

# A Stranger in the Wood



EP Allan

# Table of Contents

Resignation	page 4
Another day of a life spent in Hell	page 6
The Last Waltz	page 8
Climbing	page 10
The Changeling	page 12
The Dissapearing Trick	page 14
The Letter Home	page 15
You don't have to Sing every Bone	page 17
On Looking Through Apartment Ads	page 19
This is how you make a Sandwhich	page 21
The Transmigration	page 23
The Returning	page 24
The Very Stupid Prince	page 25
The Vanquished	page 27
The Optometrist	page 29
The Trouble of Chairs	page 32
The Survivor	page 34
The Crashing	page 35
That Place	page 37
Endings	page 39
The Facet of Faces	page 40
Those Last Silent Words	page 42
A Hesitant Eulogy	page 44
The Cutlery Factor	page 45

Wistful Recall	page 47
Back	page 49
Mr. Jack	page 51
For the Lack of Something	
New to say	page 53
Migration	page 55
Staying in Strange Places	page 57

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## Resignation

Dear Sir or Madam

On this not so sad  
occasion I have decided  
to quit my McJob  
& while it was so  
nice for you to have  
hired me to stand  
before your empty sad  
sacks of thoughtless  
humanity

I can no  
longer continue to pretend  
I have lost the myth  
that I matter

that I can  
find full time employment  
actually afford something  
more than a roach happy  
shoe box

that you think  
of me as something other  
than an inferior monkey  
teaching your singular  
ownership on humanity  
weird simian screeches  
don't worry  
only you know how  
to be polite

as you stand  
sagging sexless asses parked  
in front of escalators  
or that your rancid  
fecal laced cigarettes  
stuffed in your rotted  
oral cavities don't  
stink

or that your salt  
lick sauces

MSG insta  
noodles

sewer meat substitutes  
triple sprayed apples  
& plastic mayo spreads  
doesn't make your so called  
healthy cuisine one

stomach cancerous smear  
of blood black vomit  
& just to prove that no  
negative feelings could  
possibly linger  
or that I am just another  
rabid dog biting your so  
lily dainty hands

I hereby  
recommend Andy  
he is older  
jobless  
living in a packing crate  
with a frumpy  
nut cracker hag bitching  
everyday how he has no  
worth

cause no 10,000 yen  
bills are swimming desperate  
as salmon into his 2 digit  
bank account

in short  
a perfect sap you can  
terrorize into any head  
below knees position  
complete with inserted  
exploding cigar

& who won't  
be able to so much  
as even think  
of quitting

& in conclusion  
you can do all  
& any of the rude  
prerogatives left to be  
suggested

by someone  
in my current state  
of mind

& while I would  
like to say  
goodbye & thanks  
for all the potatoes  
I really couldn't  
care

to bother

Another day in a Life  
spent in Hell

in this soggy grey  
hour I'm a sticky pool  
of garlic rank fluid  
the mind has gone numb  
& as curiously vacant  
as all the people around  
me pretending humanity  
as they amble down the tan  
& umber tiled walk  
with empty grave stares  
already twisted into  
rigamortic squalor  
& shrill cat gut twisting  
voices butchering even  
the hope of melody  
with such vile stupidity  
even roaches seem  
more developed  
& as they stand gawping  
in their identical  
insectal symmetries  
dresses in the exact same  
slacks configured by  
20-30 jeans  
40s blacks  
& retired fart browns  
with T shirts  
emblazoned with such  
unimaginable English as  
'go on a  
World Journey  
VIGOROUSLY  
throw up'  
or  
'Fish Farmers only  
Fuck Fish'  
or  
'Happy Teddy  
cats friends  
9-5 happy eat  
Teddy says  
"Hi Cutie"'

while redolent  
cigarettes stick out  
of rotted hooked  
teeth

& to think that  
soon I will have to get  
up

leaving a sweaty  
wet blotch on the back  
of the chair

& head out  
into this tired pressing  
day

moving against  
the rotten vacant  
dead

## The Last Waltz

Bill Evans perches eternal  
at his formica black piano  
his pale shoop fingers  
teasing dominate scales  
through the thrumming  
bass

& drum  
while someplace to the west  
Blake sulks in a corner  
watching the flight of angels  
curling off the white  
smoldering end of his cigar  
& dreams of revolutionary  
riots swelling down the blood  
scuppered streets

even as  
mad Vincent picks up a rusted  
cut throat razor

& heads into  
the house of mirrors  
ready to shave his other  
ear into symmetry

