

SEVEN TWEETS FROM THE FUTURE¹

The people even carried their toxic assets to bed with them · Sun Sep 19 2010 23:34:28 (CDT) via web from Framingham, MA · Embed this Tweet

Which is why, in morning coat & black dress, the people were a xerox of the ocean, long ago, when we breathed in our sleep · Sun Sep 19 2010 23:39:58 (CDT) via web from Framingham, MA · Embed this Tweet

Just as the moonlight was searching the tunnels of a mare's eye & the glaciers collapsed under a deluge of 80 odd billion plastic bottles per year · Sun Sep 19 2010 17:39:48 (CDT) via web · Embed this Tweet

Trace my thumbprint to the source: this pelican, adrift in its box of clear plastic sky: its oil-coated wings spread wide, O my people · Wed Sep 22 2010 12:08:37 (CDT) via web · Embed this Tweet

Just toggle to the enlightened. For the people were pregnant with their very own lives · 2 min ago via web · Embed this Tweet

After all, it's been the Age of the Insect for about 400,000,000 years now · 1 sec ago via web · Embed this Tweet

¹Hum a few bars then, from The End of the End of the World · 2 sec ago via web · Embed this Tweet

THE OFFICES OF THE BLINDFOLD

When they remove the blindfold,
in the woods, or on stage, say,
there's generally something missing
that was there before, a woman's body, a white dove,
that's appeared in the lights, flapping
in a puff of gunsmoke. That afternoon,
for example, at the reservoir,
once John's daughter had blindfolded me,
& I could hear the snapping turtles
plunging one after the other off a sun-baked log
into the water, at 20 paces, down the trail,
Lily disappearing into the understory,
once I took the blindfold off again, I was alone,
but a single tortoise crawled at my feet.
I was running over yet another dropped birthday call
in dad's voice: *I'm glad you were born* & immediately
the wide world had shifted 360°
back to my twelfth birthday, back to me,
pulling trout #4 out of a mountain brook
as dad snapped his fingers & a rainbow flash
wriggled on the end of my line. Ta-da!
Then *his* voice, completely disappeared:
"All I remember about *my* mother
were the black buttons on her pajamas
as she lay there dying, & that's only because some aunt
had sewn them onto a teddy bear for me,
as eyes, after she died."
Every time I try to remember somebody else's life,
I feel this vertigo, behind the veil. Sure,
you can see *through* the blindfold,
everything ghosted in a silky transparent light
but once they spin you around, those eyes
are just black buttons sewn to your face.
Even if you could see through them,
it'd be like black horses running into a black wind,
horses with no eyes. Other days,
the light hurt when it came off
but you can't just tear off the blindfold;
it's a way of seeing,
with its faint thumbprint of a moon rising
that particular afternoon. Then John reappeared
right before my eyes, "That tortoise," he said,

“knows exactly where he’s going.”

Turns out they have an inner compass
akin to the membranous labyrinth of the inner ear,
where the brighter absence balances in its canals,
& even in there, the moon quietly keeps pulling
all those liquids. “If you pick up a tortoise on dry land,
be sure to point him in the same direction
when you put him back down again.”

Otherwise, he’ll be lost.

That Summer’s fluids have evaporated to the second.

That Summer, I was navigating by ear,
the wild savage springs bubbling up & away.
& if the present moment is a non-negotiable, (which it is,)

a compass point, a true North,

then where did those days flow away to,

John’s long frame, stretched out so still

in the free-stone course

that a cluster of rainbow trout

had gathered at his bodyheat, an incandescent halo

in the wrist-numbing snowmelt;

those afternoons, the sunlight hurt so clean

that the kids ran away from me

into the glowing understory & I just stood there,

dizzy, newly sighted on the spinning path.

Could you follow that inner compass back home,

if you were actually blinded in the woods?

Down the gully from the bald trail,

down to where the underground stream

surfaced at spine-break, into the blind draw, there,

feelingly, the book’s signature woven

into a slowly boiling spring,

even though every dram of that water has evaporated

& fallen again. Down you go into the forest,

even if your shell *is* cracked.

Screw your eyes shut tight for Lily, who’s hiding,

& Luke, who can’t be seen.

Don’t cheat now, don’t go slow.

Carry away those sealed rooms bursting at the seams

with self-mutilating, euphoric, artificial light.

Take a step or two, everything still spinning on the path.

Crash into the brush. Disappear for good.

