UNSOLICITED ADVICE
(JANUARY 2012)
UNSO LICI TED ADVICE

Dear Princess,
You are making your home in a new land
Filled with many sorts of Princes and Princesses.
Your compass may need some adjustment.

As a second daughter,
You are filled with strong convictions.
I have more than a little experience
With second daughters
Filled with convictions.

Manage your convictions carefully.
They may limit your line of sight.
For a while, ignore your sight completely.
Ignore your guidebooks,
And step back from your convictions.

Follow your nose.
Let it lead you onto the path of fresh smells,
Of newly turned earth.
Walk it, without opening your eyes.

You may stumble,
But you will not fall.
Once you have practiced this long enough,
You will find good companions on your path,
And you will open your eyes
And see clearly.
A Bone to Pick with Mr. Bly

I am reluctant to write these words,
As it seems unfair to criticize a skilled teacher
   Who cannot defend himself.
But the muddy teachings of those with poor reputations
   Are soon overlooked,
While those of a Master are perpetuated.

Science is not the cause of its misdirection.
By itself, it reveals, and blocks no other way.
The trouble is in the motivation of the practitioner.
No…
More often in the motives of those
   Who don’t really understand.

With sufficient humility
And deep feeling for the organism,
Science is subsumed into the Way.

Students of the Fox

You two have studied the fox
And know its tricks for staying
One jump ahead of trouble,

But more…

You two are willing to share
A few fox secrets with us,
To advise us in verse and design
On how to confuse our troubles away.

Wendell, when you told us
To practice resurrection
Had you seen Eva’s bright kitsune?
Inside the cabin, it was full of hungry hikers.
The smoky smells of the cooking made
my mouth water.
I ordered breaded boar cutlet for wolf,
Some rye bread soaked in a bucket of beer for stag,
And braised rabbit for me,
And with full hands made my way
back to the pines.

Once satisfied, wolf sure was ready
To follow our scent back to the aspens.
Stag and I just wanted to take a nap...

**FOLLOWING YOUNG WOLF**

Summer at last…
I could have sworn we were somewhere
south of Spearfish.
We emerged from the aspens.
With young wolf in the lead (like usual),
The old stag in the brush to my right,
We followed the ridgeline.
Wolf circled back whenever we got too far behind.
Then he caught a fresh scent
And took off for a grove of small pines,
Strange shrubby ones, branched to the ground.

That’s when I noticed a blaze on the trail
And a signpost ahead.
The sign was hard to make out,
The words not quite familiar.
But off in the distance past the pines
stood a large cabin.
My friends, reluctant, wouldn’t move
from the grove.
I signaled them to stay put and walked on ahead.
Making Good Time on the Jackrabbit Line

We crossed into Minnesota a while ago.
The bank thermometer read 2 below.
I’m in the back of the bus bouncing along,
Grateful our driver knows the way.

A light snow falls, but we’re making good time.
The hunting was good – this time.
They’re down beneath – frozen stiff
Two rabbits and pelts.

I tell the woman across the aisle
“Be thankful for that driver.
When I get home, I’ll call my friends.
I should throw a party…
…Where are you heading?”

And think to myself,
It’s time to honor my friends
And jackrabbits
Not just the ones I got
But all the others hidden in snow -
So fast, so quiet, or just plain lucky.
The Third Retreat

Tinkering with the balance so,
You’d think my life’s a stereo.

Movement and stillness
Chaos and contemplation
Keeping up and stepping back
And stepping back again
And again,
To readjust the signals
That mysteriously set their own levels.

The first retreat began to warm my chilled soul.
The second helped me set a course.
What about the third — is it too soon to say?

What seems clear now
In brilliant sun
May fade by that same sun.
But what seems rough rock
May become polished
In the tumblings
Of the life ahead.
THE TOOL BOX

We perceive discord
Surrounded by harmonies,
Each one resonating at its own frequency.
Of course…
How else could we perceive discord
Without knowing the nature of harmony?

So is there a mystical tool box
That holds the tuning forks
For each frequency under the Sun?

Can we accumulate them in our memories
And let them ring out
As we go through our days?

FIND YOURSELF A GOOD HORSE (TO ADAM)

In our youth, all things seem possible.
And maybe they are given enough time
And devotion.
But not all at once.

Conventional wisdom says to keep your two feet
Well planted.

Forget it.

Find yourself a good horse, one with bright eyes
And a friendly face.
Take the time to learn how to ride.
Learn your horse.
If you wake up early, eager,
Then you’re doin’ alright.

On horseback, you get a mobile vantage point,
Above the confusion.
The world will make new sense.
And you can move faster, but only one way at a time.
Metaphysical Ophthalmology

If seeing is believing,
What should I make
Of the 273 shimmering, jagged glass necklaces,
The 38 chain-saw blades that shine and snake,
    But never cut,
The 119 ceiling fans spinning slowly
    Somewhere off in the distance?

They all lie just beyond my reach.
My skin is impervious to them,
Shapeshifting foxfires, coming and going
    Whenever they please.
And when they go is the hardest part,
For as they depart they close the shades
Maintaining the gray till they are satisfied
    (With Heaven knows what).

If believing is seeing,
Perhaps it is only as faith is restored
That my eyesight returns.