Ernest  
caresses his father's  
shotgun with his big  
toe & takes aim  
at all the heroic  
dead pressed into nameless  
Belgian muck  
Marrot tests the waters  
in his paint white tub  
for the perfect tepid  
temperature guaranteed  
for painless wrists  
Mozart starves himself  
into insanity

& the quick  
lime's welcome  
as he picks up  
quill & scratches perfect  
notes down the haunted  
fool's scrap

Old William F

pounds his liver  
into whiskied jelly  
Silvia listens to the hiss  
of Ted's oven hum  
of bees  
    impaled on rusted  
barbed wire  
    their thin celluloid  
wings quavering into death  
Ann swills an emerald  
mountain of granulated  
ludes with a quorum  
of fine French whiskey  
& floats down  
    the night snake  
river on an incestal  
boat  
    the long bone white  
oar dipping  
    & pulling  
through the dark  
ink of page  
& mad bad Edgar  
tripped out on laudanum  
flails his alabaster  
arms  
    & dives into rat  
infested gutters  
    to drown  
in an inch of crystal  
rain bobbing through  
the corpses of bottles  
the sticky moons  
of horse apples  
& other less than poetic  
droppings  
    & still Bill  
manages One Last Waltz  
for Debby  
    the trilling patter  
of the keys soothing  
the horror of the living  
& the not  
    into a silver  
smooth flow of intellectual  
ice

Climbing

Mud

black

slime wet

oozing between my white  
fingers

wriggling desperate  
snakes for a granite grey  
rock to pull

1 more bit

to the soil waved crest  
the smell of fetid rain  
rotted grass

dark mold green

rubbing long slag tears  
down the once pressed  
white shirt

the tattered

puce tie slipped in a drooping  
silk noose

twines about

the broken thumb of a dead  
skinless trunk

& still there is so

far to go to reach the ice  
cracked top

& stand in the thin

wintermint air

gasping

as so far

below the curved world  
sprawls out in a vast  
quilt work of sleeping  
fields

yet the gravity  
of iron

& darkness

& the sin of wages

grabs the brittle ankles  
in their once business blacks  
complete with the skull white  
corporate logo embossed  
on their throbbing sides  
& pulls down

as petrified trouser clad  
knees butt  
    & slither  
ever higher  
the ever elusive moment  
still just a nail's breath  
above  
    in the pale  
home sky

## The Changeling

I still remember the night  
you came back from the hospital  
with those crackling  
cellophane wings quavering  
just below your shoulder blades  
& I realized then the reason  
for all those medicine brown  
vials lining the cupboard  
with their pea-green granules  
cloudy powders  
& black rubber bulb  
squeeze tops  
becoming a bee is never  
easy

    the removal of the sky  
wounded iris replaced  
by those hard wet  
coal multifaceted orbs  
the arthritic stiff limbs  
shriveled into bone black  
lumps

    the peeling of the skin  
into stiff Halloween  
blacks & pumpkin oranges  
the drilling of teeth  
cracking out in painful  
grinding yowl

    the long inky  
night proboscis stinger  
stapled over your face  
& the kemo therapeutic  
retaliation shriveling  
the body down into a thimble  
of apis melliferic malevolence

& how the doctors  
with their blank window  
glasses & plastic white  
clipboards

    would mumble  
those antiseptic words  
of impersonal reassurance  
as they injected their

l-cystiens  
glycerin nitrates  
in blood biting jabs  
whispering how this was  
perfectly normal  
everything was going according  
to plan  
    that the urge to  
suck the innards  
out of pansies  
or attack light bulbs  
a mere side effect showing  
how perfectly beautiful  
you were transmuting  
as night  
    after night  
you would crawl under  
the twisted  
    insomniac sheets  
toting bits of broken  
glass memories  
into the mother hive  
feeling every bit of consciousness  
tear away in searing  
brown bits whose silver  
paper wings trilled out  
over the sleeping fields  
of corn  
    & into the empty  
expanse of death  
    & forgetting

## The Disappearing Trick

Every night my bleeding shard  
feet tear over broken green  
glass fields

    this arrow splitting  
mind searching for the peace  
only trees know

    while breaking  
oak boards with the prow  
of my nose

    piercing the cheeks  
with pineapple laden skewers  
dodging acid bullet balloons  
thrown from violently rusted  
trucks with shrill cat yowl  
breaks rattling twisted strings  
of rusted rebar

