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Hello Serotonin:
poems

Jon Paul Fiorentino

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

January 2002

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ABSTRACT

Hello Serotonin

Jon Paul Fiorentino

This is a collection of poems thematically linked by the language of self, self-medication, and home. The poetic thesis of this collection is to translate the internal dialogue of anxiety and depression into poetic form. This creative work is divided into four sections: Neurotransmissions, Namedrops, Homecallings, and Intentionalities. All four sections consist of free-verse lyric poetry interspersed with the occasional "language" experiment. This is a collection of poems that both confirms and confounds contemporary notions of mental health and synaptic experience.
DEDICATION

For Onofrio and Cheryl Fiorentino
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Hello Serotonin
poems
by Jon Paul Fiorentino
Section 1
Neurotransmissions
Hello Serotonin

the drip that fails to linger
sting that lures

where's the world at
speeding down the drain

paralinguist [read poet] scratching
at the window trope

let me intra prefix the mirror make
the cold night longer

held back hand-eye dreamer
reader meet alcohol

breathe desperate home touch
torch that tongue portal

hyperlure me home and find me
a section of hardwood

calm me down come down to
my level, level me

coming down like a system
needling into neurons
Thrush Hour

thrush hour again

pedestrians waking

sucked out of bedthrust

tongues taste like last night

doors creak open

drones spill out

doors close and lock

on their own

spilling into streets on a retail kind of morning

exhaust on the tongue in the neurotranslation

. drip into office .
. every thrush needs tonic .
. hushed into a commerce wake .
. everyone is cash-strapped like local broadcast .
The Locus Eaters.

not particularly happy. have you heard about the moment of locution.

it just might be our way out of speech and into something else.

competence and performance intersect in a transient locus, choral, local.

fuck off chime the melancholy, choral locus eaters. I want to stay.

performativity welcomes lexical preference. illocutions for the ill at heart.

perlocutions all around. it’s on me. do you know what I mean.

the whole process is as latent as a field of wilting poppies. let’s stay.

still not happy. it’s all an act. nothing particular here. where’s circe at?
*Thrum*

If you’re thrumming then you weren’t listening; you spent your school days peering out of frosted windows as opaque as the Red River.

If you never heard a word then you were waiting for that energetic thetic performance space, that thrill that could stun you awake.

Daydreamers are homely, homophones multiply in your grey matter; you are that writer in every window in every classroom.

 Bedsitting, you just might be the hinge that you are, insolent in silence headthrumming subjunctive word thrum as clear as sin.
Mine

It's all mine—
the endless substantia, the terse
lyric, the dream that cringes
awake as day breaks.

It's all mine—
the glacial neurosis, the shattered
window, the auditory
spectres, the translucent
dour words.

It's all mine and I gave it some pills
after I offered my stories and verse to the
student therapist in the claustrophobic clinic
after suicide versing and wintering on black ice.

It's all mine—
the notions of you
coated in notions
of pathophysiology.

I let you in to the
bitter thrush of home
the static psychic winter
but please note—
it's all mine.
Drip

It’s the intravenous drip that punctuates your position most efficiently—an endless auditory ellipsis as you are leveled on a stretcher, the fluorescent light pelting your gaunt face.

You are up for the uptaking, rising for uprising.

The hallways are filled with reluctant martyrs wincing for the camera.

The bag sags and sways in rhythm; the lights hum off key, serenading you:

where have you been, what have you done, you sad child in your tattered hospital gown come down.

The intravenous drip is somewhat constant until you need another bag and you fall into dreams of splitting open crystallized on the stretcher, the night is translucent like saline.
Takeup 1

take up reading like a meandering dream lite
swallow on a neck like pandering stress
powder feels like under paid plunderers
drip drips like a blender rip off
homing comes like a coating of menthol
Takeup 2

reading
gaunt children hiding in the neglected book stacks

sympathy
black-eyed susans wilting to the sound of a respirator

driveling
emotive sheet laced with inhalants, out of breath intoxic

coma
cigarettes expiring on asphalt, trampled on by elders

dew
powder
toxins spilling on the dirty sidewalk home
Takeup 3

take up
the book

breathing in
a gasp of uptake

hello you
serotonin
takes the
dream up

you have some nerve
you have some nerve

soma uptake
it’s been a thrill

homing
idiom your body
language

take up the drink
on the jar
familial split

it’s in your blood
it’s in your blood
Sayings

What do I say to it?