Get Your Ticket at the Station

Read the last page of the Official Guide
The one in fugitive ink
Find yourself a spirit line
Get an excursion ticket
Walk down to the platform
The trains are running more often
Than you think

All Aboard!

My favorite line has seven stops
The station at the east end shines
In shades of blue
    (She always looks so good in blue)

At the next stop
There’s a shelter
Where the birds sing
All day long
After that
You cross a beautiful river
And a few sparks
Can fly up from the tracks
Stop for a spell if you’d like

Then on through the prairie
The plains of sage and flowers
It’s a great spot for a summer picnic

Soon, more trees appear
A good friend of mine
Lives by that flagstop

At last, the train pulls into the city
The bold city where there’s always music
And someone’s forever dancing

Ring the bell!
The train’s pulling in

On request, the train will run through
Up the winding grade
Up to the seventh stop

Some call it the Eagle’s Nest
Though I’ve never quite seen it
Off through the trees —
From that last stop
I’ve heard it’s a four-day hike
To get there
Look around –
We are not alone:
The redhot Miatas, Corvettes, Audi TTs,
The rumbling black Harleys,
The even noisier powerboats,
The condos in Vail,
Trophy hunting, in all its forms,
Those drug ads and their mounting profits,
Clear signs of mid-life crises,
So many desires to change our places
   In the scheme of things.

But does it really take a prophet mounting a peak
To see the collateral damage?
   (What a glib phrase, two words that reveal
    so little of the long litany that’s seen with
    compassion)
How can we buy our place
   In the scheme of things?
How long can we forget our place
   In the scheme of things?
What sense do we really need to find our places,
   To find our balance?
And can’t some good come of it?
TO HER BOYFRIEND

Your friend just breezed in
To the restaurant with the lucky name.
You couldn’t miss her –
Rusty, long hair that would make Vixen look twice,
Well-appointed in black and tan leather.

Here it is the middle of January,
And she orders the spicy eggplant dish to go.
If I were you, my friend,
I’d be looking for ways to bring back her summer,
Or you may be looking for a new spot to eat your meals.

MEDITATION III

Ambiguity defies perfection.
Defy perfection ambiguously.
Become whole.

At which moment does your hesitation
Become your wait?
**Scrapyard Dogs**

Is it time for a greener heaven?
As our mother recycles our flesh,
Might our souls be reknit the same?
Might they fly to a place
Where the spirits of moles, of worms,
And of all who work the land by hand
Slowly unravel them
And generate the stuff
To make the mysterious seeds
Of all new lives?

For one day,
Its gates should be guarded by the spirits
Of scrapyard dogs,
Who will then assume an honorary role
And open the gates to all.

---

**Travel Advisory**

A travel advisory has just been issued
To all mice in Black Earth County
Until further notice.

Alert level - ORANGE:
The Metropolitan Transit Authority
Has announced new late-night routes.
Be advised that travel on such buses
Is not recommended.
Exercise extreme caution.
Be alert to any suspicious passengers.
In many cities these late-night routes
Are known as Owl Service,
For obvious reasons.
A LITTLE RABBIT MAGIC  
(ZAO SHENG HAN, JING SHENG RE)

Walk in the closet  
Pull out that rabbit hat  
Put in on - tie it tight.  
Quick movements in the cold will seem too easy.  
Poof! The shivering cold disappears.

Sneak out the back door  
Watch the resting rabbits  
Find some shade - lie stretched out.  
Rabbit serenity is contagious.  
Poof! The sweltering heat disappears.

THE RISK OF HIDDEN LOVE

The regret that comes from seeing  
Secret loves destroyed  
Persists.

Unknowing allies will not assemble  
On your beloved’s behalf.

But tales of secret love,  
Even partly revealed,  
Have some enchanting powers.

Before your list of regrets  
Grows too long,  
Go share some tales -  
Take a chance...
School Delay

Startled, I stop chopping the icy snow
And look up at the big orange bus
That says, in no uncertain terms,
There’s a two-hour school delay.

It’s strange how some tasks
Change right into new ones
While others take so long
You hardly notice.

We climbed up Lishan;
Our goal was wild elms.
But most of the wildness was long departed,
Lifeless like the many sad pelts
The hawkers were trying to sell…
Except for the temple
Where some of the wildness remained
And I felt at home, but couldn’t say why.

My schooling was delayed for years.
Only now am I starting to understand.

An Unwelcome Call (...with apologies to Bob)

Hello.
-
Yes, but the name’s “Wee-dur-leck-ner.”
-
Yeah, I know.
And you are?
-
Ms. Badgeir – Hmm…
-
Yes, I got the registered letter.
You must be with Wolfe, Foxx & Badgeir.
Sure we can talk.
-
You did what?
-
Won a settlement from Acme for your client.
That’s great.
-
Yes, I sent him a note last fall.
No, he didn’t ask for my advice.
I thought I was doing him a favor…
Still, I don’t see where you’re going with this.

What?!!

He’s where?

In ICU at the University of Arizona Wildlife Care Clinic?
What happened?

After the settlement he did what?

No, I know you can’t disclose that.
But why are you after me?

…
So he finally got the bird.
Well, that’s what he wanted.

He’s in what?

In anaphylactic shock?
A severe allergy to Roadrunner?

(Oh, my…There goes my nest egg.)