

first

my newer tiny poems from (t)here

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(5/22/2022 edition, expanded 9/12/23)

cover image by bridget underdahl:
“a small tree in a wooded forest”

Here’s what I said about this painting in *This Fall*:

There’s another painting of hers [which she made in high school] I have in the bathroom, where I can see it when I take a bath, one of my favorite modes of relaxation. It has a purple background with thick, clunky, brown tree trunks jutting awkwardly all the way up so whatever leaves they have would be outside the perimeter of the canvas, hogging the sun. Right in the middle is a much smaller tree, so fragile looking, spangled with the most beautiful emerald-green leaves, individualized but cascading down like liquid. From the sky above dozens of gold droplets are drizzling down and over it, the only real “light” in the scene. It is so inspiring to me. If I saw it in a museum I would sit there and stare at it for a long time. I would wish it were mine. She had the habit back then of titling her paintings with black paint at the bottom of the scene, large text, quick and messy, like it’s part of rather than index to what the painting depicts. This one is called “A Small Tree in a Wooded Forest” [partially covered now by the ISBN tag]. Sounds pretty tame. Until you start to think about some of the ways that “small” and “wooded” play out in real life.

Preface

I started writing poems again last Christmas Eve, after a six- month hiatus. When poems stop arriving—sometimes by an intentional force-quit, more often for no reason apparent to me—as they have over and over during my career as a poet, I never know how long it might be before they start up again, months, years, decades; it all seems to follow a pre-scripted schedule of its own.

During the final week of 2021 there was a sudden seismic shift in my inner world, I mean utterly ground-shuddering, one I had been working hopefully toward for years but, honestly, never expected to happen. I'm just not that smart. Then it did. I was stunned, gobsmacked! One predictable symptom of all this—a metamorphic change of that magnitude, I mean—is that I temporarily lost my bearings, the old landmarks gone or displaced, new spaces

opened where there were none before, both exciting and unnerving. You will no doubt notice that internal-walkabout-untetheredness in these poems, which are all over the place, as if many different minds wrote them. I offer them here in the actual sequence of their composition, many of them dated. I suppose I could have grouped like poems with like poems. But I just didn't want to. That would feel like a lie, or at least gratuitously artificial.

My overall title is a variation on my last book's title—*slights: my new tiny poems from here not there*—which was supposed to highlight the dramatic change I made in my life when I retired and moved out west here? Many of these newer poems resemble the kinds of poems I published in *slights*. This book, though, takes all of that here/thereness to a whole other level, one even I am only slowly and partially coming to comprehend as I write into it.

The “first” is borrowed from the first poem I wrote from this new vantage point, one that came out of nowhere on Christmas Eve last year. I have been living and writing in its very generative shadow for many months now, and there is so far no other poem in the series quite

like it, so it is a first for which there is no second, a concept I like.

The “tiny” part is more a sympathetic link to the kind of poems I started writing after I migrated west than an accurate description of all these poems, which vary in length, form and density. Even in *slights*, the poems gradually evolved into less tiny forms with less tiny lines. Some of these newer poems are of course quite tiny, some are not. But I just like the overall smallness that “tiny” suggests: My new and newer poems make no grand claims about anything, are more observational or, in some cases, just briefly cryptic, seeking to minimize egoistic presence in the transactions. The smaller I get now, in that sense, the more I like it. And myself.

As to the here/thereness of *(t)here*: I have in my most recent prose books—*Harvest*, *Living Hidden*, and *In Dreams . . .*—been exploring the various ways in which identities are multiplied exponentially in all of us, a carnivalesque diversity that culture and physical individuation work quite assiduously to counter, or at least mask, while we go whizzing along assuming we are one thing, unaware. Until something comes along that stops us cold, a sudden change of state, say, like a particle in the Large Hadron

Collider smashing into its target, scattering into its many intrinsic and diverse pieces, each singular and unique in its own way. These poems are kind of like the remnants of such a collision.

A more sedate analogy from particle physics might be “quantum entanglement.” One implication of the concept of entanglement is that paired photons or subatomic particles can be both here and there at the same time, communicating instantaneously across distances, the whole of the universe theoretically; and that something akin to teleportation (of a third particle) can occur under the right circumstances.

