

HOLY EQUATION

god bless this city, steel beamed and starless / exhaust and graffiti, a dirty glass forest / surrounded by faces, always a tourist / god bless this city, i've just gotta say this / whole thing is really, keeping me humble / the discount groceries and the timing belt trouble / i'm waking up early, i'm bussing the tables this whole thing is really, a hopeless equation / the math doesn't add up, there's holes in the fabric of dreams, you see right through / good luck to the lucky few, and god bless the rest of us fools / god bless my neighbor, her pitbulls barking / the boyfriend who robbed her, was searching for something / to ease that feeling, that mortal labor / god bless that woman, she always waves at / the old russian couple who walk in circles / bright colored kerchief and hard world smiles / the harshest language is one that fails to / give a person endless value / the math doesn't add up, there's holes in the fabric of dreams, you see right through / good luck to the lucky few, and god bless the rest of us / god bless this country, i cry about it / gold dust blooming from black gun powder / a proud explosion of hope and anger / god bless this whole mess, and god bless my neighbors / the purple bicycle kid rides home / his arms outstretched in the flight path soaring / a pickup swerves and honks his horn / if god exists, that math is holy

ANIMAL POEM

courage is a tired mom, milk crate and a cardboard sign / trying to find a story for her daughter / this is how the world exists, let me spin it for you kid / in a way that's easier to swallow / everyone is in a play, characters in constant pain / reaching for a way to taste some beauty / you can be someone who loves, or you can be somebody else / that's all there is, you breathe, then you're not breathing / lit up real neon bulb, everything is human love / everywhere you look there might be meaning / chaos is an ancient art, you can cut the world you want / out of any shit that you've been given / i don't know and tell me more, is a poem that never fails / spoken in the language of a lover / you can be someone who / moves, and tries to move somebody else / that's all there is, you die in broken laughter / none of it is / really fair, born into the atmosphere / breathing gold or stealing when you're hungry / everyone you come upon, holds a picture in their mind / ask them and they might just show you something / magpie on the dying grass, looking for a diamond / or some trash to build a temporary altar / everything's a turning wheel, it comes around, you're born, you feel / you leave the truth you stole for someone after high up silver howling bird, looking down to see the world / spinning out into the vast forever / flying is a faithful dance, animals suspended / at the place where understanding touches vapor / sorry and i'm listening, is a poem that's always been / beautiful enough to kill the darkness / you can be someone who loves, or you can be somebody else / i tell you kid, the first one is the hardest

PARADISE (IS IN THE MIND)

you know i keep the paper for some future rainy day / i put it in a pile with all the other things i save bottle tops and broken watches, rubber bands and creamer cartons / all that i might need tomorrow you never know and it gets hard / folding all the clothes, a growing pile upon the bed / tshirts from my travels, egypt, montreal, berlin / turning up the radio, the bbc, the world's so close / my old car is dead you know, and all those papers block the door / i can't find it, paradise, is in the mind, i just know it is

but i've been searching, for a lifetime / i pick my way through everything to find the ringing phone
pose a hundred questions hungry just to hear someone / another year tomorrow, no one here to send a
card to / books and bills and empty jars, a wave arising oh my god / i can't find it, paradise, is in the
mind, i just know it is / but i've been searching, for a lifetime / wasn't i alive among the pine trees and
the wind / running through the country trying to fight it / almost out of time and i still don't know
what it is / i don't have what i need to keep from dying / i can't find it, paradise, is in the mind, i just
know it is / but i've been searching, for a lifetime / you know i keep the paper for some future rainy day
i put it in a pile with all the other things i save / envelopes and advertisements, soup cans and folder
files / i keep looking, i can't find it, paradise, or something like it

BADLANDS

driving through the badlands, you were talking about time / all those strange formations making
shadows, you followed / the purple of the ages and the painted yellow lines / a photo never catches what
you're after, it's further / easy does it lead foot, you've got miles to get it right / look at all those silver
hubcaps spinning, the wind sends / a thousand birds in startled waves reversing through the sky / then
emptiness right after that explosion / sweet understanding, the sky is on fire above the badlands / and
when you least expect it, you're gonna find yourself traveling alone / sediment and sandstone, there's a
coyote on the rise / lonely as a figure in a painting, it's painful / you learn it all so slow, you'll be gone
before you're wise / but maybe it's the highway that will change you / sweet understanding, the sky is
on fire above the badlands / and when you least expect it, you're gonna find yourself traveling alone

HOUGH AVE, 1966

the plane touched down, cleveland ohio / i raised my collar to the cold / on the cab ride home, that song
was playing / don't let me be misunderstood / raised on soul, and running hungry / looking for, a more
perfect love / rock and roll, or god and country / or just somebody, to look at us / on the corner, where
you were laid out / still half smiling, from the dream / there's a reason, for the let down / and that song
means everything / good intentions, better liars / history waves its bloody hand / i saw you last in late
september / you were sleeping in your car again / human kindness, is overflowing / miss simone made
me believe / but i just don't know where to go now / that this whole place, lied to me / on the corner
where you struck out / in the echo of a scream / there's a reason, for the breakdown / and that song
means everything / it's just a song, quit your crying / there's men who fought for you to find it
reaching out past their violence / into some bright unknown / it's worth the cost, just to listen / that
door was locked, and now it isn't / an endless wall of televisions / and something bigger, still unfolding
on the corner, where you bled out / and the bells began to ring / there's a reason for those bells now
and that song means everything / on the corner, where you held out / for the future lives of kings
there's a reason for your death now / and that song means everything

