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# Sign You Were Mistaken

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SIGN YOU WERE MISTAKEN

A Thesis Presented

by

SETH LANDMAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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MFA Program for Poets and Writers

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A Thesis Presented

by

SETH LANDMAN

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## CONTENTS

For You .....	1
Red Eye .....	2
The Coast .....	3
The Navigator .....	4
No Lights around the Observatory.....	5
Time-Geography .....	6
The First Maps Were Done in Babylonia .....	7
The Projection of Lifelines in Sea-Rescue.....	8
Outside Is a Room.....	9
It Still Moves.....	10
Your North Main Looks.....	11
Revealing through Compilation.....	12
What's This Do .....	13
Countdown.....	14
The War, Overnight .....	15
Being Honest with Myself .....	16
A Message, an Epicenter.....	17
Unclassified Highlands .....	18
Preemptive Reply .....	19
New World.....	20
Singing is Ringing.....	21
A Large Organism.....	23
A Small Flag .....	24
Regrets .....	25
Santa Fe.....	26
Instincts in Navigation .....	27
Misdirection .....	28
Séance Geography .....	29
The Only Real Gesture.....	30
This Is a Celebration .....	31
You Were Right .....	32
Puzzling Cartography.....	33
Consolational .....	35
The Heart Cycle .....	36
Sleeping in Anticipation .....	37
To Anyone Who Dreads the Glass Structure.....	38
You Are Gathering Up Sticks.....	39
Gloria .....	40
Stab, Stability .....	41
Parachuting .....	42
Some Friends' Houses .....	43
Angles of the Coastline.....	44
Pinhole .....	46

On a Clear Day.....	47
At a Demolition.....	48
Cases .....	50
Sign You Were Mistaken.....	51
Dull Side of Astonishment.....	52
Avoidance Platform .....	53
Arrange the Mosaic Again .....	54
Map of the World.....	55
Holiday.....	56
Quarry .....	57
Sneak Out Your Window.....	58
Navigating on Parallels .....	60

## For You

Finally there is the map that continues larger than the folds and beyond shadows and hidden space. It is not enough to describe what is not yet rendered, as a brain fills in lines on the sky. It is not enough to lay the space out flat, to digitize zones of vegetation, to describe the coastline as formula, as the perfect math of an impossible love. Home is oxygen: necessary, corrosive. It begins to feel terrible in the interior; maps call the outside into view. I pour over them for hours, never leaving my kitchen. Finally, I am unfamiliar with my own house. The routes possible from one spot to another increase geometrically. It is not enough to know inside I might travel anywhere. A hidden geography shouts out; I feel it press my ribs and skull. Great forces are shifting us and there may be nothing we can do. Each day, if you are okay, if you can remain, you remain. Though you may be cold, you may be the cold water surrounding my continent.

## Red Eye

This is how people can form a network,  
how the arranged sky can point to a city,  
says the captain. Look out the left, he says.  
A branch of your blood you're forgetting.

Up here we're small as a pendant.  
A necklace in a sandstorm,  
when it's overcast, when you aren't looking.  
Here is the place to remember the hail.

A place to not break down at the dead  
in the face of a face you can't forget.  
Where do the ones you love live before you love them.  
We are circling their city now.

All lit up it looks like a runway.  
It feels like a special occasion.  
We are taking turns connecting bodies in space.  
I am living a whole life up here.

I notice the moon in focus out the window,  
a third coordinate to find you by.  
When you get within earshot, I've got to speak.  
When there are too many loves, you love love.

## The Coast

Not every sentence  
means the moon falling,

I manage to stammer.

In the dark, in the shadow  
of the memorial,

grass glows a half-life  
lighting up a room.

I pinch myself, sleeping,  
but I don't remember.

There's wind in my mind,

the last light turned off  
in the gymnasium,

pelagic silence,

an echo of starlight  
left on a lens, a watchman

guarding town from the dark.

## The Navigator

I saw a light from Sagres  
coming for me. I could fly  
if I had no eyes, but I built a ship.  
I am lonely for the towns,  
but there are tropics  
so livable as to be loveable,  
topics we could trace like coastlines.