    & demolished  
bits of cement factory lives  
which can never be  
Humptydumptized together  
again in one whole  
jubilant stab of sun  
igniting the slice  
with the burn of bird  
calls trilling triumphant  
& it is only a few daily  
white sand grains of life  
sprinkling in a sibilant  
death mound bellow  
before I will have to do  
my greatest trick  
to disappear through  
the red hot eyes of coal  
glowing

    & winking white ash  
slag

    my one long how  
dwindling into a forgotten  
smear of ink  
never noted by one  
single column  
of night eyed  
insomniacs  
sitting row by  
row

    of splintered  
toothed  
misery

## The Letter Home

Dear Mum  
even as I write this  
I am floating on a white  
raft of skulls  
                                down a sunless  
ink waterway which snakes  
its silent twisted path  
through a vague landscape  
haunted by the sense  
of lost memories  
My pole man  
a shriveled old coot  
with a mad axe grin  
& a pair of wet pebble eyes  
told me that tomorrow  
we should finally reach  
the river of flame  
which all the tour books  
report as being most  
photogenic  
                                speaking of which  
I am including this snap  
of Chary & me  
so sorry but he refused  
to change out of his ashy  
rags into this rich green  
velvet suit I brought  
for the occasion  
& no matter how hard  
I tried he just couldn't  
understand how to V  
a peace sign  
                                these locals  
can be so trying at times  
still he came quite cheap  
only 2 silver pennies  
for the entire trip  
& I am sure it must be some  
superstition that he would only  
pick them off my eyes  
but other than that he works  
at his femur wielded pole  
non stop

still no need  
to fear tomorrow when we  
reach our pyrotenic canal  
there should finally be enough  
light for some really good  
snaps  
until then  
thinking of you

PS  
Chary sends his love  
& says since I am such  
a sport that he will come  
quite soon for you  
Free of Charge!  
ain't that just so  
sweet

You don't have to Sing  
every Bone

As the slow roll of stars  
waltz in the infinite  
carbon night  
                    pick the worthy  
path to sing  
                    not a moon howled  
rift of contention screaming  
teeth  
                    & canine rendering  
pleasures  
                    nor the fat grizzled  
slobbery G of soft papped  
horse grindings  
                    pig anuses  
& other delectable intestine  
smacks slubbered from a pink  
plastic bowl  
                    shoved under  
the full luna door  
next to a midnight femur  
to gnaw  
                    & worry  
nor should you yowl  
an aria  
                    your fur matted  
cheeks swelling dark  
through the ink black  
of fractured plate  
glass doors  
                    of biting  
savage growls descrying  
the hand  
                    a pinned  
blood quavering butterfly  
munched in slick snapping  
sinews down the sanguine  
hot throat  
                    no run  
silent  
                    through the night  
the still watch of trees  
arched in moss rich

snuffle moist delights  
the whole world burling  
alive through your wet cold  
coal pebbled nose

the curious

aroma of owls searching  
through the sea deep hours  
the peppery fear of mice  
rustling under the heavy  
bracken & earth wet  
oak leaf blanket  
the hint of snows  
or rains yet to slip  
slivey orbs off  
the serrated leaf's edge  
the whole universe opening  
under your curious  
claws

as darting under

the groping spruce arms  
you head even deeper  
in the haunted forest wild  
until the first breaking  
bullet of the roiling  
sun sings a silver  
lento under the nuzzled  
paws of sleep

## On Looking Through Apartment Adds

There are lives lost  
& possibilities gained  
through each inked column  
a building for an outrageous  
6 at the all night  
drunk shooting edge  
of the permanently unemployed  
bar squatting population slowly  
perceptively fogging their brains  
into sweaty mash as they swill  
bottle

after bottle

of mad

dog wood grains  
or the 1 bedroom  
all utilities inc  
will negotiate pets  
next to the university  
where all night keg  
parties

whoop at the empty

moon sky

or perhaps

the midnight roach emporium  
where snapped on lights  
refract off oily brown  
shells

& darting

air inveigling

antennae wavering Dr. Freud's  
idiopsychosis in the sudden  
lamp lit nightmare

or the place

tucked off at the grassy  
swelled line of a rusted  
rail with its 20 minute  
commute

or one with a fireplace

where you can sit & watch  
the wild eyes of demons  
pop & burn in the purchased  
logs

a red heat swelling

through the lazy room  
or how about this one  
with the view of the top  
of the basement stairs  
tucked under the coal shovel  
& each one

                  each choice  
will change your life  
as surly as a new job  
or marriage  
                  the edges of conversations  
mapped for future debates  
of blue curtains

                  or beige  
if something red or yellow  
should be in the entrance  
& which way your headboard  
butts against your neighbor's  
slice of plastered privacy

