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Andrew Mister

*The University of Montana*

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LET ME KNOW

Poems

by

Andrew Mister

B.A. Loyola University, New Orleans, 2001

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Montana

May 2003

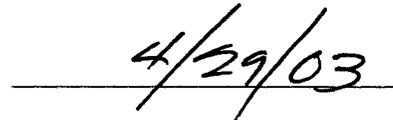
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# LET ME KNOW



## CONTENTS

To the Reader	1
Central/Standard	2
Sunday	12
Hotel Series	28
Untitled	38
Notes	47

## To the Reader

1.

I do not watch the ships go by and will not venture out upon that bay.  
I want only to walk along the shore then collapse in the sand.  
She thinks then turns off the water. What light remains  
traced along the ridges of a glass, against the dishrag's white stripes  
lost in the water, on its surface, the dark between her lips  
before it's gone. Darkness wipes the walls clean, erasing the birds  
between the striping, only distance continues ahead of her.

2.

If only these fabrications of sleep could hold me down,  
my breath warm beneath the pillow. She thinks  
then turns off the water warm against rubber gloves and sweat  
and skin before the pipes sing themselves into coughing fits.  
Steam covers the window leaving traces of daylight in the cracks,  
a sliver of land she cannot cross over. The fracture is what endures.

3.

My worst fears, that I am not breathing, that I never  
will again, are being ground beneath his teeth while I sleep.  
She thinks then turns off the stove. A cone of steam rises,  
She is waiting for nothing to happen, puzzled that anyone  
hears anything other than mice in the insulation.

4.

We have been carved out of the distance, out of what we lack.  
We are only a song the pipes sing to themselves. She thinks  
then turns off the lights. Flies disperse over the basin.  
And maybe you are not here with me sketching this portrait,  
graphite dark between her lips, a sliver of land she cannot cross  
into speech. Once the window has been bled dry, the feeling of air  
getting into nothing replaces white stripes. The fracture endures.

# CENTRAL/STANDARD



(8:15 a.m.)

the sky calling white      over the loudspeaker  
shadows harden across the lake's skin  
of ice. light quivers skyward like smoke  
& I can't move beyond what I look like today--  
    there is no remedy  
                    except to ignore it--  
                                    a clearing  
    out. moving against water  
in my sleep I get so tired trying to find reasons  
to lie to you. across Helen St. a car door slams  
shut--tomorrow's omission I was thinking of but didn't want  
to be absorbed in. rain pulling clouds toward the broad-shouldered  
horizon. gray descending. the trees bent. standing still  
                                    standing.

(11:23 a.m.)

day arrives empty-handed  
the telephone ringing against  
the thin flesh of my temples.  
I wait & listen as the car  
leaves the driveway. light  
reaches through the blinds  
to meet me halfway. outside  
the snow keeps repeating  
itself. the rain turned. morning  
is gone like a thought:  
profound because it's  
been forgotten. anyway.  
I have plans. Today, I will  
do nothing. I have you  
here beside me, nothing.  
there is news I want  
to bring to you: we have  
things to do. you get the car  
I'll get the night off.  
we don't have anything  
but the snow repeating. I'm  
tired of trying on daylight  
to see into your dreams.  
tired of waking out of  
my own. Today, all I want  
is to watch cable television.

(2:30 p.m.)

beneath the words  
I felt a humming  
your voice has brought  
little other than *tomorrow*  
in a foreign language  
another day tacked onto  
the calendar brings snow  
beneath the sky's  
scaffolding to hold  
in place the echoes  
I learn with a body  
I am not part of

are there no more hospitals  
to be missed, *demain*  
can I steer my course  
between you and the night  
I am waiting to reach  
through or can I  
only fail by casting out  
these are all questions  
I'm asking you  
let me know

with spring comes something brighter  
determined to let  
you down  
or is it only the cedars  
there in the sun  
reflected off the snow-  
covered lawn  
is tomorrow a celebration  
of the nothing  
that supports it  
beneath the notes

Glenn Gould is humming

(5:59 p.m.)

