

Searching for Accidents



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cover image: *darkly looking* by Francis Raven

There are three things in reading
As in life:
An opening, a continuing, and a closing.

1.

We are connected more by loss than by gain.
This is not trivial, but the way the world is:
Shaped by hammering, by defeat,
By the scooping out of possibilities
Not by their addition.
Sometimes we are prepared for it
To kick the shit
Out of us;
Other times
We should have had religion.
My uncle didn't have it.
Do you think it would have helped?
I don't think so. I really don't.
We should have had science.
We should have used the scientific method.
What does that begin with?
Looking at the world?
And then there is always the hypothesis:
Making stuff up
Always helps
For a few minutes. But in the end
We want to know what really happened.
In the end
We want to know
The beginning;
It's just the way we're built,
Constructed the same,
Which guarantees
That we react
In similar ways
To similar events:
That which comes out of.
Did you know that's the etymology of 'event'?
It's what comes out of. That is,
Everything comes out of something else;
Everything has a cause
Even if it doesn't make sense at first.
So what have we learned?

We are connected by loss and this loss has a cause.
The loss I am mentioning is death,
Three deaths to be precise.
They are connected and they connect
Not necessarily the people who died
But others, surely they have to connect someone
And those people, in turn, are connected
Primarily by their losses. There's the connection part.
The causes, the explanation are the other part:
Why we're connected, essentially.
And it's true, I have personal interest in this case.
I am one of those who lost: my young wife died
On March 5th, 2005. We'll get to how she died.
It was neither accident nor natural, but firmly intentional, voluntary.
But they all thought that she was the one with the intention,
With the thought in her head, with an incomprehensible conceit.
That's, at least, how the police saw it.
They all believed that
Yes,
Someone intended to kill herself
Someone fulfilled her intention.

It is often considered a sin
To kill yourself
But you must believe in sin
For a sin to exist
And she didn't believe
In such divisions of action: original or otherwise.
She did believe in explaining the world.
She believed that we could understand the world we live in.
Her death, her apparent suicide, shut the door to such explanations.

Intention divides us ultimately
From accident. Half of each
Investigation is spent
Making sure
The crime
Was spent
On purpose.
But a division is another way of saying a connection.

Everything under the line is connected.
Everything above the line is connected as well,
But the two sides are divided from each other.
I am divided from everyone who has not lost anyone.
I am equally divided from those
Who have lost someone to a terrible accident,
And accidents are terrible.
I'm certainly not saying they're not.
I've been accused before
Of saying that I don't think
Accidents matter at all.
Well, you're hearing me here.
That's not what I'm saying at all.
Accidents can be terrible
But they're different, just different.
Essence is, we should have learned by now,
Different from accident:
What should have happened,
What somebody thought should have happened,
Is different from
What nobody thought should have happened:
It's more interesting,
Makes you think deeper
And is a lot harder to deal with.
That's all I'm saying.

2.

How well do you know an uncle
Is always a question about
What it means
Not what it could mean.
That is, a father's relations
Are always prescribed
Even if he is absent.
In his absence
The prescription is prepared.
Doubt, loneliness, rage
Are all reasonable side effects,
But we might not even notice an uncle's absence
Or he might be
The most important
Person
In our lives.
It all just depends.
An uncle depends on so many things:
On the way the world turns out, on politics really,
On the age discrepancies between siblings,
On cultural variations in living arrangements.
Yes, the uncle is strange.
My uncle raised me,
But he was not otherwise important.
He was, of course, a factor in every decision
I made
But
A neutral one.
I never thought of pleasing him,
But, equally,
I never tried to displease him.
That is, he didn't regularly enter into my psyche
Though he was the closest male around.
He clothed me, fed me
And I suppose taught me something,
But since he was the one who taught me,
And not my father,
What I needed to know

I learned less from him
Than from the world.
This is another thing the absence of a father brings:
More experimentation.
Yes, my father died
When I was not so terribly young.
I can remember him
And not merely in
A peering at a photograph way
But actually remember
His legs.
This memory, of course, hauls with it
Some pangs
Of loneliness, of impossible possibility, but
Aside from those pangs of legs
There is little emotion
Associated with my natural father.
I was left to this earth
And since this earth
Could not raise
A young boy alone
That task was left to my uncle.
He did a fine job, at least I think so.
I am happy enough
Or have been happy enough
When being happy enough
Was appropriate
As I said before
I lost my wife, Sarah,
And thus, being happy enough
Is not, or was not for quite some time,
An option.

My uncle, what is there to say:
My life
Or more properly
My feelings about
My life
Would have been
So different

If I hadn't
Been
So proud
Of him.
Okay, so I had feelings for him:
Many feelings.

But that was, of course,
Before he married his second wife, Melissa
Who also died: his frivolous wife.
He betrayed me with her.
I had never thought that a wife could be frivolous
Before he married her, but
I had also never thought
That a wife needed to be controlled
Before he married her.

It turns out that she was having an affair, a long one
That I never got to the bottom of.
Depression, like frivolous wives (and just so
I won't be thought of being sexist, husbands who are tools)
Need to be controlled.
Fabulous medications
Have been invented
Just for that purpose.
There is nothing frivolous about such medications.

3.

It was a traditional second marriage
(He divorced my aunt Katherine
After I was out of the house
(They were perhaps the only aunt and uncle
Who stayed together
For the kid)
And this I've never been clear on:
Is an aunt by marriage
Still an aunt
After the divorce?):
But the new wife, the first of his wives to die,
The one who finally reconnected us,
Was hot, too hot for his 67 years.
She liked fancy cars
And knew about them. Her musical tastes
Brought my uncle's up
By several decades. And travel,
Yes, she was up for travel:
Heady for *living life*,
That catch phrase for being yourself
But freer
Without the responsibility of a self.
My uncle had picked up some cheddar
In this life and I had to watch out for his cheddar.
But he was a lonely lawyer with cheddar, which
As you might guess
Is an extremely vulnerable position to be in.
Thus, I felt that it was my duty
As his surrogate son of sorts
(Although, as I've mentioned before,
This surrogacy came with none of the emotional baggage
Of actually being a son, of real relation.)
To protect his interests,
Which were quite substantial
In commodities and real estate.
Further, thus, I was against the marriage
From the very beginning.
I didn't like her

And her fawning ways
Seemed rather obvious ways
To extort my aging genial uncle.
I refused to go along with it.
I would not give him my blessing.
I wrote out my concerns in
What I thought was
A well thought-out letter.
But people only see what they want to see.
People do not see what they do not want to see.
You would think that the second followed
Logically from the first,
But it really doesn't.
So much is separate.
So many thoughts are separate and remain so.
My uncle Philip had both afflictions in spades:
He only saw her hotness and fun and *spirit*
And did not see her flightiness (which would soon
Transform into equally flighty art)
Nor the possibility
That she was just a skanky golddigger
In relatively tasteful, expensive, clothes.
That is, my repeated warnings
Were not heeded.
Needless to say
They were married.
She replaced my other aunt
As my aunt by marriage.
My uncle, to her credit,
Looked happy when I irregularly saw him.
I couldn't really stand her enough
To maintain our relationship
In the manner
I had
In years past.
But I also knew, or suspected,
The emotional cost
Of giving up my father figure
And I didn't really have the time or energy
To deal with such trauma.