It is promising me flowers, promising me structure.

It is stretched across the classroom, luminous and pedagogical.

It is flowering promises.

Just saying conjures up tragic semantics, indolence in the lexicon.
It trips you up and me.

Say something darker.
Let's Burn down the Author

The dreams and scrawls of excitable speech, the wound creaks open on every page like an extended release pill.

We will have a wonderful time enlightening the dead man sparking up the world letting the author's ember flicker us to sleep.
Bedding

Winter came just too soon enough
to decorate every futile intention
and every domestic convention
with a light
dusting.

There is no reason not to stay
since we are already here
and so are our dreams
of unfulfilled narratives
etched into the well-versed
bedding.

Let's go bedding because it's winter
and maybe if we write imaginary seasons
create a decorative psychosis that just
might work or even just may be then
what?

Let's go out bedding because it's winter
and the tears freeze immediately
and the only solace is sophistic
verse and/or
speech.

Let's go to bedding because it's winter
and I'm feeling unsound and tired
of imbedding every desire in suspicious
words like unbedable or
misread
Surge. Scrawl. Stitch.

scrawling on anonymous walls with all of the wit you know or want to know

the importance of thinking in idiom the road to well is paved with

the sadness only lasts forever you are dreaming you know difference

if the streets are silent enough you will dislocate the sentiment
you will provide the surge you will will things to happen
with intricate stitching of intention

it's all over—cruel warmth scrawl outside with permanent ink

let me read your etchings let me in or let me sink
let me stitch you to me dislocate me in a fleeting surge

it takes a great effort to fail so badly almost shocking

write me into difference give me your voice
scrawl me with the most electrical mixed metaphors
that unravel like the contents of an adolescent bedroom
Alarmists

you can't get there from here
you really don't want to

oh, you can get there through letters.
you can get there through fiction
Latinate letters: they create

oh, the metaflow
the lacquered, toxic diction
and drivel

alarmists in the garden
alarmists in the children's textbooks that
are stacked up like surplus headstones

insects in the intertext

a rogue rewrites
a scholar inscribes
it's all very pesticidal

alarmists in the canon
everyone squirming
Sugarblood

The television is tinged in the pastel
waiting room always.

My condition is terribly conditioned—it
happens and doesn’t.

Sugarblood can’t stop me
glitches happen—it’s terrible.

Irradiated home informs specific
readings of illness, eyes roll endlessly.

We’re mirrored in the translucent
skin, the oxygen tank, the syringe.

There’s terror in the saline, terror
in the samples, saccharine trembling.

I am leaving slowly: health slippage.

          Stay with me.

We could tremble to sleep under
soft television in a typical waiting room.
Dime Bags

The muses scatter their empty dime bags like seeds and out of the seething earth grey monoliths sprout and stretch.

They are stems, made up of lazy friction elevated botany and elevator veins office-filled, reaching for the south.

Self-contained in the antiseptic sunlight, they are gleaming like unopened, gilded books the tourists mistake the colour for silver.
Neurotransmission

Another static dream tactic—don’t call me home with that tone I get wistful when you don’t call.

Remorse is a honey-tongued letter; just traipsing along, she wrote. The bar glistened weakly behind her sheen.

When the phone rings my memory triggers, trips along; a neurotransmission trips itself more real, filmic.

She whispers something and it sounds like someone thrushed all night and a caffeine lullaby, valium dream.

Guilt umbrellas skyward from the trepanation stream—kicked in the wit again.