there is a line to be drawn  
the edge of our bodies  
swallowed by sensation  
whole as everything pressed  
into my mouth callused/  
tentative as a hand placed  
over my eyelids all I see are  
blank spaces filled by static  
like restless stars through  
the leaves making the wind  
audible or is that snow falling?  
the air can cut clean through  
as evening descends you're just  
waking or are you working  
yourself into sleep touching  
the world's frayed edges--  
I felt your eyes peeling back  
my skin the only limit left  
fastened between us telling me  
I will never amount to anything  
but a fragment no one would  
draw a line around but in chalk

now the leaves are writing

me into their dried veins

now the birds are turning

themselves into smoke

your name rubs against

the back of my throat

as I ask you to help me

find my way out of this room

knowing when you arrive

I won't be there to leave you

(7:15 p.m.)

beneath oblique washes of light  
how many skies are there? loosed  
from day's current our nights--spent, full  
of excuses--bleed through the white  
space between hours: the distance  
we turn our backs to: a mirror  
darkening. I can barely see  
your mouth moving. laughter  
drifting in and out like music  
rises to the surface I'm drowning  
beneath: the sound of breathing  
through plastic: a wave collapsing.  
there's something about what's sung  
against the skin: its imprint.  
there's something I'm not  
telling you beneath oblique washes  
of light. how many I's are there?

(10:12 p.m.)

& it was beautiful  
to be lost  
if only for a moment  
outside my personality  
now I'm waiting  
for it to flood  
back over me

here I am. here.

Night, be generous with me  
show me things I've never  
imagined could break  
free from this life like dust  
motes rising through light,  
but there's none  
to be found  
here  
where I stand  
tonight

In the morning I'll find  
a clean place to sleep  
it off, but back to now--  
a place  
to be lost

if only for a moment  
outside my personality  
now I'm waiting  
for it to flood  
back over me

Then the sound of street noise  
as if the night were telling me,  
I don't give a damn about any-  
thing you have to say, & why  
should it?

When all I wanted to say  
is how much I miss you  
but instead I'm saying  
all this shit  
about what I want  
& have left behind

(1:06 a.m.)

meanwhile in the city known  
for shipwrecks, night bleeds  
around the cars in the 7-11  
parking lot. the snow  
stopped falling, though we  
can still hear it pouring  
out of the cutlass supreme's  
radio. we've been in the habit  
of counting them dead,  
the houses. how dearly,  
the night holds the damp.  
the twine that holds a thought  
suspended above your head  
severs the thought. the resolve  
to sit in that car all night knowing  
the next day is dust on your hands.

(2:10 a.m.)

in sleep this succession of places  
is placed falling back  
into the elsewhere I bend  
towards renders my body  
suppliant in the darkness she is  
floating on the periphery  
like paper caught in the wind  
I extend my hand through  
the frail streams running  
across her neck  
into the hollow  
of her body--day's  
dark transparen--  
where suddenly nothing  
is nearby but rain  
the city is blackened by  
I take into my mouth  
as it sinks through  
the air like a body  
caught in the current  
though a city is the same  
as air when she is taking off  
my glasses the sky-  
scrapers carved by her  
nitrous oxide laugh  
letting me see static  
between the words  
slipping into sense  
like a stupor my life drains  
through the hours rain  
down unhinging this need  
we've memorized  
by rote sinks beneath  
her breath as I wait  
for light to appear  
through the cracks

SUNDAY





It's morning now--no one noticed.  
Moths push off into the light,  
the clouds we've created,

and there you are.  
You want me to plead my case; all right.  
Am I trying to find calm words?  
Am I asking for directions.

---

The plans you shed cover the street--  
or sink into. But how you speak--  
in this tongue--  
how you sink  
into sheets built of water, becoming silent  
under the sway,  
the spill,

2/5/02

And if you get me out--what then

Wake up it's me alone now holding onto the water.

for hours our bodies sway, sink

then reemerge in the threadlight

numbing our hands--our grip around the neck

---

I'll do anything

you want.