Thus, I played along,
All the while yearning for our previous relationship,
Although I was too stunted to admit it.

So, my uncle married her
Hot looks
Blond
Nice body even though
Relatively old
(I suppose she was in her 40s)
With two BMWs,
One was a 5 Series and the other was an 8 Series
Actually that's false
But they were really nice cars.
I just
Can't remember models.
She liked to drive racecars
And she updated Philip's
Musical tastes
Into something just a little bit hipper,
Just a little bit more elevated.
But this hipness, this speed
Was totally inappropriate for Philip.
He was way too sentimental for that.

They were the years
When relatively hip middleagers
Listened to world music.
She listened to world music.
A world music band
Would be at every birthday,
Anniversary, even Christmas.
It was kind of grating.
But it seemed cool
And Philip seemed happy.
But hidden within this happiness
Or behind it
I should say
She was cheating on him
With some African prince

For almost the entire duration
Of their foreshortened marriage.
Even after her death, however, Philip
Never revealed more than that
But that was enough for me to hate her more.

Then came the art.

Which is to say, there were always costs.

Frivolity, at the edges
Feeds into art. Not that
All art is frivolous;
Nothing like that
But when you are a hot woman
Twenty-odd years the junior
Of your new husband
Art is a natural outcome
Like cancer
Is
Of smoking.
Life will say (and will say again):
Told you so!
Art just seems to come out
Because art, in the beginning
Is about you. About your tastes
What you have to say, how you can
Express your inner...
Well, whatever is inside.
Melissa, that was his new wife's name,
Started by collecting some small paintings.

Becoming an artist is like founding a country:
It is violent.

There is often no foreseeing it, no overseeing
Its whims
And whims it has
Like a frivolous wife.
What I'm saying is that

My uncle's frivolous wife
Had a frivolous wife:
Art.
She wanted to become some,
But that wasn't the way you said it
So she took some photography classes
And she started throwing lumpy pots
On the wheel
And then she was urging gloppy paint
Into supposed shapes:
Could they be something mystical?
Could they be something real?
That's the question of art
Even before it really begins:
Could it be real? There is just this question
Tingling through the bones:
Could we represent it better?
But that's actually how anyone starts their art.
No, they begin with some stupid inkling
That they want
To express
Themselves.
That was exactly how Melissa began
I just need to express myself
But I don't know how
Philip suggested *why don't you take a class.*
It was in actuality
Less an earnest question
And more a way of ending the conversation,
Of letting someone else answer her questions.
Nevertheless, she took the bait.
She registered at the San Francisco Additional Education Center
For a course in pottery
A couple in photography
And another in oil painting.
The painting class was supposed to be advanced
But the lower level one was full
And she really wanted to express herself:
I could be advanced,
I mean how good could they really be?

It's just painting.

This was her attitude:

And this is what she wanted to do.

But people don't have much insight, do they?

Similarly, she had no idea

What kind of art

She wanted to practice

So she just registered for what they had.

She was *keeping her options open*.

Of course, decisions are more efficient

And meaningful

Than options.

Options waste time, space, energy,

Entail a lack of knowledge and insight.

Insight provides a decision.

She thought she'd just cancel a couple of classes

If she didn't like the teacher.

But a teacher cannot impart art

To the student. The teacher

Can only

Create the conditions

For art,

Which is

An art

Itself.

Thus, Melissa was going about it all wrong.

But we don't pay attention to what other people think.

Her first paintings were copies of Cezanne's apples.

She explained to Philip

What her teacher had said

About the perspective being wrong

And he just didn't get it

But merely said *how is that guy famous?*

I would love a world

Where lawyers received accolades

For doing everything wrong.

But she explained that the wrong perspective

Was, in fact, the right way to art

And then she sort of understood something about art.

Well, not really, but it was the first feeling
Of understanding.

But, unfortunately, art is a neglect of duty.
Hence, their marriage
Which should never have occurred
Began to cease
To occur.

Art is also a neglect of the body.
These two facts led Melissa
To grow overweight
To leave the house in filthy shambles
Overwrought with profusions of excess
For projects she would most likely
Leave unfinished.

So, just as her art was coming into its own
Her affair ended. She just wasn't a catch anymore.
Art would have to hold her together.
But questioning such neglect is no easy task.
The artist's spouse is the most difficult position of all
For he is called to support

The art
But must also
Call the artist
On her shit.

He must wait while she flings.
Philip's lawyerly tendencies led him to record
In detail
Her demise.

Her photographs were at first
Not very good.
They were the obvious examples
In a beginner's photography class:
The oblique self-portraits, the rear-view mirrors,
The vistas, the critique of consumer society...

But slowly, not gradually, but
In evolutionary leaps
She became more herself.
When neglect and excess
Roll up,

Spiral into a hairball
That tenderly aches
Under the master bed,
A self is reborn
As an artist;
Reborn, that is,
As someone else.
And as a birth is always merely natural
The conventions of marriage
Do not easily apply
At such a stage. Thus,
More neglect:
Neglect of her role,
Neglect of their intimacy,
Neglect of the house,
But she was an artist
Who had been born and would continue.
That was undisputable,
A fact of the world
For all to see.
And for this I hated her
Doubly.
When Philip finally understood
That he could not have the life
He had hoped for,
A stable marriage with a hot lady,
He retreated first into his work:
He was an impressive lawyer.
Yes, he was.
As if it needed repeating.
But often he did need it repeated
Back to himself.
He was just that vain and insecure.
But work can only bring so much solace.
It cannot cure a broken heart.
Rather, it was not so much as his heart
That was broken
But, rather, his heart masquerading as his ego.
Thus, he brought his glassy eyes
To bear on the bosoms of other women.

His matted gray hair and gaunt figure
Were not that attractive
But he could talk a good game
When such a phrase
Means that someone
Is successful and has money

And I wanted him to be able to have these women.

Neither is art solace
Even if it is necessity.
Thus, both Melissa and Philip
Were searching
For something
The other
Could not provide.

Melissa became severely depressed.
At first she thought she was just feeling artsy.
She thought she could use these feelings
In her photos and her small geometric paintings
(Geometry was all she had mastered)
But then she sort of
Stopped creating anything.
That should have been the sign
For someone else to read
But no one else
Was reading.
We need readers in the world
Much as we need
Spotters when we climb.

