

WATERFALL
JASPER
BAYDALLA

Doctrine

I never had one that I knew of
but it stops me from opening up
often
then I let it

and whatever worked is cherished and becomes doctrine.

Easier than having to make stuff up
or is it fear
that puts a stop to it,
the doctrine.

Not mine, because I don't have one
using the wrong name to serve you.

Main Road

Above some houses
down in the gaslight,
purchasing a small share
and taking part in the general discussion.

Things are changing, he paused. Everything's changing.

Too much, she replied.

Flying like a bird over Chicago
kissing between the seats
finishing that book and putting it down,
one every thousand years.

STUCK ON THE PLANET

Used soap, hair,
staying at a friend's place for a while
and it's no hotel.

Strumming the water
from below and breaking the mirror.

That made it poisonous,
eyeing the weather
WATCHING THE PLANET UNFOLD.

LISTENING from the back room
among boxes of seasonal decorations
plotting my revenge.

Delay

The body of the plane
being wheeled into the lane
then driving around the corner
and reappearing on the runway
hidden by the massage chairs
and vending machines.

Whisps of pink cloud and floodlights,
floor-cleaner shaking the concourse,
driven by a young woman on her phone
texting and cleaning.

House I Grew Up In

Everything felt smaller
then it was all the same.
Clock tick, hum of fridge,
two note birdsong at the top of the ravine.
Sunrise through the pine trees,
paper-white aspens, items of interest
scattered across the surfaces
for instance Louis Armstrong
standing atop the stereo cabinet
and the lyrics of *It's a Wonderful World*
taped to the fridge:

'I hear babies cry,
I watch them grow,
they'll learn much more
than I'll ever know.'

Slipping through the treetops
and shining in the window.

Kierkegaard's Grave

He's buried with very many of his ancestors
so that his famous name is nearly lost
among all the names and numbers.

There are signs all over the graveyard
leading you to Kierkegaard's grave
and a steel bench there to sit upon
eating an orange, spitting seeds.

Who is Niels Bohr?

The top of Hans Christian Andersen's pillar knocked off
and other souls long departed
and a couple spooning on the grass.

Blue Sage

Paddled into the weeds
and pushed aside the wet grass and cobwebs
to find a dead fish
on the sandy bottom of the lake.

An eagle soars around the point
and perches high on a pine top
rustling its big brown wings as it settles.

Swam out to the island and lay in the moss
too dark to see the bottom
and was used up, looking
through the patterns in the branches
through smoke and fog
at the mountain.

High Note

So long sweet chariot
hands hanging down
with sway of saddlebags
whistling
on a
farm like this
where you just got to
get things right.

Moving

the moon
past those branches,
ice all broken up
and crushed against the shore.

Went around past the cabins
down the evergreen trail where
it gets darker, and heard the ice
shifting along the cracks.

Mountains sitting around
next to the valley, with snowy tops
that will have to go soon
but the mountains will stay.

Treetops

Listening to distant cars go around the mountain
and muscle of the trains
putting pressure on the valve.

The Northern Lights are cloudy
or say an eclipse
blotted out by shadow.

Taking the backroad to avoid the grassfires,
making the same wish under
the bridge when there's a train on it.

That's something Steven said
outside a noodle house in London,
that he does what he wants.

Call

Survived the call
and was healthy when it ended
though not better off,
just not worse.

Fear

Weather much improved from yesterday
being no judge, far from quiet peace
when setting out that morning with
selfish understanding
like that will change anything,
coming face to face with the lake
frowning quiet peace.

Gravel Road

Driving back from the wedding
stopping to see, engine idling,
aspect of late dusk and half-moon,
green grass the sheep chew.

Associating the word 'river' with barking dogs
because dogs were barking when we tried to find it,
quiet rushing against an old burn.

That's what we learned about rivers,
you can't change them much.
Tall wet grass growing along the bank
and growing around a rusty trough.

Sweeping Through the Park

Savouring the good news
on a stump close down by the water,
bubbles spreading over the edge, speeding up
when I squint.

Another inhuman beauty to admire
and brush past when its gone.

Waiting

For you to
know what happened to me
waiting for your reply.

I was never good at having to wait
but can see its uses,
will it make a difference?

Cars drive by and people cross the street,
trucks turn left into St. Vincent Place.
They could care less
and neither do I
I tell myself.
There's nowhere to invest.

Leaving House

Won't go back that way for much
and don't miss it.

The new place is nicer.

Up the wide boulevards
and down the

narrow

lanes

I swing my shopping.

In the Flame

The tribal leader
turning to park backwards in a spot
between two bulging motors with their tails up.

Purple lips in the passenger seat,
the flame of desire.
Her magnum opus
slathered on with extra mayo.

