DOUBT'S BOOTS: EVEN DOUBT'S SHADOW

by Charles Noble

ISBN 978-1-55238-666-8

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Doubt's

Charles Noble

boots

Even Doubt's Shadow

Doubt's boots

Doubt's boots is a long poem that gathers itself as it scatters
to chance, to pre-conditions, indices of how the times of
themselves are guilty.

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Charles Noble

Doubt's boots

Even Doubt's Shadow

Open Spaces

Published by the University of Calgary Press
2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4
www.uofcpress.com

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© 2003 Charles Noble
National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

Noble, Charles, 1945-
Doubt's boots : even doubt's shadow / Charles Noble.

(Open spaces, ISSN 1705-0715 ; 1)

A poem.

ISBN 1-55238-100-5

Also issued in electronic formats: ISBN 978-1-55238-666-8, ISBN 978-1-55238-329-2

I. Title. II. Series: Open spaces (Calgary, Alta.) ;

I. PS8577.O32D68 2003 C811'.54 C2003-910462-1

PR9199.3.N54D68 2003

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) for our publishing activities.

Canada

The Canada Council for the Arts
Le Conseil des Arts du Canada

Printed and bound in Canada by Houghton Boston

This book is printed on Ancient Forest Friendly paper, 100% post-consumer, acid-free

Cover design, page design and typesetting by Mieka West.

Other books by Charles Noble

Three (with Jon Whyte and John O. Thompson)

Haywire Rainbow

Banff/Breaking

Afternoon Starlight

Let's Hear It For Them

Wormwood Vermouth, Warphistory

Hearth Wild/ post cardiac banff

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foreword

credo

But if I am sure of one thing it is that we are living an interregnum; we are walking across a zone whose ground is not solid: its foundations, its basis, have evaporated. If we wish to climb free from the marsh and not sink into mud we should quickly work out a morality and a politics.

– from *Itinerary* by Octavio Paz

C. S. Peirce thought that science, through doubt, error and hypothesis, was able to step and stay on a bog in that it had to move, as in closer to the truth it can, nevertheless, never reach.

Re the question of commitment, the new Kantian take is that art is not above the fray (or clay, i.e.

doubt's *solution*), but in it, prior to yet feeding conceptual systems and thence political systems.

The prophet's allegory confronts the irritants, the doubts the reality principle presents, and then incorporates them into the church's narcissism (dogma).

Likewise going back, but to release or new-lease the real, the artist's "blasted allegory" disperses concepts to where, in the quick of what resists (the formless, the ill-informed, the informal, Spinoza's hodgepodge, Adorno's non-identical), they must fight for their lives, or divert them, such as they are – street concepts now, or clichés with smarts.

But also these crazed and self-destructive concepts/hypotheses must keep the enemies; keep them free, as plan or "draft" resisters, or as the narcissist's nightmares, i.e. just the ordinary, unadjusted, slipped to ornery, and slippery for that matter. This is the undermining, generative well of inconsistency, à la Gödel, presented by the completed artwork, whose own narcissism disowns its zone – for its own good.¹

¹ This disowning artwork is different from "the disturbing particular" blindly loved by Stanley Fish (*Harper's*, July 2002) under which closed sign he "sees" "Western" reason as another religion fatally clashing with Al Qaeda, which he takes to be "the deep strain" of Islam. (In the same issue of *Harper's* see Edward Said on "the many Islams.") It all presumably makes for a lovely impasse ("my Impotence

O down, with the bog, defeated, feed not us our
feet, will-o-the-wisp. O will the well as the welling
up gives us the will. O Möbius monad. O rising
abasement. Do dew, do don the dawn, I have a plan
– for a beaver lodge.

about Doubt's

Doubt's Boots is a long poem that gathers itself as
it scatters to chance, to pre-conditions, indices of
how the times of themselves are guilty. Dynamic
static rippled through with a background of
second thought (*musique informale*) tensed
between construction and expression: of suffering,
including the suffering of joy and even of one's
express actions – here we're well into the twisted
time wormed/fished out of the first second, dilating
I scale.

The language is seeded with a here/now every-
man voice atop a decadence that presupposes
all approaches turn mannerist if not abandoned

in Hell can beat your Impotence in Hell"), i.e. reason
has no opening potential and al-Qaeda is not criminal
nor yet rooted in a world order motivation. Incidentally
see where Baudrillard's "singularity" re the World Trade
Center destruction (*Harper's*, February 2002) is so *lawfully*
motivated it verily expresses the New World Order, as if
this were in some dire relativity fix.

to a waiting, a culling of the ear. Intimate from inattention, scantlings of a lost, wit's-end lyricism collide with runs of normal narrative – and various levels of abstraction, from the unreflective, peculiar, confused and false (exposed as such through humour, parody and plain bad ends), to the more reflective but typically everyday again, rickety bridges or out-of-tune choruses to real enough worlds rising with the fungus of funny mind.

The fewer, more rigorous abstractions declare, but demote themselves, not to equivalence with, but so to let live, the raw, all too ready to have its own celebration (the first ur-rah) begged, with its correcting seal of silence ever broken by the erratic singing of junk *bons mots* or motes, word particles going uncollapsed again, puffed-up and everywhere as waves. Step into the poem, and drown in the ocean. Or compose a path that staves it off. – C.N.

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The frame is in the picture
says *Kant and the Platypus*
though more Kantplus ie Hegel
and the latest art in the Stedelijk
Cold Fusion and *For Real*

Plato in the coffee bar
window on the street
caving in

to photo radar
slapped together

my clipped wings
chopped eyrie

hole in the wall
whole fancy science
of real particle creation

elderly Japanese tourist souped up
with a local girly girl

stabbing in the dark
it hurts me more
to see you one
heart condition
into a backhoe job

the enjambed windows
make the little Chevy
with only interfacing rear ends

the assembly line
could make it three

so that's her boyfriend
that guy who jumps into
the front trunk

"some clown" you were
going to say
but you're right
the orange hair's a wig
and here's 'why' cut off

the woman walks across
the street with her coffee
and leaves her husband
with someone else's
mongrel
healthiest breed

if you can call it that
not even window shopping
just fixing their hair
as a cover
for looking at their looks

the mongrel mind aspires
to purity
and the stray hairs
presuppose it

Trudeau period piece
the manips of melancholia
very guitar and coot or phalarope

I wonder
here comes Sandra
what's her face name

I've never known one to date
tho Bill Mitchell married four of them

called one Myrna
put the rest on the pink lawn
one with an 'e' I did date
go flamingo

one was never there but
runs a coffee bar in Pincher Creek
vegetarian chili and soup and pie
pink lawn in Sid's apple eye

even with shorthand
I can't keep the trunk
from opening a can of salt mines

cabaretic die
jiggling round the mirror stem
like Cuban testicles

another musician
with not an unfinished tuning
but a piece she's not happy with
a completion not completed
here this guessing gusto
falls off after a Planck length

"it's of no consequence" in a tone
of undignified dignity
which we call indignant
but then Freud's there
bending Egypt's mummies
in organs out of MIT
Moses in the latest *October*

seems there is some consequences
and it seems the old retro rhetoric
was a bit of a lie already
and yet the job was filled
by a practical applicant

moreover move over
it was a matter of his choice
he would know best how to reflect
himself in such a short space
at that time of day

he'd been of two minds
he went with one of them
it petered out on a rock
the mind left remembered of course
the mind that had left
the franchise that had folded

he had chosen presence of mind
and yet she was now his second choice
then he burned the frame
and her life bore fruit
but not all of it was exciting naturally

at least in the abstract not exciting
but remember once you've said halo to her
a new abstract takes over

one brand of realism to be continued
except it's nine o'clock

this is objective interruption
with a vengeance almost double blind
very controlled but like a tripped-on root
it tells us very little
but dawns it does

crack light before sun goes code
people bunched against their transparent
but decaffeinated ideologies
easily undercut anyway
apples and oranges below the root
are engineered
 in responsibilities lightheartedness emerges
carried away
unbeknownst

people do grow horns
aplenty

you thought a Pinocchio horror
not the fertility come to term
but donkey sex and floppy icicles

what's in a bicycle
that flies in like a barn swallow
then limps away like Captain wooden leg?

that forward sitcom synchronizes a novel that'll
never get uncorked or even be a loaded whiff

my first mistake was to get up
and walk into the experiment
cognate with something natural
that throws up a formula

I went out to the curb
and put a ticket on the car
parked backward or a long way
from the other curb forward
I was a rabbit duck

some of the waitresses thought
I'd abandoned the hive
was out of my fuzzy aerodynamics

a guy with an umpire's chest protector
on his back under his shirt
had a very skinny neck
came in and ordered
then said it was one o'clock
when some young French girls
asked the time

this is an accurate impression
I'd considered a bullet proof vest
man he was tall too
and I couldn't help looking at his huge
pulpy back

and slowly he seemed more like
an intellectual
maybe he'd broken his back
or it was just cancer of the thorax

in the frame her typically pink blouse
didn't flutter because she was in it
and walking attractively bow-legged
looking for a place to sit in the shade
to hear Jesus preaching

Jesus wasn't preaching bread did not arise
nothing said about fish
the better to eat you

eating sultanas the kids at the water
fountain sprayed inadvertently the picnickers
in line of fire

like ducklings really ugly ducklings
they went by as
intentional flowers of mind
just pruned that way

newspapers as mats
embossing the day around
big league players good yes
but way overpaid
static stuck on Spinoza's hair

east of Saskatchewan China
but their refrigerators are behind us
west of the Selkirks

on a very thin rug the poplars grow
the fish and the rockets are jumping
but after that it's hardly universal
universality exists it plays dead
then rolls over
a basket of currencies a sharp pencil
and thou

eventually I learned the '86 Chevy pickup
was not hers but Bob's
who'd parked it in her yard
the restaurant used it for taking bottles
to the depot but now somebody comes around

the weather stripping around the doors
costs five dollars a foot
if he flips it he won't bother
if he keeps it he'll spring for it

a dead editor would not say half-ton
hence 'pickup'

after she'd left after leaning over the counter
on tip toes I said rather salaciously
that I thought each buttock
had been tailored for separately
because they weren't spandex

round about
we collapse our natures
or so we think to tinker

I tried to romanticize the weightlifters
as some breed of obsessive bohemians
but they really are just that focused
with the long beaks of their hats up
lumbering down the sidewalks
staring bug-eyed past you

I don't really have to cheat
I just can't take it that seriously
the point about painting Colville guns
is that you project through the wire mesh
of the POW compound
then you bring them back through
so the mesh is part of the guns

you confine the finest futility
catch the catcher Lady Macdonald
mainlining the panorama
the rushes override the theatre

it's so something this summer
the young avant-garde Turks are jumping
into the abysses
I shouldn't say that
first that late 19th century unblinking
and then the vulgar theatre of Everest
yet remember
the toothless metaphor!

