

“The Age of the Watermark”

Aquarius' pitcher is empty  
and the liquid, everywhere.  
But it was all for the fishes,  
who feel through the seas the  
companions not here.

Air, it's more diaphanous than  
we thought. The stars fell in  
through holes in the sky, our  
alleged certainties punctured  
when we saw Pluto's un-red heart.

Was there ever a thing to fear  
if one fell to the floor of space?  
The meteors and comets do it.  
Or did you think they ran rings  
around the multiverses?

You maybe thought things  
run out. Dry up. Disappear.  
But nothing is ever gone, friend,  
don't cry, the salt soaks up the tear,  
as water dries here, but  
not there.

“Zero Below”

Negative numbers age here,  
repeatedly cancelling each  
other out in vast numerical  
deaths. But that doesn't  
stop snow from falling on snow,  
or the piles of refrozen slush  
from coagulating into lost planets.  
Some ex's ex scraped  
the cement from the brick  
in an untimely accident  
when no one was looking.  
The exposure exposed  
the spare design on this one--  
very spare, sparingly spare.  
So ill-equipped we were and are:  
not included were the tools we

might use to figure out who we are,  
and now we sit, hairless,  
buried somewhere below the  
well's well, under a black hole  
from which not even an eye  
of light can spy, disabled from  
finding for ourselves that we've  
been left to the vagaries of  
the lost meteors and errant  
comets after the star unwisely  
exploded into groups before  
the conclusion of its education,  
our group falling dumbly through  
the backside of the cosmos,  
and falling still, us becoming  
the sediment from which  
all antimatter is born,  
we being that always  
and yet still longing to be  
its opposite: matter.  
To be born  
to matter.

#### "To An Heir"

At a certain point  
all apologies are absurd.  
Take the wheel, or fire itself  
and the eventual move  
toward ovens and water-wheeled  
factories, toward cars  
and skyscrapers—even,  
it seems, the protection of  
the self by firearm and  
the fissure of the atom itself.

Being halfway in bodies, we  
held that finite and carved-out  
way of thinking of a world  
whose mind-bending  
variety we quite tragically  
misinterpreted.  
For us being that way,  
especially in the century  
before you and yours,  
it's possible that

even the most ill-intentioned  
among us never saw the squalor that  
we would leave in our wake.

But you do see a thing we  
never knew could exist.  
All things precious mined for  
an ill-starred constellation of  
urges and beliefs that held  
a baseness only hinted at by  
latter-year prophets and lost  
tellers of truths.  
That the necessary variety of  
the source of all would be  
blackened into useless uniformity  
was a bleak thing—  
too bleak to bear,  
though now, heirs, as you fear,  
it is here.

“Death is What Kills You”

Forgive yourself ahead of time.  
Because in the hour of your death,  
should you be wakeful and not drugged,  
you, like the rest of us, will ask yourself,  
no, you will know, that you could  
have done it all with more magnificence,  
because you will at that moment see  
the true measure of your own spectacle,  
the spectrum of a life,  
that you were  
a projection of something stellar,  
with all manner of control of the source of the  
light if not the rainbow at the end of it.  
The two or three projections of yourself—  
a lifting of your three-year-old onto shoulders,  
or that private day you held the wind’s hand  
and it calmed you, the green and gray of it,  
the outlines of a lived life, stark in relief  
against your fading self

you will say, oh,  
those were the proper moments,  
ah, I see now,  
and the lights will fade

and you will be somewhere none of us  
ever know, despite hypotheses, prophecies  
and claims to the contrary. You will, in short,  
finally see the sum of your parts  
after the exit, and without a living soul to tell.  
And then, if your life was a healthy one,  
you will laugh  
where no one living can hear it.