4.

My marriage was different.
Sarah and I met before each going away.
Hence, a gap.
Growing apart is not the same thing
As growing apart.
In presence: the difficulty is movement.
Is growth explained? Beforehand, the subject doesn't even know the words.

Hence, we always wish we knew each other earlier
But this doesn't even make sense. We are
Always supposed to want
To know each other earlier. But if so,
We would not have even seen each other.

We are always too late and early for love:
Happiness forces us to regret
Our prior life
But our
Projects are still
So ultimately unfinished.

Some things we did right:
We went to different colleges.
And although living apart was painful
I don't know if we would be together now
If we had chosen the same.

Imagining from here is always
Imagining from here what
Imagining from there
Would have been.

When you look back on a relationship
Each moment appears less serious
Then it had to have been

But at some point you know
It is really serious

And you get married.

If I were to give any advice
To a couple about to get married I would say
That the wedding is nice (it's great to have a party,

To have everyone say they love you
And get presents, so many presents)
But don't forget the vows you are making to each other.

Even on that day of cake and wine
Your relationship should be
At the forefront of your mind.

We were a perfect match
Made
By each other:

A partnership
Involves creating roles:
She paid the taxes, you cleaned.

These roles are delicate
Shifting
And then fixed in place

Like natural objects.
A marriage becomes a natural object,
That's all I'm saying.

We were really natural, enjoying it.
There were really no problems
For a narrative to untangle.

Except

Sarah and I were a perfect match
Except, one day she came home
And started talking about how
She would die soon. It was

Really weird.
Even she knew it was really strange
And she really wasn't a strange person.
She desperately wanted to get her affairs,
Our affairs,
In order. She piled receipts
Into piles. She piled those piles
Into other piles.
She told me what I should do
With these piles
When she was gone.
She was very matter-of-fact
About the whole thing
And she wasn't really
A very matter-of-fact type person
Not that she was prone to histrionics
But she usually displayed
The appropriate amount of emotion
In appropriate situations.
But now
Now
She was acting really weird.

Eventually, she fulfilled her own prophesy
And fell
Backwards
Over a railing
At Bryce Canyon
To her death
While we were on vacation.

The real moral,
Well there are so many morals,
But one of them
Is not to
Speak of your own death.
It is sacred
And not yours to proclaim.

When someone dies from falling off a great height

What they usually die of
Is something
To do with their organs being jarred
But a great height also often breaks many bones.
This was the case with Sarah.
Her limbs
No longer
Seemed
To fit a person.
Or, more appropriately,
She seemed to be
More than one person.
I, of course, only knew her
As one person
But in death
The soul
Can take on many forms.

I didn't know what
I was supposed to do.
I spoke with the authorities.
I was primarily in shock.
Shock was all I was offered.
I had to speak with the authorities.
We were just trying to
Take a nice photograph.
If you travel alone
With your spouse
There aren't that many opportunities
To get photographs
With both of you in them.
I was snapping a few shots
In front of those bright red pinnacles.
Though if scientific truth be told
It's not really a canyon.
I sort of forget why,
But it's true.
It's misnamed.
It has something to do
With the fact

That they were formed by wind
Instead of water.
But that's not important right now.
My wife, Sarah, died
And I know I'm saying this
Very matter-of-factly
But in a way it is
A fact about the world.
I haven't accepted it
But I do know that it's a true fact.
Well, anyway, we were taking photographs
One after the other.
Like, I would take her photograph
And then she would take mine
In front of the same hoodoo.
Then when we got home
We could either cut away
The space between us
Or if we wanted to use technology
We could photoshop the affair
To appear like we were standing together.
But how can you stand
With a dead spouse?
I ask you, how?
You might think that
We would have just asked another tourist
To take our picture together
But we were much too shy for that.
What happened was
That somebody asked us
If
They could take our picture,
You know, as a favor to us.
They must have seen that we were
Taking pictures together
Apart
And have taken pity on us
Else it was something they always did:
Asked to take another couple's photos,
An alternative that is slightly weird,

Almost creepy, but not quite.
But anyway, they somehow
Didn't know how to use the zoom
So what was in the photo
Was in the photo:
There was no changing that,
So they asked us to back up
And when you're not looking
Where you're going
You fall
And fall she did.
I was skeptical of the perfect photograph
And knew the plan by heart
So didn't really back up.
I kind of just wanted to get back
To the privacy of the day
But she wanted a perfect photo to frame
And as she backed up
She kicked up
Dust like smoke
And let out a scream
That just kept getting quieter
Until I heard her body
Cleanly hit the bottom.
Damn those people.
They should have just minded
Their own business.
Generosity always comes
With strings attached.
Hopefully
They're not usually
Strings so heavy
As death.

The authorities first suspected
Foul play and who else
Was there to suspect
But me?
So I really had to get into my feelings
And that really wasn't

Something I was good at
With strangers
But when you're in shock
Over your wife's death
And there's the potential
Of going to prison
You really have no choice
So you go along, crying like a baby
And for this I was thankful:
Talking to the cops
For the days after her death
Was really
Like therapy;
A therapy
I'd recommend
To no one.

But therapy is only
As good
As its outcome
And I came out
Of it
Not only
Not knowing
If I pushed her
Or if I should
Have died
Instead of her
But not really knowing
Who I was;
Not really understanding
Our marriage
And that was,
Even under normal circumstances,
The one thing that kept me sane.

That took a long time
In real therapy
To come to terms with
But I tried not

To go too long:
I didn't want to talk
About myself
All the time.
Obviously, this poem
Is a way
Of understanding myself
But one which hopefully,
In its externalization,
Helps you
To understand
Yourself as well.
We all need help
Don't we?
It's not an easy world.

5.

Death, like a diary
Is a common thickener.

After the fall
I was offered a suite in the Bryce Canyon Lodge
For as long as I cared.
Since Sarah had no burial wishes
We had a small ceremony
(Her family flew in)
And her ashes were flung
Amongst the oxidizing iron dust,
Amongst the true meaning of rustic.
I said a few words
That I now forget
And then had absolutely no idea
How to continue;
No idea what to do next.
I was overcome by grief, yes,
But also simply paralyzed by life,
By not knowing what this new life
Was supposed to entail.
Since I didn't know
What to do
I took up the National Park Service's offer
Of a free suite:
My tax dollars at work.
I stayed put.
My linens were changed.
Room service arrived.
Something was elegantly put under my pillow
(The item changed each day)
But I stayed.
From my window
A mighty view was apparent;
A mighty view that had murdered my wife.
But I suppose that I cannot
Bestow so much intention
Upon nature.

