



*Poems and Illustrations  
by Moe Armstrong*



**CENTER for  
PSYCHIATRIC  
REHABILITATION**

**Sargent College  
of Health and  
Rehabilitation Sciences  
Boston University**

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## *Foreword*

Moe is one of my favorite people on this planet. I have had the pleasure of working with Moe for more than six years, and in that time I have come to appreciate him at many levels. Moe is a tireless advocate, with the kind of focus and energy required for making changes in the mental health system. He is also a wonderful teacher and devotes many hours each week to helping staff, consumers, public officials, and community members to understand the nature of psychiatric disability and the nature of hope and recovery for people with mental illnesses. Moe is also a historian and willing to share his insights about transitions in American society from the 1960s to current. In another life, Moe had a rock and roll band that recorded for Warner Bros., promoted reggae and rock tours in Cuba, had a radio show, marketed records and musical acts, and was the state twist champion. More important than any of these roles and lives that Moe has had, he is a friend. Moe is always there with a smile and a kind word to help staff and consumers in the mental health system make it through the challenges that they face each day. He is the kind of goodwill ambassador who would strike up a conversation with a needy stranger on the street and then spend the rest of the day helping that stranger. He is the kind of person that you want to be with during the best of times and the worst of times.

This collection of poetry is a remarkable body of work. It says more about who Moe is, what he's done, and what his take on the world is than anything I can say in this foreword. I know that you will see the spirit, humor, and heart contained in this work and come to appreciate Moe for his abilities as a teacher, advocate, and all-around helpful person. More than that, I hope that you come to understand through his words why Moe is such a special friend to those of us who know him, and why he is one of my favorite people on the planet.

ANTHONY M. ZIPPLE, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
VINFEN CORPORATION, CAMBRIDGE, MA

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## *Preface*

These are poems about me. These are writings about my mental illness. I do see things differently than other people. That was the first question that I used to get asked with these insanity tests. "Do you see things that other people don't." I do. I also think differently.

I have learned to accept and celebrate my difference. There is still a lot of pain in my life. I am learning how to live with mental illness and teach other people what we have learned together about our mental illness. I do group, after group, after group. These educational support groups are my life's work. These poems are my life. I call them, MoePoe's. I hope you like them. This is glimpse of seven some months of my life.

I dedicate this book to Tony Zipple and LeRoy Spaniol. They invited me to Boston. I am grateful that I am here.

MOE ARMSTRONG  
BOSTON, MA

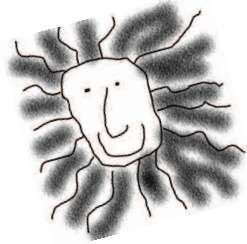
## *Living with an Insect*

Insects in July,  
flying around,  
at night

I want to,  
squash the,  
flying pest

Then, remember,  
we all have,  
to live

Looking closely,  
I see this insect,  
feels



## *Light Sunshine*

Never got,  
hot

Stayed cool,  
into July

Lisa complained,

Not hot enough

I reminded her

We could be,  
in Florida

The mornings,  
are fresh,  
in Boston

Always cool

Even these,  
days are,  
too hot,  
for me

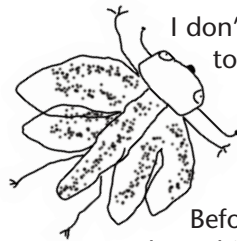
I go through,  
life

Looking for,  
perpetual spring

Yet, the seasons,  
do change

Could feel,  
the pain,  
before,  
squashed to  
death

I wouldn't,  
want to,  
feel that,  
pain



I don't want,  
to be squashed

The bug has,  
flown away

Before I'm,  
done thinking



### *Summer Rain*

Summer,  
brought July

There was,  
no way,  
to continue

Heat,  
so  
hot

Then,  
in this heat,  
the rain came

With big,  
crash,  
of thunder

I rode my,  
bike,  
through the,  
rain

Felt,  
good,  
drops,  
of,  
moisture

On my,  
face

Riding,  
to,  
Vinfen

Wet face,  
while I,  
work

### *Moist Heat*

Sitting,  
by my,  
window

First dawn,  
light comes,  
out

Rays of,  
sunshine

Pour,  
through,  
window,  
fan

The hum,  
of fan,  
keeps,  
me,  
calm

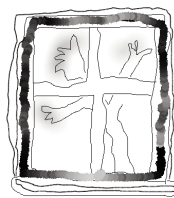
Through,  
the day

Through,  
the night  
When I,  
wake,  
up,  
turn on,  
computer

Watch,  
the sun,  
get brighter

Days get,  
hotter

This is really,  
summer



## *Splendid Green*

Never knew,  
plants could,  
be,  
so green

The mixture,  
of heavy rains,  
and bright,  
sunshine

Have brought,  
about,  
a green like,  
I've never,  
seen

Walk out back,  
on porch

BAM

Full in the face,  
green everywhere



## *Shooting in the Capitol*

Where is,  
the outrage,  
lack of,  
mental health,  
care,  
for red haired,  
Weston



Look,  
how much care,  
has gone into my,  
life,  
to succeed

I have had,  
every chance,  
to stabilize

And my sanity,  
has been,  
difficult

I'm left to live,  
with,  
no weird,  
movies,  
no drugs,  
no booze,  
no guns

Take something,  
which calms me

Learn about,  
how to live,  
again,  
with what I got,  
schizophrenia

Randy Weston,  
had none of this,  
did none of this

## *I Go On*

Never had,  
peace of mind

There were times,  
since the war

That I went,  
through life,  
with sometimes,  
bliss,  
day after day

Am I growing,  
older,  
and my uncertainty  
creeps in?

I should,  
have more,  
confidence

Left wondering,  
what to do,  
with my life



Finding my way,  
back to sanity,  
and stability

Every day,  
is a struggle

Finding peace  
of mind,  
happens in,  
moments,  
some days

Not all the time,  
forever



## *Summer Porch*

The roar,  
of traffic,  
goes on,  
down below,  
the porch

There is air,  
freshness,  
after hot and,  
humid days

The end,  
of July

More than,  
half way,  
through,  
the year

Some days,  
have gone,  
so slow

Then, a week,  
goes by

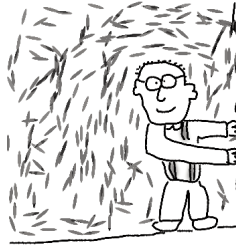
Next thing,  
I know

A month has,  
passed

This year,  
1998,  
was a time,  
of learning,  
to sit on,  
back porch

Feel the breeze,  
on my face,  
cool down from,  
the heat,  
after work

## *Only a Year Ago*



Last year,  
at this time

I was huddled,  
behind a wall

I had fallen apart

Was left to go,  
out,  
walk in the streets

Get my way back,  
to sanity

How did this,  
happen

How did I fall,  
apart,  
I am still not sure

Built myself back,  
through:

1. Some light activity

2. Some time spent,  
in conversation

And I am not over,  
the emotional,  
disorientation

I go on

Living with the new,  
person

## *Thinking Mental Health*

Morning prayer

Let me have,  
the clarity to see,  
what needs to,  
be done with,  
mental health

My mental health,  
society's mental,  
health

Can things,  
that work for,  
me,  
work for others

I have so much  
self doubt,  
about my ability,  
about my sanity

I keep working

My job is,  
go out,  
meet people,  
in the mental,  
health programs

Try to discover,  
who we are

What are the,  
needs of people,  
in need

Praying for clarity,  
to do this job



## *With the Rain*

It was a rainy day,  
in July

Heat had come,  
and gone

These were days,  
that were overcast,  
and still hot

I got through,  
this summer

Wasn't like,  
last summer

Today,  
by the time,  
the early morning,  
rain ended

I was kind of,  
choked up inside

Thinking about,  
people I had known

Places I had been

Memories,  
on a rainy day



## *A Day Goes By*

Was alone in a room,  
getting ready to go,  
out into world

Get ready to meet,  
more people

Go more places

From Marlboro,  
Massachusetts,  
to South Station

All through  
Boston and,  
around the area

A day of discovery,  
and ideas

First,  
riding around,  
on a bike,  
looking into  
corners of the city,  
meeting people,  
from our mental,  
health programs,  
on the streets,  
in the city

Then,  
driving car out,  
on the Mass Turnpike,  
for a meeting discussing,  
how to get people off,  
booze and drugs

The days are,  
fast and short

Before I know it,  
a week has gone by

## *Flipped Out*

How happy,  
I was,  
before my,  
first break

Kind of a,  
fresh kid,  
from the,  
midwest



Dreaming,  
kind of,  
guy

I still have moments,  
when I can,  
be,  
in my room or,  
in the country

Alone, at peace

Reading,  
quiet

Then, I am,  
brought back

I am Moe  
I am mentally ill

I have no life,  
but survival,  
from flipping,  
out

Day after day,  
I live with this

Could you?

## *Sometimes Too Much*

I've been,  
too sick for,  
this society

I have,  
rage

Lucky that,  
I haven't,  
been,  
picked up,  
thrown in jail

Most people,  
haven't been,  
ready for me

I'm trying,  
to live,  
in the community

I'm terrified

I never know  
what I'm going,  
to feel like,  
any given hour

Sometimes, any,  
given minute

I can explode,  
or fall apart,  
in a second

I wish all this,  
would stop

It hasn't

What will happen

I don't know



## *Tanzanian Marriage In Cambridge*

The marriage,  
procession,  
with Tanzanian,  
women singing,  
following the,  
bride

African bright,  
cloth of colors,  
wrapped around,  
their heads

Moving in lines,  
moving in song

Bride dressed,  
in best white

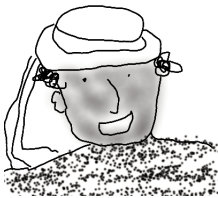
Cambridge style,  
wedding

Two different,  
African cultures

Africans from there  
Africans from here

I sat,  
drinking soda,  
pop

watching the,  
ceremony



## *Poetry*

Mind spun,  
out of control,  
now back in synch

Off into,  
straight away,  
day

Straight ahead

My life,  
is poetry,  
short phrases

That tumble out,  
of my head,  
and on to paper

Fought madness with poetry

Never knew,  
what I had,  
never knew,  
my mental illness

I just couldn't do,  
what other people did

Would fall apart

Thought this falling apart,  
was special about me

Didn't know,  
this is mental,  
illness

Yet,  
I got myself,  
back,  
through poetry

Organizing words,  
on paper

Organized words,  
in my head

## *The Way Out*

Conversation at,  
substance abuse,  
program,  
on Long Island

You,  
wanted to know

About life on,  
the outside

You didn't realize,  
you were outside

You could go where,  
you want

Here at Bay View Inn,  
to stop drinking,  
is freedom

Freedom is "inside"