I shouldn't say because they are right
but even the deepest insight when you check
is only in sight occluded
its true measure is when
it comes back unchecked
into your shoes gone home
otherwise the mesh is finer than you
think through

that rather senior woman is still a fine
artist and getting finer
that's a twinkle in her eye
he's even older and getting up
to get them drinks
they look so elegant but detuned
to a certain openness

the decadent cabaret is pastiche dark
a nostalgia likes
is like the decadence
all pretty tame stuff for them
coming at it with a condescension
they try to disown or donate but can't
they lay it aside

I'm getting sleepy and they come in
so late and perky
Henry James got Pound drunk
on half a sentence
Pound established his growl
with crystals hard and clear
you can take the radio out of the man
but we like him swinging in the rough

*

I never see Gordon in here
but Don comes in periodically
he's the archivist at the Whyte
that pretty well wrecks everything

Pelagia is a lovely name and odd
even for the Dutch
I loved to hear her say "squash"
even after we came in here
as relentless Turing machines
and I coaxed her to say it

I finally figured out on my own
who that guy is
the dress the haircut the mannerisms
and two and two
Canada's most recent war artist
I saw his Somalia work somewhere
about the time I started noticing him this
somewhere else

Walter's brother-in-law's paper
on Shlegel and Rorty and irony
gave Shlegel the nod
for working the real tension
between art and politics
with Rorty it was no contest
and that's a bit of an in-joke

I went out and sprayed the bicycle seat
with Windex and still the many faces
of Jesus would appear
then go back in the inky Arctic
to the Siberian archipelago
'Pelagia' was Greek for goddess she said

Mel gave the finger to that guy
that was more than pointing him out
that was biography at its worst best
and a violation of the frame game
he also gave me his thoughts
about the guy across the street
and around the corner who sells
me my paper and I

a couple of old expressions came
to mind
they were covered with impressions
and that woman who ran the health food
restaurant gave my brother a twenty dollar
discount at the motel she runs now
Alice went through three names
and a digression of frames
while I supplied one silly one
before she remembered it

my brother said the guy was such a perfectionist
took so much time getting his seeder ready
he barely got the crop in
and then the snows came early late September

I don't say no insights but I don't say
in the know always either
unless I give recognition
to the floating uncollapsed
but definitely a caveat on wit
a thin rug where the poplars thrive
a thin crust in another earth science
context but I've nothing against
the connotation of dry
except maybe too fertile and flip
pat the too pat
and you've invited trouble
pretension as a heuristic device
keep blasting
those prewar vortices precluded the hollow men

cranberry juice puts a scum
on the roof of my mouth
on the roof with a rope
I hang out my shingle in the democracy
I know my rope is clumsy and yellow
Tarzan was here
movie frames that is
the slow extraction of oil from
the tar sands is a speedy chaotic ecology

he does the crossword puzzle
and never looks up to the sidewalk
but he's around the corner in the back
anyway

Alice couldn't believe it when I said B
had met K two summers ago
and thought on the hike she was tremendous
and a lot of fun
and that applied to her boyfriend too
so it wasn't a matter of falling for her
youth and beauty

metaphors in service to an elegiac
solemnity ruin an otherwise fine silence
even if I exhibit the same fault
with my fine and ruinous denotations

I would know the silence
but the dead are more broad minded than ever
and wouldn't want silence
nor solemnity
but that doesn't mean
they wouldn't be wicked editors
they would and are

"I saw you kissing that mongrel"
the one tied to the street lamp
she said that it was her brother's

surely there's content here somewhere
just content

can there be smart content?
a contradiction atorquing?
our minds can't think the soft pink centres
of the last quantum
it's a proper experiment
it's just that all these waste baskets
go flaming out the upstairs window
and the chaste kids have singed their eyebrows

it's more like you can't get away
once you make that first droll remark
like Liverpudlians they're all comedians
or act out their bear stories
with cute little backward baby steps

all the refusals backed you into a program
and the next thing's just silly
not an actual entry into a genuine exit
but you say exactly
just silly is what it should be
but then silly evaporates
well it doesn't even condense

and that obtuse program lends the pre-silly
a subtle weather intention
Ginsberg had an elegant solution
in his "proof of a life"
puts some weight in it there
and loads the argument
into just about everything that's been
lost

the waking moments
finer than the butterfly
to catch a butterfly

no more customers finally
but then the echoes
on the little-stone cobbled floor
which is nice to eat
your puffed wheat squares over

he looks a lot different in a tank top
and tan than
all rumpled and pale
being here about four years
and always talking to tourist strangers
with sort of thumbnail anthro-apologies
for the place

the most prospective woman
in a long time triggered what's her name
the impossible
like before when her incidence of one day
had effect for five months
and then that other one left the country

sure as down the aisle she was
and cleaned out the shelves
so up and ask her outright for a tin of tuna
and her sweet smile says no
the deeper structure of the face
approaches the power of a ritual mask
forbids the reading of her smiles
rotten behaviour

Freud is in the unmasking in her case
even if only as the bank in a bank shot

with no tuna
restoration is at hand
and the girl next door won't leave
the country
and next door is a lot of dispersed luggage
not all that random or geographically exact either

the split tourist
suggests a confession more intimately able
than what we take for confession
its flushness turned to past the mark
elemental as necessary spring
and as fish out of water

she the trigger happy tragedy
will always spring to mind
born in the same century for no reason
paths crossed in the right town
the light shaft like a super cosmic skyscraper
through the clouds shadowed
and oddly awed Rundle Mountain at six o'clock
in the evening
there from a patio in Canmore

God bless her
she sticks to her terrible guns
no climber sticks to her
she makes virtual into a virtue
and she comes to know
the mask as flush
and a crying shame
the cliché crinkled
as the canthi of the eye

into the crazy mix she's isolated
the gene for entertainment
and is good with that too

meanwhile the childless mother
of all women
is next door
by next door I mean similar backgrounds
and a knack for surviving with irony
and keeping it at bay too
no I mean more than that
I mean a listening that solicits
I mean something more damning too
a ratio of details that all told
tip the balance

Paglia could call her a "bitch"
but I would add one with a story on her
albeit squished to surface intensity

to carve up slippery appearances
with judgements of cruel
but strange dignity
at least the dignity of clarity
or to bleed the story's tributaries
to death?

on balance we know
we have to be off

she was smiling past me the young
waitress at the young mother's baby
the ring in her lip was too a bridge
and soldiers broke their rhythm
such zipless sentiment could be yeast
for the revolution
could be friction for runners in the Andes
one of those theoretical terms
for in-the-water bent sticks
like glancing eye beams for a lot of no truck

even my armpits got the message
but I didn't zip up
because I hadn't zipped down
something bent in its place
like a dog's head under its paw
basically history here 's been had
coming and going
not the end of history but the ends
of same

history as inadvertent is not to be therefore
irresponsible or even non-Marxist
it would actually be more right thinking
than ever
in Marx's Hegelian sense
there ain't no path for history
I'm trying to say and see where it leads
apart from big guns and wrong metaphors
and not to not acknowledge
the time plane and plans laid out
both from the head of Zeus
and the inertia of materiel

I have one lamp turned into the wall
and then the effect of a TV screen
on my toaster
nice to find the nostalgia differential
intra my integral kitchen-living room-
bedroom-dog house
lightning splits my hemispheres
and I wear it on my Timex band
getting in touch with my duality
implies a third position stupidly
or a third displacement
the place is realized with fondness
memories make the distances of places
longer than they are when I go back

there blocking out relations and action
I can't believe she would have been
that close
sheer presence is repulsive
blocks us out to memory

back to the crime scene I carry
my toaster and push down the bread
pop culture levels with you
but I subtract the mirror's depth
soak up the sidewalk
the concrete abstract is not sacred suddenly
but like a breeze's own back draft

back in my cabin I press down
and the floor lights up
my feet get hot with clots
even though it looks cool
so I walk to the dusty horizon
to locate a natural night
the milk thereof

when I come back
I check the answering service
with all the expectant gratefulness
and horrible heart I have
when I come for the mouse in the trap
behind the little door under the sink

here's another asteroid this summer
we're trying to steer it
in about sixteen different ways
ie different methods of steering
some of them contradictory
some of them stretching the sense
of steering

the rotating earth revolving in embedded
revolutions where chance has crashed
into elegance
I cup in my hands
a moth tickles my enchained palms

the snap dragons and marigolds
and the inedible berries on the berry bush
are a relief this morning
after making the phone call last night
with the rain on the windows
about the time the mud slide was building
to bursting over the Trans Canada

I know I have no idea what goes on
in her head
that animal grace both lower and higher
than certain stereotypes of femininity
is ahead of the asteroid's wave

she deftly selects the fallout reading
on the butterfly airport lists
the butterfly stakes are high
and through the heart
like a tent for Michelangelo
she likes to put her feet up
and likes too to work
travelling creates new smells
all roads lead to aroma therapy

laugh? at the tourist who mocks
your miserable observations
here is a kind of content
whose porosity is hard
with probability forces
that bump you out of your own
picture

it can be formally entered but not
ironically through the main door

round about in time
not to need them
you get them and their forces
come unchained
asteroids that come out of the cage
but are so weak with hunger
you poke them with your finger
ostensive rash dies on the vine
you drive by in a white panel truck
on Canada Day
at the four way stop you let them
write "Bill's Plumbing"
white on white on the panel

side swipe someone in the gym
for eight years
and then one day she says she's moving
back to Vancouver
on her last day you tease her more
than ever and she teases back
then you both spray and wipe down
the equipment
the moving van is so discrete
it ends up on a ferry
in the middle of the Mediterranean
then drives out of a garage
two days later in Vancouver

the usual train wreck the usual gym germs
grow an oasis in the waste
open secrets thrive on the face of the pool
the exercise in itself is meaningless
something perhaps in its favour

she camped in the middle of the jocks
did yoga on a mat
long black hair to the floor when she sat
told the young high school kid to breathe
the sidelines began to bend
the cold steel developed fuzz
there was no essence to the words
that were wasted and cleared the air
the threats around the grimaces

she knew Alex and his water colour works
about matting
worked in the photo processing lab
but couldn't take a picture herself
worth a damn or a dam
we argued about special effects in the movies
the gym limited us
created a waterfall

next door is the telephone company building
a guy in the parking lot with his cell phone
is talking telephone stuff
seven hundred feet of cable etc.
twenty feet up are huge doors
that open onto nothing
they lean out and drop boxes into the garbage
another eight feet up
from the top of the doors
is a steel beam with a snatch block
hanging on it

the guy on the cell phone is a blond hunk
he hops up the steps phone on his ear
couldn't get the back up beeps
on the trucks backing in
into John's Cage

in a bunch they go to lunch
it's us on the farm
seed to seed politesse
but weeds gone awry on the other side
spreading out of the draw
through the culvert out of the ditch
into the field
the lie to laconic Kilimanjaro
negative snow job
Jon's and Pam's encounter
with the lion shit
or me misremembering

obsessions play out
the oil spill on the driveway
the four year old on the rug
the drunk daddy on the couch

some infrared murderers re-framed
and shot their Cézanne'd dishes of rice
where it was said the waiters were
neither friendly nor ultraviolet
made a lot of noise dropping the dishes
off at a table in the corner
probably why so many were chipped

I think I understand music
from the top down
I outlined a broad perspective
and the guy actually thought I was
the times little times I guess
music critic

it was my idea of a parody
with some idea the parody
was a fallback position
and that I was really going for a score

of course bottoms up
I could barely hum the simplest tune
except sometimes in the tractor
I would let my voice out
and it would keep on coming
like some huge lariat
totally unwieldy
unless I concentrated on bits

very avant-garde
but some of those melodies
trapped and usually just sleeping
in old unheated neurons
would drop out from time to time
like frequent but small winnings
lotteries

after I sang a twenty minute
to my mind paramorphic opera
mining as many voices as possible
and took the tenor a couple of parasangs off
I went back to Mann's *Doctor Faustus*
and sang to microscopic parasites
then it was tea and crusty exchanges
with Mr no jazz Adorno

it all made me appreciate
the upside and the downside
to critical lines not fine lines
no lines at all but at the back of the hall
one ear to the street and one street
to the gutter and one gutter
to the convoluted gut

laugh and correct me if you want
but dead in the tractor
I heard the song for the dead
the dead of winter
the merest swollen seed

I almost got kicked out of the local
Lux Theatre for stripping wallpaper
during the latest Hollywood movie

sure I saw those gorgeous watery
brown eyes and from certain unedited
angles the horse mouth on her too

but underneath the lines
not closer to the bone or anything
I saw beyond the wall filler
of cross promotion
I saw a movie worth maybe a buck
ie defrayed among the whole audience
ie below the smallest coinage
and so nothing since we would all
have to pay equally
our time was priceless and *uncollectible*
lost in the movie's unintentional surplus
the attraction in dumbcracks
like limber horror unblown up

the time is cut and curious as we know
but looking at the actors' death masks
and the darts in their foreheads
reminded me of myself and some very
powerful emotions

