

Five little poems, all in a row

Fence

Squirm like a first date

Smile a white lie photograph

Eyes blank and empty

With hands reaching, aching

But not going anywhere

Wishing hoping tracing

The confines of the fences they built

And all the while

Waiting for a buzz to set them free

For a sign of love

A smoke signal, a doorbell, a scarlet letter

Anything anything

Mind wringing itself

Over and over

Wishing hoping pining dying

Squirming like a first date

Please

One last chance to show you

I care

The hands scream out

But the fence is sound proof

And you're afraid of what will happen

If you use your outstretched

Hands to rip down that fence

When you've labored so to make it stand

Old Habits

Mustard yellow shag rug framed by mustard striped couches

Thawing bits of old forgotten photographs

Pulled from a peeling pickle keg

Green glow cast on a quiet face

In the majestic chair we all covet

But breath taking memories expound

From the depths of that pickle keg

Gathered like some scouts around a fire

Naive but not naive enough

As I submerged and proudly brought news of treasure found

In a forbidden ashtray under the sea of the den

Panic stricken tongues were quick

To restrain my innocence

In haste they led me to it

Almost in unison

There was a chorus of

"that is not an ashtray it's a plate."

A heavy dark overcoat hanging in the closet

Little hands reaching into big pockets

Found old habits dying hard

Denial of the trivial

Greeted with a painted grin

A malleable frown, dripping confusion

Receding to the den

Where things can be as they are

Paige

Days that make

Butterflies and shooting stars

Mean more

Cause the rain to fall hard

In sunny days

Last I love you left unsaid

And everything beautiful that happens

Makes you think of her

And feel like she's looking down at you

Or visiting

And every tree and telephone pole

Makes you cringe at its capabilities

And the crosses that line the highways

Strewn with flowers and ribbons

And pictures and tears

She is beautiful and dead and

It's all wrong

Forever young.

I don't think this is what they meant.

Merely Insects

We were like those plump spring summer bugs

That link up in passion
That fly into windshields
Husks cracking
Splaying open
Guts to the wind-heart and soul exposed
In cytoplasm
Suspended
Earth sky sea
Awake to our confessions
Our words giant raindrop waterfalls
The size of coins on the glass
Spread by speed
Sped by a long ache
Made urgent by the prospect
Of miles, empty promises
And loaded statements
Like a soft gentle rain to come
Knowing later it will turn to pebbles

Heart

A line
A light puffy callous of a line
Unevenly divides
The thumping red into jagged uneven chunks
Together

Held by the ugly that runs down the middle
Slowing the beat
Making it the violinist forced to play the cymbals
In the marching band
Flashes of gold don't do what they used to.
Trace that hard tender line
With quiet fingers
Knowing what comes next and forbidding it
Every time
All the while,
If I go anywhere or do anything
There you are.
No more warm tug, blue lace
Grinning eyes
But eyes
Tired of naiveté and sore from tearless nights
Greet us.
Unknowing, growing
Blind sages soothed fever blistered skin
And baby soft hands forged a comfortable place
Broken and unreal
No strings attached
But thrilling and guilting
In the sight and sound of what was "we"
When our eyes meet.

It doesn't hurt anymore

Knowing exhaustion

And that beasts fear bold shining blades.

No hard feelings

But you are everywhere

And we'll not soon forget.