

## Buried Treasure

He buried treasure all over the world;  
The sands of Mexico, the plains of Montana  
The ash of Iceland, the savannah of Tanzania.  
And then he drew maps  
For friends and relatives and strangers  
To find the treasure he buried.

I went with him once  
When no sun spots graced our faces  
And our hair flowed coarse and black.  
We hiked westward to Kinsman Ridge  
On federal land.  
I guarded the flank as he dug off-trail  
In the narrow ravine  
Under the lone conifer  
With a child's plastic beach shovel.  
The treasure was in a Chock Full o' Nuts tin.  
He was from Minnesota  
Where the winters are draped in snow  
And to adorn is to die.  
What's in it, I asked;  
You'll have to come back, he said.

In his middle years he found treasure  
The best kind  
A wife and two children  
A home near green hills  
And he buried something else;  
Seeds for a garden  
And paid a mortgage  
Dissipated radon  
Composted waste and collected rain  
And his children grew.  
I visited in the spring, every spring  
When flowers bloom and ants scurry and birds chirp.  
We walked the hills, ate home-cooked meals, reminisced,  
Shared, laughed, and looked forward.  
Until the day in January  
When a phone call shattered time and  
I was left to wonder why, how.

And so after the bells stopped ringing

And the hymns all sung to mourning  
I returned to Kinsman Ridge  
Unsteady on my new prosthetic hips  
With his map and our memories  
To unbury his treasure.  
The afternoon was clear and cold  
And the sun gleamed in the north sky;  
I dug in the shadow of the lone conifer  
That never aged.  
With hands raw and purple  
Creased with subcutaneous blood  
I squeezed and pulled at hard soil  
Until I touched tin.  
It came up with a shake  
And I opened it then  
With mist in my eyes.  
Inside was a note, simple lined paper,  
And a pencil.  
What do you want to be doing right now? The note asked.  
That's it. That's all it said.  
And I shook my head and dabbed at my cheeks  
And laughed and took the pencil in my hand.  
This, I wrote, how did you know, Ryan?

### **Bicycle Chase**

Weaving through the overgrown urban jungle  
On your yard sale bicycle

Speeding ahead, not looking back  
As I chased, losing ground, fading

The graceful liveness, the symmetry of unseated body  
Pumping power strokes between curb and car

And me in tow, a simple man in love

### **Victoria: A Song**

I had a dream of Victoria  
She was alone in the cedar straw

I had a dream of a whistling wind  
To bring me back to you again

I saw you last in Tennessee  
With your hair in a bun and a banjo on your knee  
I saw you last in the bluegrass scene  
Now I'm dying just to see you

You are winter's best last song  
I'm no longer young or strong  
I can hear the birds at night  
They fly and fly, they have rare sight

I'm freer now than a mountain stream  
That's rolling on to the deep blue sea  
But even a mountain stream isn't free

Say the words, say what's true  
Tell me there's roses in the garden, and the garden's fruit  
Say the things I long to hear  
In the light, no more tears