First,  
get inside yourself,  
to stop drinking and,  
drugging

This is your chance,  
to live

Find out,  
who you are

What you can do

Live your life,  
clean and sober

Being in your,  
program,  
is an opportunity

To be free

## *What We're Like and, the Way You See Us*

Out on porches,  
reeling out,  
thoughts

You see ourselves,  
as unable to,  
leave

You think that,  
we stay in the,  
house,  
all day long

Look out windows,  
only to go back,  
to the porch

Smoking cigarettes,

Yet, inside our head,  
there is a light,  
burning bright light

Light that is always,  
lit

Searching for the way,  
to balance

We talk

We talk about how,  
to get to saneness

The pain of confusion,  
that each of us,  
experiences,  
Is never seen or,  
understood

We are seen as only,  
smoking cigarettes

## *Gone and Going*

To come so far,  
I wept that morning

I had been fast,  
asleep

To have my head,  
full of dreams

At least I'm dreaming,  
these nights in my sleep

I have picked myself out,  
of the dust

Brushed myself off

Started going in the,  
direction,  
of renewal

I wept that morning,  
life is so hard,  
sometimes

Psychiatric breaks,  
can last a long,  
time



I have come through,  
a lot

Still got a way to go



## *What's Out There*

Driving through,  
the desert

Light of the,  
day

Can see the,  
landscape,  
stretched out

There are,  
fields of shrubs,  
and bushes

Going through,  
where there doesn't,  
seem to be any life

The place is crawling,  
with the living

The desert means,  
that I can take time,  
to see,  
because,  
I have the space

To see each living thing,  
ants and bugs,  
lizards,  
some field mice,  
rabbits,  
scraggly stray dogs,  
and some occasional,  
coyotes

Then I,  
just have to,  
jump out of the car,  
and walk around

See this life up close



### *Bounced Back*

I was left standing,  
alone

Some people said,  
that I couldn't have,  
gone through,  
this schizophrenia,

Must have been,  
something else

Walking through,  
the daily haze

Hearing the rattling,  
and rustling

Seeing the mice,  
and cockroaches,  
which aren't there,  
moving off to the side

Psychiatrists and,  
psychologists,  
explaining to me

What I have,  
what I experience

What a life this is,  
what a life this has been

People explaining me,  
to me

While, my head,  
has a storm in it

There is no way,  
to get away from the pain

Stood up to face the fury

I'm still standing

### *Nuts on My Car*

Horse Chestnut,  
spiny green balls,  
called seeds

Fall on my car

Nature keeps trying,  
to cover me up

Imagine, I'll walk,  
out someday

And a tree from,  
the chestnut seeds,  
will be growing,  
right through my,  
car roof

The constellation,  
Hercules in the sky,  
looks over me

Sky and earth,  
I walk through,  
this world

My mind looking for,  
natural meaning

Trying to find,  
my place in nature

While nature,  
falls on me



### *Bog Walk*

Wish I was out,  
walking through,  
broad leafed,  
cattails

Following streams,  
bogs and woods,  
with bunchberry

Maybe looking hard,  
seeing a brown winged,  
teal,  
or northern pin tail,  
eating,  
lesser duck weed

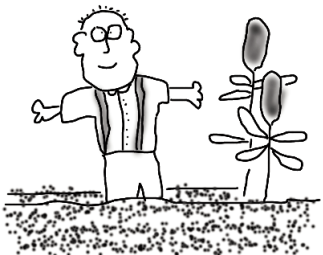
The beauty of the,  
Northeast isn't,  
the cities

Many forests have,  
been left and surround,  
these cities

Waiting for the day,  
people leave

Ducks, bogs and streams,  
also poised in wait

They know how to survive,  
without civilization



### *Old Hickory Forests*

Some day,  
I'll walk through,  
these forests,  
under the canopy,  
of hardwood branches

Finding ferns, and  
leaves

Looking for wild flowers,  
and screech owls

Then, these old opossums,  
which get into Boston

I will discover in,  
their native home

I will try to come out,  
on some abandoned,  
fields

Looking for moist meadows,  
filled with Little Bluestem  
Grass

Find some Red Cedars

Look for songbirds

Maybe sing a song,  
myself

*Humid and Hot*

Last blast,  
of summer

Hottest day,  
of July

Wasn't so hot,  
as humid

Sat in the,  
room,  
made phone calls,  
all morning

Turned on,  
air conditioner

Just to cool,  
down

Sweating through,  
the day

When I went out,  
of the house

There was that,  
Boston breeze

No breeze,  
all humid,  
in my room

Didn't know,  
there was a breeze

till I went out

*Get to Sleep*

Sleep came,  
so peacefully,  
last night

Didn't lay awake,  
didn't have,  
this restless fear

That keeps me,  
awake in,  
middle of night

Came home,  
so tired,  
couldn't stay up

Went to bed,  
eight thirty

Slept through  
the night till,  
four thirty,  
in the morning

Was with the quiet,  
of the morning

Zen music,  
by John Singer

Some poems

Feel rested like,  
I can go on,  
with my day

My sanity,  
has been a struggle

### *Fungus Out Front*

Alcohol inky,  
mushrooms,  
growing at,  
door step

You might,  
walk right,  
by them

I have walked,  
right by them

Didn't notice,  
the living,  
plants,  
at my feet

Thought to myself,  
"Oh, a fungus"

Not thinking,  
about how,  
this little plant

Is trying to make,  
a life for itself,  
in the flower box

### *Storm Moves Thru*

Woke with,  
such a,  
bang

There was,  
thunder in,  
the night

There was,  
lightening,  
crashing

Woke me up

Then, came,  
rain.

Light rustle,  
of rain against,  
the window

I was back to,  
sleep

### *Building Back*

Better than,  
I have ever had

Right now,  
my life is better

Broken down,  
and coming back,  
gained me,  
consistency

I gained,  
my life back,  
by being constant

Struggle to calm,  
the inner me

Struggle to have,  
peace and sleep

Struggle to keep,  
going through,  
the day

I take so many  
herbs to calm,  
me

I need something

I am mentally ill

Step by step

Day by day

I am building,  
myself back

*Shooting Holes  
In the Air*

Bombs in Kenya,  
missiles in,  
Afghanistan

Who will be safe

How long,  
before retaliation

We go on,  
with killing

The United States  
talks against  
terrorism,  
then, kills many  
in sanctioned  
military action

When is enough  
enough

How much blood,  
to feel satisfied

The missiles are,  
in the air

The bombs are,  
on the ground

*Leadbelly*

Jumping,  
Leadbelly,  
song,  
coming,  
at  
me

First thing,  
in the morning

About a man,  
going round,  
taking names

Just this one  
guy,  
on a guitar

What a difference,  
he made

Made more,  
music from,  
that voice and  
guitar

Than, the whole,  
electronic,  
orchestrated,  
wall of sound,  
that was to come,  
later in music

## *A Person*

All these people,  
speaking,  
for and about,  
me

Is a little hard,  
for me to take

Well, if me,  
feels this good,  
I can't have,  
schizophrenia

No congratulations,  
I have gotten,  
through,  
one more day

Learning to live,  
with schizophrenia,  
has not been easy

No congratulations

So I go on,  
trying to get,  
through the nights

So that I can be,  
stable during the days

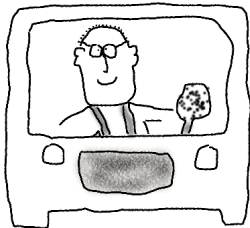
To turn on television,  
radio and read books

Find there are,  
whole groups of people,  
making a living out of,  
speaking about us

People with schizophrenia,  
can speak for ourselves

I am a person with,  
schizophrenia

I can speak for myself



## *City Daydream*

Wish I was,  
walking through,  
the countryside

Looking for,  
American,  
Elderberry

Letting the juice,  
run through,  
my mouth

Maybe catch,  
some,  
High Bush Blueberrys  
Low Bush Blueberrys

On a hot day,  
With my feet going,

I could be on,  
a trail

Looking for the berries

Then, I come on to,  
the bushes

Berries in my hand,  
then, in my mouth

There is so much,  
said,  
for learning how,  
to forage

Getting back,  
to the woods

### *Eats and Thoughts*

Milk and cookies

Under a tree,  
inside a cabin

Looking out,  
a window

This is the kind,  
of life

That I want to,  
lead

Milk and cookies

Writing some,  
poems

While listening,  
to music

Walking through,  
the forest

Looking for,  
plants and animals

The good life,  
never escaped,  
me



Milk and cookies,  
is how I kept,  
my sanity

### *\$120 a Month*

This hunch,  
of going,  
through the day,  
by getting,  
through the night

Get up,  
with a,  
thought,  
to write down

There are times,  
when I can't,  
sleep

I can write

Sitting around,  
the morning,  
of late August

I spend,  
almost \$120,  
on different herbs,

To put me to sleep

I need to get,  
knocked out,  
from the day

I probably always,  
did

The terror comes,  
at night

The days can be good

Still, to be able,  
to wake up  
fresh and not flipped,  
out

I have to go to sleep



## *Moths*

Waiting for the,  
Cabbage White Moth,  
to come back

Signaling the fall

Autumn doesn't,  
come along,  
until this moth,  
is out and flying,  
about

Cabbage White Moths,  
filled the kitchen,  
last year,  
end of summer,  
ate up my hops tea

They didn't seem,  
drowsy,  
as they circled through,  
the kitchen and living,  
room

Before the leaves,  
turn

Before there is frost,  
in the air

Comes the little,  
Cabbage White Moth

## *Rainy Moods*

The rain from,  
Hurricane Bonnie,  
came in drizzles

Supposed to be,  
the big storm

Light rain in,  
the morning

Thought about,  
when I once had

An office in,  
the Marine Corps,  
barracks

Listened to folk,  
music,  
and wrote poems,  
in 1964

There is so much,  
in my life that,  
has come and gone,  
and come back

I am writing right,  
through,  
this life I have

About the life I had

About the life I have

In a small room,  
writing poems,  
listening to folk music

Thirty five years later

### *No Relaxation*

My head filled,  
with so many,  
thoughts

There I was  
in the Dharma,  
room,  
at the Zen Center

Alone with,  
my mind

I could've,  
rested

Didn't doze,  
while meditating

Instead,  
I went to,  
flow

I thought, again

Why not,  
rest my mind

Instead,  
went to,  
thought,  
after thought

Tried to stop,  
the thinking

Couldn't go back to flow

So absorbed,  
in my thinking

That time just went past

With my head still,  
full of thoughts

I was beginning,  
the relaxing

### *Monk Later*

Bop in,  
the morning

Thelonious Monk

I'm getting sentimental,  
over you

"Gallop's Gallop"