Here is an abortive neurotransmission—cold like an octave drop, relentless like the dial tone.
Tonic

Seven o’clock, Miltonic time
and I’m writing this to tell you not to bother to
set the alarm to wake me. I can’t perform any trace
of heroism. I can’t pull down any pillars. Ruling classes
revise their dreams in the following way—silkscreened on
tasteless vellum, instantly canonized and draped over the Philistines.
I haven’t slept yet but the pillars are crumbling and while they come down
on their own, you are immersed in sitcom theory, constructing elaborate pathetic
fallacy in order to capture tinned laughter. The walls are watching you emote; they are
creeping closer. I clamp my index finger between my front teeth, roll my eyes. What if
there never were pillars to begin with?

What time is it?
Lysol

We could be suffragists, disinfecting the deified sky imploding cultural imperatives, ourselves.

We could rewrite things, etch them into our desks; maybe phone me one day soon if you want to.

We could get high; this place has always been like an invalid hymn; I don’t love it— I came here to remember that.

We could hide under the pews. Do you want to? I shoplifted some Lysol. Do you want some?

We could do it here; the choir always scares me but nobody will hear a thing over their voices.

We could fall asleep.
We should fall asleep.
Lysol Notes

+ the convenience store across from central park in Winnipeg sold Lysol at a steep markup

+ he wouldn’t arrest me, I think I reminded him of his son, he wouldn’t arrest me

+ I even showed him the drugs, he didn’t arrest me do you know what that means?

+ he wouldn’t arrest me and I almost didn’t question it: it was the Bell Hotel and I was his paleface son.

+ he couldn’t arrest me, I left the dime bag in the back of the car, I went straight for the cupboard, straight for the aerosol
Strategies for Patronage

There are means by which we can mean it something to do with seamless easywords.

Think of the wordroot the patron in all of us; give me a moment or two; I mean it.

We speak in performatives; this is the only thing I know (I give it to you).

Meandrip in the throat, what have you been up to you insomniac?

Don’t forget your sapphic ethic—there are means by which it will matter.

Later on when the sense returns, scratch an ode to your dreamtrips.

Request honorariums for your emotives; initial beside the commerce verse

Outside there is a patron waiting in line disgendered by layers of plain clothing singing painsongs.
I Can Take it All

It is unattainable
I tried but I flailed.
My arms and made
sick sounds on the
sidewalk.

You are an elegant
permanent marker and
you are driving me menthol
all over this overmarked
city; don’t stay here.

I believed in destiny
for as long as I could
throw it; I owned it
as long as I could
rent it.

I want to take care of
you and so you skillfully
whisper into the receiver
goodbye and take
care.
now you know why you’re here, and the best part is in only gets more tragic, like the unfolding of any narrative, less and less familiar, familial, random, somehow cruel take comfort in the knowledge that it is better this way, not knowing, just taking if there is an ethereal sky and it is half sick enough it will whisper “take” and I will half-listen just too much to not know any better I’ve only seen you through pale amber or the unclouded weather of our sadness there’s only so much I can take

I can take it all
The Verbiage Between Us

the last time we talked, we talked about carrying on and you carried on about the fear of carrying on and how you were better off without I carried you home in my mind over the threshold thrush my mouth cracking and we held fast to the belief that the secrets we secreted were sacred I silenced you against the backdrop of silence, the slings and narrow misses of juvenilia singing slingmy name in your voice you sucked on a coffee and i watched you watching me studying the faces of students failing to be studious, moving in social ellipses is this unclear I asked you clearly you didn’t mean to imagine I meant it then and I mean it now, only I forget the subject matter of my assertion, believe you me you may not whisper in concrete terms but I still know you and the tactics you employ, moving toward tact or tract every word you said I feel is to be continued without feeling this idiosyncratic static you said I feel for you and I have a feeling that was your first best mistake imagine fleeing from my feelings you didn’t claim this or that claim, too busy fleeing me out of my mind you claimed last time as a prophecy of a larger discourse to come when one day comes one day I will understand the manifestation, I will put the man back in manifestation, in back in infestation you silenced me with the very notion of me in silence imagine it’s a good thing I have a thick skin thick skin is thin blood is domestic don’t dream if you had any sense you would have sensed it by now yet another coffee under the gentle illumination of fluorescent flesh don’t imagine crawling out of this too much sense outside
Dark Star Text

Without words it just gets colder and when the dark star rises late
and I'm comfortably sedated it feels so right to blame you
for my wordlessness.