Animals are hatching  
on both sides of water. I lost the field.  
I found an astrolabe.  
You were an ally, Allison.  
I remember a grace. There were helicopters,  
declarations, my bloody noses.  
I was harvesting you a western song, a meteorite.

## No Lights around the Observatory

I carry out a blanket for the meteors and fall asleep each time I see one. When the electricity goes out, silence shifts. When I can't take another minute is when the heat spirals on. On the monitor in the core of the facility I can see myself in a mirror. Each fragment of my body is a research in conservation. It is clear I won't be disturbed, that I should sustain this for a long time. I'm relying on a pattern of recollection and perpetuation. There are no lights around the observatory, but there are clues in the pixels of every image I see. I've never received a dispatch. I wonder whether communication is ever severed. Sometimes I wake up standing, leaning in the direction of the next outpost. It's unthinkably far away, over the polar ice of a great shape I know is my head.

## Time-Geography

What does it mean to sit down in the shower.  
To pull another shoebox down and go through it.

To see the eclipse from another angle.  
It means to give up.

Your life is a diorama.  
You are inside that specific somewhere else.

What does it mean to say.  
What is possible and what is realized.

So long, popular music.  
So long as in what you go through,

as in path and project, what you go through, who you are  
tries to see the moon from other eyes.

I want to break down what it means.  
I want to say something that takes longer.

## The First Maps Were Done in Babylonia

Crows are witness to the spacecraft as it leaves,  
only a quiet hope, a gleaning of sky for news.  
It reads between stars, carries a brain as a beacon.  
Puts out a small signal in all directions,  
picked up by an enormous nothing.  
To be a world in itself, in orbit on a tiny thrust,  
concerned with fuel-economy, survival.  
Can I speak to you in interstellar space, and know how long  
you've got? It is hearing: branch this human tree.

## The Projection of Lifelines in Sea-Rescue

I have felt spacecraft leave  
the gravity of Earth.

It's like orbiting the crowd.

A small disruption.

A tiny movement of you,  
waiting to be received.

## Outside Is a Room

It took a while to believe anything was right here. It took  $x$  for the car to travel 5,000 miles at 67 mph. It took something like seven days, I said. This will bridge the chasm between us, I remember thinking. Ice-cold tombs, after winter, take how long to thaw. It takes a hammer in space to realize anything has changed, whether you are living or not. I took to you, and this is incomparable. In anticipation of seasonal distress, everyone agrees the weather is perfect at all times. I can't. I can't get used to something. It takes time. Occasionally, my brain humming, I take on four projects in a single day. One never completes the modeling of real life at a ratio of 1:1. Five minutes later your sandwich is ready, and I heated you up a bowl of soup. Did you, did you ask. It took a relatively small amount of time, but we have reworked our expectations. On a peak, the mind seems to expand. It takes only a moment to notice. There is a perfection I'm looking for, though it's constantly undermined. On seeing you, I feel a heaving. I'm a laborer from a long time ago.

## It Still Moves

I'm going under the knife; anything you have to say,

say it now. The light in the kitchen,  
the light in the supermarket, it's all miracle

and clean. Callous, though undecided. The light  
in these places is ambivalent. No more of

that with which we're familiar. I'm going  
to tell about the time I invented invention.

I was hovering in the inert sky of a video game  
and I was thinking, this light is so this light is so

clean. Accomplishing tasks is another answer.  
Hack off an arm and it regenerates.

To be burning up on re-entry, or just to be re-meeting  
the one you love again. In the bread aisle.

## Your North Main Looks

You look deep, silence. You're visible,  
turquoise. You're everywhere, alphabet.  
We're dying outside frames, spiders.  
Needling into affairs, possum. I am  
arriving, first class, on airplanes,

You need shoes, asphalt. Your secret is  
safe with me, watershed. Just to know  
you would be enough, everyone. It  
would have been enough, interstate. I'm  
getting tired, the sound of your  
breathing,

It would have been enough, blankets.  
This is evidence, chieftain. I will follow  
you, turn-signal. Tell me I'm slouching,  
amethyst. Fix our movement, aisles.  
Point me homeward, when it's difficult,  
in reverse,

I'm disappearing, azimuth. But these are  
my dancing shoes, hallway. But I'm  
weary, farmland. Tell me what the hills  
say, dinosaurs. When I tease them,  
monuments. Make a halo, on your  
forehead,

Hibernate, ransom. Don't show yourself,  
half-a-bird. Obliterate, frozen skunk. It's  
expansion, savior. What purple means,  
bruise. The sound and the city, high rise.  
I'm a new spectrum, folded, my love.

