

the  
moving  
frame  
in which  
I picture  
with

poems from 2015-2023

I Dipped Inside

the underground pool without sunlight

was kept at a cool minus sixty-five degrees Celsius

now that I think about it maybe I just couldn't read the thermometer

the water was a lossless blue tone something like the Mediterranean Sea

I missed out on my youngest's middle school graduation

the other's first marriage and my second divorce  
which I believe we had as the result of an affair

I miss that look that you gave me  
whenever I would take calls for you

you looked at me as if you knew I was imagining you

you looked at me as if you knew I was imagining you

taking off your glasses

slowly approaching while maintaining eye contact

but I couldn't be making eye contact with you

I was in a room without any doors

wondering if this is it

and to think I didn't even stay at this hotel

I was just there for the pool

The person at the front desk didn't know that

What is the New Yorker

A fish swam by us along the sidewalk—  
the mystical sound of the ocean played from its backpack.  
It made eye contact with us and beamed—  
it was a rainbow fish.

The drunk walking home  
wore a lemon-colored Polo.  
It was as if a mannequin had learned to walk.  
It tried to smile and to say something.  
It looked at me but couldn't see.

At first glance the sandwiches appeared to be  
just a loaf of bread inside a plastic sleeve.  
Meaning, whenever they purchased the loaf,  
they took out all the slices,  
spread them onto a table,  
placed a piece of bologna onto every other slice,  
folded these slices together,  
and carefully placed the sandwiches back inside the sleeve.

The taste of bologna made me realize I ran out of shampoo.  
Shampoo seems to be at the bottom of everyone's priority list.

place where something happens

four people  
drive by with their  
semi-tinted windows and  
sunglasses  
as they travel  
through exhaust  
to the beach

the leaf fossilization  
indicates the sidewalk  
was poured  
in a recent fall

a couple pass each other  
with a closed lipped smile  
as if they too  
are noticing the weather  
or the generality of it all

perhaps they notice  
the absence of flowers  
picked to put  
into vases filled  
with water

one another day

soon your spouse  
will not wake up next to you  
and you will use the chest  
at the end of the bed  
as a coffin

but before digging  
you will have to call the city  
to make sure you won't hit any wires  
underground

and as you dig the hole  
in your backyard  
your neighbor's dog  
will watch patiently

the hole you dig  
will end up too small  
so you will remove your spouse  
from the chest  
and fold it  
into the hole

you will cover the hole with grass seed

your new spouse  
may not recognize the square of grass  
as you both sit  
outside roasting  
marshmallows  
on the chiminea

lost to the lawn

in a nightmare I wasn't in  
the speed of the dark  
couldn't save the deer

I went back to the office  
but the doors locked at 5

so returned to my room  
soaked my sheets in a pool  
of what I liked

then I moved

into the kitchen  
and made some changes

again,

our queen-sized bed has divided us  
we have no clue who built our house or  
where our socks came from  
we sleep with the light on low  
the fan is off  
my eyes hurt from  
the effects of freshly cut grass for some reason  
I am alone  
under the sheets with someone else  
boiling water to change the air  
getting tea from a friend  
another friend giving me a book to read  
one I have not started yet



no, but I've seen a video of it

you're in your home office  
and  
all of a sudden  
nothing happens

you are on  
the set of a film where  
the assistant director  
hasn't called action yet

you are waiting  
like someone staring  
at a fire  
for far too long

all I ever wanted again

night-time rides to the post office  
put me to sleep

a lifetime later  
is all I ever wanted again  
if it could even be true

there was a pet store  
and a barbershop  
the barber passed  
and the pets  
were dispersed  
throughout town

how to get out of the funk of history

often times  
the funk of history weighs  
more than a family  
getting stuck in an elevator together

there are multiple uses  
of a bulldozer  
one being  
transporting family-man-bodies  
into ditches  
in other countries  
but now  
we celebrate the  
American birthday

and we install  
our windshield sun shades  
to keep our cars cool

working on a novel

as if you were just  
getting off  
your shift  
at the theatre and  
you and a coworker sit  
down eating ice cream  
across the street happy  
to see sprinkles scattered  
all over the frozen treats

a different treat  
retreats back  
through a hole dug  
in a garden  
by a rabbit  
being eaten  
by a snake  
as two children  
watch quietly

the language game

ticks attach  
to my careless body  
like rocks and seashells  
engraved alongside an ocean bank

barnacles may have  
a purpose a ship sinks  
as the covers are readjusted  
and nobody seems to notice

someone in a town  
has caught a big fish  
photographed repeatedly  
a nightmare to the church  
of the sacred image

maybe a nightmare for more  
too if only there was a way  
to recollect and share dreams  
without breakfast

On Friendship  
By Hagit Grossman

If a friend calls out to you late at night from beneath your window  
Never send him on his way. And if you've sent him away and still  
Insist on rigid rules, regain your composure after a moment  
And run to the window and shout his name: "Come, Merhav!  
Come back! I've got some corn cooking! Come eat something."  
And he'll placidly retrace his steps and gladly accept  
The key you toss down from your window,  
Will come upstairs to the first floor and will be impressed  
By the large pictures on the walls.  
He'll sit and wait for you to slip into a clean shirt and you'll put on  
The movie in the kid's room and your baby daughter  
Will rush to the kitchen and come back with a red pepper for him.  
He'll decline the warm corn and say he's already had dinner.  
In the meantime your husband will chat with him about Tai Chi  
And pour him a glass of cold sweet pineapple juice.  
You'll return to the living room  
And go out to the balcony and light a cigarette and sip  
A cold beer. You don't yet realize  
That this is a sublime moment in your life.  
One of the most sublime you'll ever know.