I mean they were pinched into the movie
and I mean about three senses here
but let's concentrate on the economics
if movies were ever released
it would take more than two hours
just to admit myself
over before it would begin
which is the way they want it
and we too but for a few black and blue
vestibular vertigoes
below the surface gotta like'em
like the falseness of dogs
their winging it in humane niches

that kind of seriousness won't culminate
but incurs or incures
a gentle curve maddeningly gentle
you could say but it's only a geometric
reference

or goes into one of those bulb affairs
whose liquid receives itself
as fleeting pock marks
which don't figure in the self-cropping report
by which I don't mean
the endless microfilm of seed's outside in

but it's not a matter of kicking over the traces
and then whoa there shortly after
on spec and in faith
I won't say what it is
even though this is exactly the site
of generators of sayings as such
let us now clear our throats pause
and come back another time

we actually welcome joe public
though it costs them more
in fact we make special desserts
just for that reason
so they go away coming back
for their own work
ie like the "work" for the math answer
not usually shown

meanwhile in the jobs
they take crumbs put them from time
to time on the metronome
which flings them cross the way
regular hours but their sprung retorts
make a nice wine to toast
to more crumbs

after work they pat the brontosaurus
and it wags its tail
for the moonlighting weatherman
wearing his colourful ties

*

he looked well preserved and primed
in his getting on
and it turned her youthful hormones on

when it came to it
she discovered he was a character
not a repulsive character
but it, I say it, repulsed her
like *likes*
till he became the father for hire
and she and the others paid their dues
at ease

not this and not that on either side
doesn't make it all middling
it makes it a central vector
and after all is said and done
rich ditches
a one time only road he offs it

that well known poet you have to remember
was punishing you for the sins of others
and the next thing you have to remember is
they're not sins

I like the way these painters will read
literature in no particular hung up order
even obvious prize-winning novels
or say thirty-year old Pulitzers
the library has discarded

I even like the way they quaintly say
“he has a different kind of way of writing”
and the beauty of having an angle on a holiday
so zenfully aimless
like the rest of us stewards in the stew
Rushdie’s use of ‘atrocious’ of course
made you retrieve ‘atrocious’
but the separate usage
its overkill and the dying done it back
still lingered even as it was helped
to sober up

the old Albanian woman murdered
with one odd thing
in her hand
lay there beside some narrative
which is to be expected
unlike the re-entry mirror wired up
with the very latest outside intimate
as leather or false fart in her lobe lost

the narrative debased then and backward
was released and beginning
to turn as a baby's rolling eye
borne on bogus homunculi/ this here lie
hysterical with autistic anamnesis

Leeann coming back to the other waitress
mumbling under the glass
of the refrigerated dessert display case
scouring guck never really gotten clean before

she kneels down in sympathy
even gets under the glass or clear plastic
hinged at the top

ritual me at my brother
stuck in a combine swearing
me in the glass bubble
to defer and wring my again
unborn hands

it could be anybody's useless hands
as they take on the disposition
of the position they're in
the situations give you your hands
yet given the jumping bean in the brain
we lopsided treat the entreaties of the given
like it might bite them off

then again around the corner
getting further and further
out of context because bringing
too much baggage
good lines happy specific triggers
bringing too much crumpled context

but there she is the local Jackie O
and she's saying hello this time
and giving some kind of smile

he thinks about the smile if thinking
is right
well of course thinking
but the pretext is the resonant smile
on his face like a Cronenberg camera
or something

simply a sweet smile is not right
and neither is a slurring sexual one
but he would bet sex was in the corner
thinking back to that time
she was walking with that boyfriend
and rubbing hips in the sunny afternoon
by the mountaineering shop
and thinking against that
that all-busy look in and out of
her rusted four wheel drive pickup truck

then he thought up against the wall
made of questions
that out there you never know for sure
one's limited powers and/or condition
one's ladder off the wall deductions
clouded by slurring attraction

around the next corner Tom
and having first seen Roland
and hearing about Tom in the library
looking at art books for his kid
he kidded Tom about how he surmised
that Tom looked like
he'd been "looking art at books
no no it's coming in now
looking at art books"

Tom of course actually surmised
he'd been talking to Roland
in some backhanded way
that till now had been all
innocent supination

he told Tom about Jimmy telling
the joke about the one-upping tailor
who could make a perfect suit
with just seeing the corner a potential
customer had disappeared around

across the street past the theatre
he fell into the forest
that old cathedral calm
the tourists scrambling and giggling
when the dog came up the bank
shaking out water
like a distant cousin of the sneeze
switching neurons in the night

“in the night” for the total dumbness
of the complete brain
compared to mesh meshed smartly
round the black box Herself

romance will reduce to the body
including gestures and the face
but won't reduce beyond the fine line
between acting and behaving

the brain is jury-rigged
the jury is still out
and can't be put back together again
the mind is pure
escapism

the law is like the bus stops
and subway stations
where the novelists get off
to tidy up and mess about
Martha Nussbaum resolving Aristotle
into Henry James

the brain is above necessity sufficient
on the way down
to clots and aneurysms
leaves an empirical miracle in its wake
at the heart of which is that
ambiguous 'incredulous'
the smoking
not movie smoking my addicted nephew
would say
actually smoking author
unlovely and lying in a bath of analogies
he lights up and celebrates his exhaustion
his flare for words doused by the doused for

the particular miracle's
an oxymoron
and oscillates after this

up in the hills we keep our noses
in the dust
watching the weird weather
sinking grain prices
the satellite transmission shows
the variable ratios
averages and leverages
we mouse along under our own shadows
our deep sympathy for the starving
inhumanly thought through

Braudel saying all those seafaring centuries
the rooted to the earth were erased
from the flowering preserves
of the marked up clearings

we could click
on the big picture
one to one on the low hills we listen
at kitschy horizons
the wind falls after supper
the sun sets itself up
to be untrue but to our specs

the pictures are cropped and bleeding
so fuzzy logic finesses a finitude
crooked granaries and Kantian numbers
put us in our roundup weak electorate
food chain reactions ambiguate
to a pure mess
multicultures in Amsterdam flow
and play out
a seeming peace
the famous Dutch tolerance indifference
the pundit said

lost in the nebulous hills
the seed exceeds us
and we are "tempted to exist"

tempted to stomp on our funny
affiliated hats
let the sun stroke
fuse the electro-weak links

more Harleys or the Harley sound
down the alley
revving and down revving
the more maculate angels
the angel drones

the seventh of August
and summer is finally here
are the comments
more forgivable
cycles
though the odours of country boy borne cities
and multi-sourced period reclinings
overcome the nudists

whom we could not determine
were not stuck in the mud
rather than actual
ly getting on with it

please Alex paint it
please Ernie photograph it
get it on the wall
get us off the hook
or reel us in out of the movie

all these aging boomer movie stars
going to the dogged live theatre
dismissing their jobs
as jobs
or flipping over on the bed
for vicious satires of the one Hollywood
elephant ear their weight
they can whip in elephant measures

these nudist thespians
shedding their snake skins
are the innocents
with such knowledge after
all
and no where to go
but more work
shop talk
emotional muscle
being John Malcovich being the general
case for the actor in us all
the host the parasite

it takes a thief
here the time
to get bogged down
or going ahead gingerly and quick
like Peirce's many-footed science
hot not to fall in
or convert to shoe in a fit of wherewithal

the good ones in the hot seat
have nothing to say
shy away
embarrassed into poverty
obvious too bigly popped questions

so nude the wife sees through him
in the shady business too
and through the cancer in the psyche
in remission with the admission
of the evident cloud

the budgets and the punched out pasts
scare them of themselves
so outside honest kept

before the paranoid ideologues
prophesying real estate
other Freudian twists
including the mice
living behind the lines
from hand to mouth
the health of real dirty realism

imagine them going back to the well
kicking the Beckett say

with their amplified mugs
drain the fake poison poisoning
the public world promoted across

while the world is on the screen
the empire with no clothes

the drained actors would lead the way away
from the redundant word to the wise
the self-draining prophecy of the public world
would quote its own silence

imagine a world where you could take
Mickey Rooney's squeaky wheel street smarts
take one take two etc joke the puns etc
never underestimate the actor's well
attention-getting pays objective attention

being a hard case
we couldn't let him down easy
he would thank us for cracking him
and he would be
the kind of new omelette we would want

now the Horatio crack
of Hamlet to ham
the tiny globe on the globe
is no simple ratio
or story
they scoop one another infinitely
Bloom onto Dickinson on James's
big bang brain

at the end of the night
with the expensive scotch
the weary fireworks
heartprick the chest
the brain drifts in its vat
bumps gently the shore
of word nests and boat rails

but morning is the progress
the actor inches apart
adrenaline decolours and stills the scene
the yard is cleaner after the north wind
in the early hours
and yesterday's yard sale

in the new town on location
they interview the unlikeliest
tease the economic hicks
are neither these townsfolk nor tourists
are between cynicism and the quick study

splice of life
all escape routes cut off
the actor will go for the main chance

rush of events
caught in the action
outside of Eden
new never-has-beens take root

let me borrow your children
play the bombed encyclopaedia
hear the fallout
in the unintended words between us

paste board words and the anti-eloquence
of reflex expressions
synonyms piling up in counterpoint
are not bad acting
but the freedom of two solitudes
before they re-master the slave ram screens

the movie house is my airplane
the movie merely thrown in
I just like a dark big room
and rapid rabid popcorn

goose shit on the banks of the Bow
mosquito repellant for the first time
the usual statistic of women
googly-eyeing the dog
one telling me about hers
both dogs eleven years old

Jackie O struggling to get her big Rottweiler
off the path
the Rottweiler as aggressive and growling
as ever
looking like she's just had pups
her teats so

a few hours later see Jackie O on the sidewalk
wearing brown lipstick
a nice smile and a hi
off on the trail all she could manage was the dog

Stickney phones to say he's had a kidney out
I notice the rhyme
and he tells me the trouble the doctors gave him
and he them and me imagining
remembering the free dental work
from the U of A student dentists
all the yelling and threats
around the corner
pain killers not working for him

he tells me about the interconnected families
around and into the family of the girl
who was shot on the Ludwig premises
he tells of the homesteaders
circa 1912

parallel are the interconnections
of the farmers with the oil industry
mineral rights lease rights access
pipelines sometimes eight wells
on a quarter section

farmers running water trucks
small service businesses
and sons on the rigs

he balances it
with how they use American terms
to describe the Ludwigs:
compound (Waco) cult
as opposed to an old Calvinist story
though he refers to a distant relative
at the U of A and their discussion
of the background to apartheid in S. Africa

I talk about the moderate Christian Reform
around Lethbridge and then the more recent
“black stockings” who won’t take polio shots

he includes how the retired forty-something
RCMP often work for the Alberta Energy Corp.
goes over the mountie bombings
and the very interesting trial coming up
the cross examinations re the cross affiliations

they got that killing frost on July 15
minus five for however long
the cloud cover saved most of the rest of Alberta
he got rid of a hive of honey bees in his combine
otherwise he can’t do any work

then he's off the phone
seeing the neighbour has already come over
and fired up the combine
fescue is all he has this year
will have it straight combined
if he gets anything fine if not fine

I didn't know he'd taken a class from Wilfred Watson
got the best marks on his papers
was the only one who knew who
Madame Blavatsky was

was an omnivorous reader when he was a kid
reading through a collection of English classics
his aunt gave him
kind of a dandy
but when at twenty I helped on his farm
out on his own at twenty-six
and already retired Junior High principal
I couldn't keep up to him

when we stopped in at the thoroughbred farm
around Lacombe or Blackfalds even
where my father's buddy Bob Carlyle lived
we went out after lunch
with the ex-British Army Captain
direct descendant of Byron
one Lord Roderick Gordon
and his new Slavic wife
watched a mare get bred
the biting on the neck
the quick shiver
and Stickney's typical resonant ribaldry

talk about interconnections
the American actress the American poet
lines into the British aristocracy
with much genealogical tenacity
what a snob he read books on the subject
but too eccentric and purely outrageous
as well as plainly prurient
in the deliciously detailed give and take
of gossip to be simply an atomized atomizer

tho he could be nasty with great talent
when his Timon was on
and knows his tweeds
in fact always this way into knowledge
he knows the different English cloths
the story of Eliot's tailor
he knows fine things and has some too
collector's books prints and originals
perfectly cut suit
world travel
but wouldn't waste money on a vehicle
beyond a serviceable farm truck
always arrives at dinner time
and leapt at the twenty dollar phone deal