## Revealing through Compilation

Cells leaning on a door fall down stairs.  
Astrology is a body of concepts of bodies.  
Quibble with the naming of planets,  
not plans. There are stargazers in a corn maze  
eliminating light. We are not only pulled  
from the center of the earth but from the center  
of ourselves. We gather endings into arrows,  
protocols into directions; I have no word to express both.  
Hello and goodbye. A disaster reveals  
our true selves holding up bricks, our arms  
cantilevering from our centers, but what is it about love  
over time that dissipates? The longing of your cells  
geometrically insists on being heard. When you see a ship move  
you stop ignoring wind. When our town was new  
the reasons for it were obvious: structure as it relates to function.  
And as the granite in our building points back to a quarry  
I played your greatest hits all the time.

## What's This Do

I put a red chair into a bottle  
and my whole personality bloomed.  
If light weighs a lot, I weigh a lot.  
I am batholithic, an intrusion.  
I displace the whole tub.  
Two people is great, is a fringe benefit,  
an organ orange in sunlight.  
Silver sphere above my brain, I miss  
snow forts.  
I miss the galaxy's perspective,  
busy reading the fault line.  
I miss everything whirring  
on the highway, Massachusetts.  
At two you pummeled me skinny.  
It was a light shift. It was the heart  
of the house: a sibling placed back  
inside the belly. Jut out from the coastline,  
cool down in the summer, go back  
to the pepper garden. The strength  
of your wrist for rotation. Long underwear  
for the baby. For the old brain. A self  
I don't forget. An igneous moment in my head.

## Countdown

I mourned a disaster  
all night focused on a place  
inside my foot and shivered

Dream muscle memory  
in video all night  
flinging light at the wall  
on glass saying this is  
where to jump where  
to become weapons

## The War, Overnight

Stars through glass, I thought I saw Europe fragment  
the firmament. Listen, I don't want to fight. All my  
links will recoil. I put in a request for you on the radio,  
arranged rocks on the beach into your name. I will  
continue waiting for a signal to come that you are still  
alive somewhere, my pack my pillow, rations gone, the  
sky a bell jar I'm in.

## Being Honest with Myself

A horsefly sat upright said wind  
I won't soon forget you

To California unlivable there was too much  
From the kitchen to an eternal kitchen bulb

I had to walk out of that room  
I had to walk down to the Pacific

And this log is a list of the places I've sat  
And this log is a graph of my destinations

With remarkable accuracy I thought  
I could not have come up with the moon for the tides

## A Message, an Epicenter

I heard you over the wind  
illustrating the grass in the graveyard.

When the continents shifted  
your gravity increased

and all the grass was waving  
warnings to the squirrels: there is a road here;

this is becoming an interstate;  
this is where the Earth will snap.

My bride is going to come and see this mess.  
I heard everyone say to hide in the graveyard.

I hid in New Madrid, 1812, when  
the chimney was thrown down.

## Unclassified Highlands

When an element nails the heart  
to the land, an element  
with a down-thrust,

you feel a sweat of excitement.  
As in the axe-swing moment of  
potential energy.

I held out my hands and I went to water.

When I escape the bubble—get out of sight of land

When I escape the bubble—the day after I was born

I will be a precision, a divination, a map of the crust-work.  
I will search for myself in  
the atlas which includes me.

And when the search hits, I will feel  
out of sight of land for the first time.  
The document can't freeze or hold the river.

This zone is beyond habitable. Your house burns  
in oxygen, and your lungs are clapping;  
your hometown is your hometown always.

