

Angels

They have little use. They are best as objects of torment.
No government cares what you do with them.

Like birds, and yet so human . . .
They mate by briefly looking at the other.
Their eggs are like white jellybeans.

Sometimes they have been said to inspire a man to do more with his life than he might have.
But what is there for a man to do with his life?

. . . They burn beautifully with a blue flame.

When they cry out it is like the screech of a tiny hinge; the cry of a bat. No one hears it . . .

Let Us Consider

Let us consider the farmer who makes his straw hat his sweetheart; or the old woman who makes a floor lamp her son; or the young woman who has set herself the task of scraping her shadow off a wall....

Let us consider the old woman who wore smoked cows' tongues for shoes and walked a meadow gathering cow chips in her apron; or a mirror grown dark with age that was given to a blind man who spent his nights looking into it, which saddened his mother, that her son should be so lost in vanity....

Let us consider the man who fried roses for his dinner, whose kitchen smelled like a burning rose garden; or the man who disguised himself as a moth and ate his overcoat, and for dessert served himself a chilled fedora....

Metals Metals

Out of the golden West, out of the leaden East, into the iron South, and to the silver North . . . Oh metals metals everywhere, forks and knives, belt buckles and hooks . . . When you are beaten you sing. You do not give anyone a chance . . .

You come out of the earth and fly with men. You lodge in men. You hurt them terribly. You tear them. You do not care for anyone.

Oh metals metals, why are you always hanging about? Is it not enough that you hold men's wrists? Is it not enough that we let you in our mouths?

Why is it you will not do anything for yourself? Why is it you always wait for men to show you what to be?

And men love you. Perhaps it is because you soften so often.

You did, it is true, pour into anything men asked you to. It has always proved you to be somewhat softer than you really are.

Oh metals metals, why are you always filling my house?

You are like family, you do not care for anyone.

A Journey Through The Moonlight

In sleep when an old man's body is no longer aware of his boundaries, and lies flattened by gravity like a mere of wax in its bed . . . It drips down to the floor and moves there like a tear down a cheek . . . Under the back door into the silver meadow, like a pool of sperm, frosty under the moon, as if in his first nature, boneless and absurd.

The moon lifts him up into its white field, a cloud shaped like an old man, porous with stars.

He floats through high dark branches, a corpse tangled in a tree on a river.

A Performance At Hog Theater

There was once a hog theater where hogs performed as men, had men been hogs.

One hog said, I will be a hog in a field which has found a mouse which is being eaten by the same hog which is in the field and which has found the mouse, which I am performing as my contribution to the performer's art.

Oh let's just be hogs, cried an old hog.

And so the hogs streamed out of the theater crying, only hogs, only

hogs . . .

Conjugal

A man is bending his wife. He is bending her around something that she has bent herself around. She is around it, bent as he has bent her.

He is convincing her. It is all so private.

He is bending her around the bedpost. No, he is bending her around the tripod of his camera. It is as if he teaches her to swim. As if he teaches acrobatics. As if he could form her into something wet that he delivers out of one life into another.

And it is such a private thing the thing they do.

He is forming her into the wallpaper. He is smoothing her down into the flowers there. He is finding

her nipples there. And he is kissing her pubis there.

He climbs into the wallpaper among the flowers. And his buttocks move in and out of the wall.

Counting Sheep

A scientist has a test tube full of sheep. He wonders if he should try to shrink a pasture for them.

They are like grains of rice.

He wonders if it is possible to shrink something out of existence.

He wonders if the sheep are aware of their tininess, if they have any sense of scale. Perhaps they think the test tube is a glass barn ...

He wonders what he should do with them; they certainly have less meat and wool than ordinary sheep. Has he reduced their commercial value?

He wonders if they could be used as a substitute for rice, a sort of woolly rice . . .

He wonders if he shouldn't rub them into a red paste between his fingers.

He wonders if they are breeding, or if any of them have died.

He puts them under a microscope, and falls asleep counting them . . .