★

through the "back" window
where the midnight skateboarders clack
under the mercury vapour
on the new convex asphalt of the parking lot
two young women in the morning

before she leans back to check the van door
gives a light shove to the shoulder of the "sister"
who does a goofy chorus girl
crossover step
it is my curtain call

the young blond in white coveralls
watering the new bushes bordering the lot
along the fence behind the cabin

three ton diesel idling noise on my nerves
1000 gallon tank and a big wheel between
the cab and the tank to wind up the hose

finally finished
in her yellow and red safety vest
she climbs into the cab
lights a smoke
coming together she pulls away

matted with wood chips
the backfilled trench
haikus planted where they may
nevertheless catch the confusion in the air

Alex drops by after five days in the "hills"
with the mountain-inhabited-by-prairie
water colour I'm buying
with Skye his blue heeler who snarled
a bit at my Lab when we visited the studio
and who hangs in the Whyte
looking like a fox in a nest
as a series of photographs-plus
by Allan MacKay

Alex using water colours only five years
did a colour blind test on himself
years ago at the College of Art in Ontario
and saw that he was "100 % colour blind"
so did nothing but drawings for years

"speaking of philosophy" he says
then explains the conventional tags
for colours whatever each of us sees

he's never looked back
and I think of McIntyre's paper on colours
in cultures
the relative ranges and differentiations
more words more perceptions

but don't let it go to my head
thinking of M. and W.'s *From Cliché to Archetype*
"more services less service
in the service society"

what's up between
the earlier integral anthropologized
and the later anthropologizer's
background waves of homogeneity?

the scholar on the morning radio
her study of her own aboriginal language
the words for various kinds of relatives
the precision thereto

then the many words for snow again
the many snows
some revision of this I thought I heard
then revision forward back before the first revision

out of the bag into the fire
I take the painting out of the paper wrapping
to show Alice later
Alex keeping to landscapes
the Kootenai Plains here
no humans in it no human traces
but the orological frame
borrowing me
the word from Jon

this space no longer innocent
not another strophe but a cata-strophe
with a grain of sand
so to speak
with half a world on the phone

yet you put them on hold
or dump the new borne craft
over some sheer geometry
to a strange planet
tho the lines will still come down
“down” being frozen for light years
to this local unfamiliar gravity

Hemingway's dictum is relative but true
re good
break up the measures to whatever gauge
send them out over the fractal reservoirs
and they coolly cover the ground
more than some supposed
infinite completion

infinity finessed by the finite
I conclude Jackie O would never
want me
and I rationalize
she is too sensational anyway
cover girl

but that industrially battered
truck she drives!

Roland came by this morning
and I told him I needed to finish
a couple of lines
that if he could sit
on the chair with the newspapers
sitting on the stories like
Roland being the walking news himself
so sitting on himself

he brought back *The Elegant Universe*
he carefully handed me the dust jacket
and I said ahah
where are the GUTS?!

carefully wrapped in a cut-to-jacket-form
plastic bag
I wrestled with the physics
as I went through the technically
non-"complex" universe
and the wrestling was good
otherwise no through to it
but something evaporates weeks after
not working at it as a pro day after year

yet you know you've been turned tuned
possessed by a virus waiting for Godot
to pass and perceptions to spin out
of old metaphoric chains
the rattled force fields

Roland and I box our way into past participles
what they are
he finally agrees
I must be right
I think so too if I may say so
and want to spell it out

I do and it is no entry anywhere
and there is that capacity
to lingeringly feel archetypally wrong
rooted in the nature
of some amount of arbitrariness
that though goes deep
into the boxes tricky angel-backed logic
opens up disposes of
leaving not fallen angels' weaving
not the dread but the thread
of the question of the open back

as at our mathematically scoured-out best
we curl up inadequately
around our adequate opening

thematize the latent surround
the niftiest old precursors
their skipping some of the middle steps

however much you wrestle with
your lost feet
Minerva will have laughed and left

I wait for me to hang myself
with no apparent friction at all
completely pearl
an noise annoys an oyster
pure twist

the wind comes out of the grass
into my sails
I cut into the leaves of I

the blade rubbed
fattening the imaginable degrees
of *physis*

begins hacking away
for the bullish lamps

the quivering arrow
it escapes me *I* says
with the equivalence back
still moving right on
I crosses swords with *I*
I am "in the wings" to be or not the
Beg-riff point of all

★

he takes a few minutes off
from behind the counter
and sits with his old girlfriend
and her family

so young for such seasoned
salad days
the family are raconteurs and wits
and recount a recent wedding

the outlaws vs the in-laws
and some fifty-year-old
the father allows her to call
“nowhere”

the hamming family
the famming homily
the feminine famine
the masculine mescaline

I happen to be reading the title essay of
The Death of the Novel of Love
after the (her) thoughts
on Heidegger and Arendt
instead of the carried-over
weekend papers

the young women behind the counter
do their duties
in winter take to the skies

I can't get past the duty-free zones
look up to wonder how the abysses
favourite haunts of the new avant-garde
are doing

I like the cynics that come to my door
better than the “philosophies” shelf
at the bookstore

splintered demographic that keeps the forest[s]
throws away the trees

I'm not that close
to my ideal energy
that burns my questionable receptors
if you ask me
the burning questions are not further in
but beyond me there
churning out laws of their own
despite the "philosophies"

rogue totalities versus
the complete critic's guide
to critique's dismantling mantle
the resource worms churning us out
to wormy flummery

I'm talking a big crop on the telephone
right out of an F. P. Grove optimist's groove
possibly headed for a big frost
and a winter of huge increases
in natural gas prices

the canola along the tracks in Banff
has deflowered into pods
and we're into another week of showers
Myra's friend Katie telling of the worst storm
on the lake in Manitoba
she sat in the open doorway
and watched it come across
unaware of the huge tree uprooted
and the scrambling neighbour kid's just
just broken arm

the rain was so hard around the mud slide
just west of Banff
that you couldn't see to pull off the road
and the kids in the back laughing
Joplin sighing and gag gagging
with the deranged wipers

backed up out of their range
re the frames per of the eye
of the storm

a lot of the scary movies intent
on crossing over into death and back
to flesh out the affirmations
consolidate the anxieties
into big horror twisted
phantom family tight

tonight the elegance of the symmetry
particularly pat
I was disappointed with what
the young woman
who remembers my confections at the theatre
turned out to be reading as she walked reading
even across the intersection

she seemed to guess as I was asking
I would be
but at least it undermined
the possible otherwise pretension
I suspended pendulum for her

up the darkened steps of the information
building and into the empty parking lot
clang the not metal but
I prefer the "metallic" gate
expertly for my sleeping dog
her Pavlovian D.E.W. line love

tripping over the other pair of running shoes
hopping over the hiking boots

"Damn kids!"

there aren't any kids

but the dog stumbles into the boots

bangs hard with the recovering paw

"damn things

in themselves

and the hairs of the dog that obey

the laws of chaos

stook themselves and gather under the feet

of the chair overdetermined as my simple

sliding-in-and-out-of-the-way 'foot stool'

I sick on them"

if you get the reference

I make as plain as the planets

on my loss of face philosophies

as plain as the mosquito bumps

on the dog's muzzle just behind

her actual pup/pet nose

she hardly looks at the old fellow

retired high school janitor

who pats her whenever he can

then runs wagging and bouncing up
from thirty yards away on Bow Avenue
to an old German woman of a certain shape
she's never seen before
I think of her bonding
over seven years
to my seventy-one/eight year old mother
who died four and a half years ago

when I first stayed at Bruce's house
down on Bow Avenue
he was still with his first wife
had a kid and a German shepherd pup
who took my dirty underwear out of my bag
and left it in the middle of the kitchen

Bruce seemed always to be gone off things
and then be gone off
first to the Glenbow in Calgary
then Halifax then Ottawa and Montreal
and now Manhattan

one morning in a Red Deer Hotel
hung over I turned on the radio
to take me out of myself
so I could go back to sleep

half asleep I heard the Sunday arts program
mention Bruce coming to Calgary
for some keynote address
that he is the president
of the New York Academy of Art

*Allan will tell me in a later revision
(but the future has landed)
he's now the dean of fine arts at Columbia*

a few months ago in the Globe
I read Enright's review
of the new Eric Fischl opening
eight portraits including
Mike Nichols Steve Martin and Bruce
each of them worth 175 thousand
and something "magical" about Bruce's hand
in the painting

the second last time I talked to him
he was stranded in Chicago
trying to get to Banff to head a team
to assess the visual arts program
at the Centre

he was watching TV
an old cabinet TV in his hotel room
I said I was reading at that moment
yet another guy on Lacan
yes he said he had lunch yesterday with the guy
who didn't like that book now
was working on a book about faces
I said tell him to read Levinas on the face
the appearance and disappearance of the infinite

me switching to another second hand store
and he told me to see a new Australian film
about a blind photographer
I eventually did and thought it very good
but can't remember it too well now
though now now it's coming back
as I put mind through some paces
through some places
he was so busy assessing
having arrived late
I ended having talked to him
more from Chicago than in Banff

though did drive him to the airport in Calgary
where we had lunch with Marie
he prevented me from spending more time with
by insisting I walk him to his gate
we said our goodbyes and he gave me his cap
that said "Fear No Art"
which isn't the line the Language poets take
tho not no way the line is taken

I wear it running in the summer
and one day I met Landy outside of Nobleford
and he pulled out an art book he had in his pack
last time he had a bag of ham scraps
for the coyotes
and my dog turned around and followed him
when we finished talking

he opened the book
a book of early western Canadian landscapes
to a painting entitled "Near Nobleford"
and we swore it must have been painted
from where we were just then standing
the hills
Black Spring Ridge actually
upon which my brother lives
we could see traced the same horizon
and it was done before Kehoe Lake
was formed from the irrigation canal
so there was just the swale below the hills

walking back to see if maybe Marie
was still there
I walked by two curators from the Banff Centre
dressed in black and sitting up in thrones
getting their shoes shined
I offered them the Boston gallery hat
but quickly withdrew it

when they reached out if they did
as I was gone as was Marie
mischievous Bruce Manhattaning it

went to the Rex Murphy lecture
in the Cultural Journalism series
a few weeks ago
he had the audience laughing
in no time

then talked about Yeats
lifting the lyric into public event
how the Irish tradition
given the historical position
had a dialogue going to the outside
outside the echo chamber of Art
and I can hear his catchy
almost caught voice at "Art"

he talked about eloquence in Yeats
and the once honour of rhetoric
its fallen state now
old stuff but the case is there
the argument good
about fifty years old hat
notwithstanding Pound's news
that stains

he had trouble coming down to Auden
"though no slouch"
and Larkin much lower
"though don't underestimate
The Whitsun Weddings"

nothing after that
begging the question
he disdains even looking
as if it was all there in Yeats
we just need reapply

no sense of
but there was a sense of
implicit
he just wouldn't bring it up
going on

no sense you got of
wrestling with Eco's headless octopus
where the centre doesn't hold
the canny mix of the worst with the best

no sense of the moderns taken seriously
enough to problematize
to here
no mention of Pound
despite Pound
his great crazy experiment
his harping
the music and the provocations
his silence

and is *The Waste Land* really merely
only a "compendium of English Lit"
no index to the times and without
a Benjamin blast?

in the trenchless trenches of the new time
rhetorics are surely at hand
just spinning a bit at the different doctors
and poetry and politics are found
impounded further
into the languages

if confounded things are said about universals
it's because universals sometimes
say the wrong things at the wrong times

here in the creation
we're teaching doing as we speak
with mixed results
to be sure
to be unsure

Rex was not wrong about Yeats
in fact I learned a thing or two
and late great Yeats is not wrong period
confound it Robert Browning!

it's just Rex sounds like
high rent Don Cherry at times
and I want that jerk chicken voice
out of my head

Ted Hart was in the Book & Art Den
this Saturday signing his latest history
The Place of the Bows part one
his history of the Bow Valley up to 1930
I go in right past tense and talk without my copy
explain how I mined some of his other books
last year
especially the Jimmy Simpson one

I wander out and wonder when
he gets to the nineties
and his stint as mayor of Banff
will he be untying or tying those bows

but how do the arrows come out
of the eponymous bows?