Live at the "It"  
Club,  
1964 Los Angeles

When I was,  
running around,  
LA

Didn't know what,  
to look for

I could've,  
been at,  
this concert

Years, later,  
I got a CD,  
in Cambridge

In a space,  
in my head,  
on Sunday morning

No matter what,  
happens

We never miss out

We can always,  
catch up

Like, hear a concert,  
on this compact disk,  
34 years later

## *Nesting*

Last day in August

How the summer,  
has gone

First there was,  
May

Now there is,  
August

Light rain sprinkles,  
and overcast

These birds that had,  
the same nests,  
all summer

They seem restless

They might be,  
moving on

One nest,  
at a time,  
they build a,  
nest,  
and move on

They seem,  
to enjoy, the,  
nest they have,  
and the birds who,  
they are with



My summer ends,  
not by seasonal,  
temperature,  
change

But with birds,  
looking for a,  
new nest

## *Brought Together*

Learn by talking,  
with each,  
person sitting,  
around the table

So much said,  
in this time

Had to hang,  
on every word

This was a,  
focus group,  
made up,  
of mental health,  
consumers,  
about our mental health,  
programs

There were,  
conversations,  
and ideas

That I never,  
heard before

Sat here for,  
hours,  
listened to,  
the discussion

Got to know,  
people from,  
another point,  
of view

## *Snail*

Natural shapes,  
have some curves,  
that let the eye,  
wander

## *Black in the South*

Mance Lipscomb,  
bent over a guitar,  
playing out in front,  
of Texas feed store

Down by the,  
railroad station

Sharecropper,  
singer

These stories,  
and guitar runs,  
play on

Down in,  
Brazos valley

Noasota, Texas

Living with,  
his family

After he,  
worked in,  
fields

He was able,  
to make music

With the money,  
from music

Bought him  
a mule and,  
a better guitar

Mance Lipscomb,  
had a story,  
to tell



Around this  
winding,  
sloping,  
shape,  
of nature  
Finding,  
that there aren't,  
sharp corners

Houses that  
humans built,  
stand in contrast,  
to curves of  
a snail shell

House that,  
nature built,  
on the back of,  
the snail

Looking at,  
the little,  
to understand,  
the big

Natural world,  
helps me to,  
understand,  
authentic nature

## *At Home*

Learning to enjoy,  
where I'm at

Go for a walk,  
sit on a park,  
bench

The people,  
are gathered,  
around Central,  
Square

Finding out,  
who is there

Spending time,  
getting to,  
know this scene

Then, take a walk,  
down by the,  
Charles River

With a sketch,  
pad,  
in my hand

I draw out,  
people I have,  
seen

A goose waddling,  
past

Try to capture,  
the shape of,  
a tree,  
on my sketch pad

Life goes by,  
for me



## *Bird in Cambridge*

This little Chimney Swift,  
swoops down

The shape of,  
the wings

The way the,  
wings,  
slope back

All fits to the,  
character of,  
this bird

Fast flying arcs,  
brings,  
Chimney Swift  
back to rest,  
at the nest

Wouldn't be caught  
on a branch or  
wire

For this bird,  
it is only the nest,  
or nothing

There, right off,  
to my side

This bird swoops,  
down

I am left to wonder

Could I someday,  
fly like this

With wings that,  
slope back

## *The Past*

The night,  
was quiet,  
all night

There were,  
no stars

When I awoke,  
went for a walk

I thought  
the lightening,  
was only from,  
the heat,  
till the rain hit

With a crash,  
the sky opened,  
up

Ducking my  
head,  
I ran for cover,  
all the way,  
home

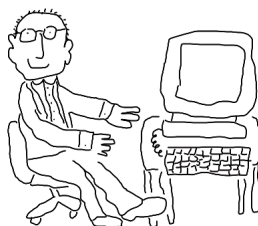
Not enough,  
rain to,  
splash up,  
my legs,  
my pants

Enough to sprinkle,  
my head

I ducked inside,  
my home,  
did a little dance,  
while I listened,  
to Emmy Lou Harris,  
music

Thought about my past

Then,  
let some other rain,  
fall inside my head



## *Clicking of the Keys*

In front of a computer,  
I can no longer,  
remember,  
what typing was,  
like

Scattered papers,  
all over the floor,  
I still seem to have

Yet, many of those,  
written thoughts,  
are now on,  
a computer disk

There were times  
that I felt lonely

Used to dread,  
the pain of waking

This is no longer,  
the case

I feel like I have,  
a job to do

Rebuild myself  
Rebuild others

I'm just recording,  
the changes,  
that I'm going through

Sitting in front of,  
a computer,  
writing words,  
about the life,  
I'm living

Places I have been

### *What I Do*

The nights,  
turned crisp

Beyond cool

So there I was,  
so comfortable

In my sleep

Never thought,  
that I would,  
have this experience,  
again

Sleeping almost,  
through the night,  
every night

Cool air wrapped,  
around me

I finally feel,  
like I am getting,  
better

I wake in the morning,  
say a pray of thanks

meditate

write this poem

### *Changes*

The Lance,  
Leaved Coreopsis,  
flowers,  
are withering

This Tickweed,  
is changing

Summer has,  
come to an,  
end

The flowers,  
are changing

For those,  
who take the,  
time to notice

Bright yellow,  
petals,  
are shrinking

The stem,  
is still strong

People going,  
to work,  
might not notice,  
Tickweed

Might not understand,  
the time to,  
harvest is now

Tickweed is changing

### *Train Station*

Two ragged folks,  
down and out,  
around the railroad,  
station

Nine PM,  
I'm here again,  
at night

These are,  
the kind of people,  
like I used to see,  
all the time,  
in those days of,  
the sixties

Now, in Boston,  
I catch a glimpse,  
of new street people,  
different era

They were up,  
all night,  
won't go to,  
the shelter

Hang out around,  
the railroad station

They were here,  
again,  
trying to spend,  
the night,  
South Station,  
Boston, Massachusetts

They will,  
spend this evening,  
living through,  
another night

While I head out,  
of town,  
on the train

### *Leaving Town*

The call  
for "Commuter Rail  
for Bridgewater,"

Clears out the,  
the South Station,  
this Sunday night

The headlines,  
about the President,  
scream out

Passengers pass by

On the train,  
there will probably  
be,  
discarded,  
newspapers

Keeping everybody,  
reminded,  
about Monica,  
Lewinsky

I'm on my way,  
to Washington

Heart of the storm

What will I see  
What will I learn

Talking about,  
mental health

In the midst,  
domestic,  
and economic,  
uncertainty

Next train out,  
my Amtrak train,  
the coast run,  
to Washington, DC

## *Get Away Day*

About the President

To censure,  
To impeach

I'll go to the,  
Smithsonian,  
instead of read these,  
newspapers

Catch a glimpse,  
of history longer,  
than today's headlines

I am too early,  
for museums

Find a garden off,  
to the side of traffic,  
in the shade of,  
Natural History Museum

Look for butterflies

Looking for,  
butterflies,  
on damp ground

Here in the heart,  
of Washington,  
traffic going under,  
Smithsonian Mall Tunnel

So there is a butterfly  
garden,  
with no butterflies,  
and lots of flowers

This is better than,  
than the newspaper

Surrounded by small trees,  
flowers and shrubs

The butterfly loves,  
the clover,  
the alfalfa

There are sweet grasses

The Big Blue Stem Grass,  
sprouting out,  
in clumps

A home for the butterfly

The butterflies,  
didn't come North,  
this year

I get to see their home,  
when they aren't,  
around

A bird's nest hidden,  
in a wood's edge,  
habitat

Probably small sparrow;  
found this place

There is whole village,  
of insects and,  
birds,  
living in this habitat

Carved out in,  
the middle of the city

Finding a way to survive

Each plant has distinct,  
defined beauty

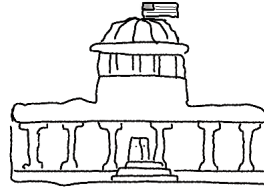
Black jack,  
bee lites down

The small pincers  
on the front of  
head,  
wiggles around,  
flower top

As I write,  
the world's smallest  
ant,  
crawls across,  
my notebook

I blow the ant,  
back on the grasses,  
with my breathe

I'm lost in the,  
flower garden



### *Capitol Power*

Thought I,  
would walk,  
to the Capitol

To see what,  
all the hoopla,  
is about

Channel Nine,  
Eyewitness News,  
parked out in,  
front

I read the,  
Washington Post,  
get a feel for,  
political climate

Start up the,  
steps,  
to doors,  
balconies and windows

Steer to the right,  
walk in to sit,  
House Chamber

See the House,  
in action

Experience,  
corridors of power

### *How to Raise a Butterfly?*

Have late blooming,  
plants

Butterflies need food,  
for long journeys

If you want butterflies,  
leave decaying plants

Butterflies love to,  
eat the mulch,  
from those dead plants

Don't use chemicals

Butterflies love the natural

A single flowering  
plant like,  
Summersweet Clethra,  
can go a long way,  
to keep butterflies,  
around

Make friends with butterflies

Live with plants

Go for walks,  
through plants,  
and butterflies

## *George Wallace Died*

In the shadow,  
of US Grant,  
statue at,  
Capitol steps

The day George,  
Wallace died.

On his horse,  
this General

Grant fought,  
for the union

In a stone's throw,  
from the Capitol

I'm reading a,  
newspaper,  
about the death,  
of George Wallace

I'm realizing,  
George Wallace,  
died today

He was part of,  
the reverberations,  
of the Civil War,  
still rolling through,  
this country

Grant wanted the,  
war over

He killed every,  
rebel soldier,  
possible

One of the last,  
of the rebels,  
died today

Yet, George Wallace changed

Embracing African,  
Americans,  
for votes

And, Teachers Unions,  
for better schools

Leading Alabama,  
back into the,  
nation

Back into the Union

The old rebel died,  
I read about his,  
death

In the shadow of,  
Grant's statue

Under the gaze  
of Grant staring out  
across the trees  
and the mall

Washington, DC  
September 14, 1998

## *Fought for the Union*

The bronze soldiers,  
of the civil war,  
pulling an artillery field,  
wagon

War monument,  
Washington, DC

The memories of,  
my own combat,  
history

Fighting the other,  
side,  
till death

Carrying off,  
those crying in pain,  
the wounded

My great grandfather,  
fought,  
for the Union

I always wondered

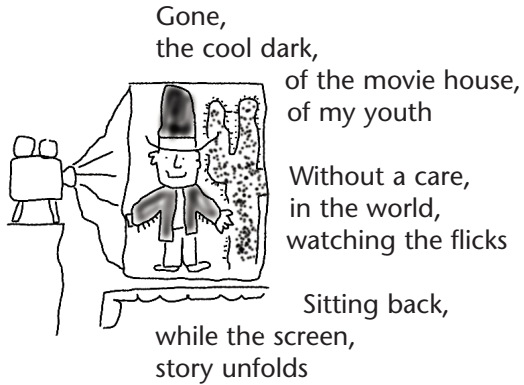
What was his story

While at this monument,  
I say a prayer

For all soldiers

And, for this old soldier,  
moe armstrong

## *Rialto Theater*



I watch some,  
cowboys,  
ride across,  
the sage

All lost up,  
in the moment

The great expanse,  
of the desert,  
moves across,  
the screen

I wasn't in the west

I grew up in,  
Illinois

Back in 1959,  
I was watching,  
these cowboy pictures

I'm thinking,  
"someday I'll live in the west."