## Preemptive Reply

Like waking from sleeping a fever dream

across this channel  
everyone sinks

our city is doing so much  
with its river

\*\*\*

Light as a staircase  
in a conversation

we had everything felt so far away

a porch light came on  
a scene ended

\*\*\*

Now I get this signal through static

through a pinhole  
like peeking at time

a tunneled clarity

I know you think of me exactly  
when I think of you

## New World

Fuck you and your clothing. You wear it like solid gold hangers. It looks fantastic. When I see people on TV, I hang up pictures of my favorite rock musicians. Some people are so big they create new dimensions in the passenger's seat. They take up extra movements in a symphony. When you wish for one thing, everything else knows you are full of hate. You are a television show I saw you watching. Your clothes mesh with the way you move just so. When I see your clothes I only think that this must be a new world. I exercise plainly for the greater good. Clouds get trapped underneath me. What you said was a crushing blow. You even meant it. Some people will harm your finest moments. I have refused to make any more phone calls. During the game I always realize I'd rather not be playing. Listen, it is really getting dark. Any moment I'm going to get hit in the face with the game ball. This is when the game ends. When everyone in the world is speaking a different language than you that's a moment of transcendence.



As in a steel trap                      memory of waves  
that's just how I feel about the puddle

in the ultimate rain and                      inside the place  
how I knew you had been here

As in considering your face and then hearing your voice in real life

in whispering the map

and for me you still look back

## A Large Organism

I never could help  
the distance between empty spaces.

I want boxes of weight stacked along the walls.

I heard word of you on the news  
for a portrait you made

of a hospitalized old man  
who looked like your father,

and I wondered if you knew that,

and how the tallest buildings sometimes lean in  
towards me but make no sound.

## A Small Flag

For progress, even in reluctance, go and get a map. For the nothing I never imagined. I was dreaming. We sold the house though we did love that neighborhood. We sold the house though our swing set in the back yard was a swaying over roots, a bubble of inertia. Take me out of here with a forklift; I mean, I feel large. Disintegration that may or may not have been a halo, you won't put that on my head. On my head is a harpsichord, a singular means of expression, a sign from God when things are not okay. Will you answer me if I ask you. If I ask politely, go weightless into the living room, and let you think about it. If you think about it, how old we are is a rumor, is a chance for us to be reborn because of the answer. The answer is an extra hour in the right light, is a signal there will be no excuses. It's nice to be forewarned, but there's a negative side to knowing. We are going. You are weightless. No questions. Nothing further.

## Regrets

Don't ask me about morality. It's just dumb luck.  
I took care of the neighbors' plants  
for a dollar a day and broke a vase  
in their basement. A foul ball dented Bob's car,  
and I apologized reluctantly, timidly,  
though he did not care a shred.  
It's just a car. Don't ask me  
about cars, I don't know a thing.  
I hate being a kid. When you nudge a meteor  
in zero gravity, it heads off somewhere light-years away.  
The sooner your life changes, the more drastic  
your evolution. I wrote a song about you  
while I was on my paper route, but I can't remember  
the tune and the only word was your first name.

Santa Fe

Sometimes I hum  
I've never been there

Waving to Santa Fe  
Under airplanes

I'll be there  
My hand in the air

You just looked different  
I imagine I blink you

Dear dear Santa Fe  
A blink that takes all day

To fall asleep  
As though I moved

My fingers past my eyes  
Revealing the city

Sometimes I think  
I reached Santa Fe

Then I'm so far away  
It is sad

I reached  
Dear airplanes

Land here tonight where I am  
I knew you looked

## Instincts in Navigation

My train is coming; I hear it.

Deep in the hospital  
my extra body could be weightless,  
could be buried in air.

At night you lose your borders  
in shadows. Everything artificial  
wants to be warm; I hear steam  
singing a chorus to all songs. Don't be a mystery  
all day. To my curtained neighbors I'm leaving  
myself for a sundial. I've learned.

When you are a wounded streak of red on the water,  
your friends will hunt you down, calling out  
momentary comforts, coming to eat you.

## Misdirection

I asked you for a drawing  
I could find my way home by,  
not the transportation chart of the world.

All the announcers have been quiet  
for a long time; what they loved  
became obvious and unspeakable.

Late at night you whispered the play-by-play  
of everything you stole, but I was sleeping.  
I can't even mention the name of the hand soap you used.

If you trace my palms you'll see I'm at the end of my city.  
You can imagine yourself to be the center of the universe;  
it just takes a small faith, an accuracy of measurement.

Globally, you just watch the grass grow.  
I am asking, behaving like me,  
a whale moving under you.

