Hungry Like the Wolf
(November 2012)
Lamb Two Ways

When he saw on their online menu
That he could have "Lamb Two Ways,"
It dawned on him
That it might finally be worth
Taking a chance
On eating at a restaurant.
There, at least,
No one would steal his place
While he went to taste
The other carcass.
At the Edge of Town

Alit, a cross lights
A deserted parking lot
Just down from Sparky’s

Cold Wind

This morning
the stalks are dancing
offering their feathered plumes
to the sky
stiff and tall except the heads
preparing to fly
Together

I didn’t know your cousin was around.
Last night, a bit before 10,
Near the end of my prayers
Up in the dark room, under the comforter;
The one I just pulled out that morning,
I almost fell asleep.
But then I remembered to ask that the spark
Stay lit in all his healers,
And that’s when the howling began.
We closed our prayers together
And found warmth.

I wonder how big
Our congregation is.
The Inside Story

The lyrics of the songs of personal reconciliation
Are potently idiosyncratic.
If you know them well,
Then you know the lyricist inside out.

Paradise Lost?

When the massive earthenware honeypot was finally moved,
And the old stand taken apart,
She noticed the mouse on the floor.
Dark,
It did not move,
Flattened, candied.
Did it leave us in paradise or for paradise?
No time to ponder that now.
First, the scraper,
And, with each successive scrape,
An image was carved
Deeper and deeper into her heart.
Out Shopping

Behind the tall glass counter,
The lady with an accent
Showed me boxes of exquisite chocolates.
So I bought some,
Not knowing their price.

When she figured the exchange rate,
I gasped and gave them back.
Still, my money disappeared,
Till I found a windfall
In a secret wallet compartment.

Pleased, but not satisfied,
I walked out toward my car
And met a two–headed dog,
Thankful I had two hands
For scratching behind his ears.
Captured

My mother understands the inherent, raw power
Of a bushel of beets, blood red and muddy.
What other vegetable lies closer to the earthforce?

She has learned their ways.
The power preserved in sour brine and onion slivers
In the dark hold, below grade,
Persists for seasons on end.

And, if you're lucky,
Some will come to you.
Comfortable with You

When quiet incantations are the order of the day,
It’s best to get outside the house, to hit the trail.

Which ones have you been practicing?
Which ones are most comfortable with you?
  ...and not?

Where do they take you now?
  ...and how ’bout last time?

Do they come from your voice or another’s?
Do you sense when it’s time to stop and head back home?

I won’t ask you what happens next.
Mixed Messages (Reason #23)

You can bring Fido!
Memorize 392 pages of abnormal psychology.
Determine whether or not peanut butter sandwiches satisfy all four food groups.
Or do something fun.

It all started on a bus.
Our strength is not for hurting.
Hear & Be Clear:
Smart reasons to enroll, applying Science to fuel and feed our global society.
Picture yourself in Cytopia...
The Depths of Taste

The gifts of roses,
Of flashing jewels to be worn for all to see,
Or of little somethings that are not to be worn in the public eye,
Are known throughout this land as signs.

In my little world,
The gifts of certain foods (not just of chocolate)
Also signify.

So when I tasted a small piece
Of those bars you had made yesterday,
And carefully wrapped for me,
I hoped it was only out of friendship,
For their rich taste
Tried to take me beyond.
Meditation IX

The documentation
Of dis-integration
Is completely different
From its repair...
...still...

Past the Gate

The gate is ajar
Her hungers now satisfied
In peace, she enters

A long night over
A tearful Mistress relieved
Finally sleeping
On the Occasion of Your Canonization

I decided to take a walk, Kateri,
Down along the bridle path that follows the river,
Through the soft leaves of silver maple, elm, and cottonwood,
The little drifts that only partially cover even softer gray sands,
Where, in the sun, the snakes were warm,
And three young bluebirds, brothers perhaps,
Were almost playing, up in the branches.

An osprey circled past, carrying a small meal.
On the edge of a sandbar,
A swamp sparrow had finished its bath,
In beauty.

The walk had become a moving prayer.
The grasshoppers, in their black and orange robes,
Led the procession.

And then I saw it...
A single wahoo, all its leaves gone,
But with hundreds of pendulous pink ornaments,
Some with little orange fruits dangling,
Shining in the sunlight,
Giving its gifts so freely.