## *Dan Emmett*

Diamond of the,  
river boats

Playing songs,  
of,  
Pelham and,  
Gilbert

Songs of people,  
enjoying themselves

The master,  
is gone

Songs of the carefree,  
life,  
not of work

The well dressed,  
dandies and ladies,  
sit in the front,  
rows,  
by the stage

The humming,  
and strumming

Going on

"Double shuffle"

"Hoe corn,  
dig potatoes"

"Scratching gravel"

Jump up and dance,  
like we got all,  
the time,  
to get our good times in

"Pigeon wing,"  
around

While this banjoist,  
plays

Pick up the feet,  
while we do this,  
dance

Pigeon wing

Riding on the river

Double shuffle,  
all the way

## *Washington, DC*

City that is always,  
in the news,  
in the movies,  
on the TV

Different view,  
from,  
the street level

Northeast architecture,  
Federal Style

That now I am familiar,  
with the buildings

I recognize the row houses,  
which have become offices

Have same peaked roofs,  
and rounded,  
window frames,  
as Federal style,  
in Boston

I'm moving through this,  
city,  
of monuments,  
and old buildings

## *Too Much Hassle*

This town,  
Washington, DC

Runs on,  
self importance

Doesn't think of,  
the outside world

The news from here,  
from Washington,  
keeps generating,  
excitement,  
for itself

The rest of us,  
are worried

When the power grab starts

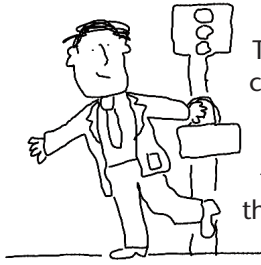
Will we have a job  
Will we have a home

Washington likes,  
the power conflicts

The rest of the country

Doesn't want this power trip

### *Observing*



The morning,  
commute

I was able,  
to watch,  
the day,  
unfold

People,  
in Washington,  
DC

People on top of,  
people

They will be,  
working all day,  
in the office,  
buildings

Returning home,  
tired at night

All day long,  
breathing canned,  
air,  
in those office buildings

Behind sealed,  
plate glass windows

Imagine,  
outdoors for them,  
these city dwellers,  
is riding,  
the metro

With overcoats,  
suits, ties

Women in heels

These are the riders,  
on inner city rails

### *It Was Luck*

Could I have,  
discovered

This path to,  
wellness,  
sanity,  
stability,  
sobriety

If I had lived,  
another life?

If I had gone,  
down another,  
path?

Instead,  
I was left to,  
flounder,  
and discover

At the same time!

These floundering,  
mistakes,  
I made with my,  
life

Were a help,  
in bringing,  
me to stability

Lucky I lived,  
long enough,  
to find out,  
a path

## *Human Safety Net*

The end of,  
this trip,  
to Washington, DC

September 15, 1998

This group of twenty,  
from across the country

We sat around,  
the table,  
and talked about,  
long term care,  
for people in need

Who would we,  
be working with

What will mental,  
health look like,  
five years from,  
now

This was only,  
the beginning,  
of understanding,  
there will be a need,  
for long term care

The trip had ended,  
that afternoon

We asked each other  
"How would we,  
like to be treated."

Should we break,  
down and  
fall apart

"Guarantee long term,  
compassionate,  
mental health care,"  
as the foundation,  
as a guarantee,  
was the answer

## *Boston Bypass*

Washington,  
DC,  
to Boston

I get to town,  
the next,  
morning

The Boston,  
morning,  
commute

Seen from,  
Amtrak

I sit in,  
the train

Train tracks,  
the Metroliner

Riding right,  
through,  
Route 128,  
traffic

Boston,  
backed up

Bumper to,  
bumper

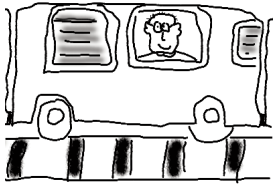
Imagine,  
people,  
go to work,  
every day,  
through this,  
traffic

I glide by,  
on the train

While, people,  
grind to work

## *Reversed*

Back in Boston,  
on the all night,  
Metroliner



New England,  
countryside,  
flashes by

First light of,  
dawn

This train,  
going by,  
as part of,  
American,  
landscape

Except,  
I'm on inside,  
looking out

Trying to think,  
how trains look,  
from the out side

I have stood,  
in a railway crossing

Watched trains,  
go by,  
seen the people,  
inside

Now, I am the,  
person,  
on the inside

In my compartment,  
on the pullman train

## *Realization*

We all,  
have to,  
get off,  
our high,  
horse

We are,  
capable,  
of,  
every mean,  
spirited thing,  
possible

There is,  
so little,  
time

To live

To be together

Be good,  
to each,  
other

Go with,  
goodness

Be kind

## *Death*

Alfredo Russo,  
died

Built himself,  
back from,  
homelessness

From drug addiction

From gang warfare

From streets of,  
Boston

Raised for decades,  
on the,  
streets

He got clean and,  
sober,  
to die from,  
brain cancer

## *Traveled Alone*

The airport,  
muzak,  
played

While I waited

Boarded,  
the plane

The guy who,  
was,  
to ride with,  
me,  
on this trip,  
to Las Vegas,  
Nevada

Guy who was on patrol,  
with me in Vietnam

He never came

I was alone

On this trip,  
to,  
Third Recon,  
Reunion

Las Vegas,  
Nevada

Logan Airport,  
Six AM

Remembering the,  
war,  
the people,  
who I served with,  
in Vietnam

Traveling alone,  
this morning,  
with thoughts and,  
memories,  
of the war

## *Could've*

The plane,  
I'm on,  
keeps going,  
to Los Angeles

I could stay,  
on the plane

No one would,  
know,  
I'm going on to LA

Then,  
get off and walk,  
down sunset strip,  
with a floppy,  
overcoat

Pocket full of poems

Looking at bright,  
lights

Walking through,  
Hollywood,  
looking for stars,  
just like I used to do

Instead,  
I will get off,  
this plane,  
in Ohio

Go to Las Vegas,  
instead of,  
Los Angeles

Walk in the,  
bright lights,  
big city,  
of Las Vegas

Without the,  
movie stars,  
of Los Angeles



### *James Whitcomb Riley Country*

The fields of,  
Indiana,  
are brown

Being harvested

Reminded,  
this is fall

We fly low,  
over the farms

Grey barns

White siding,  
on the houses

This Sunday,  
morning,  
no one is,  
working

I see the,  
life below,  
is only seen by,  
the farm work,  
done

Not the people,  
working

Quiet Sunday,  
morning

Midwest,  
slice of life,  
America

Fields, fences,  
roads, farm,  
houses and barns

Seen from the airplane

### *Under the Lights*

In the Casinos

I'll be looking,  
for the new,  
Sally Rand,  
in Las Vegas

Fan dancer

Like in,  
"Kings of Kings"

She held those,  
fans,  
parted them,  
just a little

Men gasped

Tonight, a new,  
generation of men,  
are gasping,  
around the casinos

Men in polyester,  
checked pants,  
are gasping  
in Las Vegas



Seductive dancers,  
are peeking out,  
shaking their  
feathers

These dancers used,  
to get men going

Now they got Viagra

Wonder if?

Because of Viagra,  
show attendance,  
will go down

Will men still need the fan dance

## *Lots of Lights*

The quiet of,  
Las Vegas,  
morning,  
before dawn

The clink,  
of change,  
pouring out,  
a slot machine

Bells ringing,  
Lights flashing

The mechanical,  
sounds,  
of the casinos

Slot machines  
Roulette wheels  
Keno

This early in,  
the morning

More fun to,  
see casino in,  
action

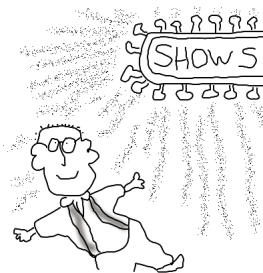
I go out,  
on the floor

Catch the,  
morning,  
gamblers

Drink some,  
tea at  
Starbucks

Walk around,  
see the lights,  
and the people.

Dig the scene



## *Watching Vegas*

Too many,  
new cars

Too much,  
money

Too much,  
high living

Here, you can get

Instant wealth  
In Las Vegas

24 hours a day

Signs flash

Bright shiny autos,  
roll by

Down Las Vegas,  
Boulevard

The Strip

Who has the  
most

All this glitter,  
doesn't buy,  
peace of mind

I'm happy looking,  
at the cross section,  
of humanity who comes,  
here

I don't spend a penny

### *On the Bench*

Strike up,  
conversation,  
with a woman,  
on the stone bench,  
outside the Westward Ho,  
Casino

She didn't,  
strike it rich

Broke and,  
drunk in,  
the morning

Nice clothes,  
no money

A night of,  
losses

She tells me,  
there's a tent,  
city,  
where she can live

She can,  
wait through the,  
night until she,  
is sober

I say good-bye,  
walk into the,  
casino lights,  
and street lights

on to the sidewalk

### *At the Table*

She nervously,  
strokes her,  
hair

As he plays,  
Poker

At the table,  
the cards,  
flip over

He seems,  
to be losing

She tugs and,  
tussles,  
her hair,  
over and over

As if to say,  
we must be,  
going

They stay,

He continues,  
to lose

## *On Vacation*

She was,  
thin

He was,  
fat

They came,  
from Kansas

They are here,  
in  
Las Vegas, Nevada

They go,  
down the strip

They go,  
into one casino,  
after another

I wonder

Does she keep,  
herself thin

So he can

Spend what he,  
wants

Eat what he wants

While she goes,  
on by his side

Living without



## *Macumba*

Black Leopard  
left alone,  
when his master,  
died

Had to be reached

Roy,  
a lone man,  
got in the cage

Sat still with,  
the leopard

Until they,  
connected

Thought about,  
why can't people,  
go to where the,  
other person is

Sit still,  
until they connect

Then, spend every,  
waking moment,  
with the each other

Spending time,  
with the each other,  
can be,  
a sense of enjoyment

Alone, with the,  
other person

There is a bond,  
that comes over,  
time,  
of being together

Learned this from,  
these animal lovers

## *Secret Garden*

Stripped,  
white tiger

Uses the,  
stripes,  
to hide,  
in the bush

He can run,  
after his game

Here at the,  
Secret Garden,  
Las Vegas, Nevada

The animals have,  
everything to eat

I am a like a small  
child,  
filled with wonder

Each living space,  
for the animals

Filled with trees,  
and grass

I can get up close,  
look them in the eye

What a wonderful,  
world

What a way to spend,  
the afternoon

Romping with tigers,  
lions, elephants and  
dolphins at,  
the Secret Garden



## *Life on Streets*

*Consumer who I met in Vegas*

Here in Las Vegas,  
I pick up cans

I make two hundred  
dollars,  
extra a month, on top,  
of social security

I live around the edge,  
of the strip

My shopping cart,  
filled,  
with cans in,  
plastic bags

I head down,  
to get my money

Some social,  
security

Some cans

I have enough,  
to call this life

Living

## *Waiting for a Bus*

Three mental health,  
consumers,  
waiting for a bus

I go talk to them

They take me,  
down town,  
Las Vegas

Show me apartment,  
building in stucco,  
balcony out front

"Corner apartment  
that's where I live"

