Let me know| Poems

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

Approved by:

Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
LET ME KNOW

*

ii
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 facture endures.
CENTRAL/STANDARD

*
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.
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
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
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 anything 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.
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 transparence--
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
captured 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

*
1/13/02

But nothing comes of our efforts
to build a staircase
down into ashes.

Beneath its weight
our skin holds us coiled
hand suspended above.

The heart erased comes to infect the blood
sliding between fingers.

If I could see the wires directing my hands
the thought of your apartment
giving shape to the debris, the wind
we become silent under.

She fingers the edges lightly.

I thought I felt the shape of your eyelids tilting away.

For hours the orchestra bled across your hands and the night
also spreading over--
waking out of--
will never see you waiting for me.
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,
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
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
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
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
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
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
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
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.
*  
cashed $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  
stableness (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
(warning 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
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 crawls 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 Randall 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.