I noticed this guy was now a regular
in the coffee bar and bringing in the Globe
like me sitting behind some days
some days ahead

he had that curatorial look as Myra would say after
from a distance not unreminiscent
of a once Bruce

slowly I figured out who he was
maybe writer then more likely artist
and when Myra explained the "paintings"
on her wall were derived from videos
from Somalia
by Canada's latest war artist

I figured I knew
who he was
this Allan MacKay
still I don't say anything
just notice him more
drinking a beer in the afternoon
on the patio at the Magpie and Stump
and one night in the pub
I point him out behind a glass
as well as glass partition
and Tom says oh that's Allan
I'll introduce you to him
but when we turned back he was gone

now he seems to read only what
is already there usually the Sun

at the Skoki exhibition in the Whyte
two elderly tourists were looking closely
at a series of pieces
I'd just noticed this was Allan's work
and had just read his statement

reading carelessly I somehow took 'Skye'
to be archaic for sky
and there was lots of it there in the art
and somehow thought he was referring
to Alex as an "alert canine presence"

just when the elderly tourist wondered aloud
to his wife about this animal
maybe fox in his maybe nest
it came together for me
I butted in and said that's Alex's dog!

they were all at Skoki for a week
and watched in awe
a Grizzly bear on the way in
chase catch and eat a squirrel

the scene with a mind of its own
tensed up their-to-be-pampered-
while-they-"painted"
digestive tracts
some guts into the mind so to spec
Allan photographing his shadow
on the stream
Ernie the window with the trees
you would see too if you were
in the cabin itself noumenal
but "taken" transparently from those trees

I buy Ernie's strange loop
of the series he calls "Threshold"
I see as finessed of the human question there
with two separated black boxes
no doubt full of giddy neuro-scientists
tapping and then listening
tapping and then listening

but I buy the photograph as much
for the warmth of the orangey wood
the ghostly fuel efficient burning
in my dark interior grandfather house
on the prairie
California style
and then we're in the movies
more boxed-up fire

two steps to my cabin kitchen
one step back to look
at the woman in the khaki pants
let her go
I'm shameless but generous
parked on the edge of the parking lot
and nobody thinks of me
taking them in
I like the vacancy fine
and my cognitive pet to boot

down the winding stair
sends up a unicycle sample
rejected phrase the air
to bank another
into a ballroom
ornate as hell
the ceiling low seeming as I descend
high when I get there

dog bones and dictionaries
pineapples on your lapels
tomatoes and toast spring the lumber dog

eye in my ear like a folded fool
meteorites from backward places times
miss practically everything
thank our lucky stars
for this practical permanence carved out
the statistics

they miss even the place there're in
such sucks oh yea near nay
o blackened glass

the flattened cans up and into the truck
continuo avalanche in the human wake
like strong drink
and the wind tinny leaves

no nonsense
I just walked right out
and shot it
the wad
the wide world
pricked
picked over

everyday three or four tickets
on the non-RVs in the RV parking lot
“you’ll get a ticket” I say
“just like the press hat beside you”

“where can we park then?” asks the mother
and the grownup daughter
“what do I care
I just want to put you in a spot
no fee just a fine how do you do”

I’m so mad at the timing today
I let the bus run over my foot
this morning was late the dog paid
irritable in the pet store

my feet are copper green inside
my shoes I feel
my famous feet tried queening the tesserae
I realized their infinite glory
when that didn’t work

veritable variable vectors
that have done me no good really
I laid out the map and used my fingers
Shushwap madness the BC interior houseboats
such thunder under the legendary path

I did lift a finger across the gorge
mechano sets complexity delivered
but we couldn't wait for it
my psyche mobilized memo'd
ready to colonize the quantum computers

pubic hair on the keyboard
or on the counter among the change
gigantic there in the gigantic post office

however that doesn't detract from
the objective measure
I saw launched over and above
the arrowing ducks
your fuzzy irreproachable authorship

last summer almost every day
after school Andrea would paint
another barn red patch on the granary
and we would slow down with our loads
of wheat but still have left before the waft
of dust sepia'd her

long patches across the top under the roof
big panels at ground level
half a door on the east side
some stray brush strokes on the north
we stole her greasy red ladder
to get up other granaries

everyone with flecks of barn
on their pant legs T-shirts
and gloves if not hands

green mathematician hen red geometry
Rothko evenings no jaundice
justice all the way down

after the autumn lid
we focused the electronic dish
winter forecast as cut commotion
the truck too moody in the crisp dust

above the oil on the powdered earth
red planet capsizes the emergencies
a science out of season

the fastest hound around
limps with her sad brown eye
no sadder than when she was first bounding
to the orbiting vet and wiener string

I couldn't stand myself to be so amplified
though could imagine learning
the tricks of the trade
quick ways of doing complex arithmetic
ridin' an energy wave

in the hall of mirrors
to be re-entered into a flattening cake
in a series of oscillating hands
till the ghost is given up

we are lucky to be the cairns
atop Crust Mountain
and no one has to figure out
what we're plately thinking
till the next great quake
we know will never come
and so are the galactic newsmakers
beginning to revert to old solidarity

atop Mt. Crust we breathe the light years'
afterlife
stick up for ancient curvatures
we receive in the morningless dew

in many ways such expressionism
we can't biologize
as we're determined in that sense
against the undermining of *mine*
our printers can feed us back a
line into an open can of wombs
so fine grain coarse grain relax Hair breather

rough paddle and canoe
make their cuts
into the murky work of united metaphor
eraser dance discrete cloud and clear

you're wearing dirty underwear
and don't realize how good off
your singing is in the car

I think you're just fine
when you're not sleeping
but then like Alex
I'm colour blind beyond imagining

I don't care if you skirt with the ring road
my policy's your accidents before they happen
or never
I illustrate your mistakes with up
to the minute minuteness
thrown from the throne
nets to unnatural selection
heredity folds
cancan canaries fly out the anti-matter shaft

when I tire of the second hand stories
I still you with pure body odour
once in a while your bluebottle eyes
grab me as boring
and I shudder at the wooly barrens
to the north
how unnecessarily apt I've become

it's not the painstaking circuitry
of our conversation

slower than the swarming neurons
hived off with their unlistening answers

but it is
the consistency at the end of its tether
under the sewing machine or microscope
the snake back self massage
getting the diamond around the head
without the plea of pleonasm

those restituting phosphenes
when the press comes knocking
for intellection
I love

but after the dog days
and the italics in the alley leaning
on the horn

I care to see the bruised eye
out and out above the ripe crop
falling together so
canarding the sky a bit further
than the second look disconfirms

affirmament in the hollowing task
spotted at the end of the hawk's kite line
the swather's cutting bar end is in the beginning
of any width at all but the miles
are inch collectors
Andrea's paint drying beyond the pail

crushed like this
the vapours roll over me
the bruise in the sky is vivid
but beginning to tumble
then bounce lightly on tundra's tons
airborne fluff reterritorializes gravity
from Eden's apple's fall
to health nuts' methods of Methuselah

the bombs of the cosmos
are quite wonderful today
especially with the kids in school
the county counting on taxes

so the farming
is back
to its financial roots and water rights
cattlemen moving cattle around
among friends for subsidies and deductions
then crying about welfare moms
up in public meetings shaking with rage

we flush and cuss
when certain neighbours track on our land

cutting up the hill
the bruise is back in the eye
worried coffee'd words puffing
from one loop to another

after supper utopia
butting out
shades of west across your lap
marooned then sun-blackened
everything to the left

going north
the faint bruise again
the blood
sailing out of its cells
nor magnetic nor morphogenetic
but married
in Madagascar

going south next
nothing lasts
at least the zerk-fed bearings don't
the acid batteries of the infrastructures
it could be morning
my tusks curl aside
like this on the anvil I'm easily evil
to recognize this destroys
the simple conservation

someone starts doing his job
we all snap out of it
even me
at the end of the loop
puttin' on the knee pads
for the gravel under the down cultivator
contracting abs straining for the lower back
the transvalued skin denies the organs and itself
I could be licked by a cat or a cow

barely a quorum
a leap to the next farm
the Hutterite colony is no joke
though there is some comedy
in the straightness
out past the less than five percent
of the digestively active population

the oil-stained concrete is familiar
or the state of Denmark
sitting low on the junked truck seat
the old Volvo seats stacked

the vise on the metal work bench
the drill press the welding corner

quick to clean up after the jobs
except in the fray of harvest
old parts torched off or unhinged
dropped dragged off for drive space

fifteen foot doors slid open
to the sunken dirt road cutting through
the crested wheat to the east steel bins

roll the old office chair toward the arch
lintel squarely clipping the open apprehension
lunch bucket corrected

implement hat toyed with
to see the gulls wheeling over the pasture
broken to crops

the compressor fires up after the leakage
stroke in the extended reflex self
Gould minding the music unminding the maid

the ghost of a pit
and Yorick's high old car

"most of us are finally right
for the wrong reasons
and into the bargain
never quite right"
is unwarrantable or elitist convergence

he chose to be a bore to his friends
when they invited him
once it was booze and a vital role
the booze was necessary
but not sufficient for these functioning flights
so something real was lost
in his *choice* death

the full force of lifeworld talk
is still straggling in
on the strength of this stray advice
he diverts his energy
to a rolled up path
its quantum tortoise phylogenizing the future
those sands so egged on
by the empty upright glass

outside the castle were the market tents
complete with amusing hangers-on
when the caravans lurched
into the animated hills
so was the castle gone

the fire truck in the fire hall yard
has erected its ladder
waving one way and then another
it is fishing for fires
McLuhan said quite rightly
get rid of the firemen
and so go the fires
maybe a lot of Handel
maybe more Handel
than we could handle so hot

there's been so much rain in Banff
the brown spots in the lawn
where the dog pees
have turned extra green and long
the dog can't keep up
though she keeps going

I will now narrate from the back seat
what's happening
but we can't it seems
get out of the driveway can't
get the gangrene out of the tongue

all revved up though so we go
first of all I can't tell you anything
about the mowed down dead people
can't even tell whether their reactions
ruined the candour of their previous schemes

I turn you over
so I can report on the fleeting frontal nudity
going down

and to the wreckers
the menagerie of oily mutts
on more liberated car seats
my brother's always there
and a dog lover
that in fact is how the Volvo seats
rolled over and two fell out

unsittable in the shop once removed
cousin the mounts will break or bend

Roadrage hates its own instrumental
except broken at the eternal return barrier
July fifteenth north of Grand Prairie
is that an early or a late
frost?
with Mao in the meantime too early to tell
as if the heady actions were sole and not cut
by an embarrassment of *plein-airs* in parallel
and series futures interruptus
Mayo the French contraction
so back home to the fire disking
over the crumpled worm-like hoses

