

Moonlighting

A slow urge for destruction
Flows through wide-eyed veins,
Drives me on without instruction.
The bright moon loosens the reins.

On a dimly lit bridge I swallow a river,
Draw inward to renounce my breath.
As after the success of love, I am aquiver-
Not one solitary shiver kept.

And as I have known a few heights,
I'll meet the depths and ask the strangest,
Most soul-searching questions in spite
Of intoxication-ones beyond the layman's.

All my unkempt urges sit down beside
Me in the dubious bars and greasy stalls
Of demi-restaurants. No one will chide
Our dirty-nails and tabled elbows. The walls

Are decorated by the sweaty palm slaps
Of bold men, bold and flailing
And relishing a day's end, the few laps
Allowed before a long night's wailing.

Homeward over the river, icy and wide.
To cross, to return, I must begin
With only morning mist to confide
In; the secrets of my new religion
Built on love-yes-love and pride.

The Trouble with Me

The loathsome hours rattle
In my pocket and don't add
Up to enough to make bail.
Such lonely hours without
Even myself for company
Because I'm not talking to me
Right now and afraid of how
I'll smell when I return
To the outside world,
That passersby will note
The hint of misdemeanor
On my breath-
Much worse than whiskey.
They take my fingers and hands
But leave my heart to me.
My own peace to make
With the man I've become
Across the dull unraveling
Of city jail hours.
The loathsome, lonely hours
More easily forgotten
Than gotten over.

Rebel, rebel

Beneath the whiny finale of some gray
Evening we sit cushioned on the floor
And think of chairs fondly and the easy
Beings of the powerful people who use them.

In mumbled half-light we seek out
The wisdom we didn't realize
Was supposed to be at hand and find
Only some childish means of brilliance

That we'll laugh at later on,
Knowing it meant nothing.
When older, we'll be ashamed
And hide it and all we said before.

If ever we were charmed to be gods,
We washed our hands of that notion
Last night (the one before?) in the sink
Of a bathroom with more piss than floor.

How everything used to be gained
From some witty, inked comment-
A drawing on the reserves of elders,
Learned in the ancient ways of the skin mag!

Now sirens and us and the roarclack
Of passing trains. A spit-shined failure
To place in the way of a too-bright star.
All is oil and grease if not tragedy.

Strife, stinging, biting, dying at night.
Our sound was fury. Our fury was our right.
We don't know what we had before,
Only that we have less now.

Swamped

Here I am in the Everglades
Of your love,
Of your life.

Again.

Singing words that fall on
Alligator ears.

You're cold and tough
Like alligator tears.

So let's drink some rum
And forget we've begun
To resemble old mistakes,
Bloated bodies in the brakes.

Alligator tears in the Everglades:
Common and dejected and fearsome.

Here I am out of the boat
Of your love,
Of your life.

Again.

Long-distance calling

As if shared memories
Might return something
To me, I am listening
Closely to every movement
Made in the hall.
The heating bill's been
Far too high and suspicion
Abounds like the freighted
Steps of the upstairs neighbors.
So I am not sleeping well.
So I am writing you
A letter that will be an email
And imagining the wings on
A standard postmarked
Envelope flapping across the sea
Or wherever it might be
Where the lights are on
(I always turned them off)
And a new life shines
From the center of your mantel
Above a nice brick fireplace,
Maybe empty, maybe cold
And probably forgotten
Because a new man is keeping
You warm tonight
And when he breathes
You're hearing me
Clearly through a tin can
Across a string,
Across an ocean.
I put it there
To bring you back to me.