

**Self-Portrait**

myself:

black belt

top shelf

sun belt

red hot

hot shot

soft spot

self taught

out right

low life

egg whites

highlight

dry mouth

deep south

field mouse

lighthouse

all out

strike out

drop out

no doubt

come back

high hat

snap back

black jack

lock jaw

bear claw

coleslaw

yeehaw

off beat

dead beat

back seat

mince meat

dirt bag

black flag

jet lag

zig zag

dry spell

blood cell

hard sell

clam shell

no show

tip toe

long bow

free throw

toe ring

bee sting

hot spring

yeung ling

bed head

corn bread

widespread

misread

heart burn

u turn

short term

book worm

backlash

heat rash

hot flash

whip lash

cockeyed

hillside

high tide

land slide

barcode

bulldoze

primrose

case closed.

**Aubade**

I woke up alone today  
but that's not true every time –  
now and then life's not so great  
but really I don't mind.

Sat outside and smoked  
the last cigarette I could find –  
now and then life's not so great  
but really I don't mind.

I went and bought another pack  
And somehow my card did not decline –  
now and then life's not so great  
but really I don't mind.

Of course I had to gas my tank  
but wrote a pretty poem in line –  
now and then life's not so great  
but really I don't mind.

It's cold outside and work's picked up  
My jeans get stained with turpentine –  
now and then life's not so great  
but really I don't mind.

I've learned to take life's citrus and  
make sangria out of wine –  
now and then life's not so great  
but it might work out just fine.

## **In God We Rust**

I was raised Southern Baptist  
which never sat right with me  
because the fundamental tenant of original sin  
seems fucked up but that might just be  
the case at least here in America because  
I can't count what I'm guilty of just living  
this life of imported coffee served in plastic  
cups and thousand-calorie meals of whatever  
ethnic food I'm craving tonight– and how many  
oppressive labor policies am I complicit in  
when I get cool, cheap, vintage t shirts shipped  
to my house and how many thousands  
of poisonous chemicals do I put into the atmosphere  
just to get them here and how many  
slaughters of turkeys and chickens  
and hogs and cows am I implicated in  
on any given weekend, how many living  
creatures will harmed or killed  
in the making of my poetry collection?

**Stand the Post**

My head rocks in the sea  
of your mother's chest –  
she will sleep tonight.  
The stillness eerie as an albatross.  
I toss and turn, anticipating  
the storm inside you that swells  
and cracks like glass.  
You, my crescent moon  
whose cries screech catastrophe.  
delirious in the moonlit night,  
I would stumble over any obstacle,  
fall overboard,  
for you. My kin – my baby boy.  
Too young yet to face the dark alone.  
Batten your hatches in these hickory arms  
and sway you silently  
like the wind and the mizzen mast.  
Together, in our secret crow's nest  
we watch the sun rise over the flats  
over the city stirring and stretching  
over the horizon,  
basking in daybreak's light –  
  
You are worth each seasick night.

## Cannon Beach

I park my slate civic along a sand-speckled street  
     and walk through this seaside town  
         that shipwrecked here long ago.  
     The wind whips at my back, and I lap up sea salt in the air.  
 I descend a splintered stair, turned splintered pier  
     turned cold white sand between my toes.  
     the dunes preserved by beach strawberries,  
     and song birds in the creambush,  
 mangled driftwood now dozing in the bay.  
 The shore stretches wide like canvas in a frame  
 And dark Stratocumulus clouds push in from the Pacific  
     Tufted puffins perch atop the cliffs,  
     and their hatchlings chirp for sea eel and herring –  
 Gulls and terns fly in concentric circles searching for  
     a porcelain crab scuttling along the sand ripples to the jetties  
     but waits for the surge of sneaker waves to pull him back  
         to the sea stacks:  
 Haystack and its Needles – how lucky to be here at all.  
 Among the eroding monoliths and their tempest-tossed ecology –  
 These swirling pools of the intertide are a making in the great unmaking.  
     Sea stars and mollusks cling to the volcanic stone,  
         mussels clump on the wave-washed rocks,  
         gaper clams burrow with their straining adductors,  
                 while sea urchins snack on bull kelp,  
                 and the sea slugs put all their colors on display.  
     But high tide brings ulterior motives  
         as cabezons make lunch plans with the mollusks  
         and the undulating oral arms of sea nettles look mesmerizing