Wake up it's me

these words lined with flesh

spoken in sleep

The water looks tarnished.

the sky is tarnished water. either way

I'll struggle to catch

my breath

---

The path we follow into sleep

I feel my way along the banister

collapses

under the weight

This lie I alone tell you

stretches beyond our room

into the nowhere we've created

---

and if you get me out--take me home

Shall I say something about the body here. the limbs in which  
we are tangled. I went out walking beneath  
the tarnished sky

and shut my eyes

to fall into marriage  
arms bent back. I'll never understand

that final pause  
wind like tape hiss through the leaves  
when she says wake up it's me

2/17/02

          false because of the surfeit  
walking alone these four blocks between  
          a shadow of the night draped over shaking  
I want to go on but I cannot  
have a hand in my forgetting  
          your hand on his arm do I really  
          have a choice resting in the doorway  
          bent over shaking  
both my hands in hers murmuring just then  
*just then* I have become  
between our apartments  
          these four blocks  
          leaving me alone--  
          false because of the surface  
I have become walking because I  
cannot stand still  
          sometimes your skin smells like metal  
          having walked four blocks through  
a curtain washes the scene with light  
all I see waiting for the fear  
          to give for the tense to change  
          with our laughter  
          light between water  
the curtain empties  
          the scene of life and all I see  
          buried beneath these words  
I use to comfort myself

between our bodies  
through the window I see  
you glazed with water  
sometimes the rain smells like metal  
floating through the air  
to grieve is to give way  
you never know when  
to stop she says  
the air charged with laughter

2/24/02

about her collected works what can I say  
if one were to build a songbird out of newspaper

like leaves falling beneath the dead light of a convenience  
store parking lot the shadow stretches over her shoulders

one gets the feeling she is looking out across a field  
of moths before it evaporates like snow rising

as a car passes I don't know what it is  
this chore of enchantment woven through the world

I ask her don't you ever just want to stop  
thinking sleepless before sleep her bedroom window open

a crack of cold air touching the sharp edge  
where our bodies meet waiting for the twine to fray

into morning while silence burns through my questions  
I wish everything could be held back as in a painting

or a novel when the main character thinks someone said  
I don't know what it is about the night that leaves me

thinking of her waking beneath a towel only the words  
won't still the impulse to reach across the life

she is lying inside thinking I will go on emptying  
though I don't know what the night leaves me holding

a paper cup placed beside the shadow it created

3/24/02

voices startle her awake birds  
    beating across the ceiling  
like shadows falling  
    pieces of drywall  
    I've taped together  
        breaking apart  
        a rock thrown into  
the frozen lake we fell  
    through the pupil  
        blood seeping into the whites  
        of our eyes when really  
        what are we to ask the metal sky  
    we've been painted  
    against like haystacks  
    lying on the floor waiting  
for the static to drain  
out of the air  
the song collapsed  
*sounds like praying*  
she says but what  
are you talking  
*are you?* about  
when the sound  
is gone all that's left  
is all there is  
    left waiting her hands  
        tucked behind her elbows  
    shadows still swept  
over water the wind lifts  
    into shapelessness breaking  
        against the skin beneath  
        a hand words drift  
    across from another conversation  
changing what you were  
    saying not wanting to say  
        what it's really about  
            what it *is really*  
        when what is there  
    to say that hasn't  
        already been pressed  
        against our limbs

the wave like air  
we reach beyond  
to shore up

3/31/02

where will I be standing  
when I realize nothing  
about myself is hidden  
beneath layers of water  
the window holds a domestic  
scene I thought of  
when you said *ironing board*  
like something we've lost  
but still cleave to  
reaching toward the blinds  
my arm bends away  
the surface you made  
so carefully replaced  
by a shadow the day  
has built out of us

but she never makes the bed  
because I'm always sleeping  
or waking beneath clouds of  
ash counting the words  
removed from the wreckage  
I hoped to feel a pressure  
against the vein-lit skin  
of my neck and it's March

when the cold becomes  
unbearable she covers her body  
with water but never makes it  
go away waking to snow  
turning to sleet  
the streets are still  
wet and I can hear  
the sky gray as Portland  
given how things  
have been becoming  
I retreat  
from your discordant  
life I sought one cord which  
when entered into mine  
might end it  
but you don't really care

for music do you?  
too quickly waking  
beneath sheets  
of snow she would have  
folded her hair pale  
and mild as fingers  
moving from one moment  
to the next wanting  
my life caught  
beneath her skin  
like shards of laughter  
we used to brace ourselves  
against the sky seeping through  
its reflection but today  
I don't care to see  
the river framed by a bridge  
since the end is supposed to be  
something we can use  
to lift ourselves  
out of the end