This is how you make  
a Sandwich

The bread is the first  
step  
    mixing the bran  
& the what into a sweet  
inked molassesed water rich  
with butter  
        salt  
            & yeast  
kneading it on the counter  
feeling the elastic mass  
grow smooth  
        then wait the hours  
for the zymurgic magic  
to swell the dough  
into a brown gas giant  
the rich loam smell  
of fermentation seeping  
through the room with the warm  
promise only the oven wafts  
during the slow bake  
as the loaf swells  
the oblong box in rich brown  
contentment

        Then the next a.m.  
rise serrate two slices  
& prepare them for the daily  
9-5 mustard  
        picante sauce  
paper thin Parma ham  
& a tithing of cheddar  
or gouda  
        & the French knifed  
cross dissected tomato  
then gift it in plastic  
wrap which will only stick  
in an aggravating clinging  
clump to anything but  
itself  
        & finally once is never  
enough  
        love only comes through

repetition  
the sleep plastered  
eyes blearily glaring at the plastic  
white cutting board  
gouged with thousands of razor  
knife chops

It is only with  
each day as you give a little  
piece of your time  
& self to make another's  
sustenance

that you grow  
the love of earth propelling  
the hard green tomato orb  
into a bright red sun  
the patience of the farmer  
waiting the wheat  
tending the pig  
harvesting the mustard seeds  
& all the labor of the unknowns  
who brought the ingredients  
our entire world of labor  
loved & hated

the making of riches  
or poverty  
shuddering  
in your shoulder

bag  
as each step  
propels you  
a little closer  
to work  
home  
or even other nebulous  
destinations  
promised on the curling  
lip of the horizon

## The Transmigration

Mr. Apposite was parked on a laminated plastic  
chair twisting his face into a red beet trying  
not to scream as the Missing Comma Conference  
droned on about the misuse of semicolons  
in translations of Vedic texts when the woman  
next to him turned into a cow & placed her light  
brown hooves on the heart graffitied desk  
& smiled a smile exactly like the Mona  
Lisa's would have been if the Mona Lisa had been  
a cow

“Oh no

Here we go again” he said  
as the man next to him shriveled into  
a scrawny & very undernourished chicken  
only to begin pecking with the beak of his nose  
at the twisted pink orts of eraser droppings  
curled on the pencil shaving roved floor

He himself was turning into a hamster  
his two pearly buck teeth gnawing on  
the redolent saliva slick pellet  
tethered to the end of a tooth pocked  
HB even as his four white fur paws  
itched for the circular thrill  
of the tread wheel his pink curled  
tail quavering delighted esses

Meanwhile the building bored to sniveling  
great silicone tears from endless hours  
of looking at have you seen this “,” lately  
posters while hastily erected exclamation points  
from two bald myopic domes argued over  
the correct way to pronounce

lettuce

in Sanskrit

decided to return to the earth  
from which it came & dream the slow  
dark dream of worms

“Oh no

here we go again”  
the parking lot said as mounds of ferric rich  
sands slithered across its inky night  
surface





with the approved iron  
grey locks  
bucked incisors  
& an unspeakable proboscis  
which not even a pound of clay  
could model

He smiled  
“What are you smiling at”  
her dark carbon eyes flashed

“I’m smiling because I smile  
it’s what I do best  
can my butterfly lips flash you  
yet another smile”

“But why are you smiling”

“I’m smiling  
because my lips have petrified  
into place

& if I do anything  
but smile my whole face  
will crack & droop  
in a slick white flow  
of flabby lard”

“But why are you smiling”

“I am smiling  
because I am George  
& I am smiling at the one-way  
conversational loop  
we seem to have become  
stuck in —

one in which  
neither the dancer nor the dance  
knows the possibilities  
of stopping”

