's waterfront property",

She appreciated the back porch  
where she could look across the yard  
between the houses, past the sidewalk,  
over River Road, across Niwanda Park  
to the mighty Niagara's shore.

"one street ahead", she told him  
"is something the richest woman, cannot buy"

They both knew challenges could come,  
but not so soon, not so sudden.  
questions arise in scans and tests  
and doctors above her swollen belly.  
proposing that it was likely nothing  
but wearing the eyes of doubt

She treasured the back porch

where she would look across the yard  
between the houses, past the sidewalk,  
over River Road, across Niwanda Park  
to the mighty Niagara's shore.

If hope isn't a strategy,  
than what of a wish?  
And what could either do  
to prevent the shadow  
from a child sized wheelchair  
staining the porch?

She cast her hope and wishes  
between the houses  
past the sidewalk  
over River Road  
across Niwanda Park  
to the mighty Niagara's shore.

Warm evenings the three of them  
love to walk the path along the shore  
their child born bright and robust  
racing forward and back  
on strong toddler legs.

They come to a place  
where each time they stop  
there she smiles  
and looks back,

across Niwanda Park  
over River Road  
past the sidewalk,  
between the houses  
and to the empty porch.

## Shame

It rustles through you  
churning your thoughts,  
as you

reach for your receipt at the ATM, or  
look into the bottom of the coffee cup,  
taking your last sip.

It may gnaw,  
come at you in waves, or  
in a gasp of panic  
as you

walk back into the house, or  
watch the floor numbers pass,  
in an empty elevator.

It even allows you to be free of it,  
a brief and merciful lapse  
until it returns  
as you

consider the titles,  
on a friend's bookshelf, or  
listen to the waiter read back your order.

It is not the wheels falling off,  
nor did it cause everything to go to hell.  
but it disturbs your core  
as you

hear your ring tone on someone else's phone,  
log off your computer, or  
place a glass in the dishwasher.

This morning, it was so powerful, that  
after discovering rain arrived overnight,  
you returned to the shower  
planted yourself in the hot wet spray  
desperate to cleanse it away.

## The Crash

*(note to reader: this poem is most effective when read quickly  
and without much thought)*

my calendar in Outlook has just exploded  
fragments of my schedule everywhere  
seventeen minutes of my policy meeting  
stuck in next Wednesday's dentist appointment  
jagged fractions of Monday's management meeting  
spread over five days, some in the past  
while a thirty eight hour Tuesday  
crowds a six hour sliver of Sunday

I'm glad you are amused,  
because this is serious  
this is my life, you have one too  
perhaps purposeful, guided by  
clear attainable goals based on the values  
you identified in the previous exercise.  
Or maybe its a river that  
takes you where it will  
difficult to imagine it really matters  
when you are where you are

this has only gotten worse  
as portions of my calendar  
are now in my contacts list  
how can I send an e-mail to  
kelsey.august 6 1430 conference call line will be provided @ pleaseconfirmattendance.com?  
It will surely come back undeliverable  
and he is awaiting the kindness of my reply

I am feeling very dizzy and  
am going to throw up.

When I feel this ill and overwhelmed  
I think of my mother and oldest brother  
who were both born on the fourth of July  
and who have already passed  
It may be on the fourth that I am writing this,  
but I wouldn't know and couldn't be sure  
my calendar in Outlook having just exploded and all

and as the smoke and din fade  
I lie on my desk, breathe deeply  
and wonder, among other things,  
if there is wind in the internet.

## **Lake and Loons**

Only your surface  
is defined by what rises  
along your shoreline.  
Life's beauty lies deep within  
your secret aquarium.

Leap away and soar  
leave me earthbound to ponder  
the gift of flying.  
In my modern peasant life  
possessions empty me.