You can't translate my sounds under water;  
you listen to your heartbeat and it says  
what it says. It is unrepeatable.

## Séance Geography

That insane landscape says to me  
perfection does not exist  
in my heartbeat.

I've counted my sleeping as a fraction  
of my life, astonished.  
I wanted that evidence.

I wanted to be the circle, to describe  
the family, to be what is real to dogs,  
but what do dogs say.

To let old days sleep. Days were pearls  
to comprehend; this is a photograph  
of a church I visited.

I was sleeping.  
I was drooling in a mirror.  
Spheres over the Great Plains.

The Great Lakes are passing me by.  
I can't believe lightning.  
I walked one hundred times home.

Then home changed and I was awake.  
Miracle over memory, I said.  
Lie down now, let it rest.

## The Only Real Gesture

Long dissatisfied, Arnold in his eightieth year began making sculptures. They were glorious beyond words. No one knew of his work, though he sat in his kitchen for hours each day sculpting the impossible scenes, cities, abstractions. They were assembled in his bedroom when he passed. The closest of them attended his funeral, cared for his estate, tied up any and all loose ends. Generations passed; here you are at his retrospective exhibition. The original works have long since passed on. These are the works of his works. He never touched a single thing you see, but notice the fine craftsmanship, the way, when you look at one long enough, the pattern of his breathing is revealed.

## This Is a Celebration

Yesterday was the parade. Our family in outer space.  
In the bed of the truck we slept under the sun.  
Wrapped in aluminum foil, sporting green  
face-paint, we seemed more similar. I could not  
tell my father from a trashcan. We were longing  
to be released, but there was a soundtrack,  
and a friendly voice on the radio.  
Would we know when our chests were opening?  
Would we elicit a response from headquarters  
regarding our disappearance? We shot through  
spheres; we skipped out to new orbits.  
It will be triumphant, our return, when we make it,  
but now and forever we will not.

## You Were Right

Worlds accurate to a remarkable degree  
though always false; I may have said they  
belonged to me. It is in retrospect that I see myself  
as an ancient scientist, aware of what I should have known.  
The truth is no one knows what is past those hills,  
though I am considering the curvature  
of my spine, feeling my balls for the cancer,  
debating whether I can recover your face  
when you are leaving the room, when you are gone.  
The inevitable finally, the everywhere yes; affirmatives  
are spinning in my head, tests are coming back positive.  
I'm putting sticks of dynamite underneath this beached whale.  
Again and again one remembers one's childhood  
as a tool of measurement, an obelisk in Alexandria.

## Puzzling Cartography

In space  
shapes arrange

as in space  
figures  
move into bloom

as in space  
we sectioned off

as in to divide  
preceding the divide

as in from  
here on out  
to motion

as in concentric  
circles  
of the watershed

as in gravity and  
to explain gravity

as in rainfall  
in pond and lake

as in pixels as  
pieces  
of image

as in to break apart

as in to sew

as in space  
carved out a space  
to speak

as in remainder

as in to file down

as in to scrape  
a cell off  
the mouth wall

as in after  
ourselves  
in animation

as in to sort  
the polygons

as in to sift into  
a classification

as in over  
the years  
to sort it out

as in waves  
and metronome

as in sea-grammar

as in to fix  
on the mainland

from the craft

and focus in

## Consolational

When my sadness creates a flag, let it be so simple a child could draw it from memory. In a dream, I was a sculpture, a statue, a pedestal, a dragonfly. Extrapolating my daily pattern made it clear what I was symbolizing. No outward zeal, no emblem, nothing already in use, but similarities to show connections. Distinctive and related can not be mutually exclusive. In a dream I was a mammoth, a water buffalo, a dragonfly, an extinct bird. I drew a gourd to my mouth and sipped. I thought I was standing on two legs, then one leg, and then a prosthetic. Let the document state the clarity with which I became myself. In November, I am a statue, then a creature, then a visible mass of condensed water, so simple a child could steer it through the atmosphere. Simplicity is characteristic of the reversible trend, the possible solution. I should not be separate. Abstractions converge like clouds. In a dream, we studied the relationship of part-to-part and part-to-whole. In short, we discovered rain to be cleansing to the sky, though the streets reeked of ash. In the morning I was in a burning house with hot doorknobs, and you were nowhere I could see. At least, I thought; at least, at least.