Without terms I am tacit and I blame you and the dark star lingers
and the teleprompter sputters and lags and it feels just
half-right.

A flowering capital idea illuminates the antiseptic sky, the thick, dark drip
we are under; a bright retail malady sweeps over a nation or two and lulls
us to never-sleep.

Ignore the television's blue virginal hiss and let's dress unsuccessfully
and speak without words in tongues just above or under
breath.

The dark star sets and
the words germinate on
the translucent bedsheets of home.
Phone up your dark star.
Tell him that you love her.
Prove it.

Musing is dead and
perhaps you should die too
but the girls have amnesia nightly
and the boys are working on vocations
in an unmarked night school.

So go to school with the girls and the boys
and peer out through the filthy
windows; fall asleep on your favourite
subject.

A trip into normalcy
reveals
the trance before
the words before
the dark star trance
the television sings
the phone hisses.

Instant message your dark star.
Section 2
Namedrops
Come Wintering
for Sylvia Plath

Waking in winter is one way of many
langue is tricky, gravestones are luminous.

If those smiles were not hooks then you made hooks out of dull crescents
simply hooked them by the mouth, lured them, made them happen.

Dead tulips on the pathway
dead tulips on the pathway etcetera. . .

You are charming the coffined children and digging your way inside
the earth, posing pretty in acres of wild sage.

Fervent in linen, death-grey cars and metallic winters
come wintering, your man don’t know a goddamned thing.

I know less. I offer less: no flowers but perhaps you know
my shadow through the gauze of an antiseptic home.

I will not smile.
I will not smile.
I will not do
now will I?
Trash
for Allen Ginsberg

trash in the mind
trash of the world
man is half trash
all trash in the grave

—Allen Ginsberg

The elevator carries the trash
and the trash carry gilded cell phones.

The suits are all hooked up for the weekend
and the revolution is stuck in voice mail.

The family has half a mind to stay
and the trash is on the corner six days early.

Buried in gilded bungalows,
and the television carries the weekend.

Home is where the trash is; they are hooked there
elevated in their cells, cornered, practicing voices, then
drawn back to work by a dirge ringtone. Something like:
all trash in the grave . . . and so on.
Pact Unpacked
for Chandra Mayor

This is a pact between us—
we will end it all

if we find ourselves plastered with the look
of corporate faces—effortless, tacit, beaming

if we find ourselves in general, escaping specificity,
specifically waxing and waning off the clock

if we find ourselves in domestic body bags
twitching, sighing help

if our eyes are permanently rolled over this flat landscape,
our dreams skyscraping themselves

if hours become silent ethereal hymns
perversely melodic and slow

if we feel too young
in the atoms we are ordered to breathe

if there are too many young people
erotically strewn across the right

if it’s Sunday and everyone else has already done it
in a manner of speaking

if it’s Saturday and we just can’t
wait for Sunday

if we can do it at the exact same moment
in fantastic synchronicity

if we catch hold of some subatomic reality
and it makes sense

if it pleases us not to hurt anyone anymore
and so we don’t
if I, sucking on an ashtray,
turn to you and utter melancholic lyrics—

it is fatalistic and static
under the jaundice stars tonight
and still I wish to know eternity
as sadistic as I expect it to be
come, let's repress in collectivity
let's decorate our illnesses
let's let go from any or every balcony
taste that novel air, land on the broken glass
of home, or let's find the perfect alley
to get trampled in

oh, how we would gurgle and smile
with every blow, receive the hate
with interpellated wisdom, reading
every bruise and gash symbolically
and we could squirm in our own
poetic realm of ash and tar and
oh, the possibilities, sensory and
imagistic.
The Switching Yard Songs
for Clive Holden

+++ 

Here, the sky sickens its way into your sleep
it whimpers in your ear, drips on your
tongue, so endless and pointless.

