Down Past the Ciderhouse
(October 2012)
And the Chorus Went...

In apples, lies a treasure,
Force it out to swell.
Cork it up, drink it down,
It goes down so well!
Pockets full of sixpence,
We don’t need that rye.
With scrumpy in our glasses,
Our joy will never die!
Yellow, Red and Purple

Cut yourself some ties
Cut some strips of hide
Cut yourself some ties
Cut some strips of cloth
Yellow, red and purple

Tie your stories together
For yourself and for your friends

Find some sweet tobacco
Tie it to a tree

Tie your flute together
Let it take you from the past
To the future and back again
Yellow, red and purple
Where Water Touches the Sky (for Welby)

Old water renews
It sings all day and all night
Enchanting the rocks

Sand cherry renews
The fragrance of fresh blooms
August is now May

Picking Plums (for Vida)

Through dust-coated leaves
Red plums hang ready to fall
Now, Grandmother smiles
Almost Noon

Ganesha, you’re always here
...and everywhere else?
Here before you, the arid air
Suggests an offering,
I’ll walk back to the car
And bring you a cluster of fine grapes,
Juicy and full.

His Retreat

there are no mirrors
in Bear’s den
wildflower pond
mirrors
Something's About to Change

The blind eye waits,
Murky, swirling, without iris,
Trapped in an eternal treasure prison...

Each night removed to perfect stillness,
Each morning taken from the lacy runner, reanimate,
First light glinting off its two pyritic inclusions,
Nearly microscopic,
Mute witness to the day's unfoldings
On a sinister hand,
Till now
Time Travel

I glanced at the clock this morning.
It read 8:18 and struck a chord
With a time almost too long ago to recall.
So I stopped, sat down, and thought hard about those days
When I left for school early so I’d be down by the station
To meet the special train scheduled to arrive at that very minute.

Its chain of commuter cars was broken
By a vestige of another time.
It came from the world of my father’s dreams
And was heading for a world he would escape one day.
I never did get onboard that train.

So much has changed in forty years.
And, now, the chain of blue jay calls is broken
By the song of a distant air horn.
Missed Calls

When you hear her voice,
in these days of coveted relationships,
of too quiet mornings, you say nothing.

I can tell from the flashing red light,
from the clicks and hums and silences,
no words articulated, no news, no source,
only cryptic signals.

Are you real and shy
or are these just misdirected machinations,
ex machina without the god?
Ill-fated Lovers (Libretto by E.T.S.)

At the next séance, I need to find Leoš.
There's some work to be done.
This man, who enchanted us with Liška and her kind,
Is clearly the right one for this job.

I found a new libretto, the ultimate romantic tragedy —
The tale of Lobo and Blanca
And how their love was their undoing,
At the hands of the one who was then reborn.

Who else could compose the score?
If Leoš won't take the commission
Perhaps he can take Lobo and Blanca out one night
And the three of them can run down a sleeping composer,
Who would then, by dream, be reborn.
Rough Climb (for Judith)

This trail goes from bad to worse
Through mud and briars
And now, on higher ground,
Sharp, red rocks.

This climb is not a path well trodden,
But the view from that ridge
Might take your breath away.

So prepare to think like a mountain goat
And take some chances with your balance
And jumping muscles.

Or pull out that eight-pound sledge,
Take on each obstacle with a focused mind,
A different set of muscles.
As those red rocks break, who knows
What veins of ore you might expose.

The choice is yours,
But if you act the goat,
You’re leaving that hammer right here.
On a Wing and a Prayer

Flying solo
Chasing a vision by the seat of my pants
On a wing and a prayer
With no one to guide me

I want the impossible
And I may get the impossible
What I get will not be the impossible
That I wanted

For isn’t that the elusive nature of desire?
Trans Canada Highway

Summer fruits gone.
At dawn, I prepare to leave the village of Tame Deer,
Where the doe brings her spotted son down to the diner to show off,
And three wolves knock over the bucket of ashes to frolic and roll,
Where the hungry bear, no more fruits to be had, breaks into the shack...

No looking back.
It’s time to head towards the village of Truth
On the long road west to Winnipeg.
Wind through the Aspens

Precisely at 5:48 pm,
Your break was over.
Roused from your rest,
Bedded in the brush,
You knew just how to vanish.
All I hear are the aspens now.
Will you sing for me?

He Called Again

Song so powerful
My prayers are answered today
Joyous in fresh wind
Made Her Mark

When Ursula showed me her den,
She pointed out
The scratch marks on the paneling.
I could see that they went
All the way up to the ceiling,
Through the roof an' into the sky.

Some Treasures are Guarded

If you find five amber beads,
You've been looking where you shouldn't.

You can try to cover your tracks,
But, if you're made of the stuff of this world,
Expect to be found out.
Hawthorns

The black cows graze silently around the battered thorny grove,
Red fruits spotted, browned leaves scarred.
A few barren trees hold their clean green leaves.
Will the next year bring more of the same?

A Very Temporary Situation

dead pheasant
gray gravel
north windgust
feathers fly

body shudders
Vesna came to see me once,
Years back.
She came from the east in her compact car;
Not in springtime, but instead,
When the haws were plump and red.
We walked to each one, tasting some,
And splitting the others open
Looking for her blessed maggots.

Then the day was done.
Her beautiful figure
And bags of infested fruit
Drove straight to the west,
At one with the setting sun.
Uncle Elmer

The blackbird turned back when he flew over the sleepy town. He came down behind the big hackberry tree And landed in a plum next to the patio behind her house. A few white kernels of corn waited under the white table, Where the shellers had been working all afternoon.

He dropped to the ground and picked one up. It was good. He took another.
A New Day

morning has broken
no doubts about it

a perfect clear sky
thermals arising

five vultures kettling
shapeshifting star

Becoming Phoenix

peacock china vase
the applewine bottle holds
an eternal flame