4/18/02

nothing apart  
from what I have gathered  
as if swimming  
with stones  
in my pockets  
I descend  
my western course  
pulled along  
by wants the clouds  
begin to shudder the sun blackening  
the air like paper beneath a magnifying  
glass burning off  
the words  
the night offers  
bold approximate of everything, like leaves  
pinned as we are to these limbs, left dangling

and the dust descends as the train  
stops rising as the train pulls  
the air out of the station trailing

steam like great rocks rising out of a lake of air  
breaking around our limbs  
a silence carves its way through conversation  
but tonight all I want I will take  
as a burden  
my thoughts cannot

contain you

but for

light singeing

the pages

through distance closing in like a tunnel each night a passing car  
paints the walls

the day sometimes

seems

to laugh off  
and become something  
I cannot live with  
lying in bed I stave

off waking after  
sleeping sixteen hours

we arrive in the middle of night  
statues lining the bridge  
covered with snow and I hold her  
for the feeling of dancing

4/24/02

still feels like something's trapped  
in the hallway breathing  
you carried the bird  
to the bathroom and  
opened the window  
day taking shape  
in his wake  
suddenly a sound  
carried through  
the hall like a book  
you say you don't  
feel like waking only  
to drag yourself  
through this again  
and again cradling  
your arm like a child  
*suddenly* is a sound  
something trapped  
inside your voice  
lingers becomes  
a falling need  
you slip into  
like a dress I hold  
onto not knowing  
when to acknowledge  
desire falling  
from your mouth  
like teeth  
a part of ourselves  
dust traced through  
light carried down the hall  
and let out the window  
to settle over a world  
apart from ourselves  
from this vantage  
point a feeling  
of vanishing progresses  
like a stairway falling  
from your mouth  
a world of desire  
the word *of*

5/7/02

And what does it mean  
to be held here opening  
as if a hand shaken loose--  
The streetlights begin to bleed  
light. Rain falling like dotted lines.  
The sky darkens.  
I felt gleams  
flashing against a windshield.  
I can't make out anything  
but what I've made--  
an exact copy of everything  
we want. Then closing in--  
My home is in your hands--  
The street like a sea  
shining rises and swells,  
and there is room  
for your body in the body-  
shaped opening  
I have emptied.  
There closing--  
A white rain falls  
lightly, a child in its nightgown. 2:00 a.m.,  
the bars are closing,  
the light leveled off  
I can barely see  
the buildings stitched through smoke--  
the hem of sky

# HOTEL SERIES



\*

awoke to white rivulets streaming  
down blue panes before fading  
back into glass

what to abandon today stripped  
from the breath attempts to stay warm  
pulling me toward the tiled floor

lying in the bathtub of a foreign hotel  
last summer I wanted  
very badly to ask you

when something unsaid becomes the night  
sky we stare back through  
ambiguous kind of overcast

great burst of lighted city coursing  
dread of unearthing  
so much hidden away

across central square, a flock

pigeons dissolved into sound

\*

Another record of fluctuations

felt through the clotting  
of conversation.

These thoughts like days  
x'ed off the calendar. Nothing,

the light it casts  
over 5th street.

It seemed familiar  
to be touched

---

Tired of waiting for you & left.  
Walked north river

sight of rain on water  
stayed with me all after-

light before rain  
livid near the horizon

carried over with little sleep  
cluttered by moments

filed away in hectic  
wind let down coarser

I won't come down for anyone

\*

Nothing in life becomes me like leaving it. (My voices  
have brought word to me & it is true.

No more falling asleep in front of the television.

Soon you'll be over the sea like a passenger  
sleeping through your bright flight.

I wish you could hear me singing beneath these words,  
beneath the small letters my voice cannot shine through.

I'm still waiting for this day to end or rise  
like a balloon (all that's left, metallic taste of failure

comes to mean in place of the day  
is a part I keep turning over in my hand glass.