I'm the worst and last of the hormones
code for what my false expressions
conceal
a zeal for hit-the-roof romance
not the mountain next to the town
that merely tells all's
not been told
but the mountain behind the mountain
arranged to be last

to stay on the tether
between towns loosely connected
in order out
to see

climbed and caressed they are
we
forget how dreadful in returning it
they are
asking for more
almost corrective in a real sense
of falling away
but really just spherical to the yards
vehicles pointedly sucking to houses

arrows clatter against the shins
of the rock
O bubble gauge burst to sliding scalings
geology night night extension course

footpaths into pines
pining words
and I fall for the echo
that mixes me and not-me

so what the signal lights were on the blink
at the complete click the abyss finessed
to positive infinitely articulated molars

imagine her caught hovering
over the ditch
higher than the punctured cloud
of vivid detail

at the peak of the roof one peek
at her peeled white underwear
from above
like immaculate trampoline
her even higher impossible
tho below your above
out of the picture
yeah right
on the tip of the tongue

down hill after that
a few years the tiresome car
hits the pavement

keep her
talking her own
mountains of trivia

ever rest the peak
to think the world
of her

the hypocrisy twisted to her
and the world
also

the ploughshare in the plain
Persephone

pomegranate seeds grenade of light
looked up
opaque in the eye of exaggerated life

keywords diverted
to the dog-eared Dardanelles
Miami's anomies

one step into the St. James Gate
pub

snap Ernie but the door
won't quite quit opening

at a tall table
with an amateur ballerina
not Zelda nor especially the Hemingway slight

chocolate almonds rattle
then muffled enter
into my colonic accordion

outside the Park
I touched down on the jelly feel
of the smoked salmon
on dark triangles of bread

like a prick
he like a man at a craps table looked
before I could decide
or taste the spring roll

a brat preserved into adulthood
such are the interesting masks
I was grateful
for the spicy insides
inside the clammy skin of the rolls

two days later
a bit of background
and the table rehashed

not just a cocked eye
a man with global afflictions
a mix master of slaves turned up

on the rim of an imperial measure
of ethnic food and some
handgun reserve

unfortunately the wiry blood vessels
were engorged with real adrenalin

but where
will the mask end
I reserve a question
for the fetal dialectic
umbilical to chance
raised up and held
in a water tower

the pressure tapped into at every turn
terror relieving terror
little by little
the synecdoches rebuild the tower

away from the table Brian
tells me about the English novelist
with Caucasian Georgia roots
John asked if I could meet
but who I referred
to Brian for vibes of Banff
she could bring
her Rawandan character to

he wondered about
the benign intrigue
away from the massacres
Alice pulled a book of flowers
off the shelf in her store
the novelist had predicted
before her research

Brian talked about the winds
in the early eighties
and how weirdly this year
in the middle of August
the muggy weather
instead of the usual cold snap

after I left the cops came
saying it was only fair
since they had just checked
the huge teen party down the block

all around the living room were hanging
Craig's black and white photographs
of Guatamalans

I'd learned from a woman who heard
from another woman
who'd heard a woman I once knew
at the beginning of a long detour
and the incarnation of a child

was now twenty years later
reunited with a man
I knew as Jimmy's friend
the young artist
who illustrated Jimmy's poems

out with the dog
and then in the alley talking this
morning with a woman about a parallel
reunion story
the love object surviving the parallax
or created by it
or a subject with a recommending mind
of its own?

now the detour has refined the new asides
and the road is broken up to being there
for awhile
slumming for asylums

with so much movement of cloud
the outlook gives me afternoon slants
on the news of morning
in a good old omniscient pickle
the first year I've really tried
to hang on in a long while to summer
even with
its guts spilled ahead of time
and seeing again the pure
ungilded auguries
of binned grain

I usually fall
for the fall
dumbed down in the hedge
for the smart parade
almost up its ass

in the palimpsest of the immediate
irritant future
mid-future yet more troubling

to the point of reversal
watching
the passive in its heart
get active
simply by limping through
the layers till all
is dim

there's Allan MacKay coming in
for his coffee and newspaper read
and I decide it's time
to introduce myself
ask how he's selling
that photo-painting series

Myra said he accepts
either "McKay" long 'a'
or "McKay" long 'i'

I rehearse after all these
coffee conjunctions
my pronunciation of choice
go with the long 'a'

take the dish and cup to the back
and wend to his table

not that the long 'i' so much
comes out instead
but I call him *Don* Mc-long 'i'
let slip poet
ur or tongue-tied torque

his first word is
"Allan"

"but that's you"

I said
undonning Don like a dirty shirt
or his muffler for a saxophone

a brisk young woman
shortish blond hair
caught against the incandescent
back wall of the church
in the morning

under the still waxy green leaves
fluttering in themselves
plus swaying on the branches

flash of nostalgia
never takes you anywhere
but home
place without teeth

the alarm devices get cocked
on the cars
and their annoying peeps
sound like the birds here too

but not like the "right" irritation
knowing

off with the lid
getting active in the palimpsests
again making solid
the fall through nothing
like the crazed vulture
I said "fuck this"
flew down and killed something
the market is still nervous

I walked away from the window
like it had seen a ghost
such are the jitters
of doing
a good turn

the solidity of the future
is not that it is handed down
one odd way of looking at it
but simply that its hands
are here and devil idle

the wall is not the wall
but the wind
you've come to rest in
and the leaves not ripped by hail
have a few weeks
before they turn

walk the wind through
and a metabolism will rise
to the skin

sophrosyne in the starship
but before we do that
sophrosyne worried waiting
for acceleration's next move

guys combing the universe
pollutant complexities
paring to [un]canny simplicities

we're pretty well shell-shocked
whether we know it or not
more perhaps the "shell"
of a late fifties pop psychology
coming out [of]

and also the way we throw
our trench coats lightly over
our arms these loaded reference trays

the way the remote
comes to mind

knowing even the electrons
are terminal!

purple myth
grows over my shoulder
suddenly
when I strike a back-there time
with a remote now space
of course inhabited by a female sphinx
I say
not because of some fashion construction
or superman's shadowy cape

just some ordinary ribbon for brains
used the way a demon conductor in a cave
uses an orchestra
to surpass itself

the only brain's a whipped one
even if it comes up a fine cream
rather than a pride of *Weltschmerz*

purling myth so said
keeps the content at bay
but the content is
pure is the point

yet I thought I saw
a figure
or a landscape
standing in a field
of coloured clouds

even the colour word
is coloured

and when I look at
the leveraged ideologies battling it out
they may as well be bombs
not so much
so counter-intuitive they've gotten
but the not quite toppling
that could otherwise get the new material
in at ground level

I hear there's a new package
for me
that circumvented the mails

I'm delighted to do Kostner's
postman
or let Banffite Wendy Bush
do the horse-riding once a year

but speak of toppling
package is twined
with its undoing
so an honest donkey figure of

house is a working metaphor
and the crocodile
I'm looking for has eyes
as menisci uncontained
are the water
slightly horripilated

I hate the inside pinkness
and then the pleatedness of crocodile bellies
which isn't a crock of correctness

and Andy
says those old pagans
liked to mix their beasts
to see who'd win

worm back into the fiction
on a Mars *in medias res*
scare up some earth
eponymous dissolve

the woman on the radio
getting away from florescent lights
and shiny linoleum
for the newborns

babies are smart
she says
their heart beats
and temperatures
tell us

that "smart"
is of course
technology speaking

the smart bomb
and new canola
the basic machine

smart outsmarts itself
outsourcing will never end

the ambiguous irrationality
of twenty-two sevenths
of an alligator

Alice tells me about people
I only know the faces and names of
a few facts of my own
painful messenger particles
never able to rest
and neither could the rest of the case
rest its case

now when I meet them
I shoot the messengers
dead *and* full blown

they're nudes descending staircases
just like they've always seen themselves
I know where they've been
they know what they shed
they take leaps
I keep seeing the stars into stairs
building their case
alas the wave and the particle agree

new wrinkles old scrotums and lamellae
and then "o my lemon Labrador"
telluric talaria scrabbling

that old granary Andrea painted
has a new green metal roof
and regular metal granary doors
so the seed
can be gotten at with much facility
rolling the auger in like artillery
to finish off the pile

still have to climb up the walls from the alley
inside
to check how full when filling the various bins
the wooden roof and rafters
the one after another 2x6's laid in for the walls

the wooden ladder nailed to the wall
and incorporating the 4x4's through which
are anchored the reinforcing rods
you occasionally bump your head on shovelling
and cuss at

on the south wall of the alley the setting sun
through the big west door beaming on beams
Adam Bede embedded in the copperish old timber

such throwbacks you take like
the very transience of the modern moment's
jetsam
like the goldfish you become
in the soundproof cab and the radio waves

but then here's Billy tall and tanned
with a new idea again
his sister/my sister-in-law says
like never before a door
and on the house
a new roof east off the old one
angles on the angles talking
but walking too on the air

his brother Jim's religion of work
stepped up to real religion
pragmatic electrons falling back to light

the painstaking electrician so
Sears will use no one else
all the boxes perfectly coded
power dropped down
plumbed at the habits of chaos

the hot August house
at least two weeks to harvest and then a gap
before the rest of the crops are ready

the still- and staleness is deadly
another frame it's a heartbreaking dream
an amazing motor again to the mountains
sinking in the long roll of land in the Rockies' lee
a woman halfway to Claresholm with a lawnmower
in the middle of nowhere under the "gigantic" clouds
warp-gauging a miniaturizing-back sky
cutting the crested wheat
at the approach into a yard only of bins
not even trees
get me to a nunnery I sing
home on the range camping away

circus cool in Keller Foods for coleslaw
Ruth in perhaps a ball hat
reminds me to go to her opening on Monday

Edith with her new synthetic knee
sitting in the sun with Olga and her husband
on the driveway at the back of the house
looking up to Norquay if you please
after a terrible wind and rain storm knocked
the power out
and I had my windshield wipers on high speed
just past Priddis

Stickney phoned again to say the pathology report
was in on his removed kidney
no cancer at all
a benign growth he could have had all his life
him pleading for them to do a needle biopsy
or save that
one when they opened him

the doctors had an attitude
and the nurses too he said probably brought forth
by his own talk back
"but I was right"
and ready before to accept his fate he said
like a farmer the weather and what not

they tied his hands
and his balls wouldn't have fit
into an ice cream pail after the operation

a year before he'll be really functioning
meanwhile the drought and only some fescue
a neighbour can combine for him

is it Deleuze's "body without organs"
that's so ironically offended?

beyond the unusual no chemo follow up
tho the cutbacks argue the inexperience
my mother recurringly rose out of her disease

and at the end weakened to death
signalled the three of us to go
her red puffy face struggling for breath
it could have been the birth of any of us

for the active letting go the alone
had to be actually alone
the tip of her tongue the tip of a sword
some physical finale
like a big pill to swallow with no water
at the end of risen and caught up
impossible lives the passion is full of

one thinks through the medical stringing
to a freeing up like when
everything embedded in traffic lights
and tail lights go red line synchro

of release in a grassy headlands
at a certain time of day
as easy in the breeze
that brings on a blending from away

I'm tired of all this new old talk
of the poem machine
really a creature that can't speak
but speaks
dumb poet/smart poem raised to
dumb poem/smart poem pat pat

it's all true of course
meanwhile the condescending wardens
are talking a mile a minute
over the slow sentences

so smarten up
the dumbing down will always be able to say
as a perpendicular curled up in an nth dimension
which little big-banged
would be the alien abstraction
exhorted to smarten up
ie to sit down
please

and we might add
where would these inside outside points be
without the sacrificial abstractions?