If I found a beautiful stick
That nature washed upon a shore
And dried to perfection
I could take it home
But I would never
Call it art.
Thus, this was no murder.
This is the analogy:
Murder and art
Complicating themselves
Together.
There I was thinking
These thoughts
In a posh hotel room
When I realized
How awful it was
To be experiencing such comfort,
Terrible really,
To be on vacation
When my wife had just died,
But we were on vacation together;
I tell you, together.
*Why didn't we pony up
For this suite
When she was alive?*
Was a question
That kept running through my head.
It was a beautiful suite,
Worth every penny
Though I wasn't entirely sure
How many pennies that was,
But it really was fabulous and possessed
Among other accoutrements:

- * Complimentary high-speed Internet access, both wired and wireless
- * Two-line speakerphones with computer data ports
- * Cordless Phones
- * Private voicemail
- * Large desk with an ergonomic desk chair
- * Amenities of home including hairdryer and terrycloth robes

- * Coffee makers with Starbucks coffee and Tazo Tea
- * L'Occitane bath amenities
- * In-room safe
- * Nintendo and on-demand movies
- * Flat screen television, and Stereo CD Players
- * Evening turn down service
- * Feather down comforters and pillows
- * Unique bath menu, to personalize your bath experience.
- * Lighted make-up mirrors
- * Gourmet treats in the fully-stocked honor bars
- * "Forgot It? We've Got It!" essential travel items
- * "Mind, Body, Spa" in-room Yoga Channel programming
- * Express check-out
- * Same day dry cleaning and laundry service
- * Complimentary shoe shine
- * Complimentary newspaper delivered to your door each morning
- * Complimentary pet goldfish delivered to your guestroom upon request
- * Double-glazed sound-proof windows
- * Mediterranean suites featuring whirlpool tubs
- * All guest rooms and suites are non-smoking
- * Check In Time: 3:00 PM
- * Check Out Time: 12:00 PM

Wasn't it awful to focus so materially?
 But this was the limit of my focus, on possessions
 On everything that made this a vacation
 And it was no longer a vacation
 It was a grief journey.
 It was well appointed,
 But, nevertheless, completely grief stricken.
 I stayed for a month.
 I became a fixture:
 A fixture of dry grief.
 They looked at me and thought...
 They thought many things.
 I was a sight to think about.
 I was a thinking spot: a sight of reckoning,
 Of atonement with one's self.
 My uncle called a few times.
 I seldom answered.

Finally, it was his frantic message
That brought me back to civilization,
She's gone mad; she's become an artist.

And so madness was the call.
He needed me to speak with her.
To beg her to come home to her senses.
It seemed more like away from her senses,
But Philip was neurotically panicked.
I felt I must go back.
It was a way back in
And perhaps I needed him now.
Besides Sarah
He was the only reliable source.
It was at that moment that
I knew Melissa would have to die as well.

6.

The story was that
Melissa went to the pool hall
Where she had never been before
And picked out the
Sketchiest guy
She could find.
She said she wanted
A job done.
At first
She did not specify.
Then
She offered 50,000 dollars
To steal her jewels.
When the jewels had been stolen,
After she had filmed the ne'er-do-well
Stealing her jewels,
She blackmailed her future assailant
Into killing her.
It was suicide by murder.

What I am asking for,
Of those who died,
Are decisions.
I would be okay
If I didn't understand
Those decisions,
At least I think I would,
But I'd really like to see
That a decision to die was made.
I'd like to see some thought process.
Thus, a note would be nice, some trace.

A plan in a pool hall is a trace, a witness.

7.

Melissa's daughter, Philip's stepdaughter, my stepcousin, Rebecca,
Found her dead.

This is the part where it gets exact;
Where it needs to get exact;
Where a particular species matters
In the throat or around the bend
At the time of death.
We've all watched too many,
But luckily that doesn't mean
We will become
Anything more violent
Than our static personalities allow.

To get to the bottom of mystery
Once it is officially known
As a mystery
You need a purpose
Not a paycheck,
Off duty morality: use that.

Rebecca was sleeping over for Easter,
A holiday my uncle relished.
She went to Melissa's study after
The house was asleep
Because Rebecca was pregnant
And wanted to tell her mother
She was going to keep the child.
Easter is as good a time as any
To tell a parent
You are accidentally pregnant.
She found her
Under her desk;
No way to get over
The way she was slumped under,
Protected and dead.

I wasn't very close with my faux stepsister (actually my stepcousin).
That's the thing about stepchildren:

They have to fit into a family that's already there.
The facts are already objectively displayed.
A natural child defines the culture of the family
In large part
But a stepchild is more of an appendage,
Like atheists view religion.
It has to fit in with
What is already there.

I was already in a strange position.
I was already not natural.
However, Philip had done a great job
Of making me feel
That I had somehow
Created
What I lived within.
Still, every attempt at this
Was just that:
An attempt.
It did not come naturally.

When there are stepchildren on both sides,
As there were in our case,
The equation
Is often messier, more potentially dangerous
For each side already
Has an intact culture.
Since I was already unnatural and older
It was my sullen culture
(The one that I had steadily grown accustomed to)
That was thrown to the wind.
As you might imagine

This is perhaps how it normally works out:
The woman's family
Defines the culture
Of the new family
If there is to be one.

It is true that

Simple things

Are often

The most

Confusing.

Like how much money you get for your birthday.

Or what the appropriate meal is for that birthday.

Philip and Katherine used to take me and two friends

(It was always two friends, never more, never less)

To the restaurant of my choosing.

There, over appetizers or desert

He would force me to recount the year

And make plans for the next.

But anyway, Rebecca

Found her strangled

At her desk

Below

Such that

If someone were

Sitting

At her desk

They would have

Kicked her.

The bruise marks

Were most shocking

Around her neck

Like she was wearing makeup

But there was no makeup.

You could rub it for days

And it would not come off.

Further, if you were

To rub it

For days

Her body

(It was not even her)

Would have

Begun to rot.

A dead body is stiff,

Actually lifeless

Heavy
As if in life
We are puppets
Silently lifted upward.
As if
In death
The strings are cut.

Her hair clung to her body, dense,
Wet seeming. It is terrible
That a body
Appears vulnerable,
Needs to be folded inward,
But it does.
Terrible really
That what we need
In life
Can only be given
In death.

Her past tense
Included the motive
For her murder.
That's the real body
The investigation works back towards.
Although the victim
Has nothing to say
Murder files are closed
At a higher rate
Than other crimes.
The motives are normally clearer
And connect us distinctly.

A crime of solution penetrates.
It doesn't matter what you grip
But motion is an old olive
Stuck on the floor;
Pits as eyes;
Foreign money makes foreign sounds.

8.

To find a mother dead
Is obviously
Unnatural

But it can be a growth experience.

Don't neglect the fact,
The absolute fact,
That it is only in the face of tragedy
That people can change.