(I am waiting.

Another occasion I cannot will:

When we saw well beyond the waves a buoy.

\*

cash'd \$20 of my paycheck to buy books  
wasn't enough to drain the week  
ends with a day too shifting to make  
into a sentence

(I didn't want to be photographed  
in such a state

drinking to break through the usual  
stablensess (my murderous claims

of subtlety (the first time

in months

My hands free  
of pockets.

---

& as one comes undone another self slowly  
emerges asking questions--What about that pistol  
in your belt?--Yeah,

I know,  
it's a real motherfucker

\*

Before it breaks day is vanishing  
    between the blinds pressing  
    dark slashes across your face  
I can barely make out  
    the letters etched against  
    your back--light's  
    frail tattooing--  
    *vacancy*, the dimmed  
    *no* it follows erased  
by the coin-operated  
    television the birds in  
    your voice drowned  
    beneath the sound of  
    a car wreck as your  
    body sinks through  
sleep your head under-  
    neath the pillow  
    so you won't  
    have to hear  
    the skyline  
jagged as the mark  
my life made against  
her hand trying to hold  
    myself inside a bent  
    photograph  
bending the air  
    somewhat injured

\*

Mabye if I could think of a way in, as if my life  
were a room and this line its door,  
maybe then--

I'm not so  
inclined to read poetry  
sitting up nights looking  
(waiting for morning to leave  
for work and become

anonymous (or am I working now--  
working to arrange these lies into some shape?

\*

The words must have something to do with it, each word's  
particular taste  
though yesterday when I wrote, "that's enough, thanks"  
the word "enough" appeared red, while the other words were gray--  
(written in pencil.

Other times, I don't feel like writing anything  
except "don't wake me," or sometimes just "don't."

I place the note on my chest as I sleep.

\*

Somehow I could not stop hearing  
'human murmurs for example & rain on the water'  
then you woke and said, "The light looks promising today."

\*

Tired of trying, I stop  
breathing  
write it on a postcard:  
tonight, you look beautiful

by now it's the next day  
where you're staying

or the next or  
you are nowhere  
to be found  
to be found  
you must be lost

that I'll admit. Outside my window

leaves skitter down the street ))) )) ) )) ) )

)))) )))) ))))))) like parentheses across a page

they are quotation marks  
around what I want to say to you

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

words I want to steal  
from someone else & give  
to you

& sometimes do:

when I told you:

*I love you as a sheriff searches for a walnut*

I didn't make that up. Sorry.

These are illustrations  
of how much I love you  
& I do

More than Kenneth Koch could ever say

\*

Last night I dreamed that I was you  
& the poem was finished. Not that I haven't  
been trying: to wake out of this  
dreamless flight becomes harder each  
morning: quiet except for soft voices coming  
from the radio: another I have wearied:  
I slept while you wrote about sleeping.  
That was on Cooley, near the freight yard: apt.  
B6: the sound of the trains coupling like thunder  
woke me: 3:10 a.m.: and thought: what  
present has entered my wanting? Though I  
was always waiting out: the snow, the sleet,  
daylight: a pigeon is caught in my veins: cannot  
open that window: cannot open your body.  
& is it the body that lets us know that need  
is only need & if so whose? are you too tired  
to fly out? Yesterday: caught sight of myself  
in a shop window: something else I cannot hold:  
someone else I cannot press my fingers through.

\*

I wish someone  
would show me  
the space in you  
where I once moved

& when I feel  
like I am no one  
I could rush home  
to fill myself

with pieces of  
the story you are  
hidden beneath  
in pieces I'm

too tired to think  
of an ending  
her hair smelled  
like chlorine

UNTITLED



the figure works further        into the distance  
would the night give itself up for us  
everything        I do mists the memory  
the uproar overcomes        the first pause  
the moon is close enough        to touch  
to touch you        what I would give  
the ocean slouches        shattering light  
I like being alive about as much as I like  
my favorite sweater        in the thriving  
an anecdote is told        turning  
against the rain        the moan of breakers  
collapses as if        you were telling them  
as if you were telling me,        we should  
press our lips        against the water  
the surge slips back        before earth  
is heaped high        upon our bodies  
the pills ask,        would you mind  
losing your life tonight?        like smoke  
the answer unfurls        like an anecdote  
I press my lips against        anything