AIRPLANE TO NOWHERE

gold trombone and broken drum / the wonder and the violence, the wonder and the violence / reaching out to touch someone / just how you learned in childhood, warm milk and dry blood / the winter rain, is blowing sideways / some other day, will find you smiling / pepper shaker, shattered plate / the way he kissed you after, good as any mother / made that anger fly away / airplane to nowhere, reeling in the ether / the winter rain, is blowing sideways / some other day, will find you smiling / starting over climbing up / from a dream that you were driving, out into the badlands / best intentions right up front but the dream was just a phantom, it never really happened / the winter rain, is blowing sideways some other day, will find you smiling / don't worry babe, this is kindness / a little pain, and then you're flying

WHITE GOOSE

june was just around the corner, the rain my only lover / a green so bright and tender, i got high enough to let it blow my mind / i was a kid in some past life, i shot a white goose flying south / crimson rose blooming across the empty wildness he fell out of / drunk with power, sick with pain, i laid in fields to feel something / small and lost and full of thanks, i guess the rain just made me think of it / of blue dragonflies on rubber, the cracked tires by the river / the pull of muddy water, hiding quick flashes of silver, it's alright / in just a minute i'll be fine, i got the meaning wrong again / took for granted everything i need to breathe and feel and live / the tender green, the violent wind, i want to let it make me change / born, then blown around, then dead, i guess the rain just made me think of it / five semis in the darkness, the stars that map the night shift / driving back to oregon on the burned out path the fire took, i could cry / only chimneys left alive, is there a lonelier sight / the ghost of everything we loved and everything we didn't fight for / the wild midnight forest, the kid, the gun, the white goose / the wind, the tender green, the summer rain just made me think of it / june was just around the corner, the rain my only lover / a green so bright and tender, i got high enough to let it blow my mind

MEANTIME

the family down the street moved out, that dad who slapped his kids around / then built a swing behind the house, that no one ever used / it's funny how we find it hard, to see into a tangled heart / the beautiful and brutal parts are beating in us too / and i'm gonna love you, in the meantime, til the gold light ends / in the madness, of real life, i promise to do my best / sometimes when the morning comes, i roll away from everyone / holding all that hurt me once, i know you know that truth / it's hard to keep the wheels attached, the everyday, the aftermath / the purple fading blue to black, when sunsets like a bruise / and i'm gonna love you, in the meantime, til the gold light ends / in the madness, of real life, i promise to do my best / the family down the street moved out, i wonder where they're living now they fixed it up, the swing is still, reaching in the wind / i reach for you something like that, eternally but never quite / becoming good, but god i'm trying, to be a better friend / and i'm gonna love you, in the meantime, til the gold light ends / in the madness, of real life, i promise to do my best

FLUORESCENCE IN THE FUTURE

saturday was endless, you became a prism bending / indigo across the ceiling, finally let yourself believe it / a mind to live inside, terror, boredom, kindness, flight / getting older all the time or is it just fluorescent lighting on your face / is there something else you meant to say / fear and disappointment, a forever kid just hoping / for a better movie version, of the future fact of dying / you arrive, and every room is just a mirror facing you / a carpet path, a shift in shadow, you can turn but you can never turn away / is there something else you meant to say / there's no way to avoid it, every engine has an end date / you are here and this is one day, another may be coming / lay your palm upon the table, every fortune you have handled / everything you loved and mangled, every thought you held so close your mind was changed / is there something else you meant to say / happiness is fragile, a breath of air through a window / maybe all the rest will help you hold the wind when it's against you / incredible explosion, ephemeral good feeling / close your eyes, it's only fleeting, don't forget the way it came on like a wave / is there something else you meant to say

THE HUMMING

you were trying to tell me something, i could not relate / language is a lover's problem, listening is pain everything is open baby, everything is safe / someday when we're older i'll remember / summer on the roof, the apples falling from the tree / reaching for each other in confused eternity / reverence and wonder, emptiness and need / someday when we're older i'll do better / at watching you becoming everything you will become / i just want to live inside the realness of it all / hold you til you know you are the reason i know love / someday when we're older i will tell you / everything i learned about the rain from watching you / every way i thought i couldn't change until you moved / every hour i spent just trying to kiss some kind of truth / someday when we're older i will linger / over all the moments of an ordinary life / orange moon so low we had to stop and rub our eyes / i was trying to tell you but i couldn't find the words / someday when we're older sitting quiet / everything will spread out like a history of love / cinema unfolding in the wake of us / what if that bright humming is all there ever was baby tell me something i can hear it