

Poems for Sixfold, October 2023  
Random Thoughts

Moon

You look up at the moon  
and you think,  
"This night is cold  
and deathly quiet.  
The sky is clear as black crystal.  
It is hours before dawn.  
I am awake,  
I am alone.  
I'm gazing at the moon  
and I feel nothing."

## Images of the Night

Longing for comfort  
you stream into the substance of time.  
The moon rides high,  
igniting the senses,  
seducing the soul.  
The night becomes an electric dream,  
a frothing freeway of frenzied electrons  
forsaking their shells, rampaging  
forward at light speed, but forever  
fixed in the frozen mind  
of a man running backward.

No stranger to the night  
an owl speaks.  
Lovers lie under blankets  
and share dreams of the future  
while the afterglow  
dribbles into disappointment  
and desperate longing.  
There is no comfort in dreams,  
only the apex of dark  
crowned by a halo of light.

And you are stretched tight  
across that dome of night,  
one hand groping for the dawn  
while the other clings to the dusk.  
And so, you devolve into a mythical hero  
corrupted by sin,  
torn between what you have become  
and what you might have been.

## Stretch

Picture a rubber band—  
new, stiff, and coffee brown, or  
old and pliant, the color  
of winter sky.

Now take it between  
your index fingers and  
stretch it. Stretch that mofo like you  
stretch the lies you tell yourself:  
That the face you see in the mirror  
each morning really could  
launch a thousand ships  
instead of a single  
leaky rowboat  
you have to row yourself.

## Alone on Thanksgiving Day

The wind howls and shrieks  
as it blows in from the west,  
harsh and coarse, like  
angry meaningless words  
bandied between lovers as they  
catalogue their complaints  
in the cold light of a dark day.

Between football games,  
between thoughts as icy  
and unsettled as the weather,  
we walk as one.  
We walk,  
braving nature's bluster, this  
early winter fest with the promise  
of nothing but more  
of the same.  
Or worse.  
We walk  
into the wind's buzzsaw  
and see our footsteps  
etched in new snow, see  
heavy gray clouds  
tossed about like scrap paper  
in a lonely landfill.

Then, amidst it all,  
we stop.  
And for an instant,  
the wind dies and all  
the world goes suddenly silent.  
A fragile blue slit  
dissects the clouds,  
tiny shafts of uncertain sunlight  
reach out to us like  
warm, beckoning fingers.

And for that single instant,  
it is last June  
and I am not alone.

## The Experiment

I read on the internet (where, of course, it must be true) that when you put on your pants you always start with your nondominant leg—an intriguing proposition and one that prompted me to wonder why I never considered it before. But then, why would I—or anyone? I've been putting on pants since I could walk, since before I knew—or cared—which side of me was dominant, before I knew what dominant meant.

Still, to my inquiring mind, this was a question demanding an answer, a potential revelation not to be relegated to simple irrelevance. An easy experiment one really can try at home. So, moving naked with all the pomp and flourish of a scientist on the verge of a great discovery (next stop, Stockholm), I set up the experiment, feeling like Galileo climbing to the top of the Leaning Tower, a lead ball in each trembling hand.

Standing exposed in the middle of our bedroom, with you as my witness, I began to insert my right leg into the leg hole of my briefs. I fell on my face. Stunned, I lay there, panting and humiliated and defeated, my nose and lips pressed into the coarse fibers of the carpet

we meant to replace last spring.  
And you, always the practical artist,  
laughed and lay down beside me  
and caressed my neck with your  
soft fingers. You said I can  
be such a fool sometimes  
but you love me anyway.  
Then, you invited me  
to conduct a different experiment.  
one best tried at home.  
And it was a good day, perhaps  
the best of days.