"\$150 per month"

"I live down below,  
same rent"

"Lived here three years"

"Work for tips lifting,  
baggage  
in the casinos"

Spending free time,  
at the Salvation Army

"Best substance abuse  
program in town"

I go back to the strip

Meet more people,  
and look around

## *Stayed Behind*

*Dedicated to those who stayed behind*

We came,  
to town

Las Vegas

Looking to,  
get rich

We lost,  
what we,  
had

I ended,  
up,  
a drunk

She's working,  
in the casinos

There is,  
a way,  
for me  
to get out,  
of here

But, I never,  
seem to find it

*At the ATM*

The look of,  
sadness,  
in his eyes

He lost everything

Was at,  
the ATM,  
going for more,  
money

He thought,  
that getting,  
more money,  
would help,  
him out

Help him,  
out of debt

He was losing

He lost some more

Everybody is losing

If people won

There wouldn't be,  
Las Vegas

*Under the Glitter*

The late night,  
gamblers

Still going,  
on

In the middle,  
of the night

Going to bed,  
late

Waking up,  
early

People come,  
to this town,  
to get rich

Gamble away,  
all their money

And spend, extra

Yet, I don't have  
enough,  
money,  
for restaurants

I can't understand

What do  
all these,  
people,  
do for work?

That they can afford,  
to live like this

*Home Before Daylight*

Las Vegas,  
before,  
dawn

The last lights,  
of the,  
Starlight Casino

Cool air,  
desert morning

Guy and his,  
girl,  
walking down,  
the street,  
in front of me

He is slumped,  
over

Hard night

All night

They are,  
winding,  
their way back

To a hotel room,  
on the strip

He walks ahead,  
she walks behind

As the sun,  
comes up,  
the lights,  
on the strip,  
go down

Day light happens,  
right in front of,  
Starlight Casino

*Another Life*

Two drunks,  
on the street

One drunk,  
patting the other,  
on the back

Bent over,  
a curb

Up all night,  
on a bender

Waiting to sleep,  
it off

They have come,  
to comfort each,  
other

They know that  
they can't sleep,  
out like this,  
out on the streets,  
in the night,  
or they get busted

They just stay  
sitting on a curb,  
off in the shadows,  
away from the lights,  
of Las Vegas

Looking out for each other

Until daylight,  
when they can sleep,  
in a park

## *In Between*

In between,  
trips to the strip

I hang out,  
at the Third Recon,  
Vietnam war reunion

Meet guys,  
who I might,  
have known

Look for faces,  
I might remember

We have all,  
grown older

So much older

In our time,  
we seemed so young

I thought that we,  
would never age

Everytime we get,  
back together

We look more tired

The war took a lot,  
out of us

We saw too much

The years have taken,  
a lot out of us

We are different from,  
the other people who,  
never went to Vietnam



## *Taxi*

I could,  
have been,  
driving taxi,  
in Las Vegas

Driving down,  
through the,  
night

Writing during,  
the day

Making a living,  
driving cab

Writing straight,  
through

Maybe, mystery novels,  
about casinos.

I could have been

A taxi driver,  
in Las Vegas

Small apartment,  
off to the,  
side of the,  
strip

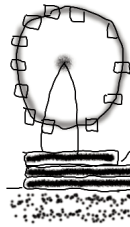
Keyboard and,  
typing

Finding characters,  
for the novels

In my rides,  
and my walking,  
down the strip

In search of a sketch

## *Carnival in Lawrence*



Old fashioned,  
ferris wheel

Small merry,  
go round

Fills the park,  
in Lawrence

Big fair,  
"Fall Harvest,  
Days,"  
for the residents

## *Back at Work in Boston*

I'm coming in,  
dead tired

From the road

From Lawrence

In the distance,  
just over,  
the hill,  
past Stoneham

I see the lights,  
of Boston

I realize,  
that I'm part of,  
big city America

Boston skyscrapers,  
just like Manhattan

I ride my bicycle,  
through these,  
buildings

Now, I'm in the,  
far distance,  
over six miles,  
from Boston

Looking at,  
the lights

Sighing,  
"Wow, I live there"

Guys trying,  
to knock over,  
milk bottles

Get their,  
girl friend,  
a stuffed animal

I ride by the park,  
as the school,  
across the street,  
gets out

Parents picking,  
up kids

Kids delay,  
ride home

Kids with eyes,  
lit up,  
waiting to get,  
over to the carnival

Not wanting,  
to go home

Not wanting,  
to leave,  
downtown Lawrence

## *Morning Quiet*

The stillness,  
of the mind

There is not,  
a sound

At five AM,  
I wake up

Before,  
the traffic

There is,  
a quiet,  
that I have,  
learned,  
to live,  
with

I withdraw,  
first thing,  
in the morning

Meditate and pray

So that I can,  
go out,  
during the day

I'll try not to,  
lose myself

I set aside,  
mornings for,  
rediscovery

The quiet,  
lets me think,  
and reorder,  
my mind

## *Boston Breeze*

The wind,  
blew,  
the flags

Straight out...

The wind,  
off the,  
Longfellow,  
Bridge

Was stiff

I was riding,  
my bicycle,  
against,  
this gust

There was,  
more,  
than,  
a breeze in,  
my face

This particular,  
day,  
I was out,  
with full gale,  
pushing against,  
me

Across,  
this bridge,  
and across,  
this town

## *Railroad Days*

Lining track,  
by the,  
railroad

Men working,  
in the,  
morning

The light,  
of lanterns

Started the,  
day

Those days,  
seem,  
gone

As I ride,  
the rails,  
to  
Washington



There is nobody,  
left

by the side,  
of the track

## *Washington DC Was*

This time,  
in coming here,  
did nothing for,  
me

There was no,  
where to go

Where I had not,  
been

I sat in the room,  
with crayons

Finished my,  
pictures

I enjoyed the,  
time

Thought why,  
there can't,  
be

More silent,  
moments

While my,  
head unwinds

So, I can,  
draw pictures

## *Conference*

There is this,  
conference

We sit around,  
discuss,  
what Medicaid,  
should look like

Accountability,  
in the system

Not enough,  
money,  
to go around

## *Alternative Services*

I suggest Peer,  
Education

Teaching those of us,  
with mental illness

What we have

How to live,  
with mental illness

Pull groups of,  
people with,  
mental illness,  
together

Let us share our,  
experiences,  
and learn from,  
each other

### *Hotels*

More gets done,  
by conversations

In the hallways

Than at the meetings

We spend time,  
brainstorming

Trying to figure,  
out what we can,  
do together

Advocates and,  
policy makers

Implementer of,  
policy

Under one roof,  
we have time,  
to get together

Maybe, we should,  
do this more often

Get all the people,  
who disagree

Rent a hotel for,  
a couple of days

Just spend time,  
with each other

Some problems,  
might begin,  
to iron out

### *Watching the Capitol*

From car window,  
I am reminded,  
that we are in,  
Washington

Through the,  
mist of rain,  
clouds

Across the,  
river

The Capitol,  
can be seen

We are in,  
the heart of,  
American decisions

In the distance,  
the white rotunda,  
sticks out,  
as the dusk,  
comes

I am able to see,  
the light is on

Congressional,  
session,  
going on,  
late tonight

### *Down Here*

"There's these  
guys"

"Blacks"

"Bad element"

"They live over  
there,  
just on the outside  
of Old Alexandria"

"Wouldn't want  
to leave your  
car,  
where they live"

"When they  
come over here,  
we take them in  
the alley"

"The police,  
beat them up"

"We take care  
of problems"

Taxi driver was,  
telling me

Late night in Virginia

This conversation,  
I called

"The Alexandria Solution"

Sad,  
we still treat  
each other  
this way

### *Looking*

"Voted to inquire,  
about impeachment"

Headlines,  
while I was in,  
Washington

My life is,  
saving lives

So far removed,  
from Congress

I'm the other side,  
of punishment

All the mistakes,  
I make everyday

Things I said,  
never wish I had said

Things done,  
never wish I had done

Stabilizing my,  
mental illness,  
depends on,  
forgiveness

I got to let myself,  
be forgiven

Learned to be,  
forgiving

Learn to go on

### *All Night Drizzle*

If this was winter,  
we would be,  
in trouble

This rain,  
doesn't stop

This could,  
be snow

The city would,  
stall shut

This fall,  
more moisture,  
and cooler air

All signaling,  
get ready for  
winter

We can plan  
ahead,  
all we want

If winter hits,  
with the moisture  
of the fall

And brutal cold,  
of a special winter

We are in trouble

### *Going Home*

Bags of stuff  
packed as,  
personal baggage,  
on the way out of,  
Logan Airport

So much,  
manufactured,  
clothes,  
toys,  
trinkets,  
electronics

Packed,  
as luggage,  
in the hand,  
over the shoulder,  
under the seat,  
in the overhead

As duffel bags

As cardboard boxes

Anyway to get,  
this stuff on the,  
plane

Everything  
they could,  
buy,  
was leaving,  
the United States

Going into,  
the Caribbean

## *Take Off*

On the tarmac,  
the Boston,  
skyline,  
stands out

State street,  
buildings,  
seen from afar

The whole,  
skyline seen,  
across the harbor

Shining lights,  
in pre dawn hours

We pull out

Take off

I'm able to,  
look back down

See the skyline,  
of Boston

One last time

Before Miami

## *Questions*

What will,  
Cuba,  
be like

What faces,  
will I remember

Will I know,  
how to get,  
around

I'm supposed to,  
meet Alexis,  
at the airport

I'm staying,  
outside of town

I'll try to get into,  
Habana

Find my way,  
into town

What will be the,  
transportation

Will the streets,  
still be safe

Will I be able,  
to dip into,  
the corner store,  
and buy something

Can I sit on,  
the streets and,  
have a conversation,  
in Habana

*Became in Boston*

Thinking of,  
Boston

How I have,  
learned to,  
love this city

Ride my,  
bicycle,  
through these,  
downtown,  
buildings

I think that I,  
can overcome,  
anything

Just by riding,  
my bicycle,  
through,  
downtown

In Boston,  
I stay,  
on the ground

I keep thinking  
about what,  
I want to be

Who,  
I have actually,  
become.

