

Desire

Desire is something you fish for
In a pocket the moment after
Some unhinged door swings open.
A universal coin to buy love, lust,
Invigorating breezes or whatever-
You have always wanted.
It's more than a sweet taste on the lips.
It's a vaguely conceived mirage
That's always been one step ahead.
You've counted your coins three times
But still don't know what to buy.
You want it all.

A something to hold onto

A stabilizing clutch at the handrail
Can be a strong wind under wings sullied
In the wee hours by the watering pail.
A rough, rusting bar being all we'd

Ask from a faintly orange-smear'd night.
And one less uneven sidewalk slab.
And to rise, and rise again, to sight-
Lines free of coppers making midnight nabs

Of the drunk and disorderly. Ord'r me?
'Nother drink, sure. We are loosely-applied
In our affections and make-up, and she,
Under the war paint, and I have tried

To make do, believe true the gratifying,
Easier desires: shimmying, spinning,
From dance floor to front door. Maybe sinning,
But unceasing, because it's so satisfying.

All kinds of knots

When she got scared
She'd hide it in a safe place
Between her heart and the pit of her stomach.
She'd forget its weight and shape
To flit again within the space of an hour.

We may go abroad and adrift
In the lives of other seas,
Or we may be simple skiffs,
Just stay in the harbor,
Leave the waves and whirlpools
To those who've seen more,
Who have more and dare to lose it.

When I got scared
I'd lock it in a drawer
But want to tattoo the key in my palm.
That I may kiss it and pray
For all the lost in this war
That is living and loving and always harm.

Let it not reach into our tender spaces.
If we cannot be doves
Then bind us with laces.

Before: To and From

Awash in the silence of turning,
Troubled by the ringing of some half-
Known emotion, outward and yearning,
And so departing again, prize calf

Consumed and some forgiveness sewn
To the inside of my jacket. Enough
Occurs once monthly when I'm shown
Again into that armchair lie, stuffed

And torn by shortcomings I've had
Since before I spoke. No chance to explain
A past another pasted in through pain.
Has a photo album ever been sad?

Or does that always come afterwards?

I misremember the facts but feel
20 dollars in my pocket and a truth:

I can walk farther at this moment
Than I ever have before.

A bit further

What am I saying?

Here comes midnight.
The fact is a woman-
The fact is an atom bomb
Could be dropped at any time.
The woman is Southern.

What am I saying?

Who knows where she is from?
It's all the way somewhere.
Jackson is further away
Than crazy.

Jackson is further.
And awhile is the time
It takes for many strange
Things to happen.

Away then crazy.
Anyone that knows where I'm from
Can be damned sure that
I am not so much in love

As with her.
Which is why I suggest
We stay away from cliffs
And from Jackson.

What am I saying?
Further away, then crazy or Jackson.
Just to find her.
It's nothing but life.

It's something one does
To pass the time:
Kiss your wife
And love your lover.

There's a laughing face.
What am I saying?
There is no place further,
Than crazy, than Jackson.