whenever there's a wind you find
trees uprooted or snapped off in the Fenland
often over the trail

all the Japanese banks are merging into
the biggest bank in the world
a couple or three trillion dollars worth

the screen door on the Telus building
slamming gently after the shock absorber

a man skips away
with a helping of files under his arm
and a metal box in his hand

the loose and bright cities
into the opacities behind all the directions
I will go now

the idealism that comes from being
on your toes
is constantly obsolescing

two Moroccans in the Cafe Alverna
in Amsterdam
stare at the cell phone between them

into the perfect trees the wind
lets go

keep the house
in odours

on top of relying on so much
in the farm situation
you have your self-reliance then too

in the local post office I was muttering
about the price of overseas stamps
not being bad compared to the telephone
I said thinking the telephone ain't bad either

that got the two of them
talking telephone
she saying they used their cell on holiday
and what about that bill

he saying
but at that moment I walked away
after getting them going

a conversation they wouldn't have had
if not for me to route it through

my brother and I reminiscing to one another
about mother and father
in front of another
nephew or Rob
and when they slip away
we are hanging wondering
who it's for

wanting to be overheard
as the integral pre-art ordinary
par excellence

the wind blows over the actors
on the roof of the granary
they crouch and attend to the new hatches

accepting grass stains on your jeans
you've in other words yelled "action"
are no longer in camera

heroes of the niche market
ride the horses of cynicism
as it goes into a topological spin

what do I mean by "topological"?
the latest
last word
that has dropped back a quantum
and then dominoes
right back to the John been Donne sun

the actor into his wrinkles
who dares to say everything up till now
's bin garbage
has nothing monk to say
wriggled out on his unembedded edge

an odd tin-tapping
two magpies hopping on the concrete abutments
from car to car in the lot
picking the bugs off the plates

on the frontier the historiography
takes the movie's new clapboards
into the freshness of the time
at the time
a handyman coincidence
I've seen before
like in *Unforgiven*

the silhouetted locusts cranked out
over the prairie fire in the sunset
no doubt real firemen waiting in the wings
of the cutting and cut frames

that "spring harvest" Rob's combine on fire
burning chaff from the hot bearing
having dropped into the empty-headed crop
frost got in the summer the year before

the fake wheat was tall
lots of material
and I fumbled at the controls of my combine
as I radio'd and forgot about the water
strapped to my engine compartment cover

even then we almost stomped it out
then another gust of wind and it was wild
neighbours seemed to pop out of the ground
with brooms and shovels then cultivators
and disks and finally the fire truck arrived

two hundred acres blackened and ripe
with powdered soil for the west wind

another year north of Lethbridge
Denny's three storey house got renovated
by the movie crew
an old barn fake to the farm moved in
Costa Gavras too shy to push through
the bystanders to his own set

and now
Hollywood south shouting down
Hollywood north
the pathos on the Fenland Trail
of her swivelling shoulders
the limper tail wagging on the go

sometimes I'm in the sea gull cockpit
and see the mouse in the shadow
trotting like my dog

"like a dog"
that low aspersion
in service to a higher pathos
zeroes in as it computes to mouse
out of nowhere on the trail

she is puffing so much
because sniffing
she holds her breath

at the end of the earnest politics
is a religious position
a beginning
"a sick Christian" would say

the cynical slide
for cynicism
is never a pure position
is the religious position
"out of our hands"
since so much
in everyone else's or something's
(or else your pleasure principle
fingering you)
but like Kant's "communicative opinions"
dispossessed's where it's at

the classical musicians riding their bikes
I treated as regular dog-loving pedestrians
and indeed they stopped and smiled
rather than run into her
as she sniffed their tires and knees

the whole orchestra stopped playing
looked over as dumbfounded
as us in fact

in this pit groan stop jug jug I stop
played stop
they wound up their bikes
till the movement
overcame them

when they departed I listened
in Estonian silence
to Pärt's single notes
dwell in the stagnant water
over and around the fallen trees

bumps on her nose
blood streaks on my calves
the trail of repellant air
after the prepared tourists pass

I gnawed on the elk antler
as if I weren't horny enough already
and crazed with wild etymologies

hockey sticks on the stove
Webster's websites

the painful window
scatters the Lincoln's tail lights on the towel
the neighbours envy the long concrete driveway
hair of the nuke
standing in their imaginary slop pail

his workouts are always longer than mine
I can't believe in the coffee bar
he read the paper longer too

de-voted politicians
invisible inside honey belts
you name it
I'm canoe here

worse than rearview-mirroring it
we sat
I say we
in the back of the moving moving van
and not "and dangled our feet"
but dangled them incidentally
tho dangle by undangle
re the pain under our knees

but not like dangling penises
which are the limit
since they dangle back
that post war nihilist joy
smoke and twilight
no horizon or ranch style revenge

see *Shakespeare, Metaphor and Meaning*
by Ann and John Thompson
for all the metaphorizations of time
in *Troilus and Cressida*

from wallets to "going into [the future]"
to "cominatchya"

our legs began to droop and then drip
and the rushing pavement wore out
our nowhere souls

you obviously don't believe I believe
in souls
you may be right

miracles by inference
on the time line
à la Hannah Arendt

pragmatism jamming at ironies
like a bathmat wrinkled up under the door

now to the vision
the grey hair of old acquaintances after hiatuses
on fire
the gaps the things burned up
but nevertheless the grey hair
a smoke and ana lytic fire
and long term memory is clearly
presumptuous and clarified
like old skin or tea

that associate
wooded away by *willing* muscles
the production of calcium

the circadian rhythms of "creativity"
the frames of second thoughts
of second hand thoughts
the repopulation of your little
Martian positions
restoring the stellar root

take Bob since July
painted the railing on the front and back
stoops
the wrought iron fence and gate in the front
and the light standards in both front and back

trimmed the tree behind my cabin
down to a bush
so Edith can see better backing out

fixed up that Chevy pickup
once used for bottle return

this morning he's already drilled holes
and fixed for the neighbours
both the car gate and the people gate
after the wind last night

that engaging outdoorsy woman
who hangs out with artists
who heads the crew that cuts and fertilizes
Edith's grass
who makes a fuss over my dog
wants to buy Bob's Chevy
but only has second dibs

I tease myself through her
about being too old to get into trouble
re how the harvest will keep me out of it

then tease Bob for her about how
the more he works on the truck
the worse it gets

Bob about six foot four or five
and about 275 or 300 pounds
gives his usual gentle slightly snorkly laugh
a laugh tempered
by his giveness
to quick and continuing reflection
that leads to accounting
that is good explanations for things
that happen

he has finished the first of 7 volumes
about an adventurer who comes out
from Ireland to western Canada
in the mid to late nineteen century
settles in Rocky Mountain House
after journeying into the States to the coast
and back through BC

like cunning Odysseus homing for somewhere
the texture of pioneer life
learning from experience but from books too
echoing Bob jack of all trades
living for awhile in the archives

it took awhile to feel
it wasn't actually hot and sunny after the forecast
in the cloud and insistent rain
'insistent' flattened into the rain

I liked the lusty wind
crossing through the cabin
until it starting blowing the paintings
off the wall

some cars used to really get out
and dangle
tilted rearview mirror with die

I thought I was part of the teasing going on
but it's raining pretty good
thank-you very much

two days after her "opening"
at Evelyn's coffee bar
Evelyn's Too under the theatres
Ruth phoned to see if I wanted a frame
she found cleaning up
for the smallish painting I bought

I don't like the frames especially on hers
I get high from bleeding I said

the two things I think an old girlfriend
remembers of me are my reassuring her
her brush could still be stiff if
after washing it hot
she would run it under the running cold

and showing her how a mess was mesmerized
or an innocence framed
when you outlined the ink splatters
with pencil on the page

paper clip
the kind kind of corrugated
pinching the poetry of release
clues in a cloud
a pin-pricked bladder

the shovel hitting rock in the soil
making a spark in the mud

the buzz about "the archive"
whistling by the grave

what is it about these Telus Communications guys
he backs into the telephone pole
pulls ahead and then just "backs" away
right into the wire mesh
no respect for the hardware world anymore

that video must have been good
the way the "perverts" and psychotics
were unrolled and then unrolled right
into and out of the bluntest terms
till they flushed me out
in maybe three senses

in fact I woke up in the middle of the night
tough depressed
but not tough enough
to not be thinking about deleting
a few previous day kinky lines

to change the subject
I would never suggest
or rather never bother to say
that getting the clothes back on
or to some degree
is more sexy

and I leave off the "anyway"
thus throwing my lot in with our
lotless
I could go so far as to say
lot

but something not bargained for
is going on with all this
nudist colonization

be as clean through and funny as you want
dirty will survive even *Mafia* the movie
ie a goon show in the Dudley Moore sense
(but deadly in the ironic figurative sense)
it will return unrepressed to ironize
the laundered money as perfect kink
even universal solvents go into hiding
as all phallic boats are raised

when you are old and naughty by the fire
you will not want to take down this huge
and unwieldy page
an unattached anchor
will lean on the cracked glass
of a framed photographed mermaid

a dance plane
will skirt
the nominal termini

the plastic cup's syncopated
clip clopping on the air on the street

on a pony tied to the tail of the big horse
my braids-wearing sister rode under a cowboy hat
with lace threaded around the edge of the brim
I got kicked in the leg

the pony absorbed most of the kick
my sister's tight tails
absorbed most of the blame

the aroma of bacon frying in the afternoon
I inhaled as the diet of diets
choosing the eat-to-live order
diffused to woods

I'm open to a good red light sometimes
as a pedestrian to stop
go on leave
knock back a few drinkings-in

only the kids are natural
when they skip the crosswalk
natural as in their
self-conscious different drummer
is so believably eager
the ghost of a cow path
Wolf Willow imprints
statistical curves from the satellites

only to you do I like
this utter loss
with no possibility of recovery
that is
that is the way I like to meet you

the story that rattles us out
of its crap

calling attention
not to some accomplishment
or anti-accomplishment which is just
as bad good

but to this shrunken state
psychoanalytically perhaps and thence
even physically
as the body ciphers itself
to re-enter a context
which whisks our vascular huff

the air alas is resistant
and while the mind is making up
the tolerances become prohibitive
a trip into detours adding a year or two
to a clumsy misunderstanding

off the detour but not back on track
is a smaller place yet
and major slow

still
the wits not even about them are quick
in the back of the service station
especially given
what they leave out

small fluorescence nightly in the newly painted
heritage interior scrubbed free of grease
the card game through the bay door windows

the hinges of relationships
meet the shifting sands
the mix-ups of outside and inside
your giggles engrave the spite
or then swallow the pride of loins

the tumbling pregnancies have come
to term
shaken up but landing blissfully
in the snowing ball

the glitter of the dusty diadem
given entrance to this new circle

The Critique of Pure Reason
as an experience
in elasticity

after some of the stretches and snaps back
background gnomes have you
looking down on the old backstop
on the ball diamond
south of the Nobleford school
and the hedge

long-cut coleslaw is more springy
than lettuce
shoots the tuna out of the bowl
pastes a lesser shred to your shirt

why would I hope for shorts
when she drives me wild as it is
and doesn't know I exist

between flashes of real exposure
I've decided to re-write myself
in the kayakyak on the ceilingo
B movie be bad be zeds be alpha shy

in the lumber store
the stereotyped dull faces suddenly
took off when I more sensitively
saw them all as basketball players
with unique styles

as more than one way to skin a cat
to the score
even if some of the jump shots
were a little too cute around the feet
except if the ball went in

and the way sexy bodies turn up everywhere
through personality-ridden faces
with the additional transformation
to women in my limited case

now I suppose we're below the B movie
but the interpellations never stop
and maybe Beatrice is just superior porn