It's a prairie sky after all, with a pristine
meaning.

Living in flatland is neologistic, at times it
strains sense, stains pallid skin, permits tense
tenement dreams to spread, germinate on an
ice-laced plain; and the sky here, still persists.

And I'm here now, home now, with medicinal
verve, with blistering ink on pharmacy receipts.
The words drift eastward and are hooked back
into the intermodal, like an AM broadcast.

But the overwrought, overcast sky
is larger than sin.

It is not recalling but retelling
home.

Thin wisps of pollen and dandelion seeds swathe flatland.
Highbeams drape over the mythic switching yard.

The switching yard is glimpsed in drips.
The sky disjunctively pricks out its meaning
The switching yard lures you to sleep with its minor strains:
its blasphemous untouchable rusting lush
its hypoallergenic hyperallegorical luminous transit
its somnambulant treacherous soma
its adjectival narcoleptic mourning.
The switching yard takes you to all of this
and if you lived here you might even concede
that it's almost lovely.
+++  

Winnipeg derailed years ago
still, twisted, rotting, fucked up
under a clay sky.

Just take two
milligrams
in the morning
just like I do.

Oh my screeching iron lung...

Sparks jump off of the rails.
Asbestos disperses through retail.

I am leaning into rails in the east.

You are railing against the curse where you are.
+++

Strike me all the way to last call.
Strike me like I'm family.
Strike me in parenthetical disjunction.
Strike me (don't strike me).
Strike me hypermelodically.
Strike me until the switching yard sings us to sleep.
Deep Winter
for Joey Ramone

beat on the brat, beat on the brat
beat on the brat with a baseball bat

—Joey Ramone

Hit me so hard i fell of your handlebar, got trapped in your spokes, was dragged through the icy street.

Hit me so hard in the middle of the playground, in the middle of my development.

Hit me so hard i stenciled myself to the side of Arthur Day Junior High School. again.

Hit me so hard i was yours, eyes widened before the swelling.

Hit me so hard i slept in your garden that night, listened to your parents whisper.

Hit me so hard i was sleeping and not dreaming at all, awakened by allergy.

Hit me so hard and don’t leave me, console me with hatespeech.

Hit me so hard that adulthood seeped in, absorbing imagination and breath.

Hit me so hard and lay me down in the storage freezer, in your unheated basement, in deep winter.
Namedrop
for Sarah Steinberg

You are in need of a namedrop straight off the fourteenth floor reading each storey on your way down, dull lamplight, television flicker and then right into traffic breaking your back,

or perhaps off a bridge as if you were in a filmic climax headlong into undertow like a discarded tourniquet or a useless, leaking pen that used to lead to bliss.

At home, in your desk, the bliss is receding into something more comfortable you are suddenly older, occupying cold skin.

You are not afraid of a namedrop now and then, a little Sylvia never hurt anyone: tulips, skulls, imaginary red hair, black yew tree, every building hospital-blue.

You are profound in the intravenous afternoon, with a sketch pad and a case of lead poisoning, your name in faint ink on your hospital wristband.

See the lady of Shalott down from her tower, sprawled out in her craft, piss and punch-drunk, gurgling on the water? You want to drop right there but you are stitched to that bridge just watching her, just weaving verse.
Performatives
for J.L. Austin

*trust me
*I give this to you
*I write the brilliantly trivial
*I am the trivially brilliant
*I name this
*you don’t say!
*I trust you
*I do
Section 3
Homecallings
Anchorage

You are a victim of anchorage.
You create it.

The idea is tethered.
The disenchanted home leash.

Stop anchoring to bungalows.
Stop anachronistic breath.