## The Heart Cycle

The purpose of the truck is to drag the heart across the ribs.

It is possible to wind a heart from certain strands.

A heart succumbs to the winter in a drowned valley.

It stares up at the perched boulders underneath the blood-sky.

However deep, a heart will respond  
to depth sounds from a ship.

Ships often have determined their position  
by means of triangulation with three hearts.

Eventually, all hearts find their way to the deepest ocean trenches  
where they become loosened.

The sea collects all their compasses.

Though unnavigable, the sea cradles the hearts in its arms.

## Sleeping in Anticipation

The old bell loses in high island air.  
The glow of a former crispness.  
We stay up all night waiting it

into our solidified minds while deer  
crush out paths you only see when you walk  
on them. Downstairs, night talk spirals

up to me. Voices in unison  
separating until, lost in argument,  
they trail off to other lodgings.

Who else hears. The imminent bell  
will keep me up. There's a footing  
I want to discover,

a promontory unexplored just yet.  
Where you are years away, where I seek  
out searchlights over the water's folding

in on itself, I will wake  
with a start. Eventually, one becomes  
who one is, and the mind dies.

## To Anyone Who Dreads the Glass Structure

With their enormous work for the master,  
the glass-enclosed lemon trees  
undertook a gut rehab of Barbara.  
“I’m a learning gardener,” she says,  
“and paints, caulking, lemon terraces, too;  
they have taken a sleek responsibility.”  
Her gardens and patios are things you don’t see.

Six years ago—mate escape.  
“In Italian gardens, trees bloom  
and perfume the air with their survived,  
and we’ve been working to reestablish,” says Barbara.  
“Also fitting the theme, I bought this house.”

“Having a young, promoting energy, we do  
have a responsibility to live this way. So we try  
to mend a greenhouse. Before the greenhouse,  
adjacent lemons are fruiting,” says Barbara.

And Barbara says, tightly sealed,  
“When I saw this place over a short time, smaller  
but much more flavorful, safe but dormant in winter,  
warm, light-filled, it just felt safe.”

## You Are Gathering Up Sticks

They are getting even bigger.  
The fire will go on for hours.  
I am collecting what is dead and down.  
You make a little halo, whisper in my ear.  
There are animals beyond these trees.  
Trees are dying, they can't protect you.  
They make you sad. It's so dry.  
There's a dog; you give him water.  
He likes you; he can smell your fear.  
He wants to chase you, but he won't move.  
We make a pit for the fire  
and lay down sticks. They all point  
at each other. You are beginning  
to feel violent. I see the light change.

Gloria

Gloria is livid; she catches the jet-stream.  
Outside the house, I grab hail  
to let it thaw, evaporate, and to see  
what remains. The comet  
is coming; I'm not on it.  
Before dark, dream information  
on a curl gets straightened,  
passes through a wide net  
lighter than space. I want it,  
but it moves on and won't turn.

## Stab, Stability

In time, the potato-as-reminder becomes richer, clearer. Forget the mysteries; I wish to just be diagnosed. A biography of me would read: this man is delicate. I'm advising you—let's get that straight. I'm whispering into your ear, You're wonderful, you're wonderful. Where do you go when you're not around. I'm tapping out a signal on my knuckles, imagining my sound as a refrain for your benefit. We can't help but be comfortable in the agonizing company of ourselves. Listen, a potato is still perfect though its shape may be wounded. A potato does not shiver though the night is cold. Once, I said Our lives are so short; do you realize that. There are acres of humidity. Again, what day is today.

## Parachuting

I used to be a sword  
I said to be is swordly.

My youth was sweltering days in chicken fat,  
burning in the temple or burning up fields like lightning.

As though their necks were in my wheelhouse,  
arms and lakes black and blue  
blanking out sky in a silence  
when screaming constructed space.

Hiding in that luxurious past  
I'm hiding in absence.  
I was inaccurate! My observations!

I am these cities,  
strangers under your blanket blinking  
light in the night sky.

Some Friends' Houses

Cataloguing these sounds  
is a life I can get behind.

I felt sleep wrapping up on a porch.  
I drove through a marked absence,

collapsed on a couch and slept.  
Then your name appeared,

an apology compressing all objects  
into a light that dies.