The old lady frowned  
her dark prune lips  
puckered in her slagging  
wrinkles

George of course  
smiled

## The Vanquished

Your stiff metallic green  
rake fanned out hooked  
dark claws

        a nervous wind  
itched mound of crackling  
yellow brown leaves shivering  
at your feet

        the long grey  
hairs of autumnal grass  
scraped over the balding earth  
in symmetrical rays from which  
you erupted

        a nylon blue  
coated sun in a carbon  
black beret

        you had just  
beaten the wind into submission  
& it curled about your boots  
& lay there

        if you'll forgive  
the expression

        winded  
not knowing whether another  
slash of your rake would slice  
its tenuous construction  
into so many useless puffs  
of failure

        or if it was finally  
free to burl the sharp  
dead blades of your labor  
over the dark November  
cityscape

        the decaying brown  
eyes in the flame yellow  
oak scrying January's  
mordant ice heart

        gliding up  
curling over

        & scratching  
the white washed edges  
of sagging plank steps  
a dark hard musk grithing  
in stagnated gutters

into an oily pulp  
as paper thin summer orts  
crinkled in a twisting grey  
tornado

in the cement  
desolation of sidewalk  
& corners

& all the while  
you just stood there  
your broken marble  
eyes alive

& cold





her angular  
skull with its stretched brown  
hide slagged back exhausted  
into a metallic headrest  
“your every  
emotion can be read  
by anyone with a scan card  
make sure you lose all the anger  
you carry so carefully  
from 1 existence to the other”

Leaving the dim fastness  
of her cement cubicle office  
I stepped out  
my thick gold  
& puce nerd glasses pressing  
discontented windows  
without the beneficial  
privacy of beige curtains  
into a pixilated glass world  
totally devoid of the silent  
blue sea sky dreaming the claw  
footed freedom of crows  
& men

## The Trouble of Chairs

George

the very stupid prince  
ruled a small kingdom whose royal  
bedroom was always in revolt  
against the tyranny of the omnipresent  
dinning room

“Down with the legs of tables  
they only encourage the addition  
of 2+2 as 5

or even sometimes

3

Down with the gritty toast  
dessert of table cloths whose  
vast conical pink seas  
of badly printed roses  
only encourage the terrorism  
of spoons  
Down with ornate oriental  
carpets whose swirling sumie  
blacks only hide the copulating  
thrill of silverfish  
whose V barbed tails refuse  
to salute your royal grandeur  
as they sport in & out  
of your slobbering sleep  
riddled nasal orifices”

The dinning room was of course  
in revolt against the library  
“Down with books  
they only lead to the dictatorship  
of grammar

where it am only  
polite to is after the future  
was of were

Down with desks  
they only lead to adolescent  
graffiti of impossibly  
proportioned well hung  
noses

Down with chairs  
they only lead to calluses  
& interminable hours spent

learning that the very hungry  
caterpillar did not eat  
a bus”

The kitchen was revolting  
against the toilet  
& the toilet would rattle  
& menace its silver flush  
handle against the linen  
cupboard

& the entire house  
was united in complete  
& total hatred of the attic  
“Only bad things happen  
between dusty rafters  
whole Afghans get lost  
& evil cats smile  
their yellow slant eyes  
glowing like bad pumpkins  
in the eternal mite  
roved night”

& George would  
sit on his royal upholstered  
throne & proclaim  
“I will herby raise  
the taxation of all  
faucets to produce  
a surplus of H<sub>2</sub> thingamajimmy  
which I will redistribute  
to the bind weed twisting  
out between my all so regal  
molars

& hey will somebody  
please remove this all too  
patriotic silverfish before  
it lays a mercurial pool  
of slimy eggs up my ever  
so grand

& elongated  
sonorous air intake  
out-take passageway  
leading to the grand central  
bowl of my ever so  
cavernous cranium”

## The Survivor

As the brute yellow sun  
burnishes yet another pale  
hazy day into an inferior  
drab moment lost to memory  
& life

did you ever pause  
to wonder why this one  
dandelion has managed  
to thrust its cloud puffball  
head up from the oil blackened  
sidewalk's crack

Its sere  
thirsty leaves curled  
& limp on the summer baked  
cement are edged with a parched  
crinkled brown

How as it managed  
to dig its tenuous white  
root between the cheap cement  
buttressed shop

& the tennis shoe  
roved walk

how did it produce  
its brilliant orange ruffled  
poms amid the desolation  
of saliva browned  
cigarette butts