(Translated, from the Hebrew, by Benjamin Balint.)

## On Filming Friendship

If you are filming a friend tossing a rock at a window late at night  
Never question yourself. Maintain your composure. They are only tossing the rock  
To get their friend's attention. "Celia!" your friend shouts out. You film Celia smiling  
Answering at the window. Your friend receives a cigarette from Celia as you climb  
Up onto the balcony and your friends will smoke cigarettes together  
While you sit beside them. Your friend's friend will invite you inside their apartment,  
And you will film the large pictures on the walls instead of your friends. You'll take  
A seat in the dining room and wait for your friends to talk to their roommates and  
Use their phones. Celia will come into the dining room and offer you popcorn.  
You will politely decline the popcorn and say you've already had dinner.  
In the meantime your friend will take you out by the bayou, chatting about the  
Sea cows and the snappers. Celia will soon join too. You will all sit outside,  
Drink cold beer, and look at the still, sitting water of the bayou. They don't yet realize  
You too are sitting still: you, and your friend, and Celia. You continue to film the bayou.

Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year  
by Raymond Carver

October. Here in this dank, unfamiliar kitchen  
I study my father's embarrassed young man's face.  
Sheepish grin, he holds in one hand a string  
of spiny yellow perch, in the other  
a bottle of Carlsbad Beer.

In jeans and denim shirt, he leans  
against the front fender of a 1934 Ford.  
He would like to pose bluff and hearty for his posterity,  
Wear his old hat cocked over his ear.  
All his life my father wanted to be bold.

But the eyes give him away, and the hands  
that limply offer the string of dead perch  
and the bottle of beer. Father, I love you,  
yet how can I say thank you, I who can't hold my liquor either,  
and don't even know the places to fish?



Photograph Unknown (6 years before death)

January. Here in this locked living room  
I study a familiar face.  
No grin, holding in one hand a bag  
of homemade jerky, in the other  
a gun, and the other a bottle.

Driving in jeans and no shirt, peering  
against the inside of those eyeglasses.  
You always tried to pose brave,  
covering that bald spot with an old hat.  
All of life, you wanted to be alone.

But hands too small, the same hands  
are responsible for terrible things,  
hands still holding jerky  
and a can. But, who are you,  
again forgetting to say thank you,  
for not holding anything  
including your pose.

The Late Game  
by Charles Simic

The sleepwalking waiter  
Carrying plates of burgers and friends,  
Is he coming to our table,  
Or is he going to walk out of this place?  
He's going to walk right out.

A baseball game played under the lights  
In a small field across the road  
Has gone past midnight  
Because the score is tied,  
And now someone's hungry

In the near-empty bleachers,  
Or out in the back  
Where couples make out in the bushes  
Young boys smoke reefers,  
And take long pees side by side.

## The Late Plane

flies passed  
Citi Field on  
free t-shirt Friday.

They launch  
more shirts  
from guns  
as the crowd  
shouts out.

Under the lights  
cars rush home or  
elsewhere,  
and now someone's hungry

in the near-full bleachers  
next to the intoxicated one  
who started the wave.

Looking down  
a home run hit  
prompted us to stand  
as a breeze past.

longing for intimacy

My most personal poem  
would begin describing  
the sky  
we're flying through

Over millions of  
light bulbs and bodegas  
planes nearly crash  
to make shapes  
with the clouds

An abstract painter I know  
who works at a bar  
paints the shapes  
in their apartment  
while the other roommates  
smoke cigarettes  
looking up

this project is a secret  
to hold up with age  
to write in the dark about

who is the audience

late at night you  
are making something  
this is crazy  
you think to  
yourself rest  
tomorrow morning  
come back with  
fresh eyes

now what do you see

digesting

rubbing clockwise  
as if to move time  
in a fictional movie  
film reels spin away  
the projectionist's dress  
is loose fabric overlay  
the chair to say  
the credits rolled  
in reverse

people left  
plenty to sweep  
under the dark red  
mats pears are  
everywhere the neighbor  
rakes them down or up  
while the other neighbor  
is swimming in around  
the above ground  
pool this time inside  
to see this

at the end

I lie dying still  
in bed above the covers  
listening to the cats  
meow please come  
kill the mice lords  
under the stove soon  
before they're rats  
in charge  
taking pictures

poems on a dated device  
screaming into the night

I stare at the door  
imagining the police  
imagining waves  
coming in the kitchen  
like a surprise party  
people coming out of cakes  
every night  
I do it again