A mental health,  
outreach worker,  
who writes

Someone who is,  
mentally ill,  
who works

Somebody who,  
enjoys living,  
and writing

*To an Ex Wife*

Joannie,  
I'm sorry

Sorry that,  
you got me,  
after the war

After Vietnam

Sorry that,  
I was uptight,  
and angry,  
when we were,  
together

Years later,  
I'm with someone,  
in Cambridge

Naomi loves me,  
a great deal

I love her

She comes from,  
our generation,  
our times

I'm trying to,  
make our life,  
better,  
here in Cambridge

I wanted you to know,  
that I am doing OK

I'm continuing on

I'm sorry for what,  
I put you through

So many years ago

*Gershwin Special  
On the Airplane*

Big Broadway,  
show

The splashing,  
rhythms

George Gershwin,  
wrote the music

Ira Gershwin,  
wrote the words

There never was,  
this kind of mix,  
of every kind of,  
American music,  
all together,  
until Gershwin

Rhapsody in Blue,  
plays on

100 years since,  
the birth,  
of George Gershwin

Listening to hours,  
of Gershwin music

on the plane ride

*Ducked Inside*

Sun so,  
hot

Day,  
so still

Hard to believe,  
tropical storms,  
hit this,  
Florida coast

These storms,  
hit with a wallop

Things can,  
cool down,  
around here

I left Boston,  
in the fall air

Still feels like,  
summer here

The sunlight,  
strong

Can't find the,  
shade

People duck,  
inside,  
the airport

Ducking from,  
sun and heat

Just like,  
people duck,  
from the rain

## *Musical Daydream*

Brush strokes,  
on the drums

Hop the bop

Was out on,  
a wing

On an,  
airplane

When I  
got into,  
sky groove

Puffs of,  
clouds

Underneath

Piano music

Swings in,  
my head

I'm all inside,  
myself

My thoughts,  
are passing,  
through

This music,  
is letting,  
my mind roll

## *Bongo Time*

Crazy,  
man,  
crazy

I'm the,  
last of,  
the beatniks

Riding on,  
the horse,  
of my choice

This big  
silver,  
airplane

Love of life,

Digging,  
the scene

Swinging,  
through the,  
air

Now, don't,  
let this get,  
to you

Just about,  
the time,  
you thought

The beatniks,  
were gone

I pop up

Dig it

## *This Music*

Arturo Sandoval,  
comes on,  
the airplane,  
music channel

Blowing that horn

I heard him,  
at the,  
Late Show,  
Hotel Riviera

Habana, Cuba

Now, he lives,  
in the United,  
States

Blowing his horn

Has a Record  
called,  
"Hot House"

He is playing,  
what he could've,  
been playing,  
while in Cuba

Blow, man, blow

You got your ticket,  
out of Cuba

And, you know,  
how to blow,  
your horn

## *The Church Is Open*

Late at night,  
after Jose Marti,  
Airport

I'm walking,  
in Habana

There is,  
a church,  
close to hotel

People praying

Filled with forty,  
people

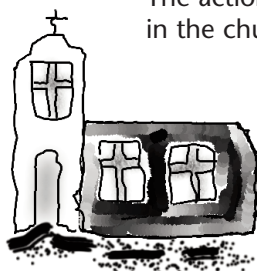
Praying  
Singing

I thought,  
how strange,  
people come here  
and see,  
the scarcity

See the lack,  
of material goods

Miss the people,  
in the church

The action is,  
in the church



## *Outside Habana*

Rush hour,  
traffic,  
sweeps by

Not bumper,  
to bumper

One by one

-I'm out by,  
the beach

Playa

Trying to work,  
my way,  
into Habana-

More cars,  
bicycles,  
motorcycles,  
than ever before

There is a steady,  
hum of,  
people going to,  
work

Traffic in the morning

I sit on a fence,  
looking across,  
the street

At the all night,  
burger joint,  
"Abierto 24 Horas"

I cross the,  
street

Take an up,  
close look,  
at the burger joint,  
maybe, I'll end up,  
here tonight,  
eating French fries

## *Alexis and I*

We discuss,  
theater by,  
people who,  
are deaf

I will meet,  
the director,  
in old Habana

Understand,  
what is,  
being done

How deaf people,  
see themselves,  
through drama

Take Alexis,  
with me

So he can write,  
plays about,  
people who are,  
mentally ill

We need our,  
own theater

People with,  
psychiatric conditions

We have a story,  
that is not just,  
disaster

We have hopes,  
We fall in love,  
We are people

Alexis and I,  
meet people

Talking mental health theater

### *In Cuba*

Pizza Cubana

Walked by,  
a person,  
eating pizza

Pizza in,  
Habana

I thought,  
that I might,  
stop

Eat a pizza

What is Cuba,  
without pizza

Stop and get,  
me a bit to eat

Have a conversation,  
with people gathered,  
around the pizza cart

Get to know the,  
people of Habana,

While eating  
Pizza

### *Cuban Prayer*

The church,  
down the,  
street,  
is open

People come,  
to the door

"Rejuvenate,  
our souls"

The sign outside,  
the church,  
door reads

I'm on the streets,  
passing by

Thinking,  
I'm in the need,  
of prayer

Say a pray,  
for the well,  
being of others

Well being of Cuba

Saying a pray,  
that people here,  
will rejuvenate,  
their health,  
and well being

And, I will rejuvenate,  
mine

*What?*

Watching,  
Cuban,  
movies

Drinking,  
Cuban,  
soft drinks

Smoking,  
Cuban,  
cigars

Walking in,  
Cuban,  
streets

Everything here,  
is Cuban

Completely,  
Cuban

*As I Walk By*

Selling plants,  
by the side,  
of the road

Pushcart,  
with iron,  
metal wheels

Cigarette cart,  
off to the side

One push,  
cart passes,  
another

Now, there's,  
cold soda,  
and beer

Being sold,  
everywhere

From,  
push carts by  
the side of,  
the road

Capitalism  
meets,  
Socialism

By the side,  
of the road

### *Cubanas y Cubanos*

The world,  
of Habana

Dark skinned,  
light skinned,  
mixed

People and,  
more people

Moving into,  
Habana

More people  
than,  
ever before

The musical,  
group Van Van,  
sang,  
“Habana can’t  
take any more”

Bicycles,  
automobiles,  
motorcycles

Filled with,  
people

On the move

I’m here,  
5:00 PM,  
rush hour

The streets,  
are filled,  
with traffic,  
and people

### *Two Strong Women*

They were,  
two strong,  
women

Catalina,  
stayed behind,  
when the revolution,  
swept over Cuba

She was left,  
with a little,  
apartment in,  
Buena Vista

Scrambling for food

Occupying,  
rebel soldier

Took over the,  
other apartment,  
in the building

Tried to boss,  
her daughter and,  
Catalina around

They took no,  
gruff

They lived in the,  
same building,  
for thirty more years

They saw the,  
Cuban Revolution,  
pass by

They believed in,  
the Revolution

They were,  
two strong,  
women

Isabel,  
the daughter,  
stayed with,  
her mother

Catalina,  
was a scientist

Developed medicine,  
with Che Guevara

She only got,  
paid,  
her salary

Made no extra money

Gave her time freely

Isabel,  
grew up,  
went to,  
the University,  
graduated

Did her volunteer,  
work in,  
Pinar del Rio

Came back,  
to Habana

Lived with,  
her mother

Back in the,  
small apartment,  
Habana, Cuba

They were,  
two strong women

One day,  
Catalina,  
was murdered

Isabel, left,  
the apartment

Went to live,  
in another house

Had a daughter

They live with,  
nothing

Material life,  
was dismantled,  
by the loss,  
of the Soviet Union

No food,  
at all

No transportation,  
at all  
Isabel,  
gives most of,  
her food to,  
daughter

Isa, grew thinner

Today,  
her daughter,  
has six years

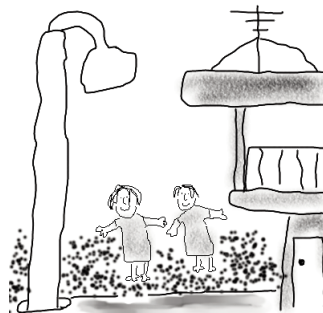
The years,  
of scarcity,  
still aren't,  
gone

Isabel, and,  
her daughter

Catalina, and  
her daughter

Two strong,  
women

Continue,  
to live with,  
the Cuban Revolution



## *Your Tender Eyes*

Your tender eyes  
Your tender care

You work in,  
Hospital,  
Cira Garcia

Healing the,  
psychiatrically,  
wounded

You pass by,  
you stop

You spend time,  
in conversation

Healing

Your tender eyes,  
look into the,  
humanity

See how you,  
touch,  
with your words

You ask your,  
questions

You discover their,  
answers

You are a real,  
doctor

You are healing

You see the suffering,  
You intervene,  
You reach out

As a psychiatrist,  
you are ahead,  
of your time

You care,  
without pretension

As a healer,  
you assist,  
the wounded

To live better

Your tender eyes

You see the world

You are present.  
with the people

You are needed

So, you help

## *A Delicious Yellow Fruit*

Mango juice,  
every morning,  
for all week

Mango juice,  
every night,  
for a week

I could be,  
called

El Mangero

Sip some juice,  
smoke a cigar

Watch Fidel,  
Castro on,  
television

Start and end,  
my day

Juice  
Water  
Cigar



### *Old Car In Habana*

Two guys,  
low slung,  
sitting in,  
a fifties Chevy

Cruises this,  
avenue,  
in Habana

They are looking,  
for pasajeros

Passengers

They make,  
this route,  
several times,  
a day

Belching black,  
oil from,  
their exhaust

They are trying,  
to get,  
extra pesos

While they,  
cruise the,  
avenue

Person on,  
the corner

Holds up a,  
finger

They stop

Gave the person,  
a ride,  
for pesos

### *Cuban World*

Sat waiting,  
for a bus

To take me,  
into Habana

The night has,  
started,  
to come in

There is a,  
mist,  
from afternoon,  
rain

I sit down,  
thinking

Hotel life,  
leaves me

Looking for,  
the stars,  
and rides,  
to Habana

Out of this,  
room,  
and into the,  
streets

Every face,  
and every,  
street corner

Different from,  
the United States



### *Morning Waking*

Sounds of,  
footsteps,  
on the way,  
to work,  
in the morning

A dog's bark

Rooster crowing

Someone,  
lights up cigarette,  
under the window

The smell of,  
boiling milk,  
for cafe con leche

Estoy en,  
el Campo

The countryside,  
in the tropics

Another Cuban,  
morning,  
begins

A truck starts

Has a hard time,  
maybe morning,  
humidity

Yesterday,  
I moved too fast,  
through this heat

I haven't learned,  
the tropical walk

I'll try to learn,  
the Cuban rhythm

### *At The Ready*

Lanky,  
Caribbean,  
walk

With a,  
swing,  
of the hips

That just,  
rolls

You have,  
to learn,  
this walk

to dance

This whole,  
population,  
of rolling,  
of walking,  
hips

Cubans,  
on the street

Start to swing,  
when,  
the music starts



## *Ten Days In Cuba*

The dog,  
barks

The guard,  
talks

Behind the,  
hotel,  
outside of,  
Habana, Cuba

I wake,  
before dawn

Just like always,  
wake up early

There is such,  
humidity,  
that my hotel,  
windows,  
are drenched,  
with moisture