Every time I see my blind student’s irises, for example,

the ones that look like splintered marbles, & roll

all by themselves,

I want to put on that blindfold
& tear it back off again, in the woods.
Where did that morning go?
Or that afternoon, at the lake, Lily & I, eyes closed—
are they tight?—we dived down kicking
through that cube of warmth,
down to that cold shock I feel on my shoulders
even now, & it woke us
& we grabbed at the lakebed,
only to rise, seconds later, bursting at the lungs
in one painful breath torn out of us with opened eyes
& it hurt, when we surfaced, into the sunlight,
holding up our handfuls of silt & weeds.

EIGHT TWEETS FROM THE DEAD

That's what it's like to be extinguished inside each moment, the mockingbirds & nightingales sing in a relentless mathematics of satisfaction & grief · 10:42 PM Sep 19th via web from [Framingham, MA](#) · Embed this Tweet

Across skyfuls of liquid sapphire with a woman's form in it, to where the people evade their very own lives² · Wed Sep 22 2010 10:53:01 (CDT) via web · Embed this Tweet

Her head falls with a spark to my shoulder afterwards, then rests beside me on the pillow · 3:25 PM Sep 18th · Embed this Tweet

For the wind is one massive prerecorded sigh & the sky, my love, a neverending brainzap · Sun Sep 19 2010 23:39:46 (CDT) via web from [Framingham, MA](#) · Embed this Tweet

In the direction of the hospital, toward which even the clouds reflected in your eyes tumble, & all the kitchens empty to the same death commercial · 4:38 PM Sep 19th via web · Embed this Tweet

On the East Coast of the Middle Passage, where you lift my death to your ear like a conch shell & listen to the oceanic breathing · 5/18/13, 22:05 · Embed this Tweet

Time is. . .Time is come. . .Tell all the clocks to stop · 10:28 PM - 19 Jul 13 (CDT) via web · Embed this Tweet

²I feel blown open all over again, like when you were born · 8:56 PM Sep 23rd via web from [Weymouth, MA](#) · Embed this Tweet

HEROIC SIMILE: THE GLACIAL SEA ICE AS IT MELTS FOR GOOD
IS ONLY PARTIALLY A METAPHOR FOR LOSS

With a monstrous clap of your missing palms,
the snowthunder announces it
in the wintry erotics of this poem:
you & I are little more than these atmospheric changes made real
or unreal. As in: Don't worry, I know you're still dead. . .
Like: the actual body of this metaphor is mine,
as it stands here today completing the zeugma
in the frozen marshy woods west of Boston,
merely vibrating with the Mass Pike: ice of course,
this being an arctic coda; your face, turning toward me,
now vanishing, late February, early thaw, the air
white with extinction—our swarming color—& falling:
a sudden ganglia of lightning up from the horizon,
a June storm in January, years later
I'll spare you the hot tears squeezing out of me,
the hot freezing, but I can't spare us the melting,
your gray eyes. Out of the black branches
they come heavy, & white:
out of all that black sky in me, they fall
onto the dangerously thin ice of the iced-over reservoir,
onto which I have walked this afternoon
with the advent of the tropical snow,
one massive shockwave, one blast & aftergroaning collects,
one clap, repeated overhead, then the quiet grown thick,
like a white moss.
You can almost see us collecting up out of the snowmounds,
like convex graves.
You could almost hold what isn't here—
in your hot little hand; you, for example,
One substantial grip instead, the ice
having contemplated my appendages,
the brittle, compliant woods, all that you've become,
all that emptiness & unseasonable melting around me.
I must gather these chips of glacial ice for my dead bride
until her gray-blue eyes have melted away in my hands,
a bracelet for her missing wrist, before she's gone.
That's my labor, in this very real underworld, to melt
a little bit more in your gaze each morning,
flipped upside down. For slowly, year by year,
those optic nerves have degraded.
I'm almost gone by now, dissipated, incinerated