Leave pleasantland.
Leave the shingled sonnet.

Please the victim anchor.
Please leave.
Mission Street Song

Take an eight-cylinder engine down to Mission Street and race the trains and lose every time.

Take seven gravol tablets and wake up to ironic cricket songs and the West Nile in your blood.

Place your work on your tongue and swallow slowly. Sprawl out on prairie tall grass; preserve it with your nostalgic lapses.

Settle in St. Boniface; photocopy your lexicon and send it priority post to the National Library.

Wake up again to Winnipeg, on Mission Street:

Listen to the song of the grey city: your entire family, the police officers, the trains, the teenaged cars, the social workers, the safe houses, the scrap yards, the playgrounds are crooning “disrepair.”
Dauphin 1981

Deciphering

Gary Carter or Tim Wallach through television snow
my Great-Grandfather pissing on my bedroom door at 2 in the morning

costume jewelry and fresh snow shimmering
five long minutes without being watched

too much family condensed into unopened chests
jaundiced paper and a jaundiced kitchen

preserves.
Transcona 1986

Curled up on yellow shag carpet
or weak-ankled in
plastic micron skates
I am twelve
my lungs are fifty.

Oxford heights community club is where
they drive me to cower
Saturday afternoon for practice
Sunday night for games.

In winter, the prairie air steals your
breath, suspends it in mid-air.

I have a blue inhaler.
I have a beige inhaler.
Transcona lol

I know Transcona

I have seen the wintering children choking on tinsel

I have served the ten year old mother, thrift shopping for lsd

I have delved into that solvent-drenched solvency

I have slept in creaking single beds with etched-in lyric dreams

I have lingered in frigid back lanes with the Winnipeg artists searching for youth and youths to use

I have inhaled that spirit, the worker statuesque against a harsh prairie wind

I have been knocked out under your catalytic converter

sometimes we meet in low lit chat rooms
and you pine for those moments of epiphany
mescaline at the sand pits, you don’t know what you are missing
I know your childhood
drenched in motor oil and covered with stolen cigarettes
your corrupt paper routes, your retail scams
your lectures on shoplifting, your uncomfortable bedroom
your discomforting rhetoric

your cursor blinks lethargically, hanging on
to consciousness, you type: remember that
night we got right pissed and broke into that
abandoned disco and we shattered all
of the lights
all these fucking tombstones
all these feeble structures

broken mechanics splitting open at the sports bar
broken high-heels waiting in line at the liquor commission
broken shopping carts on the driveways
broken televisions glistening on sidewalks

a landscape of hatchbacks rolling through stop signs

I know Transcona

you don’t know what you’re misreading

in the chat room you listen to breath
the sun is threatening to rise and your
nostalgia level remains frighteningly high
on graduation night we took the spray paint
to the school, as if we had anything to
communicate in such fleeting permanence
I know why I can’t go back

I have rested in the rusting cars
the ones in which you would
promise yourself to someone
new every weekend

family’s all broken now
laid off and waylaid
down at the Central Hotel
sipping their way to sleep

you are swallowed by your cursor
ultimately reducible, stuck in a loop
of reductive speech:  lol
I know where to find Transcona
somewhere between
the rusting train yards
and the peeling fences

I suppose I'm coming back
meet me behind the old folks home
I'll bring the spirits if you bring the solvents
if you bring the permanent marker I'll bring the words
Homecalling

always                           home calling
power lines tightening and      sagging in and out of season
block heaters clicking          "plug her in if you want her to run"
think about that idiom
lips stuck to pole              tongue stuck to tongue
"she was always a good little car"

pining for a self-serve self    it's winter at home
we have antifreeze in the blood

a make-believe city in the middle

always in the middle of something and never enough time for calling

polemics of dialing              listen in to home
always in the meddling

listen:
not home
Hazel Dell

The streets were lined with dutch-elm disease—regal trees with weeping branches and neon orange spray-painted trunks.