Light a cigar

Think for a moment

I'm returning,  
to Naomi

To the United  
States

Ten days of,  
Cuba are

Coming to an end

I walked the,  
the streets

Talked to,  
the people

La Gente

I met Henri,  
another person,  
with schizophrenia

Met Concha,  
the psychiatrist,  
with eyes of,  
tenderness

Talked with,  
Isabel,  
remembered,  
past events

Started three,  
support groups

Met with the,  
mothers,  
of son's and,  
daughter's,  
with schizophrenia

Met with,  
mental health,  
professionals

All day long,  
every day,  
I was out and,  
around

In the clinics,  
and in the streets

Then,  
at the end of,  
the day,  
came home

Smoked a cigar

Called it a day

Today,  
this day,  
is my last day,  
in Cuba

*Slow Fall*

In Cambridge,  
the leaves,  
keep hanging,  
on

Never change to,  
autumn,  
red and yellow

Kind of yellow,  
green

They never quite,  
fall

They never quite,  
become autumn

The street cleaning,  
will go on,  
to December

Trying to get up,  
the leaves

The crisp air,  
wakes me up

Off to the Zen,  
Center

After traveling,  
in October

I come alive and,  
awake

Back in Cambridge

In the morning air

In the crisp morning air

*Another Planet*

Big snow storms,  
in Nebraska and,  
below zero

This La Nina,  
was supposed,  
to hit us,  
with snow

There is no,  
cold and snow

In the air

Here and now,  
in Boston

We are waiting,  
and don't know it

There is something,  
about the way,  
nature is acting

Almost like if,  
saying enough

"I've had enough,  
of you people,  
and your civilization."

Blizzards,  
in the North,  
and Hurricanes,  
in the South

This is almost,  
like being on,  
the face of,  
another planet

Nature is,  
reclaiming,  
this planet

*Anger Costs*

Praying,  
last night

Prayed,  
that all,  
would be,  
forgiven

And forgotten

Swept away,  
by and,  
with this,  
brain fever

I yelled,  
at you

Filled the,  
house with,  
anger

Threats and,  
terror

Now, I'm,  
paying,  
the price

Paying and,  
Praying

Praying today,  
to have the,  
pain of my,  
mistake

Go away

*Lives and Leaves*

Under the,  
trees,  
of Wernersville,  
State Hospital

The grounds,  
of this hospital,  
are filled,  
with fallen leaves

I'm sitting,  
on a bench

Looking up,  
to the mountain,  
behind the hospital

Behind this,  
big red brick,  
building

Thinking about  
the lives,  
that have passed,  
through here

Like these,  
fallen leaves

are....

now...

Scattered to,  
other parts,  
of Pennsylvania

*Life at Wernersville*

Corn fields,  
surround,  
this hospital

Once people,  
on the inside and,  
worked outside

In these,  
corn fields

There is no,  
returning to,  
times when,  
person could,  
stay here,  
forever

This day

I talk to one,  
woman

Twenty five,  
years ago

She was here,  
as a patient

She remembers,  
a staff person,  
who was here

Long ago,  
and still here, today

They talk with  
each other for,  
the first time,  
in twenty five years

*Here at Wernersville*

Uphill Yellow

Leaves,  
crunching,  
underneath,  
my feet

I was buried,  
in yellow

The whole,  
mountain,  
swallowed,  
me up

I was walking,  
uphill,  
sliding on,  
loose earth

There is,  
earth under,  
the leaves

I kept climbing,  
up the side,  
of this mountain

Going through,  
this yellow,  
autumn

Pennsylvania,  
autumn

*Mouse House*

Looking directly,  
into the home

Of the field,  
mouse

Down below,  
his home

In civilization

He would be,  
seen,  
as a rodent

An animal to,  
get rid of

Here in,  
these woods

He is a homemaker

Some left over,  
morsels of food,  
are outside his,  
doorway

In this hollow log

I'm lucky,  
that I stumble,  
on his nest

Not many,  
humans stumble

Past here

In the hills,  
of Wernersville

*Sitting In the Woods*

Cracked the,  
log,  
I was sitting on

Broke the branch

Moved to,  
rock ledge

Sat back down,  
to watch,  
the scenery,  
below

There I am,  
left to unwind

I go back,  
to the woods

To think things,  
through

There I am,  
taking the time,  
to get back,  
to nature

Look for some,  
small animals

Like birds,  
and field mice

To see how they,  
live in the middle,  
of this woodsy pocket

I have made for myself

In these,  
Pennsylvania woods

I get peace of mind

## *NAMI Ohio*

Speaking in,  
Ohio

We talk about,  
how to live,  
with,  
mental illness

How to live,  
with,  
someone who,  
is mentally ill

We discuss,  
sleep

We talk about,  
the rest,  
for this brain,  
fever

We talk about,  
planning our day,  
for living around,  
mental illness

We talk to,  
each other,  
about our hopes

Our hopes for,  
our brothers,  
our sisters,  
our sons,  
our daughters,  
ourselves

We plan and,  
brainstorm

How to live,  
with this,  
psychiatric condition

The day to day  
disillusionment,  
discouragement

In the end,  
there is,  
no cure

We can,  
not,  
cure anyone

We can only,  
work toward

Sanity

Stability

Sobriety

Go home,  
get some,  
sleep

Start again,  
the next day

## *Global Warming*

Light winter

No snow, yet

Went by,  
a willow tree,  
in Quincy

Filled with,  
green leaves

Only three days,  
before Christmas

Why have the,  
seasons changed

Are we so out,  
of step with nature

That we don't notice

That we don't ask

Has the whole,  
globe,  
changed

*All Over the World*

I work hard at,  
self monitoring,  
self maintenance

I'm learning to live,  
with my,  
psychiatric condition

Learning to live with  
this mental illness,  
like a physical,  
disability

Love myself  
Love my life

I can go,  
forward

Living with,  
this weirdness,  
in my head

Weirdness,  
that surfaces

And breaks out

Every once in,  
awhile

Be good to each,  
other

Care for each  
other

We,  
the mentally ill,  
are all over  
the world

We can live,  
with mental illness

*Working and Learning*

The life I got,  
is living in the,  
city

Thinking like,  
the country

I learned long,  
ago

From,  
living out in,  
mountains of,  
New Mexico

That before,  
human beings,  
there was,  
the earth

Interaction between,  
skies, land and water,  
can guide us

Watch the,  
way the wind,  
blows

Leaves drifting,  
up in swirls

The movement,  
of clouds

The way rain comes,  
and falls

The course of the stream

I work every day,  
in the heart of,  
the city in and around,  
Boston,  
with nature,  
as my teacher

## *Ties Make A Difference*



Two guys  
in stripped,  
shirts,  
wearing ties

Come down,  
the halls,  
of Northeastern,  
University

They meet,  
in the bathroom

Don't really,  
know each,  
other

They are just  
two guys,  
in stripped shirts,  
and ties

Who are coming,  
through this University,  
taking classes,  
and going to,  
come out of here,  
looking the same

Knowing how to dress

Having nice jobs

Thinking about careers

They are going,  
to school,  
while a conference,  
about how to,  
end homelessness

Goes on down,  
the hall

## *Real Movies*

Movies don't,  
have much,  
about,  
regular people

I ride my bike,  
through town

The people I  
see,  
off to the side

While I ride

Look like a,  
motion picture

I got to ride out,  
every day

I can drift and,  
dream,  
in this modern civilization

Come home and,  
write down,  
about the movies,  
that I have seen

Just being on,  
the streets

Keeps giving me

My visual,  
motion picture



## *Screenplay*

Wanted to write,  
a movie script,  
about my life

Lost for words,  
I went to a,  
television studio

Recorded the,  
history of,  
three years

Before the,  
war,  
and during,  
the war

After the war,  
Haight/Ashbury

Then, mountains,  
of New Mexico

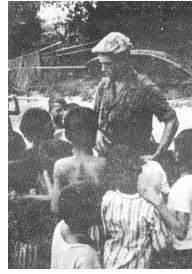
Historical pieces,  
in place

I go out,  
to remember,  
details

Someday,  
somebody,  
might be,  
interested,  
in what happened,  
to me

I'll just have

The script ready



## *If I Could Remember*

I tried to xerox,  
a magazine  
with stories,  
and pictures of,  
me in Vietnam

Two months later,  
I was still,  
trying to get,  
to a xerox machine

Couldn't bring,  
myself

To see the,  
pictures,  
of the young,  
soldier

In that country

I had loved,  
Vietnam,  
so much

Spent time,  
with the people

Finally, I only,  
got to know,  
the Vietnamese,  
as future deaths,

I couldn't make,  
the copies,  
of these articles,  
written in 1965

Articles and pictures,  
of times,  
that I was trying,  
to forget

### *Peace Time*

The life I had,  
in the Marine,  
Corps,  
thirty four years,  
ago

I had,  
this little,  
office

I would,  
lock myself,  
inside

Write poems

Listen to music,

I was in,  
charge of,  
maps and,  
medical supplies

I stayed there,  
on the weekends

Would only,  
come out,  
at night

To go to sleep

Saved my money,  
bought a typewriter

Would write away

Was so happy,  
with my life

Books  
Poems  
Music

One small,  
room

### *We Are*

The way,  
the singers moved,  
in Black Nativity

I had a flash

Saw for a second,  
people back,  
in Africa

All part of the,  
tribe

All moved together

Like a village,  
working together

The music starts

People start to,  
move side by side

With all hands,  
clapping at once

Like maybe,  
the people who,  
were in unison

Hundreds of years,  
ago

## *Uninterrupted*

Years later

Today

Struggling

I had come,  
this way,  
before

This way

There is not,  
a physical,  
trail

I had to find,  
out,  
everything within

I was always,  
being rebaptized

Looking for some,  
kind of salvation

There was nothing

Just another cycle,  
of life that,  
I'm going through

I thought I could,  
get out of this,  
cycle of pain

Continually,  
I go through the,  
same pain

Trying to find  
out

How to live  
this life

## *Better*

Crossing,  
over

Promised,  
Land,  
never,  
came

Just,  
promises

There was,  
a time

That,  
I wanted,  
to believe

In myself

Now,  
I know,  
I will see,  
better,  
tomorrow,  
for others

I can,  
live,  
with,  
myself

Who,  
I am

Keep,  
trying,  
to get,  
it right

Get it,  
better,  
every day

*Living Close To Paul Revere*

Came to,  
North East

Didn't know,  
much about,  
Boston

Learned,  
Boston history

Walked,  
in parks

Discovered life of,  
Charles Sumner

Saw architecture

Loved the people

Could understand,  
why the American,  
Revolution,  
started here

These folks give,  
you the razzberry,  
when they don't,  
like something

Been here six,  
years

The North East,  
is gradually,  
becoming my home

*Zen Didn't Help*

What's to write,  
about

Sitting in,  
the Dharma,  
Room,  
and breathing

The still morning,  
with traffic,  
outside

The talking,  
inside my head,  
rages on

So there I am,  
trying to get,  
peace of mind

There is no,  
peace

Inside or outside

A warm cup,  
of tea,  
in my hands

I have come home

To write about,  
what I haven't,  
experienced

Clearing my mind

## *Caring*

Mental Health

Not how many,  
beds

How many people

Do we care?