with you, smaller, until I can barely see you,
until I can only just volatilize your face,
until I'm disappeared like the snow leopard, (endangered)
like Eurydice (extinct) into all this falling white.
From these futures, from that last night,
you are looking back at me anyhow
through all these translucent, subglacial striations,
in the original ice, the ones I research
& that association hurts me
through all these invisible ruptures we call years,
all 16 of them,
gone by in one monstrous clap—
I saw you standing out there on the reservoir, just now,
& knowing full well you were long gone, I followed,
onto the ice that might tilt & capsize & spill "her" over
if even a child walked out onto it now, much less me,
far heavier for the voice on the radio
that woke me at dawn today, a Russian geologist
describing the subglacial lake lately discovered
near the Arctic Sea, above Vladivostok this week,
the size of New Jersey, a liquid sepulcher
sealed off by miles of glacial ice that will soon be extinct
in the great collapsing, ice that's gone untouched
for over a million years.
So they drilled down miles & miles to reach it
& that moment, when the ancient waters
shot up through those tubes & surfaced
miles aboveground, instantly froze,
carrying all that information like genetic material,
microbes, stratigraphic striations,
how the world might have been before people.
All I could think was this: the blessing of that water,
so like this unexpected grief
when your voice surfaced just now, out of nowhere,
that I feel dipped through a hole in the ice,
breakable, saturated, brittle, that for a moment,
all I wanted was to disappear into that sea,
O, could I lose all body now but meanwhile,
the sword began to melt into gorey icicles,
to slather & thaw in a subglacial eruption.
The future is now; these futures,
papery causes of action fluttering down the air.
The closest I can get to such an episodic release
was when I plunged my hand in

through a hole in the ice & felt you, just now,
clutching my wrist.
Wonderful, terrible thing, your absent current,
the way it melts as glacial ice melts, for good,
when the Father eases the fetters off the frost
& unravels the water-ropes.
He who wields power over time & tide:
He is the true Lord. She is the future end, the missing floes,
the missing lives, which come now,
in little troubled wintry waves:
little spasms of weather, without voice or word,
little extinction kinks, at the slow end of January:
you, brittle echo, frozen murmur in the reeds, pine click,
bright confetti & starglitter, frozen trickle of branches,
wind tacking about the ghostcorpse on the ice, then nothing:
snowthunder & creak & me.
For this quiet fear has a life missing all its own.
& when I rose to the surface with my last breath
I pressed my palms to the inside of the ice, pushed up,
tried to breath, now gone.
I am no iced-over sepulchre,
traveling miles below the surface,
no bubbling upward only to freeze, no ancient blessing,
but it's here in my arms, the cold air
unfreezing its fountains in a ventriloquistic, inverted thaw,
so like the wind throwing your voice into mine
that I almost heard in that clattering through the branches,
in a silicotic broadcast, almost saw it, like icy water
entering my lungs, the cry of an owlet, exiting them.
& this glacial map, with its Ultima Thulé,
has entered the branches
of my dry bronchia once more, has disappeared underwater
in the grand apocalyptic fiction, just like you.
With a small brush of your imaginary wrist,
you part me in the dead & the living,
like a frozen Red Sea.
Now it takes the lightning to split this sharp lace curtain
& shake out its tiny blades,
to freeze the glowing particles into the middle distance,
& we've reached the end,
like capillaries exploding, like a flashbulb,
like an auto da fé.
Each face in the multitude unglows. Disappears.
& the cold air

instantly fills the sails of the good slave ship Jesus
at the rate of a frozen waterfall unlocking
as you let your missing locks, all in a cascade, fall down.
For you see the black holes in my eyes are freighted
with dark bodies. One look from the subglacial rose
of your perished gaze & it freezes back,
across all the years,
unfreezes a catastrophically cold shock
directly into the Kuroshio Current & just like that,
like the air, we'll all be widows dressed in white frozen weeds
when the sails go slack, when the black trees
are like destriers cloaked in white,
a glimpse of their black shanks,
a glitter of breastplate,
& I'm the one walking the frozen waters,
I'll be the one walking the asphaltine surface of the sea,
I'll be a brand spanking new Northwest Passage,
& enters that swift current like grief,
cold bodies sucked up from miles below the surface.
Look back at me across all those years
with the little ice-age of your gaze.
Take me apart by the parabolic nerve endings falling
away, away. Wade
in the water. In the frozen water.
Wade through my frozen eyes which nevertheless,
are running here in the woods, where our eyes
lock on the beam, at a hundred feet, & you're gone.
Wade, wade up to the waste through my frozen surfaces,
carry these shockwaves.
& in a series of loud, concussive reports, again,
in one long, final, lovely, sustained & aching groan,
like a whale breaching, the reservoir announces it,
that Spring has come even earlier this year,
has begun to trouble & snap, by God
to melt my eyes –
Wade in the water.
Wade in the water, children.
Wade in the water.
God's gonna trouble the—