A New Bureau of Reclamation
(January 2013)
Why Not?

Time to stand up
Find a crowd
Get their attention
Proclaim your innocence
(more or less, as the case may be)
Profess your faith
(in something bigger than yourself)
Explain your dreams
(from your heart, in plain words)
Express your frustrations
(without naming names)
One at a time
Reclaim your community
While reinventing yourself
With Willows?

take up jackhammers
help willow shoots break pavement
it’s time to take sides

Daring Muse

Incendiary or subtle,
Instantaneous or slow-acting,
The Muse does something, says something,
That provokes a response,
Almost a dare.

Whether intended or inadvertant,
You know it happened,
And the search for the right words
To set it right
Begins.
Sankalpa (for Betsy & Dave)

Ponder intention...
Imagine crystals...
Hard, sharp diamonds,
Cylindrical, dark tourmalines,
Tetrahedral fluorite, in violet,
Or an amorphous, cloudy opal
With its flashes of brilliance.

Some pull the world toward you.
Others extend you into Oneness.

Those that seem the clearest,
The most transparent,
May even allow you to disappear for a time.
But eventually the sunbeam will fall
At just the right angle,
And the full spectrum will fan out, unnoticed,
Till it meets just the right smooth surface
To show the world your intention.
After Dinner

There’s a quality in the air
A little smoke
A little sweet
And a little too hard to handle

Moonset West of Dallas

The deformed half of the end
of a brass socket wrench
slowly fell into the fire,
getting hotter and hotter,
more and more misshapen as it dropped,
till the last flaming sliver was consumed
and turned into a puff of smoke.
A Cottage behind the Spa

No longer ink black, I stir from my sleep
Far away from home, in a big white bed
Facing a hearth flanked by windows.
The white roses and pomegranates,
Now discernible on the other side,
All know that this is a lovers' cottage.

So I wait here in the peaceful dawn
For a wide-eyed doe to press her nose against the pane,
Wonder if there's a puma silent in my closet,
If a she-bear will break down this white door,
Or perhaps a soft mouse will find a crack among the roof tiles,
And find her way towards the warmth.
I'll be your stately buck,
Your silent lion,
Your sleepy bear;
Or the wee mouse with a down-filled nest.
Whatever form you wish to take,
No matter...

And if you arrive formless,
You must take me as I am.
There will come one moment
When I, too, will become
Formless.
Raindance Rocks (for Leslie)

Their work almost done,
The gray rock and the green rock
Struck up a short conversation.

I couldn’t make it out,
But I think she understood ’em well.
’Cause right after that
I lost my footing.
But instead of falling down,
I took flight
Till she brought me back home.
Mother & Daughter

rose granite stone rose
deep green granite stone iris
cold wind distant cranes

Prayer Excerpt

...although his ropes are thousands of miles long, they still tie him to trouble; mine may keep me out of trouble, yet I still want to cut them...

Sometime after the Rut

for a moment
a doe could be clearly seen
with a briarwood pipe
Four Lovely Ladies

at about eleven
the gray fog turned white
then quickly disappeared
as a low sun burned through
and showed the blue

every jay, chickadee, and junco began to call
celebrating a warm winter's day
four lovely ladies out to find a little lunch
emerged from the brush
softly stepping through moist tan leaves
attentive
and we had an unexpected conversation

now I'm hungry, too
Another Lesson from Fruit

Their buffet held too many temptations.
I wanted them all in the same hour.
But, when I found the rosy grapes
arranged like a bowl of Easter eggs,
I stepped back from my gluttony.

Each pink egg required a gentle touch,
enough force to pierce its skin
and release its fine nectar,
without cracking its cradled seeds.

A few minutes so engaged
was all it took.
By the time I was seventeen,
Flora and I were already deep in an affair.
I left home and took the next train east
To her wooded lair,
Where we could stroll together unobserved,
But for the chickadees who always got around.

And I could touch her softest parts,
Inhale all her moody scents,
And taste both her sweet fruits
And the aromatic numbing of that pungent toothache tree.
My lover left me presents,  
Ones that I might walk miles to find:  
Her pink slipper in the bog,  
Succulent asparagus spears among dry grasses,  
A field full of fat dewberries, well-armed beneath my knees,  
And little treasures under the shagbarks,  
Which I would hoard for special nights,  
When, with passionate strokes of my hammer,  
They would crack,  
Revealing their tender meats to be mixed with honey.
Alone (In a Strange House)

Incessant winds
Windows rattle
A clock ticks in another room
Unexpected developments
On a dark night in a small town

In a strange house
The oak floors crack
The walls won't share their stories now
Maybe they'll sing to the clockbeat
After the lights finally dim
After the Chase

a sudden chase
ended abruptly

she loped up the slope
content, with his rusty tail waving
like a standard
with each new stride, out
from the side of her mouth
The Lemon

Young and somewhat unsuspecting,
We bought someone else’s troubles
For 3600 bucks and change.
The boxy blue Volvo was temperamental in its turning.
But it’s amazing how much you can learn when things go wrong.

The adventures we carried on in it
Will keep turning for years,
Long after the scrap heap ~

The mouse caches in its door panels,
The autumn trek in fits and stops and starts
To find the precious seeds,
And the time at Black Dog
When we could hear the immaculate,
Powerful flock calling across the clear blue miles,
Just crossing the river, majestic,
In that thin zone between Heaven and Earth.
An Elk with Jade Eyes

when the elk with jade eyes
serenades through the pines
the birch-bark bull will know
and bugle back
two stags by the prairie stream
will cock their curious ears
and one old brown hart bellows so long
that it brings me to tears

A Place of Rest

The feisty badger’s old sett
is well maintained by her devoted lover:
A den of peace,
dark, with a whisp of lavender in the air,
a place of rest and healing,
nothing out of place.

I’m drawn to sleep there
to burrow deep into memories
of roses and mulch.
A quiet supper
A glass of wine, a salad, and thin spaghetti with a red clam sauce
Domaine Laroque from Carcassonne
Got a postcard from there, years ago
From my cousin, footloose (and almost free)
Now he’s settled down and taken on a new philosophy
Thanks to an enchantress

There was that night when he took me to see the opera
Rusalka was the enchantress
Her songs flew up into the night sky
Her lover took on a new philosophy
All choked up, we took the Metro back to his flat

Another glass of wine, my friend?
If You Can

Repair the broken hoop.
Expect delays and tribulations.
Crescent-like now,
Lift it up
And bring it towards your chest.
Make the two ends meet,
And, with your third hand,
Tie them together, matched ends
In a moist lashing.
Only when the hide is dry will the
New graft form.