I used to have first hand experience of this:
No one I knew
Had experienced a tragedy
And no one I knew
Had changed.

Though
Negatives cross and don't really make the case,
Is what used to be argued
To me
Across my head
And then I became flustered
But what I really wanted to know
Was if, in the face
Of her mother's death,
Rebecca would alter her self-centered ways;
If her tantrums would cease;
If the world would appear to her
To spin a little less
Around her middle finger:
I'll ask,
I'll send her a survey.
Of course, her world might be transformed
By itself,
By her pregnancy. Babies sometimes trump.

This leads me to a more motivational question:

How do people change?
Are they capable of it?
Perhaps we could get to the bottom of it
If we were only allowed
To more rigorously experiment
On our fellow man, which is why
I'm going to be closely following Rebecca
In the weeks immediately following
Her mother's death.
There will be updates.
I promise you,
There will be updates.

9.

I was able, however, to see the body myself.
The marks on the neck were blue and almost powdery
As if easily removable, but I knew
That they could not be removed
Even if they might be
Painted over.
I knew they would be painted over
And thus, the killer's hard work
Would go unnoticed,
But a killer's work is always present to us
(And killing by strangulation
Is incredibly hard work,
The soul fights against its egress
With every ounce of body
And the body weighs many ounces).
It is forced upon us
By the victim's future absence.
This made me glad:
I don't like to see hard work
Go unappreciated.
Everyone should receive his
(Or her)
Due.
That's sort of my motto in life.
I don't care if the due
Is received late or not
But I can't stand it
If it's not received at all.
I really need that due
To be served
If I am to sleep well at night.
On the other hand,
A murderer's due
Must remain hidden.
Thus, I didn't know how to feel.
Well, obviously, I had to feel sad
For my uncle and for Rebecca.
But how was I supposed to feel for myself?

That's always the question
Once you're done with the comforting
And the feelings for show:
You have to look deep in your soul
And see how you, the real you,
Really feels.

10.

The mystery was that
I did not know that
Sarah's death would be judged a suicide
Until the inspector said
Unequivocally,
For a fall of that magnitude,
With such and such
A trajectory
She would have had to
Jump slightly
Backward,
Sort of like
A little hop. Yes,
It appears
That she hopped
At the end.
Hence, I have a photograph
Of my wife dying;
Her last sight
Is my sight
Expressed
Equally unequivocally
In a photograph.

The death of your closest loved one
Is a blank page
That keeps on saying
It's full.

It turned out that our life, our apartment, our trips
Our sex, our ruts, our highs, our dishes
Weren't enough for Sarah,
Not nearly enough:
She wanted so much more
She couldn't even describe it
And her saying, proclaiming
That she was going to die
Was her only choice.

I know it's awful to say
But wouldn't it be nice
If we could just imagine
That everyone who died
Committed suicide?
Look no further.

We could say
It's all in our own hands:
Life, death
Whatever we choose.
Unfortunately, accidents happen,
Evil exists.
It is not all within
Our own hands.
If we make a choice
We need the world's infinite cooperation.
That's why there are so many attempted suicides,
So many.

11.

Whose is the third death?
There were two of us
But another must connect.
The intention of murder
(Even if suicidal murder)
And the accidental plunge
Are connected by the straight suicide.
The deciding person is not the dead body.
The intention of the person
Is internally connected
With the expectation of the body
And yet, is separated
By the precise moment of death;
Is separated
By precision
And yet, connects
Two categories of death.
In the fact that it splits,
That it separates,
Lies its ability to connect.

But what if the connection
Is false? That is, what if it
Is based
On false premises,
Assumptions, facts,
Would it still connect?
And if it didn't
Would this be due
To its own inabilities?
If it didn't
Could it
If it wanted to?

The third is most obviously
The suicide by knife
Of my aunt Katherine,
If you could even call her my aunt

After they got divorced.

Their divorce was a shock to her.
Philip came home from Tokyo
Exaggeratedly said,
I've never been happy.
Said he wanted a divorce
Quickly
Melissa encouraged him
To do it quickly.
My aunt got everything.
I mean everything
Even Philip's parents',
My grandparents',
Furniture;
Even their sideboard
From their years in China.

She lived through the years
Alone
Growing steadily crazier
Without speech

Katherine read reports of Philip's young wife.
Imagining them.
Calling her a bitch.
Mouthing the word *bitch*
In her sleep.
Contemplating awful things.
Contemplating her awful life.
She had never been anything as an adult
Other than Philip's wife.
Those are not skills that can transfer.
She took a painting class.
She focused on the fact
That she really screwed him in court.
She gave advice to women who were getting divorces:
Take them for all they're worth.
All they're worth is you, nothing more.
It should all be yours.

She had a complex scheme
Involving the realization
That Philip wanted to get divorced quickly,
And if you can wait
And if the lawyers are paid
From the same accounts
Anything is possible
(Plus, there was the fact that she threatened
To use certain accusations of homosexuality,
Of abuse, of money laundering...
She directed the young almost-divorcees
To learn some unexploited secrets
And threaten to exploit them.)
Thus, Philip came out of the legal affair
A much poorer man
But an unencumbered poorer man.
Thus, he came out.
I've already explored his failed marriage
To a blossoming artist.
Katherine had no such later failed marriage.
She grew out of speech.
She got *crazier and crazier*
According to various friends' reports;
An undiagnosed personality disorder.

They said she was bipolar,
That she drank to self-medicate;
A popular,
But not terribly effective, strategy.
We all told her that she should see a psychiatrist,
Anyone, a social-worker, an analyst, a life coach,
But unfortunately
It was a psychologist who supposedly
(At least in Katherine's mind)
Told Philip
That he was allowed to divorce Katherine,
That it was okay.
Although, I find it very hard to believe
That any therapist said this
(At least, it's easier to feel this way).

That said, I was kept in the dark
About their relationship
And like I said before
I really wasn't their son.

After her breakdown she did not so much read
As group words.
It wasn't a one to one ratio.
There were always patterns because there were no arguments.
There was no way through.
There were the piles, cairns of ideas I repeat.
She was deaf, became deaf,
But that was just an obvious expression of her personality.
Nothing came in, though she could continually repeat
A concept back to you in her monologue.
It was not so inner.
Everything was pushed out.
She was solid—*the bait*, she had heard and said, *Don't take the bait*.
It's advice that she needed to give.
She always needed to tell you something.
She needed to tell you how to live.
I loved her all the same.

12.

But what if the deaths
Really were accidents?
Not the events themselves
For we know
They were respectively
Strangled, plummeted, and knifed.
But what if the way they felt
Was an accident? That is,
What if
Behind purpose
There lies an accident?
You would be forced
To keep going back deeper
To arrive finally at purpose
And its soul mate, decision.
To ask:
Who was the self
Who chose this self?
Is to contemplate
The possibility
That we are all
Merely accidents.