Eliot's Dante's higher unconscious
can do wonders
for the skin
sun screen
leading the symbol life
into and out of itself

beached on the other side
of Hollywood
I take the salt out of our tears
granule by granule swear
by the power of the sea

give or take
a few bobbles of the balls
ie teensy kernels

the fitting surviving tales
whip us into shape
like driftwood
that hobnobs off the mantle
to close down the default dimension
for the open poison cutting the table
turning sea

out of the lumber
crooked onto the boards
repair to the play
of strange dignities
digging into us

next week the first of September
the coming cusp is in my mind
we'll either get a frost or not
Tuesday a high of only fifteen

they wake me just after dawn
a nice Spartan breakfast
under the slightly modified Roman sky
I'm escorted down the gallows humorous hallway

my fingers are still crossed
only in my mind but therefore more
actual and tighter and where
looking around the husks of cusps
argue relax even the flax breaks down
though it tends first to exhaust the soil

one week ago the latest wheat
was dead green and at that then
he said we will see a big difference
in the next ten days

a Saskatoon accountant said the farmers
should find new jobs
a writer in Vancouver said farming
was a sub-genre that had seen its day
the elevator is so packed I can't turn
around to face them
and the bread is getting crushed
the demographics and the logistics
make me sound sentimental in response
and I don't like the way anger feeds itself
puts big green machines on the street
they say John Deere is still a family business
down there in some tyrannical heartland

it takes a remote rolling space
Black Spring ridge in our case
to humble these formidable machines
a lot of crop to wear them in and down
but weak links and limitations they have
and what they do is so obvious
given how roughshod ridden over
are the not tough enough subjunctive moods

or does the physics grow anything here?
like how ants could never handle matches
and the statistical winnowing of the planets
if everything's constructed we've lost
the meaning

have you ever talked to
a special case person
or to the bottom
or your real rhetorical ironies?

either you bring the mountain
or you don't
in either case its a condescension

all you can do
is be yourself
plus an opinion maker
in the old stiff Kantian sense
which turns out to be flexible
and takes you out of yourself
as I cited above but as a simile
one turning the tables
yet again the principle in action

through the back door of the church
go the old clothes at quite a rate
and it makes no matter
how many people on the steeple
if you put good on the slippery slope

on the other side of the cabin
are the recycling bins
they never really made it as a religion
but they're busy just the same
and people dumping
hold their mouths just so

the transparency of dogs
"why they pretend to love you"
brings it forth anyway in you
that is love

you may pretend some
not in line of fire to them

but to a degree re the lack
of other objects

on some infinite surface
some pretty skinny love
is prepared
to wrap your sandwiches

when the sandwiches are eaten
we used to say you could
burn the film of you
for the spectacular protoplasmic gasp

my ego was eaten by a lion once
and with special exercise I've overcome
my theatre knees

I know lots of people
who've worked on movies
in one way or another
surely something will wither away

I know we overlap a lot
with their supple surplus joints
but when they come into the joint
they hang out in
all they see is feet hanging from the lintel
and a bit of calf
without the same sense of sex
so up the sky not the leg

we have no idea
what they see
when she roves the radio above the door
especially when they use
the old music we think

I gained some idea
of how far the cynical canine niche
was into our correlations
when I told my dog
she was wearing her tail
on my sleeve

I think my elbow and perhaps my ear
maybe the book I was reading
got into the snapshot the Greek tourists took
in the coffee bar

and then shortly after the Americans'
timer camera flashed from top
the cheese cake display
and there I will be in the background
under the daring snowboarder

de-indexed and dismembered
in Athens and Arizona
what matters it
bare bodkin
I was being readerly anyway
and who by the way is the book by?

there I was with my leather and jingle
of chains
I hadn't worn long pants for a week
and at half my age she laughed
I helped her across the street
for the cars had made her if not shy
polite

I took the waitress into the weight room
where I hung my hat and dropped my belt
with its kinks and links

I showed her the leg press and then
the extension machine and now
I'm wondering what she thinks

he said he directed a light beam
through the core of the ore of the story
got another story and more and more
watered down wine
or the many mutations of Christ?

it is true
that islands of significance float up
and define an exhaustible finitude

he got so hungry he ate these islands
cashed in parents' Calvary
calved a kid's mysticism

not a bag of dog food listing like a cornucopia
but onto the older woman's hair
an early yellow leaf fell

as to her voice pressed
and part of the caducous pile
her innervations and token of blood type

forests we are
around
and can

only touch on

running around loosely in the cages
of our unmediated psychologies
and therefore if you can call them that

we slip out on a pure empiricism
uncanny ways of *putting things*

but then if you think we've slipped
the knot for keeps

think again
and then you're trapped as before

backsliding
is the question to your answer
you can run again
in the daily mirror
your history of histories
is understandable
so we're letting you off

your destiny with that god
is not the way your role
has rolled here

we insult you with ease
but worry how the god may gourmet
cook the books

the cool morning mountain air
no haze though I like haze
I could light a pipe
or sit on the stoop and read
gossip about the nabob's no nobody wife
while the dog oddly thinks twice
where to squat to pee

my ghetto blaster
such decaffeinated sauce
is not blasting

but when I lower my ear
it tickles it

I don't hear it
turn off
expanded like everyone else

on the strength of the number
who like and approach my dog
I think I could Werther
another term in office

even though I tease them
and am inclined to say
"girls"

and what is more
they easily tease me back

and behind it are inclined to say
god knows what

I still Aristotle aim
to leave a character-size hole
when I leave that is
but then I never do

you and you do
and therefore I say
he and he or
she and she
and not interchangeably

in the pulverizing forces
there is still force
beyond the cards you are the back of

which is
the self-consciousness
from the hole you fill
from the inside
and so never can
but be that force

perhaps I hope for more
in the face of the faceless
or this least in a catastrophe come
on the catastrophes come we say
from burnt-out arch inference
but at least don't forget these least
ex nihilo models
these different young women

the men in the weight room
who carry their separate strengths
to the restitution in the rest of us
more crystalline structure
netting and netting again
the margins of the body

than mere point
of departure
her brilliant nose goes to the grout
in the corner of the bathroom
to the mosquito I hit there

and when we get out of the hot cabin
I saunter into the cool sights by the river

the leash yanks me over and over
like judo to my trunk
my own nose is so lost
that smells I get
knock me *nostos*

the more they're tagged before they know it
the more
if you actually talk to them
they talk an embarrassment of basics

like our ironies
have forgotten their own importance

and then you and I
walked out of another Hollywood production

at the end of course
but finally the former implication

exhausting ourselves out
along lines
the future makes aim
agreeable

or we don't know much
about heaven
but we can narrow it down

with apologies twice
to Spinoza
one for "narrow"

two for the "eminence"
and the negative theology

higgledypiggledy
into the hodgepodge
is first fertility

as for the chaos
it's not that terrifying
or sacred alas
with all the training ifs
if you get results
and ya know ya know

a bunch of bunches
a tidy prophet feted

when you move your body
across the canary yard
you huddle in your head

with the sharks that never stop
just change directions
and when the little big woman
veers here or there
and you're tempted to talk

there is enough confusion
to keep you honest
and long hurttable

or short
set back in the habits falling out
of habits
loving you without warrant
too crudely too

back in the late sixties
I was thinking Bergman's "Persona"
was being lost on me
because I seemed to spend more time
trying to figure out if that was her
or not five rows ahead

but then the actress as in the part of
unto catatonia
somehow threw me
into an ongoing analysis
a dour wisdom
from behind the camera
turned me round and round
part after part
till the static became static
and the running around
in my head
stopped even the theatre
running around in the world

this fire sermon
cruel necessary sacrifice

then that other movie
we saw them tossed together in bed
only through the voyeur's burning cigarette
whose ash curled up
and long

Janus in the doorway stood accused
one way of neglecting her heart
inclined to fall
to hearth

gaining an 'h'
not a loss

the other way of not declaring
the clearing that set her off
absolved her

I turned to look for the traffic
and almost kissed
the grinning Canadian tour guide

"how are you" he said in my face
and the Japanese men with him
asked what kind of dog
and her name

I was getting into the origin
of the name despite myself
when luckily the light changed

but not before the guide looked
behind my back to the being patted back
of my dog to say "she's thick"

"not fat" I warned marvelling
at the thoroughness of his tact

with all this good behaviour
and the Scottish roots of one water sprite
I was getting too close
to some truth about the hospitality industry

though there is much matter
in these manners
and radical difference
presupposes the plane of understanding
even the poetics of resistance
extends the rule

I took my sick leave from the curb
sicked my dog out of the dark wood of liteness
like we'd been clipped on TV
disappeared into the modest Fenland

at this juncture protect them
from the breakdown
of my willful ignorance

never quite let land new-ordered Canada
as a pristine plane
tamarack tarmac

assuming still
a dialectic gone
underground

the dark wound
that comprehends
every stab

the wind that throws over
your lucky shoulder
the seeds of your blind thrashing

always the catch
and the ground turned
catch up
slightly stepped back corny chorus
speaking to your actions

Alice phoned to talk of the help
her sister's kids gave her
painting the kitchen
green and ivory

rolls of masking tape
and I could hear the frown
closing to the splatters around
but then the helpless laughter
that was bound to rebound

not a word
as smooth as
sea-licked stone
nor jagged as an itch

rattled and rattling
in brackets
served to stand down

an insect on the hill
torn from a habitat
such as it is

the many-splendoured spins
of "the fragment"

the puffs of steam in the rain
from the night light on
in the day

in the woofish room
counter-intuitions
kernels of snot
no one is the type
to mention
or the drip is not up to snuff

the running tape recorder
and the syntax bunches up
then goes sparse disoriented
the arrow bullies can be broken
with the illusion of a bigger arrow
extremely bigger

at the party
her feet turned in

in the provocative rain
her imperative pumping knees
bobbing breasts

no claw on the mirror
no feather duster
hanging in the tree

in the big ditch
the eye cockeyed
at the Fairholme Range

where the seeded acreages command
the cowering Pharoah's dream

under Rundle's
terrible face
smiling Breughel bill
jokes away Turkey's
earthquake

the mess of civil fish
in the shift
of natural net

the cloud of linoleum
flakes of tuna
I cut off another finger of scotch
while the piano tabulates the atmosphere

I look at the stoop
and sit on it
my id aches
for the simple complication
and release of pleasure

the ache grows
to the pain of pregnancy

I look degrees left
and barely see the bear-proof
garbage bin

I break wind
reach down and gather
the dog gone
hair fluff

bent over slightly
teeth-brushing
the collateral gas you pass

thinking it was fifth street
approaching third avenue from the north
in Lethbridge I remembered it was
in Banff across the parking lot
toward the driveway gate that I arrived
at "food stuff" through the backdoor of thinking
packing the food and other various stuff

I smell the creek
in her coat
can I smell the same creek twice? once?
it's all creek to me O azure stick in the sky
the sting of no answer
the temptation to conduct the mood
and the sticky mud

or to suffer the slug
in the beautiful slime

rather than the actual
dappled clock
or harsh sibilance
of pressured mufflers

through the dynamite door
walks my adrenaline's exit
an excellent garble
of teacher's pets

the shallow sins of the street
bottomed out
before they're out of their teens

growing into the retrospect
just beginning to eat

double blind
in the Titanic internalization

the porch light and unintended bugs
after supper
a foundering helm at every hem
despite the contradictory log book
too good for this half-lidded surfeit of sex

the emergency services Chevy
parked in the alley behind Bruno's restaurant
Avalanche Movie Co.
Malcolm's "Malcolm Carmichael Peak
Photography"

how many businesses are there
in that building?

sushi bar pizza place wine store
liquor store shirt shop
film lab card store something else
and the Rose and Crown on top on top of that

lifted is the logo'd Chevy
behind the Fire Hall

set back to the pavement
key in the cognition blunted

the Fire Hall
a parking lot away
the sirens dog my dog

intaken flames
the long breath of a house
of houses

always the ornery detail
sucked up into the rose
and the rose itself
budding in the butte
ice's waste
poor leprous pyramid

the Dalmatian
walked into the shirt shop
on the corner at Banff Avenue
and Caribou
while the fire chief walked
and talked unawares
putting out plants and little fires
on the phone

later the Dalmatian will shit
on the neighbours' fenceless
front yard
unless Bob
has had his little talk
with whom he goes back
a ways

it says here I started this
at the beginning
always nebulous
of July (1999)

it is now the end of August
check out time
you'll like the humanism
of its here wish and
pace the folks from Okotoks
its Augustinian stretch

"the death of the normative"
birth of this wrapped awareness

"the communists from Cologne
had quite enough
problems of their own"

doubt's boots
even doubt's shadow
skeptο- milieu.