Around the bend, I met a young lady on a white mare,
And her scrappy pup licked my hand.

If that weren’t enough,
The next clump of roses bore scarlet hips
On blood-red, thorny stems, above flaming foliage...

The world, joyfully bleeding,
On this, your day, Kateri.
Opening Day

It feels like Opening Day.
The calendar page is torn off.
The wind is brisk.
The full moon is setting.

It is all an illusion.
The season on Love has no blacked-out days.
It is 24/7, 365.
Those with crossbows hunt side-by-side
        with the riflemen.
And I stepped out of the house, rifleless,
With no bow and only a few small charms.
Those who Strive to be First

They seek your strength.
They seek your drive.
They seek new packs of followers.
They study you and take.

But their desires filter your lessons.
They learn only the parts that they want.
And do not gain your trust,
Nor mine.
Two from the Coffeehouse

1. Express Train from Paris to Turin
   (An Idle Moment at The Café)

   No need to rush, I sip my mug of hot tea
   And savor a lemon blueberry scone,
   As the morning slowly unfolds around me.

   And then I see the golden eagle,
   Wings spread wide,
   Land atop the silver pot,
   While scarlet cups filled with espresso
   Sit trackside,
   As loden cars glide past.

   And one crazy passenger is compelled
   To break all the rules...
   For just one sip.

   Should I get up now from this comfortable spot
   At the corner table
   And break a few rules today?
II. An Old Souvenir

As I wait for the shop down the street to open,
I sit stirring this cup with an ancient spoon.
I examine its silver handle
And see that it’s from across the sea,
Its tip, flared to a scene of a lake and a sailboat
Honors souls lost long ago.
This cup has more of a poignant bite now
Than it did just moments ago,
Increasingly so, as I stir.
At almost noon,
I found myself walking the deer trail
Beyond any point I'd gone before.
It led to a shallow pond.
Now completely dry,
It was almost entirely covered in low, beige grasses
Surrounding a patch of black, sticky mud.

Picking my way toward the next pond,
One with water,
Three long-tailed pheasants flew up low
And straight away.

The next pond was quiet.
So a different path cut through a sea
Of warm indian grass.
Through it, I glided, in near silence,
Till I came to a strip of half-green reed canary.
Its deep leaves gave a crunch
With each new step,
And the resting doe was disturbed.
She walked deliberately to the next
Willow thicket and stopped.
I continued and crossed the dry creek.
Heading south, I soon was adrift
In a thousand waves of goldenrod heads,
Fluffy, soft, and brightly shaking,
Shining into the Sun.

And that's when I lost my desire
To go any farther.
Scent of a Woman

You loved the five-petalled rose,
Not the artifice of the breeders' craft,
But the roadside rose,
When washed clean of gray dust,
Its fragrance sweetly renewed and renewing.

You learned my secret about the rose,
And it became ours,
In those sweetly renewing hours
Before the dawn.
Not Counting Coup

I stepped into that lecture hall
A few minutes early,
To my left, my old right-hand man,
To my right, an easy exit.
As the room filled up, the she-wolf sat in front
And a young Menominee brave behind.
I felt safe.

All attention was focused on the speaker;
Whose untimely arrival filled
My unexpected departure.

He was in fine spirits,
And I could squeeze his hand in mine
And not think of it as counting coup.

Whether his good humor will keep him afloat
Is another matter entirely.
An Ending, Not Quite Unnoticed

A small click in the dark
Was all that marked the end.
A Deer Mouse had been stolen
From the old Red-tail.

It came inside for shelter and safety
On a cold night
And found both food and death.

The Red-tail was guarding the gate
When I returned after a visit to the woods.
All fluffed out, she was watching me
From a high branch,
And, in turn, was being watched
By a silent Crow.

The Mouse and Sage quietly await
The remainder of the day.
Tombeau Les Regrets

Now that the rains have come too late to push the tan
mushrooms up through the fallen leaves,
The acoustics in this hall are too good.
The melancholy strains of the violas da gamba
harken back to the prematurely warm days
of early spring that pushed the apple blossoms out into the freeze.

There was a time when such losses were noted
And butchering could be seen in the streets.

With our filled-up stores and virtual, but elusive, joys,
Does this music still resonate in our modern lives?
Will we ever be hungry like the wolves again?