13.

But what if I have a disease where I only see suicides?
That's a pretty good story at least.

I know you're going to
Think I'm crazy
But what if JFK
Committed suicide?

It would have had to have been
Another
Suicide by murder
But it's a possibility
That no one,
And I mean no one,
Has seriously looked into.
I think it's a possibility
That we should at least contemplate.
Think about what was happening at the time.
The world was imploding.
Let's just say he couldn't take it.
Let's just say he knew that he couldn't resign.
It was his parents dream.
It was his family's destiny.
It was a destiny that he had to evade
At any cost, even at the cost of his life.
Now, once he set the balls in motion
There would have been
No way to stop his murder.
He would have been resigned to it.
You can see the resignation in his wave.
You can see the history in his face.
That's what you're watching.
He knew he was going to die
Because he planned his own death.
Of course, I'm not privy
To how he did it.
That would require an extensive investigation.
But I can tell you

That almost no one
Or perhaps
Absolutely no one
Would have known about
His scheme
To evade this life
And rejoin forces
With his maker and with history.
He was President of the world's most powerful nation.
He could have had it done.
That's all I'm saying.
It's possible, goddammit, it is.

14.

The real question that I'm trying with my every fiber to understand

Is

How do we adapt

To the awful facts of the world?

It seems that we do.

My uncle is doing okay, if not great all the time.

Even I am okay, though never great.

It even seems important that we adapt

But sort of tragic too.

Wouldn't it be more ennobling to know

That we didn't adapt; that we couldn't;

That life wouldn't continue to go on

If X happened (like losing your wife),

But that's not the way life works.

Yes, life works.

It's a rather complicated engineering feat,

But it works.

And by working

I mean

Basically

We continue

And to continue

We adapt.

15.

Okay, fine, I don't really believe in suicide.
I killed them all, all three of them.
Not JFK, of course, but the others.
I killed my wife, my aunt, my step-aunt.
It was a family affair.

It was too much to be married.
Anyone can understand.
Anyone should understand.
Marriage is stifling.
It is always too early.
Our personal projects are never completed
And once we are married
They have
Run out of time.
I ran out of time.

The other thing was
That I hated how
She always
Said she was going to die.
It was like she owned death.
I was tired;
Dead tired
Of her.

Well, yes
Of her in general
But at that particular moment
I was tired of her
Trying to predict her own future.
It was like by giving control
To something else
Like a deterministic fate
She got to control everything
And that just wasn't cool.
We don't know what the future
Will bring.

That's the whole point of life.
And if we say we do
Then we should be taught a lesson.
That's why I think of myself as a teacher
And more specifically,
As a Kierkegaardian teacher.

First, the Kierkegaardian teacher shows (or takes) the student to the next sphere on this journey of becoming a self. Second, he meets the student where she is. And third, he uses indirect methods. The meeting of the three attributes, however, suggests a problem. For if the goal of a Kierkegaardian education is for the student to become a self, but one of the methods of the teacher is to meet the student where he is, it appears that the student must already have a self in order to be taught, but also that to learn we must have a self. That is, it appears that teaching is propaedeutic to selfhood, but that selfhood is propaedeutic to learning. The obvious way of reading (and therefore dissolving) this paradox is to note that the self that is the *goal* of a Kierkegaardian education is qualitatively different from the self that is met along the way by the teacher. That is, the teacher meets the student's self and guides him on a journey to become an authentic self; a self that has been chosen in its eternal validity and is transparent to itself and to God.

That is, the Kierkegaardian teacher
Kills his student.
At least, that's my interpretation of the matter.
Let me know what you think.

16.

I paid the couple to take our photograph.
I paid them to ask her to back up.
I planted a small avalanche.
The police report
Indicating that she had committed suicide
Was pure genius
But not mine.
I just thought it was going to be considered
An accident.
Accidents happen,
You know.
I would be depressed.
I would have to act depressed.
I don't like acting depressed.
Thus, I had a lot of reluctance towards
Going through with the plan
But once I saw the tremendous upside,
Once I really considered it
In the light of a streetlight
I knew I had to do it.

It's not really that difficult
To arrange
The falling of stones—
The photographer's true assistant.
The small avalanche
That absolutely had to
Remain a secret
And did:
A secret that roared wide
In my soul.
But the murderer
Must evade
The urge
To leave
Traces.
This is, in the end,
What separates

The murderer
From the artist.
The artist can't help
But leave art
For the world
To discover his intentions.
But if the murderer
Were to behave
Like this
The murderer
Would be in jail
And I had no intention
Of being arrested.
I certainly did not.
Jail was a most unappealing place
For its bad food,
Violence,
And primary color: lack of freedom.
No, that was not for me
So I had to keep
It to myself
As painful
As the bursting
Was meant to be.

17.

The accident and the essence
Are forever twined within me.

But then I just got on a roll
And knew what I had to do.

Therefore, Melissa. That was simple:
I hated her. I loved my uncle

And she
Humiliated him.

After they ruled
Sarah's death a suicide
By fall
I knew that I could
Move on to Philip's problem.
After all, Philip kept calling to complain about her
While I was in quoted mourning.
And there is, of course,
A certain confidence
That moves into one's soul
When one accomplishes a job well done.

When I think about it now
I kind of regret that Melissa
Wasn't the first.
Her life really was the most pathetic.

Look, all I did was
Pay someone, Bruce,
To say
That she had hired him
To strangle her.
I had a noose around his neck:
I had paid someone else
To give me information
Which would have sent

The eventual fake murderer/suicider
To jail for life
For certain. All he had to do
Was tell someone, a friend, anyone
That she had hired him
And then
Get lost
For the rest of his life. Well, that and kill her.

It was elaborate, Bruce was a bodybuilder
All ripples
And

I was skinny.

I did the killing
Via my plan (who cares
Where my hands actually were?)
But I needed someone else
To take the fall
Should the chips come
Down to the wire.

But why Katherine? Because
The miserable should not live.
After her divorce
She didn't do anything.
Yes, I mean
She did serve on a few committees
But nothing
That could serve
As a forward motion
In her soul.

In a lot of ways
I think that it was Philip
Who should be blamed
For her death.
It was he who left her
When she needed

Not to be left.
They were partners
In this life
And when they split
It was as if
Her life ended.
Thus, my decision
To kill Katherine
Was only formal,
Only the mortally tinged
Repeat
Of a song
That had already
Been played, already
Run its course.

18.

When you kill someone
You really have to
Recognize the fact that you
Might have to kill someone else.
These are chains of things that
Lead to other chains of things.
Murders lead to other murders.

It's like if you realize that a certain person's life
Isn't worth living
You might be forced
To realize
That a lot of other people's lives
Really aren't that important.
Killing people is all about realization,
About the implicit unimportance
Of our lives. It is this realization
That serves as the thread between men
Who have lost their wives.