the sudden approach        of the slothful  
whose suffocated wrath allows now possible  
recovery of confidence        in those lips  
unable to assert        their power over nature  
fluctuating through the halls        like voices  
led down        through god's throat  
into the chamber        we fell through  
my thoughts        have weighed me down  
into down-filled thoughts        to create  
a new world        in the television static  
the spirit of correction arrives on the last  
greyhound of dreams        thrown clear  
across the face of night        darkening  
gloss of sleeplessness I will burrow into  
covering myself        with blankets  
of prophesy of which nothing will come  
but styrofoam houses        of which nothing  
are you speaking?        asks the mirror

to become removed from            the body  
of knowledge laid across        our kitchen table  
the people passing through the rain  
begin to blur together            on the cusp  
like recognizing someone incorrectly  
from a description        a question  
never asked            what of the still leaves  
you are pummeling            how can I find  
the courage to walk into the weather        outside  
this room it was the fourteenth day of april  
according to the song            a trace of need  
rising to the surface            of her voice  
the space heater is slowly killing me  
I can't do anything            to stop  
the darkness            stuffed into my mouth  
like a rag if one must speak        of this life  
broken into            leaving me cloistered  
inside you            my last ditch attempt  
the weather saying to us stinging our eyes  
don't move            you are surrounded

suddenly she is alive           balking  
at the mirror           I never stole a happy  
hour sleeping for a year           beside you  
the reflection           becomes the object  
the color of her eyelids           the end  
suddenly becomes you           if there is still  
a place for answers           we fold  
our hands           I don't have any plans  
me either           sleeping for a year beside  
the floor furnace suddenly           we are aligned  
in the act of dreaming           Inspector, doesn't she  
know, don't they care?           the floor  
must become the sky           must become  
the end           halfway under covers  
she smokes           and the soil falling  
over our heads           the tense changed  
the light between our bodies           winter  
like everything else           is tempted to quit

so we fought on            in the likeness  
of fire hoping            to string together  
these false starts into            a sentence lining  
your throat            the space we've burned  
loopholes lashing            your eyelids until settled  
aloft shining            cords of water pulled across  
the body extinguishing            grain upon  
grain            above you something catches  
in midair            to fall unbuckled into the vast  
chamber the window            we are moved  
to move beyond before            your eyes have  
rested upon            nothing we've left standing  
only to fall            back into fire the distance  
a recidivist crosses            with his tongue  
on the way back down            into flames

inevitably bound        to be reshaped  
the glass crumbles beneath        the glare  
the glint of rain        like cadence  
breaking into shards of        the breach you  
wake into        darkness shining out of  
all there is        alone in the fading  
light crawles through a glass        like lines  
on a page rain makes        its way across  
the wind        shield into the wind stripping  
away water        slows beneath the pull of  
breakers        beat against the dock like  
consequence breathing        against the ear  
in the grass light slithers through        bending  
light coming forth        from curved air  
pressed upon        the wind shield  
bound to be reshaped        before fading

in the midst of everything's      obscured  
sprawl a voice is buried      beneath the rain's  
relentless draining of lineaments      the trace  
becomes material pushed through the receiver  
like static I wake within      the sea's locomotive  
churning      nothing this far from shore  
but the enameled      reflections of stars  
submerged in cadence      are you  
going out into      day's ruined light  
shines      through the room where I lie  
on the floor trying      to sleep before  
it vanishes      like darkness hidden  
by a mirror      wouldn't you rather  
spend summer      inside I notice planks  
floating      and feel more spent than ceased  
knowing I'll be over      by next winter

outside your window      a man stands  
in the yard dreaming      beneath the sky's dark  
water      just to see pinpricks      of white  
brought by this      sleeplessness written  
in the margins      of air thickening around him  
blueblack and flattened above the roof  
like a photograph of a bruise      under glass  
the sky rises to touch briefly      hesitant like a wave  
he has little time for      epiphany stilled beneath  
the frayed dream he stares through      a window  
the wave shatters      against itself as we watch  
through the doorway      he is hoping to remember  
what she looks like      your ear against the living  
room wall      standing in the middle of  
an ocean where we cannot      remain standing

## NOTES

### To the Reader

The first two lines were cobbled together from the liner notes of John Fahey's album *The Yellow Princess*.