& the bright  
gaudy butterfly wings  
of crumpled soda cans  
& what is its

answer  
as it remains there  
producing seeds

flowers  
& beauty so confident  
in itself

here in this world  
of uncompromising  
remorseless  
insipidity

## Crashing

In the night the comfort  
of rough familiar grass  
cracked

    its soil waved  
crest shuddering down  
in a black worm rain  
pelted with the grey  
bones of granite  
& the silver smiles of soda  
pull tabs

    old pens  
the white flaky skins  
of peeled garlic  
the red fuzzy legs  
of centipedes frantically  
scrambling through the hard  
shaken soil

    all the days  
preparing to jettison  
the flotsam of unwanted  
dime store furniture  
moldy folding mattress couches  
clear plastic pc hubs  
with their milky or black  
rubber cords writhed into  
impossible conundrums  
cheap hard 100% recycled  
soda bottle carpeting  
the old pink pips of hand soap  
sagging yellow elastic banded  
jockies with frayed grey  
leg holes

    & all these other  
bits of life we buy  
use into junk  
& only manage to rid  
ourselves of at death  
or moving

    clattering down  
from the shattered house's  
pine slatted belly

    & merging  
with the hell of earth

& worms  
the whole landscape  
we lived within  
trudging backs bowed  
under the weight of cement  
commutes  
late night pasta diners  
& simpering TV hours  
buckling  
into a dream that was  
& will never be quite  
the same  
in any  
after

## That Place

There is a place where  
wild things grow  
their mirthless yellow  
smiles grimacing in the inky  
bracken night

There is a place  
deep in the feral knotty soul  
of oak & ash

where an icy  
eclipse freezes the still  
palpitating heart into the black  
malice of crows snerking  
with mysterious undertaker  
eyes

There is a place which can  
never be civilized no matter  
how much cement is thrown  
up against its vacuous  
sleeping nightmare heart  
but will twist the terrified  
steel frames into cancerous  
oily lumps haunted  
by hovelled corpses whose pruned  
countenances of despair  
gaze out from rotted  
tar paper curtains & flick  
their butterfly knives in & out  
of their scaly adder mouths  
There is a place where  
even light is afraid  
to probe with its silver  
fingers

a place where black  
ferocious bears writhe  
their pale cork tongues  
torn sideways

the bleeding ants  
in their brain flaming  
in icy pricks

There is a place  
where all hope has died  
its asphalt coffin nailed  
by splitting rails which hurl

gigantic engines of consumption  
down their shrill screeching  
bones the sagging flesh pressed  
in windowless boxcars coated  
a dejected rust brown scry  
& fill the stale bucking  
coffin with the sweet sticky  
aroma of thick pasty  
white celled scabs  
crackled with clear serum  
tears

## Endings

They come so slowly  
creeping over the brittle  
edge of the calendar  
a sizzling firecracked  
fuse with the burning  
red snake eye sputtering  
writing in the carbon  
night soul

    & then the silence  
as all emotion pauses  
in an ominous breath  
before

    the void's belly  
is ripped open  
zagging silver bolts  
spearing out from the marbled  
flames leaping in a hungry  
ball scream of vibrant  
orange lined with oil  
black veins

    as slivered pinions  
snap bloody

    & the shuttered  
curtained house of lies  
we so carefully built  
one word at a time  
drops to the hungry  
worm earth

    leaving us  
glancing naked at the other  
each one thankful  
for the escape  
only goodbye  
& planes  
can bring

## The Facet of Faces

In the dark storage matter  
of my mind

is a white scroll  
of vividly painted  
faces which I will soon meet  
after trundling through this  
cement hell

faces that will  
have a wry welcoming smile  
across their now 7 year older  
countenances

faces no longer  
so young

fresh & perfect  
as memory paints them  
faces to which I too will  
have withered one step  
closer to the grave's maggoted  
embrace

faces to which  
I cannot explain  
the aggravation of skatole  
smoking crowds elbowing  
their purpled gummed way  
into the tender hollow  
of my back

faces brooding  
boredom as I repeat  
adnauseum the horror of standing  
before a chalk smeared slate  
abyss droning nothing into wax  
choked brains

faces which  
will slowly back away  
as breathless I begin the list  
of food I would rather have  
never seen

let alone met  
on a cheap plastic plate  
or how green tea is actually  
cat piss in disguise  
but most of all I can see  
my face walking through a dark



