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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  
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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

drivel

emotive sheet laced with inhalants, out of breath intoxic

coma

cigarettes expiring on asphalt, trampled on by elders

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  
thrashed 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 slinging my 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 fleecing 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 neversleep.

Ignore the television's blue virginal hiss and let's dress unsuccesed  
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  
tongue 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.

*Per formatives  
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 gravel 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 discomfoting 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”

pinning 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 chevetttes 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