## CENTRAL/STANDARD

(11:23 a.m.)

"You get the car I'll get the night off" is the first line of the song Built to Spill song "Car."

(2:30 p.m.)

The phrase "cedars there in the sun" is from Canto XX by Ezra Pound.

"a celebration of the nothing that supports it" is from John Cage's "Lecture on Something" in his book *Silence*.

(1:06 a.m.)

The phrase "city known for shipwrecks" is from Virgil.

(2:10 a.m.)

The line "renders my body suppliant" is from a Marjorie Welish poem.

The phrase "nothing is nearby," and the line "A city is the same as air" are both from Robert Kelly's poem "A Woman with Flaxen Hair in Norfolk Heard."

The phrase "nitrous oxide laugh" is from a Lifter Puller song.

## SUNDAY

1/13/02

Some of the lines from the last stanza of the fourth section are taken from Rimbaud's voyant letters.

2/5/02

The first line of the poem is partially taken from a letter by Rimbaud to Georges Izambard.

"Words lined with flesh" is adapted from a sentence in Roland Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text*.

"The water looks tarnished" is adapted from this Smog lyric: "The water looked like tarnished gold."

"wind like tape hiss through the trees" is from a Silver Jews lyric.

2/17/02

The first line is taken from an interview with Jorie Graham in the book *Regions of Unlikeness*.

“a shadow of the night” and “both my hands in hers,” along with other words and phrases, were adapted from *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

The line “have a hand in my forgetting” is from a song by Nico, and “your hand on his arm” is from a song by Elliott Smith. Both songs are featured on the *Royal Tennenbaums* soundtrack which I was listening to while writing the poem.

The line “sometimes your skin smells like metal” was said by Sandra Simonds. It is used with permission.

2/24/02

“chore of enchantment” is the title of a Giant Sand album I have never heard.

“sleepless before sleep” is the title of a Marjorie Welish poem.

3/24/02

The first italicized line is from a Slumber Party song.

3/31/02

The line “but you don’t really care for music do you?” is from the Leonard Cohen song “Hallelujah,” although I was listening to John Cale’s version when I wrote the poem.

4/28/02

“I descend my western course” is Walt Whitman’s.

“bold approximate of everything, like leaves” is adapted from a line by Alvin Feinman.

“my thoughts cannot contain you” is from a song on the Microphones album *The Glow Pt. 2* which I listened to repeatedly while writing these poems.

5/7/02

“My home is in your hands” is from an American Music Club song.

The line “A child in its nightgown” is Randell Jarrell’s.

## HOTEL SERIES

The title of this sequence is taken from a series of boxes by Joseph Cornell. Borrowed lines and phrases from his journals, as published in *Joseph Cornell’s Theatre of the Mind* (ed. Mary Ann Caws), are scattered throughout the poems.

*Maybe if I could tink of a way in, as if my life*

The second to last line is from Beckett.

*Before it breaks day is vanishing*

“the air somewhat injured” is taken from an ’Annah Sobelman poem.

*Tired of trying, I stop*

The line quoted is the first line of Kenneth Koch’s poem “To You.”

UNTITLED

*to become removed from the body*

The song quoted in the tenth line is “April the 14th Part I” by Gillian Welsh.

*suddenly she is alive balking*

The line “I never stole a happy hour” is taken from a Morrissey lyric.

The line “and the soil falling over our heads” is adapted from the Smiths song “I Know It’s Over.”

“halfway under covers she smokes” is taken from the liner notes of the Mekon’s album *Journey to the End of the Night*. I’m not sure who wrote them.

*in the midst of everything’s obscured*

The lines “are you considering going out” and “wouldn’t you rather spend summer inside?” are taken from songs on the album *The Proud Graduates* by Spokane.

*outside your window a man stands*

The line “he has little time for epiphany” is taken from Jorie Graham’s blurb on the jacket of Ben Doyle’s book *Radio Radio*.