Well there are many ways of being held prisoner, 
I am thinking as I stride over the moor. 
As a rule after lunch mother has a nap 
and I go out to walk. 
The bare blue trees and bleached wooden sky of April 
carve into me with knives of light. 

Something inside it reminds me of childhood— 
it is the light of the stalled time after lunch 
when clocks tick 
and hearts shut 
and fathers leave to go back to work 
and mothers stand at the kitchen sink pondering 
something they never tell. 
You remember too much, 
my mother said to me recently. 

Why hold onto all that? And I said, 
Where can I put it down? 
She shifted to a question about airports. 

Crops of ice are changing to mud all around me 
as I push on across the moor 
warmed by drifts from the pale blue sun. 

On the edge of the moor our pines 
dip and coast in breezes 
from somewhere else. 

Perhaps the hardest thing about losing a lover is 
to watch the year repeat its days. 
It is as if I could dip my hand down 
into time and scoop up 
blue and green lozenges! of April heat 
a year ago in another country. 

I can feel that other day running underneath this one 
like an old videotape—here we go fast around the last corner 
up the hill to his house, shadows 
of limes and roses blowing in the car window 
and music spraying from the radio and him 
singing and touching my left hand to his lips. 

Law! lived in a high blue room from which he could see the sea. 
Time in its transparent loops as it passes beneath me now 
still carries the sound of the telephone in that room 
and traffic far off and doves under the window 
chuckling coolly and his voice saying, 
You beauty. I can feel that beauty's 
heart beating inside mine as she presses into his arms in the high blue room— 

No, I say aloud. I force my arms down 
through air which is suddenly cold and heavy as water 
and the videotape jerks to a halt 
like a glass slide under a drop of blood. 
I stop and turn and stand into the wind,
which now plunges towards me over the moor. When Law left I felt so bad I thought I would die. This is not uncommon.

I took up the practice of meditation. Each morning I sat on the floor in front of my sofa and chanted bits of old Latin prayers.

*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine.*

Each morning a vision came to me. Gradually I understood that these were naked glimpses of my soul.

I called them Nudes. Nude #1. Woman alone on a hill. She stands into the wind.

It is a hard wind slanting from the north. Long flaps and shreds of flesh rip off the woman’s body and lift and blow away on the wind, leaving an exposed column of nerve and blood and muscle calling mutely through lipless mouth. It pains me to record this.

I am not a melodramatic person. But soul is “hewn in a wild workshop” as Charlotte Brontë says of *Wuthering Heights.*

Charlotte’s preface to *Wuthering Heights* is a publicist’s masterpiece. Like someone carefully not looking at a scorpion crouched on the arm of the sofa Charlotte talks firmly and calmly about the other furniture of Emily’s workshop—about the inexorable spirit (“stronger than a man, simpler than a child”), the cruel illness (“pain no words can render”), the autonomous end (“she sank rapidly, she made haste to leave us”) and about Emily’s total subjection to a creative project she could neither understand nor control, and for which she deserves no more praise nor blame than if she had opened her mouth “to breathe lightning.” The scorpion is inching down the arm of the sofa while Charlotte continues to speak helpfully about lightning.

3. Psalm 130: Out of the depths I have called unto thee, O Lord (Latin).
4. Novel by English writer Emily Brontë (1818–1848). Her sister Charlotte (1816–1855) wrote an introduction for the 1850 edition, attempting to explain how a novel of such extreme passion, imagination, and apparent “coarseness” could have been produced by a woman with such a reserved life. Throughout “The Glass Essay,” the poet compares her own life with Emily Brontë’s.
and other weather we may expect to experience
when we enter Emily's electrical atmosphere.
It is "a horror of great darkness" that awaits us there

but Emily is not responsible. Emily was in the grip.
"Having formed these beings she did not know what she had done,"
says Charlotte (of Heathcliff and Earnshaw and Catherine).5

Well there are many ways of being held prisoner.
The scorpion takes a light spring and lands on our left knee
as Charlotte concludes, "On herself she had no pity."

Pitiless too are the Heights, which Emily called Wuthering
because of their "bracing ventilation"
and "a north wind over the edge."

Whaching6 a north wind grind the moor
that surrounded her father's house on every side,
formed of a kind of rock called millstone grit,
taught Emily all she knew about love and its necessities—
an angry education that shapes the way her characters
use one another. "My love for Heathcliff," says Catherine,

"resembles the eternal rocks beneath—
a source of little visible delight, but necessary."

Necessary? I notice the sun has dimmed
and the afternoon air sharpening.
I turn and start to recross the moor towards home.

What are the imperatives

that hold people like Catherine and Heathcliff
together and apart, like pores blown into hot rock
and then stranded out of reach

of one another when it hardens? What kind of necessity is that?

The last time I saw Law was a black night in September.
Autumn had begun,

my knees were cold inside my clothes.
A chill fragment of moon rose.
He stood in my living room and spoke

without looking at me. Not enough spin on it,
he said of our five years of love.
Inside my chest I felt my heart snap into two pieces

5. Three characters from the novel.
6. Earlier in the poem, Carson explains that watcher is Bronte's idiosyncratic spelling of
which floated apart. By now I was so cold
it was like burning. I put out my hand
to touch his. He moved back.

I don't want to be sexual with you, he said. Everything gets crazy.
But now he was looking at me.
Yes, I said as I began to remove my clothes.

Everything gets crazy. When nude
I turned my back because he likes the back.
He moved onto me.

Everything I know about love and its necessities
I learned in that one moment
when I found myself

thrusting my little burning red backside like a baboon
at a man who no longer cherished me.
There was no area of my mind

not appalled by this action, no part of my body
that could have done otherwise.
But to talk of mind and body begs the question.