Those Last Silent Words

Last night death knocked  
on my sternum's door  
his lemon grimace drifting  
up through the dark sleeping  
waters

only to stand there

dripping

inky blotches

on the lily white

linoleum scrawled across  
the sagging plywood floor  
the vacant hollow of his sockets  
staring down at my pale  
ghost body

sprawled in a slack

mouthed question on the acetylene  
blue sheets

My death never

speaks to me in a dry  
husk whisper reminding me  
to look both ways  
to say any prayers to any  
would be god  
to keep throwing my spindly  
ink tracks against the pale  
blue lines haunting the old  
yellow page

The silent bastard only stand  
there waiting for the final  
bell

that telephone call the imploding  
brain wires down to the heart  
to quit

the severance check

only moribund bowels achieve  
the spastic jib the post-mortem  
tremens feet shutter

& jerk

into slack

limp

nothing

& then his clam dead



## A Hesitant Eulogy

My whole life has become  
haunted by the dead  
in mind  
                  or body  
it seems just a sly day  
ago we drifted  
                  the acerbic salt  
stench of sea  
                  & rotted weed  
vomited up against the jagged  
volcanic rocks  
                  watching crabs  
tippolate on nervous darting  
claws over the black beach  
roaches scampering for who  
knows what  
                  in the black lava  
spoilt shore  
                  how infinite  
time felt under the umbrella's  
circular shadow  
                  the taste of iced  
water so remorselessly  
cold in August's solar  
roast  
                  what did we talk  
about that day there  
at the cracked edge of infinity  
what simple words did we  
pretend could cover death  
reduce it to a mere point  
on the dark swelling  
                  dipping lip  
of the horizon  
                  & not some impersonal  
erasure which would soon separate  
us into forever

## The Cutlery Factor

George always had trouble  
with his spoon  
    & while it was a nice  
spoon all silvery & embossed  
with flowery fairy gold  
cornucopias  
    it sometimes refused  
to unladen its sodium rich  
nitrates into the overflowing  
salivic happy ingest orifice  
with its yellowed enamel pips  
chomping with bleary anticipation  
for the pure joy of civet  
flavored raspberry sorbet  
& sometimes George would wake  
from a dream where he ruled  
a kingdom of goats who  
snickered sideways from their white  
V beards

    & looked at him  
with mysterious dark olive  
irises  
    only to find that the paw  
grip handle of his spoon  
had embedded itself  
into his right ear canal  
& how embarrassing to have to listen  
to the royal doctor

    a misogynous  
egg freak with spittoon  
slicked hair

    & a sneer  
which had eaten sideways  
down his chin

    “Now George  
please remember your ear  
is not your pink intake pipe’s  
variable usage valve  
& cleaning out all this  
strawberry yoghurt with its pappy  
red bits enriched with  
riboflavin & rat pellets  
could in fact be quite

dangerous to the consistency  
of your underdeveloped  
simian lobes”

    & George would roll  
his simpering marble orbs  
up his over slung cranium  
& wish that he had a nicer  
spoon

    one that would automatically  
heap white ascorbic mountains  
of reconstituted Idaho spud  
flakes right dab smack  
into his delighted  
ingest void

    or could maybe  
some remote & impossibly  
elusive day

    be actually  
entrusted with that most rare  
& wonderant possession  
so egregiously mislabeled  
fork

## Wishful Recall

Once the world was such  
a sun leafed green the chlorophyll  
pulsed under the skin as each  
new wind anemone flared  
bits of flame

                  here a turquoise  
river cracking its white foamed  
tongue down the sleeping bald  
boulders thrust up from the crisp  
fish waved bed

                  there a pallid  
pool refracting Monet  
impressions from the cool liquid  
mirror stretching under a canopy  
of lilies punctuated by the contented  
buzzing chirruping oratorio  
as the insect chorus sang  
their emerald hearts  
out in song

                  Once the nights  
were filled with conversation  
& what words we spoke  
our voices weaving through the patter  
of guitar or piano more intent  
on the discovery of Gurdjieff  
Dogen or the mad poet  
of cold mountain

                  once the slender  
dancing orange eye of candles  
threw molted patterns of shadow  
over the illusion of security  
plaster walls achieve

                  fantastical shapes  
more grotesque than any post  
hashish dream

                  once everyone  
we knew was still alive  
& would be there tomorrow  
along with the faces  
we would yet meet  
the plot of future conversations  
already dug into our peat  
moss mulches

once the words  
of books seemed so important  
in their black soy inked  
certainties as each fresh  
page was scanned for wild  
Homeric eyes upon a distant  
peak poised on the blue  
rolling edge of summer