how long have I been away  
between stretching steps  
like a lemon in my pocket  
a breeze takes off everything  
everyone asking  
asking for phone chargers



snores on jazz

butter on bread twist  
dancing late in night  
at a time on television  
the photograph's scale  
sliding back hi and low  
on piano

stand back and hear  
come to recognize style  
from the street go  
back home early in  
the morning sunrise  
on past

the end of a song  
of sound itself  
the trumpeter  
goes on  
for long

days

spent in the room wondering  
should I be in this one? the  
room in which I work in  
the windows replaced  
helping the light  
from before  
life stuck in the trash  
is it a dream to me  
to be in the room in which  
the sun lives in  
plastic bag covers the face  
of the motorcycle badge  
close the lights inside we  
sip coffee playing cards  
the books are green  
growing roots planting  
seeds but the wind  
blew them again  
past the mountains  
that overlook the city

several pigeons

in our house the  
house that seems  
closed, a way in-  
side spend more  
time in reflection  
grazing gazing  
soon music  
horns come roaring  
through a chimney-  
like space fire  
escape a statue  
colored wall  
protector sprinting  
downstairs coming up  
with so much

the house absorbs it  
absorbs us like a  
voice called out  
it's hungry again  
the drain smiles  
the drain grins  
all drains waiting  
at the door how long  
has the evening train  
been gone before

two of me

one who likes to go outside  
and one who doesn't they  
feel comfort in front of tv  
nowhere else to go on this  
narrow sidewalk giant plants  
everywhere the sound of  
cannon balls is it for fun  
or danger is that someone  
watching me from their open  
garage full burying them my  
other would never see that but  
what am I missing doing this

it's a lot farther than it looks  
dog cries, packages late  
car broke down don't get too close  
or they will hurt you it fell in the sewer  
the thought that theirs is nicer  
than ours say hi before the sun goes down  
why is it only amazing if you don't see it  
all the time every day this route sucks  
go down the other street please how come  
you never go this way with that how long  
before we admit we're lost talking sense  
into the phone feet soaked left out to dry  
please close the blinds so they don't see us  
like this

I only saw it as I was leaving

the small insignificant marks  
on a door or window somebody  
who looks like a friend someone  
with the ball looking at me here

I only saw it as I was leaving  
the trees I won't see again passing  
by like a highway head out the car  
window on the train today's smell  
sweet flowers filled the air around

I only saw it as I was leaving no  
it's the pulse I can't get back how  
quiet everyone whispers steps  
the slow dripping drums the new  
chimes really a syncing sound

I only saw the moment as fleeting  
as the place that was will you please  
be the same as browns and grays as  
the contrast adjusts fading to blacks  
to where I couldn't see using my eyes  
to bear this painting's edge

call me

when you need me  
to pick you up I got you  
tickets to the show tonight  
you've seen it it fails  
to be new or do you fail at  
seeing something else  
tell me everything  
that's happened since  
I've last seen you I  
need to know I need  
new sunglasses  
count to ten  
I feel a hundred pounds  
that's not very heavy

rolling on the roof

wind taking time  
blowing birds back  
home they trust  
me clean windows  
pear trees baring  
tapes playing up  
we're closed for fun  
only without trouble

floating in the lake  
still water still  
water suns me to be  
a pie for tomorrow  
a perfect fit together  
to be looking for  
band members changing  
synchronized it's all  
in there somewhere a  
breeze a train a  
moment waiting for  
the next plane to fly  
over ready to board  
first ready to listen  
ready to wait ready

to love in 5 mins  
just got off just got  
back from behind  
the clouds a warm  
safe place a couple  
calm waves today  
that know where to go  
during a tornado slow  
images take the  
cake sitting on a  
shelf for how long  
has it been now  
this time to print  
this time on time



call with bad news

music has a new effect  
hands battered to  
prevent play

can still make a face  
swimming far from home

beautiful sunsets lost  
behind a building edge

never leaving you  
alone again

love and affection

waiting for the dog  
taking care of business  
what we leave behind  
to share a knowing grin  
to cross a street twice  
on the phone all day  
just checking just  
checking it's real  
this art to touch  
wait a sec is this new  
or has it always been

a good neighborhood for kids  
for grass for trees for car  
accidents stretches of plane  
place to be  
to love in  
moods

your hands

say so much  
I can hear them  
they're loud itching  
to itching to  
both run along  
the next piece  
to take a picture  
to give to me  
your full hands  
let it all run  
through them

they aren't soft  
or direct  
they are busy  
filling the room  
with light finally  
we can be in  
the basement in sky  
again where it's hot  
mine are covered  
burns just as  
the light leaves  
again and

I've left the window  
open for you to  
fly right in here  
there is nothing  
better to write  
no not a love poem  
a love song  
is all it ever was  
a fool for you  
a bridge over  
frozen water wait

put out the plates  
it's gonna be a great  
it's gonna be here soon  
we can't wait we  
have it all packed  
to take out to  
show you everything

what we've been up to  
removing the pauses  
leaving only pauses  
leaving just leaving  
action go

joseph tuzzolino