How we treat  
each other?

We are there,  
for caring

We care for  
people

Caring is the,  
thought and,  
action needed in,  
the mental,  
health system

That I want to,  
see

We can hospitalize,  
everyone,  
still not be good,  
to anyone

If we don't start,  
to implement,  
more compassion

With people

There will be no Recovery

## *Won't*

I will,  
never be,  
drunk,  
again

I will,  
never be,  
high,  
again

Learning,  
how to,  
be happy,  
without,  
taking,  
anything

I get up,  
in the,  
morning

Wake up,  
early

Sit meditation

Read poems  
Write poems

Fill my head,  
with memories

Fresh in my,  
mind

Not swirling,  
confusing,  
thinking

Like getting,  
high

## *Coming Back*

Had,  
thought,  
about

What is,  
wrong,  
with me

How I,  
ended,  
up

Trashed,  
out

Building,  
myself,  
back

Has,  
been,  
hard

Every,  
day

I work,  
at rest

Set aside,  
time,  
to renew,  
myself

Several,  
times,  
a day

Several,  
different,  
ways

Rest and renewal

## *Lights of Christmas*

Christmas came,  
this time

This year

Silent Night

Kind of,  
time

Kind of,  
year

Christmas,  
sign of,  
the end,  
of a year

I go out,  
into the,  
crisp night

Walk through,  
the morning

Home lights,  
dressed up,  
for Christmas

Sparkle,  
in the air

Every winter

We can count,  
on Christmas,  
and cold air

And lots of lights

*New Ideas  
New Places*

Back country,  
roads,  
of Illinois,  
that I knew

Are gone

The people,  
who I knew,  
from my youth

Are gone

Left at,  
mid fifties,  
to learn to,  
discover,  
all over again

What I have

Where I am

Have started,  
to learn,  
again

In Massachusetts

In homeland of,  
Emerson,  
and Summer

Living out my,  
life in North East

With new people

New terrain

*Then*

Knox College,  
brick structure

Out in front,  
on the steps

I was

Little kid,  
me,  
in a reindeer  
sweater

With my,  
mind,  
dreaming

More interested,  
in playing,  
than studying

Kept crawling,  
under tunnels,  
by the railroads,  
and under street bridges

Then, would,  
come out,  
into the day,  
and sunshine

Rode my bicycle,  
between places

Going to,  
downtown,  
Galesburg

Hang out  
around those,  
old brick structures

Like Knox College

Left over from,  
the Civil War



## *December Autumn*

There is,  
green grass,  
still on the,  
ground

The seasons,  
haven't changed,  
December autumn

In Washington,  
DC

I look out,  
the window

To see

One lone,  
oak tree,  
with browned,  
leaves

Still,  
hanging on

I watch  
as,  
grey skies  
build

With no rain,  
warm nights,  
and Christmas lights

## *Airport Images*

Outside in,  
the night,  
from Iraq

The green lights,  
of the night,  
scopes

Look through,  
the Baghdad,  
night

Is there a  
bombing,  
going,  
on

What will,  
be,  
the price,  
to pay

We watch,  
this breaking,  
video image,  
at National  
Airport

There is no sound

We leave on our,  
flight

While a war might  
be,  
going on

## *His Soul Is In Cuba*

Ricardo Died

Two days,  
before,  
Christmas

All the times,  
we spent,  
together

Came through,  
my mind

We went,  
to the free,  
meal

In Lawrence

Had talked,  
about his being,  
peer educator

He wanted to,  
work with the,  
church at the free meals

The people who,  
needed him,  
he knew,  
from the streets

He talked with,  
them at the meal

We talked about,  
a room,  
with the church

He could do,  
groups

He talked,  
about going,  
back to Cuba

Asked me questions,  
about my trip,  
to Habana

He could've,  
done it all

Last days,  
of December,  
had a diabetic,  
reaction

Went to the,  
hospital

Died of,  
heart attack

I came to,  
the door

To his house,  
an hour,  
after he died

Stayed for,  
a couple of,  
hours

Talking to,  
his room mates

I cried all the,  
way home

Back from Lawrence,

The night Ricardo,  
died



## *Light White*

Light dusting,  
of white

Christmas Eve

Woke up,  
with visions,  
of mistletoe,  
through my,  
head

Looked,  
bright white

Not the whitest,  
of Christmas

White enough

Going for walks,  
through this white

Couldn't kick up,  
the fluff

Said, dig the,  
white white stuff

I dug it

And, it was white,  
this Christmas



## *Washington, DC.*

December 15,  
1998

The day,  
Congress,  
decides,  
to impeach,  
Bill Clinton

Same bunch,  
that can't,  
get it together

To plan a  
budget,  
for schools,  
for hot lunches,  
for social security

This same,  
bunch

Is going,  
to bring judgement,  
on Bill Clinton

I'm here on,  
this decision,  
making day

There is a sense,  
of history

As, I begin,  
to move through,  
the city

### *Meditation With You*

Crisp clip,  
walking,  
with you

To the,  
Zen Center

Thinking,  
about what,  
I like to do

How with,  
not drinking,  
not doing,  
drugs

My life is,  
meditation,  
and writing

The morning,  
air,  
is what I need

To be with,  
you

We have this,  
conversation,  
about the real,  
us

We go,  
fold our hands,  
sit,  
breathe,  
and come home

The day,  
begins

### *The Morning Poem*

Tea,  
in the,  
morning

Over,  
poetry

With,  
the,  
window,  
half,  
a crack  
open

The,  
dim,  
light

My mind,  
wanders

While  
I live with

Head full,  
of thoughts

I write this,  
to myself

Starting my,  
day with,  
poetry

Isn't such,  
a bad way,  
to live

## *This We Are*

People who,  
hear things

See things,

Think things,  
in delusions

Left alone,  
doesn't seem,  
to get us,  
better

Taking away,  
the anxiety and,  
pain

We seem to,  
find a way,  
to stability

There is no,  
easy path,  
to sanity

Stop  
Get Calm  
Rest

Heal

Learn to,  
put ourselves,  
together

After falling,  
apart

Learn to live,  
with what,  
we got

Who we are

## *Cold Snap*

Today,  
the weather,  
will go,  
from 40 above,  
to 30 below

I wait,  
for winter

Will go out,  
on New Year's,  
Eve

Watch movies

Think about,  
how I could,  
be a street,  
artist

I sit at home,  
draw pictures,  
of bearded seals

While I grow,  
a beard

I am gradually,  
rebuilding,  
myself

Through healthy  
living

What do I do,  
once I am,  
rebuilt

Have satisfaction,  
with my life

*January, 99*

The first,  
big snow,  
of the year

I sloshed through,  
light snow to,  
the Green Line,  
with Richard Sheola

We talked about,  
what could be,  
in mental health

Can we understand,  
the way people,  
live with a psychiatric,  
condition

So that we can  
bring people,  
back from mental illness

Can we,  
have a room,  
in a house,  
with someone,  
looking in,  
some times

I've been crazy,  
most of my life

That's all,  
I ever needed,  
a room and,  
someone to talk to

This very morning,  
This very day,  
flipped out,  
I walked outside,  
walked around,  
by the evening,  
I was back together

Taking the Green Line,  
back to my apartment

*Lived This Way  
New Mexico Memory*

By the side,  
of those old,  
mountains

I had a porch,  
off to the side,  
of the trailer

Built out in,  
the bushes

Trees all around

Singing my songs,  
on that porch

Before the trailer,  
I had this small,  
room where,  
I lived

Paid \$150 in  
rent,  
poor part of Santa Fe

My big step up,  
was the trailer,  
I bought

Life for me,  
has been,  
on the edge,  
of town

Space to write,  
read and sing

With an old porch,  
to walk out on

## *Anger*

Spun around,  
the old stuff,  
came around,  
that night

The old rage,  
came out

Was left  
for days

To pick up,  
the pieces,  
of my anger

If I were to  
think,  
about the mistakes,  
I have made

Through the years,  
I would be up,  
all night

Most mistakes,  
made through,  
angry decisions

I go forward,  
with my eyes,  
on the past

Saying that,  
I can't live,  
like this

I can't get angry,  
again

## *Wayne from Boardwalk*

Kind of bug eyed,  
staring out at everyone

Looked right at,  
me,  
saw me

Wayne was,  
dead

Wouldn't growl,  
out, with,  
that voice,  
of his

Wouldn't laugh,  
so coarse

Wouldn't hear,  
the stories,  
trails and tribulations,  
of the people,  
who he lived with

Wayne was,  
dead

Dave and me,  
talked that afternoon

Of death

How each of us,  
will die,  
someday

Let us die in peace

With peace of mind,  
finally

Wayne died with,  
peace of mind

### *Got A Home*

Walked through,  
the snow,  
last night

With my face,  
covered with,  
light dusty flakes

The snow,  
hung on,  
my coat

All the snow,  
that fell,  
was manageable

I walked home

Thought about,  
how happy,  
I am with,  
my home

Thought about,  
living in my,  
place

With Naomi

Forever

Let my mind,  
drift,  
like the snowflakes



### *Digging It*

So here I was,  
kicking around,  
end of January

With snow under,  
my feet

Cold air,  
on my ears

My eyes straight,  
ahead

I could groove,  
out on dime

Still struggling,  
with sleep

Learning how,  
to live with,  
mental illness

This time,  
I didn't rebound

Each night,  
is long

When I get,  
my days

I seem OK

So I head back,  
to the streets

See the city

Feel the weather

Dig the scene

Try to sleep later that night

## *No Peace of Mind*

I keep thinking,  
disaster,  
is around the corner

Whole world will,  
fall apart

There will be,  
personal and national,  
economic collapse

I will be,  
cast off,  
cast out,  
again

No work,  
Out of a job

Crazy in my head

Left to wander

I have to fight back,  
these thoughts

These thoughts,  
are eating me,  
alive

## *Searching*

The snow fell  
January, 1999

This wasn't,  
a winter like,  
last winter

Wasn't like,  
any other,  
winter

There was,  
sunshine

light cold,  
light snow

I enjoyed,  
my time,  
out on,  
the road

Came,  
back,  
home  
tired

Tried to find,  
the quiet,  
way,  
to live

Daily