Soul is the place,
stretched like a surface of millstone grit between body and mind,
where such necessity grinds itself out.

Soul is what I kept watch on all that night.
Law stayed with me.
We lay on top of the covers as if it weren't really a night of sleep and time,

cressing and singing to one another in our made-up language
like the children we used to be.
That was a night that centred Heaven and Hell,

as Emily would say. We tried to fuck
but he remained limp, although happy. I came
again and again, each time accumulating lucidity,

until at last I was floating high up near the ceiling looking down
on the two souls clasped there on the bed
with their mortal boundaries

visible around them like lines on a map.
I saw the lines harden.
He left in the morning.

It is very cold
walking into the long scraped April wind.
At this time of year there is no sunset
just some movements inside the light and then a sinking away.

1995
From TV Men

TV is presocial, like Man.

On the last day of the Death Valley shoot
driving through huge slow brown streaks of mountain
towards the light-hole,

Hektor feels his pits go dry.

Clouds drop their lines down the faces of the rock
as if marking out a hunting ground.
Hektor, whose heart
walked ahead of him always,

ran ahead like a drunk creature
to lick salt particles off the low bushes
as if they were butter or silver honey,
whose heart Homer compared to a lion

turning in a net of dogs and men and
whichever way the lion lunges the men and dogs give way
yet the net keeps contracting—

Hektor trembles.

The human way includes two kinds of knowledge.
Fire and Night. Hektor has been to the Fire
in conditions of experimental purity.

It is 6:53 A.M. when his Night unhoods itself.

Hektor sees that he is living at the centre of a vast metal disc.
A dawn clot of moon dangles oddly above
and this realization comes coldly through him:

the disc is tilting.

Very slowly the disc attains an angle of thirty degrees.
Dark blue signal is flowing steadily
from the centre to the edge

as Hektor starts to slide.

It takes but an instant to realize you are mortal.
Troy reared up on its hind legs
and a darkness of life flowed through the town

7. In Homer's Iliad, the chief warrior of the Trojan army.
from purple cup to purple cup.

_Toes to the line please_, says the assistant camera man, slapping two pieces of yellow tape on the surface of the disc just in front of Hektor’s feet.

Dashing back to the camera he raises his slate. _Places everyone_, calls the director as a thousand wasps come stinging out of the arc lamp and the camera is pouring its black butter, its bitter honey, straight into Hektor’s eye. Hektor steps to the line.

_War has always interested me_, he begins.

_Epitaph: Zion*_

Murderous little world once our objects had gazes. Our lives Were fragile, the wind Could dash them away. Here lies the refugee breather Who drank a bowl of elsewhere.

_Lazarus* Standup: Shooting Script_

How does a body do in the ground?

Clouds look like matted white fur.
Which are the animals? He has forgotten the difference between near and far.
Round pink ones come at him.
From the pinks shoot fluids some dark (from eyes) some loud (from mouth).

His bones are moving like a mist in him

8. In the Hebrew Bible, the eastern hill of Jerusalem, in Judaism, it came to symbolize a promised homeland; in Christianity, a heavenly or ideal city of faith.
9. A man brought back to life by Jesus after being dead four days (John 11).
all blown to the surface then sideways.

I do not want to see,
he thinks in pain
as a darkish clump
cuts across his field of vision,
and some
strange

silver milk
is filling the space,
gets caught in the mist,

	twists all his bones to the outside where they ignite in air.
The burning
of his bones

lets Lazarus know where each bone is.

And so
shifted forward into solidity—
although he pulls against it and groans to turn away—
Lazarus locks on
with a whistling sound behind him
as panels slide shut

and his soul congeals on his back in chrysolite' drops

which almost at once evaporate.

Lazarus
(someone is calling his name)—his name!
And at the name (which he knew)
not just a roar of darkness
the whole skeletal freight

of him
took pressure,
crushing him backward into the rut where he lay
like a damp
petal
under a pile of furniture.

And the second fact of his humanity began.

For the furniture shrank upon him as a bonework of
not just volume but
secret volume—
where fingers go probing
into drawers
and under
pried-up boxlids,

1. Pale yellow-green gemstone.
go rifling mute garments of white

and memories are streaming from his mind to his heart—
of someone standing at the door.
Of white breath in frozen air.
Mary. Martha. ²
Linen of the same silence.
Lazarus! (again the voice)
and why not

climb the voice

where it goes spiralling upward
lacing him on a glow point
into the nocturnal motions of the world so that he is
standing now
propped on a cage of hot pushes of other people's air
and he feels more than hears
her voice (again)

like a salt rubbed whole into raw surface—

Lazarus!
A froth of fire is upon his mind.
It crawls to the back of his tongue,
struggles a bit,
cracking the shell
and pushes out a bluish cry that passes at once to the soul.
Martha!

he cries, making a little scalded place

on the billows of tomb that lap our faces as we watch.
We know the difference now
(life or death).
For an instant it parts our hearts.
Someone take the linen napkin off his face,
says the director quietly.

Stanzas, Sexes, Seductions

It's good to be neuter.
I want to have meaningless legs.
There are things unbearable.
One can evade them a long time.
Then you die.

2. Sisters of Lazarus.
The oceans remind me
of your green room.
There are things unbearable.
Scorn, princes, this little size
of dying.

My personal poetry is a failure.
I do not want to be a person.
I want to be unbearable.
Lover to lover, the greenness of love.
Cool, cooling.

Earth bears no such plant.
Who does not end up
a female impersonator?
Drink all the sex there is.
Still die.

I tempt you.
I blush.
There are things unbearable.
Legs, alas.
Legs die.

Rocking themselves down,
crazy slow,
some ballet term for it—
fragment of foil, little
spin, little drunk, little do, little oh, alas.

2001