I heard you, muffled out of sight,  
going, *really, really*.

You were singing  
on the telephone promise.

I felt sleep muffling my catalog.  
I kept a log of dragonflies I forgot how to say.

Through the wall you delineated time on a porch.  
Far out in orbit an instrument rests.

I'm placing my hope on speaking in a collapsed lung.  
Some singing reaches through the ruined and hiding,

and I think you pulled me through a collapsing threshold.  
Cathedral Street makes a room.

## Angles of the Coastline

I like what you've done  
with space provided  
a space  
for you  
are the arrangement  
not suffered  
but simplified as in  
geography  
a long curve is  
a staircase  
the stairs are tiny  
of infinite directions  
the stairs are  
the stairs we know  
when we are traveling down

When tiny meteors drain me  
in the living room  
the ceiling  
will provide  
a constellation

When what you've done  
with buckets provides  
a space where  
the holes in the ceiling  
can cry collections  
of water  
for you  
not only you  
but in some everything  
and everything's battle  
from which you provide  
some relief  
though you are  
as always within—  
I would make a space  
for reading you  
a gallery

of I like  
what you've done  
for me  
in any time I like

Pinhole

Hold on. Hold onto me. Hold me  
where bursting glass begins, a carnival ride.

Not an anatomical replica or an empty shelter,

this is the train tunnel  
through the mountain,

the end of the ram's horn's  
sonic signal; I heard

here is the hinge of the world.  
I felt fabricated in that gravity

around the volcano and target, target  
forever in a lock  
a rocket  
for safety.

And how long could this last, no one thought to ask,  
but here in space you wrapped me up.

You had perfect form,

and I can't let the ending be the ever-increasing wingspan  
of concentric parentheses.

Signals  
are drops in lakes.

I am waking up

and clearing the sleep away,  
cake along the caldera.

## On a Clear Day

I saw two-thousand stitches  
through batting. I got sea-sick in patchwork.  
You make the four oceans converge.  
For a second I could jump through the ceiling,  
but it passed. I found I was dying.  
It was that I had so much desire  
but so little perspective.  
I refrain from seeing myself as any kind of orbiter.  
This is from memory: you must shock the heart  
into staying or else it goes.  
I like to rub the raised parts of my small globe.  
I like to see whether I can determine blindly  
if anything might reach thirty-thousand feet.

At a Demolition

At a demolition  
noise is the service

and in the beginning

God simply steamrolled

and let cannon fodder  
come into your heart, and

He blessed you in convection

in similar units  
in common, in a common  
space, under aegis

in all maximum protections  
and inevitable holes in

let the heart in  
the shoebox signify

the man  
in the hotel on business,

and let your make-up in  
the math stand out, and

we will guarantee sign you  
for the longest time

hold you up as the noise  
from every angle checks us, and let

the breeze carry the sickness,

the dialogue carry on  
from compass to magnet

our every direction  
and all of the possibilities,

under pressure, to which we are warming.

## Cases

When my swelling mind loses track of who I am. When I am flashing and then blown up entirely. When a wind sings on the record and subsequent movements. Then I will be a progression, a coming to, the keeper of seeds. Sinking, when we aren't ourselves, the ocean can seem enormous. I understand very entirely, to a point, a fossil might carry up knowledge from each corner, like the wind might lift and rearrange dust and leaves. We are carrying in us quietly what we haven't been. I will be your suitcase. I will be the inner workings of a lamp, invisible behind the form. In the corner of the room, out the door, in the terminal, I will what you packed into my life.

## Sign You Were Mistaken

Ocean arrived poking a star, that insurrection  
of blood you

fear and gather

this could have been  
painting with nails' rust

hammering something up, "what are you up to,"

just another symbol for biennial or derived  
from a gun wheel "did you find it" hacked

or frozen the scared sacred, the surviving child

"getting so big" as the intellect in action and apart  
from family life there is friendship and apart

from the abstract is the city, the city upside down,

poison in the pilgrimage, why  
"is difficult to explain," but pouring over the diaries

you begin to notice.

Dull Side of Astonishment

Martha, your chicken delicious,  
I would have given birth to newer teeth.  
Remember, always, I love you; you  
said you liked the excitement in me.

