

## DOUBT'S BOOTS: EVEN DOUBT'S SHADOW

by Charles Noble

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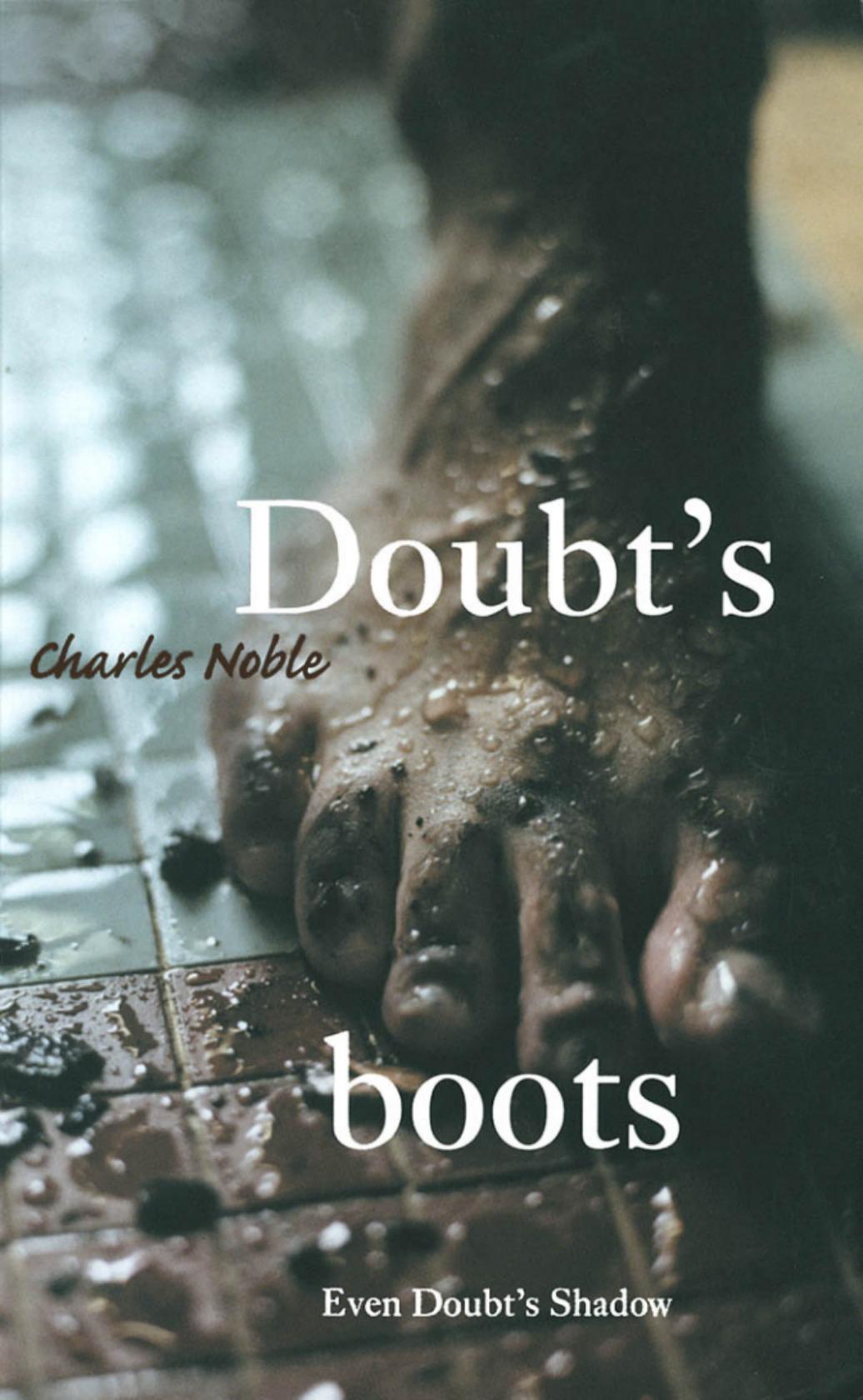
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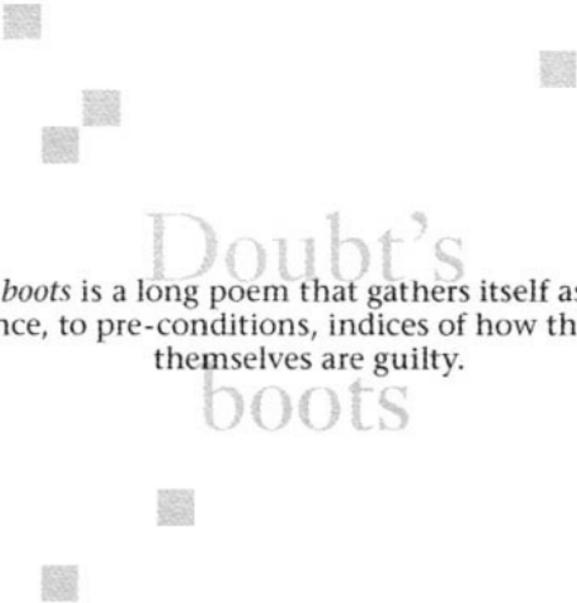


# Doubt's

*Charles Noble*

# boots

Even Doubt's Shadow

A collection of small, grey, textured squares scattered across the page. Some are arranged in a loose path from the top left towards the center, while others are isolated. There are approximately 10 squares in total.

# 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

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*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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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 rumped 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 repellent 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 ben 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 repellent 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.