Heart of Stone

They fly to the rescue, calling out
through stacks of flowers
with some special needs of their own,
though they are the hosts . . .

with a unique foreign custom
of masking the intention behind
every symbol, they all being equal.

In the doorframe an old lady cries
over the banging, banging, banging
that the Americans are suffering
but it was already too late.

At the Height

When the water started
to empty into the basin
this was not a separate act
to how it was performed.

The deed
left among history
out of place and time
when the water was gone
had to find a new place
to perform these particular honours
and rain down
and remain grain.

Traffic

Rainbow bag and green hair waiting for the light to change
skip in your step crossing the street
hard grey suitcase loaded in the back
looking and talking, arms crossed

pale scars on your face
small dog on blue leash,
we love our master and thank him kindly.

Suitcase, stroller, dog, suitcase, two strollers,
two young ladies in black quarter-length down jackets
with swinging blond braids, paper shopping bags,
tribal tattoo,
slight limp I had me whole life
least I'm sound of mind.

Pretty face with dimpled cheeks and
pained smile listening to your story,
more of a circumstance, bad luck, no faith,
self-surrender,
watch out for that car turning
see?

My life in black shirt printed with RARE across the chest
and on the back at the bottom it says
NO PROBLEMS,

as in, I'm not bogged down.

Lime green supercar on Saint Vincent Place
driving west up the hill into town,
wheels spinning,
long white beard tangled in seatbelt
mouth moving, saying something,

better get walking if you're going all the way home,
and there's lots to think about
and that's how I like it
swinging my tool belt, holding a cigarette,
smiling, remembering how easy it is,
peering up at the side of an old sandstone building
with admiration, large umbrella in plastic wrapping,
nametag swinging on lanyard, orange glasses,
the bus comes every fifteen minutes.

Perseus

I made that country up
not having to look back and see what
I
had.

That made me quite greedy
or normal
among too many occupied
or soon to be occupied
foreign lands.

It makes you honest
browsing the goods and
signalling to the others
your intention to clean out the place.

The Service

Three chaps patting a dog
their dirty grey sweatpants soggy
in the bottom, and the dog
glancing sideways across the road
when a schoolgirl screams, jumping
then settling back into the group,
phone out, so unlikely it was.

Thinking of the dog
wishing for better company, someone
sorry, too many dogs, take
what you can get.

Untitled

Rode to the hardware store and
collected the hook-and-eye screws
for the bathroom door,
cycling through our old neighbourhood.

That new pizza place isn't open yet.
People wandering across Duke Street.
Betting shops, charity shops, barber shops,
convenience stores, tanning salons . . .

I didn't bring my bike lock
so I had to be quick in the hardware store,
then I had a burger next door.
'Tell me something good.'

Popped into the Barras
and bumped into the couple who
bought our flat, sounds like they're happy,
shopping for a fire poker.

I rode clean across town
to Broomhill, and collected the coatrack
from Co-Op, and had an ice-cream
in the sun, and went home.

Devotion

Overleaning the cliff and branching out before
sparkling waters
a red spider dangles in its web
and way out
a small boat makes slow progress
under and over blue.

The fine details are better imagined,
held up new,
laying by the pool quietly
or quietly eating together.

High Tide

Death makes every detail lucid
but how can waking life be lucid?
By having no rest for too long,
finding all things significant
and dangerous and paranoid too.
Then it was over, but not quickly.
I had a horrible plane ride
and many drunken years
running from my youth
then one day I became old
like I am now, overlooking the sea.

Tout

What put a stop to it?
The sparkling surface screams to me
that I am banished.

One cause in harmony with the past
fashioning too many layers
as if it would be better that way.

It isn't,
the only difference is there's less,
not better or worse, just LESS.

Sharing

Two become one, it's simpler
than the Trinity
and won't wake up the neighbours
staring out at the church steeple
in the dark, in the rain
becoming much more than two when
I remember things I said when I was out.

Don't you have any interests
that keep you up at night?
I can never put them down, and my
interest poisons the very thing I love.

You can't talk to everyone,
moving through the room
with the confidence of a performer who
has done his bit,
gravitating to the same spot.

You'll have to come here if you're looking for quality
said the old junk-dealer
referring to his box of cheap oil paintings.
I had to explain to him that
unless they were well-framed I wasn't interested.

Bible Dream

I dreamed that I was at the airport
flying somewhere important with some people
and I had my big leather-bound Bible with me,
for whatever reason security wouldn't let me through with it
nor would they keep it for my return or check it in
and I was sad to lose it.

If that happened in real life
I would just order a new one when I got home.
The only thing is I'd have to find my place again.