No, I am what connects me and my uncle.
I am the thread between men.

But what connects is also what separates.
It's just a fact packed back in the concept of the thing.
You see, the thing in between, that is,
The thing that connects
Is also what separates
The two things
That the thing in between
Is between.
I am the thing in between
Separating men
While connecting them.
Was it a secret connection
Or a secret separation?
I wasn't entirely sure.
Maybe it was primarily its duality

That was a secret.
My duality as connector and separator,
My hypostasis,
Is what is hidden.
But the oddest part of all this
Is that I am also
What is connected.
I am connected to others
Who have lost their wives,
But I caused that loss.
Therefore, I really don't
Know how
To think about myself
And I think about myself
A lot.

19.

To summarize the third bloody scene:
The knife penetrated Katherine's heart.
I did this one myself.

Her death was cloaked in
The sadness of her life.
Wittgenstein once wrote, so seriously,
*The world of the happy man
Is a different one from that of the unhappy man.*
But I suppose he would have said
That their deaths are the same
And, of course, it is a theme
Of modern literature
Well, really, of all literature
That our deaths are the same.
This is not, strictly, true.
I watched her die.
The blood did not spurt out.
She relieved herself
Into the knife
More than I plunged.
Thus, I barely sweated
And I had earlier skipped working out.
I thought I was going to get a workout
But no workout was to be had.
Her life was, as they say,
Over before
It was over.
I merely shoved it along its way.
It was a foregone conclusion.
So, no, Wittgenstein's existentialism
Does not go far enough.
He should have also said,
*The death of the sad man
Is different from that of the happy man.*
That's very gendered
But people were more gendered
In general

At that time
So I don't really think
We can criticize him
For that.
Let's stick to criticizing him
For the first thing.
It's more substantive.
I'm sick of people
Being more worried
About tiny words
And less worried about
Actual states of affairs:
A woman is dead.
A sad woman is dead.
What does that mean?

That the absence of where to stand
Is where we stand
Nervously shifting position.

There is no doffing one's hat
Except the wish of
Bowing against

And now just
The single sharpened blade
Kept pointed away

After plunging
And, again, I wouldn't say
Blood came rushing

But, more correctly
Was there.
Blood was there

Not quickly
But intimately
Immanently

As the notes of class
Are readily visible
Upon first encounter.

As this knife is its own body.

That is, in effect
The problem with crime
Is having a body

And where to hide one's evidence
But within
The great lakes are nice

But wherever humans congregate
The precise bathymetry
Is known.

Thus, I must carry the blade
That so openly
Transformed

Accident into essence.
Openly and yet
No one saw

After such violence
After such drunkenness
The world is silent
And more the same color.
More of the same color.

But that's enough of the metaphysical,
The technical aspects must also be contemplated.
Thus, a knife must be sharpened
As one of its causes, materially and finally.
You can't just let it sit
And expect
A clean cut.
Anyone who has

Ever tried
To make a tomato sandwich
Knows this.
It's common knowledge.
And the body is firmer
Than a tomato.
Therefore, a dull knife
Will go in
But it will tear
And the entire task
Of killing
Will be
Ever so much more difficult
For the assailant.
That's why before I killed Katherine
I purchased a knife sharpener from Williams Sonoma.
I wanted the cut
(Or cuts if need be)
To be firm and precise.
An imprecise murder
Is sort of like
An imprecise stroke
In an otherwise beautiful artwork:
It just makes you cringe
A little bit
And I wanted to feel proud;
I wanted to feel like
That with these murders
I was walking,
No, marching,
Into the upper echelon of mankind.
Me, yes, me, silly little me
Above everyone else!
That was the moral
I wanted inflicted on society.

20.

Our desperateness
Can lead to revenge
Or
Nihilism.

After she died,
After I killed Sarah,
Life did not come back.
The projects of my life
Did not become mine. My life
Was not
Won;
It was lost.

Thus, belief
Was itself lost.
The emptiness
Led to practical necessity.
What followed
Became what was done.

The other murders
Followed
From the falling
From belief.

But, lo and behold,
Poetic language has also fallen. It has fallen
from our ordinary language's rigid
predication, the almost perspicuous feeling
of language, the absolute exchange values of
words, and the conventional use-value of
language. Indeed, if poetic language had not
fallen it would not exist, there would only be
our ordinary literal language.

Thus, poetry erupted
From my own wickedness.

Plato was right, art is dangerous
Or follows from dangerous circumstances,
From a malevolent character.

21.

What people don't really understand
Is the amount of work
That killing someone requires.
Hannah Arendt rather famously distinguished
Between Animal laborens and Homo faber;
That is, between the laborer and the creator
And while it might seem
That murder belongs in the category of the laborer,
For it is a sweaty task,
I would like to forthrightly claim
That it actually belongs
In the category of creation, of absolute creativity.
Other animals might kill one another
But man is the only species
That murders.
Thus, (the capacity to) murder
Is a necessary
But insufficient (for I would not leave out reason)
Condition
For an animal to be a human.
Thus, in my murders
I have succeeded in becoming
Just a little bit more human;
Perhaps I have even helped humanity
Progress
Just a little bit.
But even if you're not
Feeling this argument
There is another I might make:
The amount of planning and technical prowess
Involved in murdering someone
Is up there with all but the greatest art
And I'm talking Michelangelo here
Or perhaps Picasso,
But most art, most music, most poetry, most architecture
Is not nearly as evolved
In terms of its execution
And inherent level of craftsmanship

As a well-performed murder.
What I want to ask is whether
Mature capitalism is compatible with
This extremely delicate form of craftsmanship.
It is true, much of the world we purchase
Is artisanal
These days:
Look at the coffee;
Look at the backlash against globalization;
Look at the furniture; look at the locally produced,
Prepared, cured, turned, and fried foods.
Look at these things
And you will see
The coming of a land where
Every single thing is local and slow.
But it is equally true
That everyone
(And I mean you too)
Has used their money
To buy
Cheaper and cheaper goods.
They aren't even good anymore.
This situation forces me
To contemplate a world,
A future world
Where everything looks local
But nothing is:
This includes murder.
I may very well be
The last of the great craftsman murderers.
Do you know how much time
It took
To plan everything?
And that's not even thinking about
The money I spent.
You know, I had to go to Bryce Canyon
Before we went there
To plan it all out
And I couldn't go for a long time
Since that would have been suspicious

So I just went for the day
So I was on the plane all day
And I can't ever work that well on the plane
So it was basically an entire day wasted.
I'm not complaining
Mind you
I'm just trying to demonstrate
How much work I put into my murders.

22.

