

## What Men Want

I want to write a sexy poem;  
a poem that speaks to women  
the way that fire speaks to silk.  
I want to light the boiler in their bellies  
and send them steamed and sweating  
into the arms of their husbands,  
or their boyfriends,  
or whoever they want when they feel  
their routine shifting next to them in bed.

I want to write a poem that  
makes women wake up from their dreams  
with their damp fingers dancing between their legs  
and no idea how they got there.  
I want their kisses to linger on their men  
and their lips to conduct electric bursts  
like emergency Morse Code messages that say:  
“Swipe all the shit off the dinner table  
and bend me over the edge  
and give me more than I think I can handle.”

I want to write a poem that  
gets women thinking about hot, heavy  
breath on the inside of their thighs and  
a tongue that has them gasping in staccato:  
“no, no—go slow, go slow!”

I want to write a poem that makes men say:  
“God damn, I wish I’d thought of that!”  
And makes their women say,  
“I wish you had, too!”

I want to write a poem that sends women  
seeking after themselves; that sends their palms  
sweeping over their stomachs after the lights go out,  
hands searching under the blankets for their fantasies  
while their eyes flutter closed and they begin to dream  
about love and passion and explosions in the sky.

## **I Do Things Better Than Everyone Else**

Sometimes, I imagine that I've accomplished the awesome.  
I'm not interested in what it is that I've done, but whatever it is  
people will care about my opinion of it and things related to it.  
In fact, it's such an amazing feat that I'm known  
all over the world for it—I've revolutionized the whole field!  
Usually I'm inspired by something I've read on the internet:

A man ate 62 hotdogs in three minutes? Imagine if I ate 104!  
I'd blow the doors off the sport; my charisma would magnetize it!  
Professional eating would become an Olympic event!

What's this—three guys robbed a Huck for \$372?  
I'd have taken drinks, too! Doughnuts and corn dogs!  
I'd live my life on the road, going from gas station  
to gas station; I'd be all over the news! I'd give money to children!  
I'd be America's most-loved criminal!

Someone wrote a book? I know English—  
I could write the next great American novel!  
People the world over would slouch to my prose and warm  
themselves by the glowing light of my wisdom!  
Nobel Prize for sure! I'd be ranked with the luminaries!

I could blog about it and speak about it and tweet about it  
and talk about it on Facebook and at parties! I'd be  
the greatest internet personality ever to be on the internet!  
People would talk about me in *that* way, as if to say,  
“He's the greatest and the best at talking about himself,  
which is good, because he's sooooo awesome.”

I just have to be smart enough and fast enough  
and bold enough and weird enough  
and all of that in just the right way,  
and fame and happiness will happen to me!

## A Person Dies Every 10 Seconds

Someone just died. When they tally these things, do they count abortion? Surely someone does.  
Oh, there—it just happened again. And again. And again. And does this seem morbid at all? Does this make you say to yourself “life is short—live to the max!” or maybe you’re going the other way and all you can think to say is “God, why bother?”  
Shit, man—someone just died again! We’re out here dropping like flies! I want to have something profound to say about it; I want to know something more about humanity. I want to say, “a life of participation is the best life you can ask for,” or maybe another prong on the Zen wishbone, like, “I made someone smile,” or “someone made me smile.”  
You made someone smile? Christ—that bar is awfully low.  
Someone just died. Oop—there another goes. They died from cancer; they died from heart disease, and starvation and exposure, or they got shot, or beaten, or mal-practiced upon, or they got into a car accident, or they just gave up and killed themselves. Suicide is an ugly word. “Suicide cluster” is uglier. That’s when someone kills themselves and then people close to them grow so depressed that they kill themselves, too. I don’t think we can “take our own life”—we already have it. It just doesn’t mean anything to you when suicide seems like a better option. There goes another one!  
I don’t understand people who want to live forever. Why the hell would you want this to go on forever? Sometimes, the only thing that gets me to do anything with my life is death. Death is a very comforting idea to me. I figure I can make as many mistakes as I want; I can durdle around with my life and try this

and try that, and in the end—and it ends,  
thank God!—I'll be no worse for wear.  
When I think about people dying, I say,  
“good for them—I hope that works out.”  
The dead aren't bothered by living.

## **Is That a Gun in Your Pocket?**

There's no beauty in directness; no seduction.  
It's raw, like a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burn; like a dancer  
narrating what she would be doing if she were dancing.  
But I like the ugly truth because I'm scared  
that you won't get beauty and I don't trust you  
to be kind with me when you don't.  
Or maybe that goes the other way around....

If you've got a gun, just pull the god-damned thing out!  
Just whip out the iron and show it to me.  
I don't trust my ability to infer that you  
may be packing heat and the wondering  
is going to kill me slower than you will.  
Just do it—just pull your projectiles out  
and let's get the truth over with.

Fear is weird like that, especially when you're cornered,  
or when you fear what you want,  
which is the same as being cornered.  
You're pushed between your desire  
and your primal instinct to flee,  
and your nervous system goes into fits  
while you just stand in place, wide-eyed  
and dumb-struck and wondering if  
you'll ever be able to think again.

And may God help you if you want a person!  
You're going to stand there, day after day,  
feet rooted in the muck of your paralysis while  
they whisper with other people and you run  
through all your desperate doubts:  
Do they want you?  
Do they want someone else?  
Are they packing a .45 or a .357  
or do they have a howitzer in their purse?  
And then there's the king-shit question;  
the boss question; the only question  
ricocheting around your skull that really matters in the end:

## **Foolishness**

“...or, you are a fool to consider me beautiful.  
That one you’ll never hear, guaranteed.”

-- *Nightclub*, Billy Collins

You’re a fool to consider me beautiful—  
there’s nothing here but marbled scar tissue.  
This long one was I got hit in the head with a post;  
This one that looks like parenthesis was when  
I got black-out drunk and drove a truck into a tree.  
The thin one on the inside of my thumb was when  
I cleaned my knives after half a bottle of vodka;  
the gray wads on my knee are when I wrecked my bike  
and refused to go to the hospital to have the rocks removed.  
That thick, black chord that runs through me  
like a fat vein of silt through a glacier  
was when I spent a couple of days in the hospital,  
wondering about a police report that said  
two vehicles were involved.  
My awkward hesitation with women was when  
three different guys beat me over one woman;  
my obsession with their comfort was when  
I met her again a decade later,  
and she wouldn’t be left alone with me.