Well, now I'm diseased.  
I'm sick ends, split down middle,  
achy and not even bruised. Did  
not even fall. It's not even autumn.

Say there's a nuclear  
winter, I'll tell you I love you  
again and ride the rocket. Whatever  
anyone asks is worth doing, Martha.

## Avoidance Platform

Tuned into light, the sportscasters hunted a crying  
pillow. Long, steaming kiss goodnight.

Goodbye, radio, the only thing  
I ever loved, I never lived.

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Across tones of a bell, I never remembered the country's  
shape. Across atonal hell, I made a sound escape.

I wound up a rodeo clown. I witnessed gunshots, sand,  
sadness. I was never so cool, I said.

A removal. Moving across town. Echo, I said.  
Moving around wires in ceilings, being found.

## Arrange the Mosaic Again

First glimpse on Labor Day,  
you were a big heaven, stuttering  
everything I may have been.  
O happy summer in the sweltering  
ugliness of my obvious effort;  
is the egg showing?  
Please frisk me with a vacuum till I  
shine; over a tub do it; prepare  
my favorite meal and cut me as I chew.  
You know, parts of me  
never broke down and you can find them  
in these woods. The trees knock down  
the removal of the trees. Nothing more  
pretty than an idea. Up close, in real life,  
you are blossoming; you could be anything from here.

## Map of the World

But now I think each of us is a city.  
I was a small town. One working  
traffic light. A template for rhythm  
from the singular heartbeat. A sanctuary  
on the edge, one view down onto  
neighborhoods, streetlights worming  
out patterns from the center. It was just  
me on the common. Just me at the borders.  
No one needed steel, just trees. Ancient  
foundations were covered in growth; light  
off the pond, in winter, everything erased.  
I saw there were seeds, I knew to go.

## Holiday

Speak with sounds we're unable to make around here.

When it's raining and you are out  
in the open, I'll put my hands over your head,  
and you'll be wet anyway.

There's a lot of pressure for you to be a musician.  
Don't let it bother you.

Sometimes the weather gets violent,  
but just keep walking and imagine rain  
falling on dryness.

Just don't leave, don't leave Massachusetts,

don't leave Massachusetts ever. Souvenirs.

I had what remained of your hands when the piano was gone.

## Quarry

I am not even tired.  
Think of the world as a fraction.  
Do I see you in fewer pixels?  
All I ever want to do is duplicate.  
To wrestle with the remainder  
We leave when we go.

## Sneak Out Your Window

Sensitivity extends over  
the history of expansion.

As soon as I caught on,  
a fracture started to heat-spread

in the pocket  
of my old coat.

Chronicles of quarrel, a quarry of argument.

To heat up the bubble, the broken  
lamp when sunlight comes in.

I slipped through a seam in myself

and it felt like caving in on.

\*\*\*

Over the whole body of digestion  
you just need a tiny, fake hope.

It is somehow wrong to record

the animation of figures when a song  
is hoisted aboard,

a name for the baby when a song  
is delivered in the gut.

When everyone is aware of the smallest change

even action in an envelope  
looks automatic, a fire starts over,

begins to resemble an ocean  
where we signal by radio.

\*\*\*

And the sea is a ritual cry,

a vent to the possible,  
hard to locate.

We set off with receivers and get distant  
within a blind area

where a wooden hull resembles a thin skin  
pressed, not built on a human scale.

We separate out  
no matter, not, finally, distinct.

We are in a longing  
we observe,

a sidelines where the lights flicker,  
always about to send us in.

## Navigating on Parallels

There's no way to handle a surprise with grace. There's always a hint of bloodlust in the exuberance with which they celebrate your life. Without a rudder, in lieu of proper attire, I aim to keep everything. My life on the up and up. But wrapped in an enormous map, sticking push-pins in all the places I've been, I feel a hurricane in the tropics. Other places I've never seen are washed out and not clean. There are roads I couldn't have traveled where I loved someone. I did move on, but I am never neutral. Was this preordained, superficial, both. If I remind you of someone else, a piece of me is cleaved off forever. If I remind you of someone else. If. In zero gravity, you have to think each decision through. You have to say Look, we are not neutral. What do I look like to you.