So, I've been thinking lately about killing Rebecca.
She's not very smart.
She thinks she's some kind of radical
And she has this unplanned baby
That she's going to raise to be
Some sort of radical tyrant, possessed of its own awfulness.
God, I can't stand it.
God, she's so flakey.

It also turned out that Rebecca did not change
In the face of her mother's death.
I was wondering if her own death would change her.
Of course, I couldn't really
Change her for her
But I held out the hope that her death might
Change her for me.
It's like this, if someone dies
Your perception of them
Gets warped.
You thought they were miserly
And you remember their generosity.
Oftentimes, it is like that,
Precisely the opposite
Of what we thought
During their lives.
It's like we feel guilty
For thinking
Ill of the dead.
I've never exactly experienced
This phenomenon. When my father died
I didn't know him well enough
To do anything
But shroud him
In a certain mystery,
Which is difficult enough
In this era of precise technologies.
So, my thought process now is that
If I kill Rebecca

I'll really be able to test
Whether one's perceptions
Change in death.
Because I really don't like her
And I'm surmising that I might
Like her
After she dies. That's my hypothesis
At least. Perhaps I could get a paper
Out of this experience.
Of course, the scientist in me
Recognizes that the fact
That it will be me
Who kills her
Will have a significant effect
On how I feel about her
After her death,
Which might nullify my results.

But I don't want to kill her now
Since she's having a rough patch
With her boyfriend
(On account of the baby).
I really don't want her boyfriend
To lose touch with her
After her death
For this would ruin my connection
With him
And he's a really cool guy.

23.

To be honest
I'm not really sure
How I'm going to kill Rebecca.
I also can't really tell
If killing
A sibling
Even if she is only
A surrogate sibling
Would be crossing the line.

Of course, there really aren't too many boundaries
I haven't crossed.
For Christ sakes, I killed my wife.
I assume that has changed my life
And the boundaries in my life.
I mean, obviously it did change my life:
I am no longer married,
But I assume
That at some point
I will feel guilty
And that this guilt will penetrate my soul.
Actually, that's the sort of thing
I go in for.
I'm really sort of waiting
To feel like this.
Of course, you're probably realizing now
That I just want to feel guilty
Because I accidentally killed my father
(My mother died in childbirth)
When I was four
By climbing into the car and accidentally
(Or was it subconsciously)
Putting it into drive.
I was never really allowed to feel guilty for that.

Parents (and surrogate parents)
Let this be a lesson to you:
Let your children feel guilty

About which
They should feel guilty.
If you don't
They might
End up
Killing people.

If your mom dies in childbirth
You should be allowed
To feel bad about it
Or you might
Kill your dad
And then,
When not allowed to feel bad about that,
You might just
Kill lots of other people
Including your wife and your aunts.

But back to the method
I will use to kill Rebecca:
She's sort of a pathetic radical, part of the New Left
That values expression over strategy.
That is, it's more important to her to
Express that you're on the right side of the argument
Than to show how you were going to win that argument.
I hate that shit.
It puts us so far back.
My main problem with her politics
Is that there's really not much
Politics in them.
When poststructuralist French philosophy
And identity politics converged
The subject just kind of evaporated,
Leaving it merely as a *transit point* for the discourses of critical theory.
This, in effect, left no subject who could take part in political action.
I want my method for killing her to intimately relate
To her righteous liberalism.
That's it: an evaporated subject
Is a dead subject.
I will kill Rebecca

Via evaporation.
Don't worry
I don't really
Know what that means
Either,
But I am very persistent.
I will figure it out.

Of course, do you think she'll just grow out of her politics?
If you let someone live
There's always the possibility
That they'll change
And given that she's going
To have a kid
The kid might change her
More than anything I could do.
On the other hand, if I kill her
That's really not a possibility.
She'll always be this static
Stupid liberal.
If she were smarter
I might think that
She had what it takes to change,
But she's dumb.
She has to die.
It's the next step.

24.

I dreamed that I was finally
Sentenced
To prison.
It would be such a relief
But I am seemingly not in
For such a relief.
No, I just live my life,
Think about the people
I have murdered
And kind of carry on
Like everyone else.
It's not like murderers don't have
To buy groceries or get their hair cut
Or do their laundry
Or pay their rent.
In fact, in my experience
The life of the murderer
After he (or she, although this is less likely)
Has murdered
Is much like the life
Of everyone else
Except for the fact
That he has murdered someone.
But if the murderer
Can just stop thinking
About this heinous act
He can go on to living a normal life.
On the other hand,
If I'm being honest with myself
I can honestly attest
To the fact
That murder
Doesn't really solve life's problems.
Life is still there
In all its haunting awfulness.

25.

I'm not even really sure
I understand
My own motives.
That is, the idea was
That if I could figure out
Why I murdered
Then I might understand
Why other people murdered.
Hence, all the talk about connections.
It is only what is connected
That can tell us what is the same.

All I wanted to do
All I really wanted
Was to be connected
With my fellow man.
How could I be more in tune
With my uncle?
If our lives
Were more similar
Was my answer
To all of life's questions.
That is, I would have to
Create the essence
Of the widower
Within each of us
And then connect those essences.
For a while
It worked.
We comforted each other.
But charades are
Not that comforting
After a few weeks.
After a while
I felt sick
And even further
From any fellow man
Than I had

Felt before.
Murder is not a very good way
To get closer
To a surrogate father figure.

Motive is normally hidden,
Psychologically so,
That or
We just keep it a secret
Because to give away
Why we do the most dangerous
Of tasks,
Why we commit
The most audacious crimes,
Would be to give away
Our souls
And we will not part with our souls
Without a good deal
Or the utter penetration of guilt.

But I am no sucker for guilt:
I don't buy its sources.
I don't feel its limbs
However much I'd like to.
And you have to remember that
Even if guilt should really hit you
And make you want to confess
You'd have to penetrate
Your own psychology
To really access that deeper motive.
That's not something I've
Really been able to do.
I've been trying
Every week,
Not so much with an analyst
But by myself:
I walk around
And try to ask myself
Why I do
What I do

But it's behind the screen
Of my own past.
Another movie is being shown:
A French film
That I can't stand.
I think I'll leave before
I get bored. But leaving before
Getting bored is also leaving
Before understanding, in advance
Of a broken mind;
Hence, suicide.
Had I thought of that option before?
Not before you brought it up.
But now that you mention it
It could be a nice death;
By my own hand
Without understanding,
In advance of it.
Those are my terms.

26.

It's funny
I've really come full circle:
From thinking
(And really needing to believe)
That everyone who died
Committed suicide
To knowing
That I killed
Many people
Who were close to me
To finally
Coming to the conclusion
That I really
Have to kill myself.

Is it a circular argument
If it's a narrative?
Do stories evade
This familiarly boring trap?
If so, I have to say
That I enjoy stories
Much more than arguments.
If not, arguments
Still have my vote.