The air was perfumed with thistle breath and the Red River. Crabgrass seeped through chain link; every driveway was crooked.

She ran over the three year old child with her wood-paneled minivan; she said it felt just like a speed bump.

The Red River’s undertow was always present in every alcove and every makeshift, splintered playground pulling.
West Wind

On the prairies the wind is always
a west wind.

It means nothing.

But listen:
My first girlfriend’s name was Shelley. I hated her always.

Thunderstorms stopped over the aborted transportation hub city—
harbingers of nothing.

The reconstruction of the city was framed with impossible slogans—
Initiative begins at home (in an unsheltered split-level).

The wind’s white noise blankets home.

I moved east.

Shelley found a husband and two children and a reason not to spare the rod.

I’m sure that I loved her once, perhaps during a sporadic thunderstorm
or before a hangover.

But that means nothing.
Louise Bridge

The Louise Bridge is sleeping like a louse in strange rain and who gives a fuck?

It's the narrow, rusty passage to the east suburb.

The permatourists claim that they are leaving and still, the traffic persists above the rust-Red River. Girders glimmer on the lethe.

From the edge of the water, one could glimpse rusting chevettes traversing the bridge. heading east.

From along the darkening moat, one could glimpse the sun setting and the amber streetlights feebly attempting to illuminate these vehicles.
Section 4
Intentionalities
Acquiesce

what is acquiescent is staged

parents, love your children as if they were visionary tracts . revise and resist formation of

any static signifier and adhere to whatever grammar you must . take them to the public with fervour

aggrandize the moment, mother the fetish . scrawl a mirror stage all over a pharmacy

postcard and

fail

to acquiesce
Willing. Waiting

I think of us without the drugs and it scares me.

We have been draped in lucent schemes.

We have been swept into pharmacy vials.

I’m willing to wait until I don’t feel a thing.

I’m waiting to will the drugs to stop working.

I think of you as a kinder withdrawal.

We are spineless yet facing it.

And one day we just might not wake up like we used to.

Go ahead. Scare me.
It's just that

It's not that I'm holding on so much as I'm holding my breath, turning to you shamefully cold and easy on the strictest, loveliest summer day.

It's not that lovely a day. It's strict in its presentation: there's a filthy nunnery; there's a strip mall with gleaming windows; there's an inversion in the air.

It's not that last ditch grasp tongue lashing. The world loves you just the way you aren't. Stay shameful. Stay grasping.

It's not that I don't see past your thinly veiled traipse, your traipsing verve, your verse impositions.

It's just that.

It's just that today is the only day you've ever known.

It's just that it feels better when someone is strict. There's a list of suitable tropes you would rather not get into right now.

It's just that it's better this way. Just let me have it: inversions pockmark the sky you wish you were grasping, holding, so much, so strict, so lovely.
Strep Song

You are singing

at the monolithic gate of the university

in the gleaming parkade with a pocketful of pills

on the seminary steps with a throat full of strep.

The air is full of winter and it’s may day in the silent, psychic city. The air is full of winter and it’s may day in the silent, psychic city.

You are singing

singing strepped on the steps, on the lawn, in the car, singeing the city in and out of 3/4 time within the seductive difficulty of song, disseminating.
Intentionalities

meant to in numbers because of the power there is into menthol breath and hover again because it never ends, this thread of verse the old ones only sever their knowledge, love of it—don’t forget to get wrapped up in emotionality while you wait not yet the rapt reader dives in novelistic leave the breed behind everything must get dyed

meant to in lessons because of the power there is in pedagogy just ask the lesser ones the Poundian verve of knowing you think you are right and frightening rush of vowing to keep to your self fact that you can’t get caught let go of the conviction it can’t do anyone any harm anymore than you can

do on your own with a pen and some emulated charm here come the years of I meant to with ribboning songs thrummed to tears and the drift departs now farewell to the normals the gameshows and farewell to the pleasure vehicles the dreary hello to the old ones fellows enrapture the ageist dream and hello serotonin