Back

How strange to be here  
in the sun dappled window  
not staring out at striated  
cement with exhaust  
oil & nicotine  
                    but stiff  
ass parked on the same hard  
wood chair  
                    I sat back in  
when youth actually claimed  
my life  
                    & looking at the same  
bricked edifices  
                    the same rain  
weathered pickets under pinning  
the arsenic leaves of locust  
trees with their peppery orange  
petals  
                    dipping  
                    & thrashing  
in lake wind  
                    it was as if  
I thumbed a booklet of bottom  
corner cartoons  
                    but each picture  
was the same & only my two  
white thumbs became painted  
a mortal blue  
                    the nails ribbed  
with calcium depletion  
& too many hand to mouth  
pay check dinners  
                    with each flip  
of the pulp white page  
& soon the hesitant sly  
smile I post on my  
countenance will face  
the routine  
                    not in an alien  
kaleidoscopic jumble  
                                    but in a world  
once known but forgot  
a world which carried on

the exact same without me  
& now resurrected from the clay  
night box of time & place  
Lazarus has returned  
only to find everyone else  
gone & an infinite sea  
of strange people carrying on  
in the gaps left behind



for something dead  
or freshly killed  
& as the cackling ink  
ribs of bushes  
shivered  
in the trembling wind  
Jack's knife would whisper  
how it was always there  
willing  
waiting  
to pare back the bones  
into the lily scream of youth  
lurking on the rough pitched soot  
slick cobbles  
waiting to stab  
the fire out of the heart  
rending howls  
& how it would  
always be his fate  
on the rain cursed benches  
to remember apples  
& night



everything is  
were was or ending in D  
& the future is a predictable  
sentence  
short  
concise  
& waiting for the final  
period

## Migration

It is so impossible to remain  
still  
    just breathing  
                    as life  
crackles on avionic wings  
to the next point  
                    we are constantly  
jittered forward  
                    waiting the next  
magic phase of midnight  
books  
    an insomniac littering  
of cups with brown coffee  
lips smucked over the edge  
the blue glow of computer screens  
scrolling last minute essays  
red pen markings  
the belt pulled in tight  
as winter ice slashes  
the sunless sky  
the pulpy black bones  
of still carbon trees  
shuttered into themselves  
scratch the sagging  
clouds' underbellies  
                    & crack  
& sway  
    as the mind wants to be  
somewhere green  
                    & warm  
& south  
    & what is it  
that causes this discernable  
itch to rove  
is it the restlessness of earth's  
sun  
    which in itself  
is slowly  
    unprecievably  
moving around the celestial  
core  
    is it the itchy  
tail of comet dna percolating

through our small simian  
lobes

that somewhere  
is a place to bury the oar  
& lay upon the living  
oak bed

somewhere other  
than where we are right now  
somewhere on the wild eyed lip  
of the retreating horizon  
somewhere our shoes have not  
trod where the black loam  
mucks against our foreign  
sandals as we push so  
mindlessly  
impatiently  
forward

## Staying in Strange Places

Ariel sang on sly  
deathless wings how nothing  
doth remain

    & flitted off  
into the storm lashed ether  
where eternity stretched in a silver  
arc over the east curled  
globe

    & some 18 years later  
years of wandering the monetary  
dessert drilling broken infinitives  
into dull heads

    years spent  
camera clicking brittle  
wood temples with their cool  
shade interiors

    & dark mammoth  
Buddhas smiling shadows  
down on the greasy yellow  
tongues of candles

    as the heavy white  
snake clouds of joss sticks  
cloyed the air sandalwood  
years spent picking bare toed  
on the mudskipped beach  
the rank seaweed clinging  
muck green to the bones of the shore  
the broken moonscape rising  
through an exotic maze of banana  
of papaya

    years growing older  
the blue veins sagging vivid  
against once white boy skin  
as the teeth became a brittle  
toothache

    & now returning  
back to the starting point  
only to find that Ariel  
that singing slave bastard  
was right

    not one place  
has escaped the feral winds  
buildings

stores  
    & people  
have failed  
    or gone  
leaving gap tooth holes  
in the places memory  
once filled with verdurous  
glamour  
    & now camping within  
someone else's home looking at  
their cheap Grecian statues  
& mass printed posters  
strategically placed in chintzy  
metallic frames  
    that the owners  
left behind in their migration  
out & over this tumbling space  
orb  
    only to realize  
nothing of me hath remained  
in the strange  
    blue wrack  
my eyes reflect

# A Stranger in the Wood EP Allan



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