A more complex but even gentler representation of this process might be the wraparound cover image of this book (if you fold the spine open to see it whole), as I describe its impression on me on the copyright page, all of those fleeting flecks of light floating down to leaf out what’s right there before my eyes, little gifts, the tiny things that light always favors, while dark, hulking things are too busy grifting for more and more energy to notice what that light illuminates. Those bits of drizzling light originated, of course, with unimaginably violent clashes at the sun’s

core, hydrogen being converted to helium, releasing trillions of photons that take millions of years to wend their way through the sun's gravitational sink, then speed up instantly to their natural limit for the 8-minute journey from there to here. That is what these poems have felt like to me, both the writing and then my re-readings, the part of my current process that I most thoroughly enjoy. A friend suggests that all of this may serve as an analogy for your reading process as well, at least for things like this, which have no ambition but to shed tiny bits of generative light on some enigmatically beautiful things.

Why am I saying all of this? Because some clunky or partial version of this best explains what is happening in my head with this book. That is, it doesn't feel to me as if I have written a series of individual poems that don't quite fit together. It feels more like I'm trying to write all of these poems simultaneously, which is, of course, impossible in the human universe, given the way our bodies inhabit space-time and the current technology. Here, all I can do is press my individuated fingers in certain sequences over extended periods of time and watch these poems arise on my computer screen one little bit at a time, an interminable process for rendering

what feels like it is happening in an instant. If I had a quantum head and a quantum typewriter, I'm thinking, whole poems, many whole poems, none of which necessarily sounds like the others, might appear here before my eyes all at once. And I would be able to read them that way, too, not as words or pages locked into sequences that I need to traverse linearly one little bit at a time, but as fields, interactive fields, revealing the whole all at once.

Which is to say, if you want to know a bit about what poetry can sometimes do, at least clumsily, don't read this book as a series of individual poems. Read it as if it is one continuous poem composed by a head that is wandering about in the most wondrous ways, exploring all of its new options as close to all-at-once as the human condition now allows. Or even better, imagine (as best you can, again, given our built-in limitations) that all of these poems are being read simultaneously and cacophonously by many different disembodied voices that are not inside my head, but yours. Then, as Whitman says, "you shall possess the origin of all poems." Or at least all of these, the way they feel to me, I mean, tiny, here/there, a first without a second.

first

forget what you know
then forget what you don't
or remember it the way
you remember the inside
of a hole you once dug
deep into the side of a hill
the first half of a tunnel
that has no second half

if you walk slowly
through that portal
into deepening dark
until you are standing
in pitch black feeling
your way up and down
the jagged hewn wall
where you chose to stop
chiseling you will gradually
come to know almost exactly
what I am about to say

christmas morning in olympia, 2021

a flotilla of buffleheads
twenty or more
cruise across budd bay
in v-formation
all their puzzle-piece whites
checkerboarded on black water
like the road this morning
patches of new snow
on the dark, wet street
a rare white christmas
in this neck of the waters

and I am “light as a feather,”
after past-present-future
visited my dreams last night
as they do almost every night
reminding me that today
is christmas and so is today
and today and today
an endless stream of them
each one “light as a feather”

like those buffleheads
fluffy as feathers
made of feathers
gliding so gracefully
across still water
toward me today
the way everything

of value in life
glides so gracefully
toward me every day
and you too
if you let it
so right-now-white
so right-white now
so light-as-a-feather white

the day after christmas in olympia, 2021

1.

snow pours down
a grim gritty fog
wind-swirled

three huge hemlocks
in the park
across the street

older even than I am
shimmy and sway
but never waver

ten stories tall
they have seen it all
and still stand still

2.

I have spent the day
watching things end
through the window

so many I love
gone missing
in the cloud

I have spent the day
forgetting what I want
through the window

this blur of snow
tiny tears swirling
wildly in the wind

3.

three hours later
the weepy branches
settle and laze

glazed tip to top
with icy white
shimmering sunlight

building-tall minty
cookies cut
out of blue sky

worn thin by
what was lost
and found today

4.

tears are never
enough to cover
what's not here

year after year
they come and go
a fog of snow

pouring down
over and over
blurring everything

until sunlight
shines blindingly
somehow still always

the past

is a spider's web

be the spider
not the fly

January 8, 2021

1.

after days of rain
harsh and heavy
after days of snow
halted everything

the air clears
low puffed clouds
endless ruffles
tiger-stripe sky

tiny blue eyes
peek-a-boo
seeking sunlight
unremembered

2.

a dozen coots
bunch on budd bay
drift along shiftless
white beaks adazzle

two mergansers
flaunt flamboyant 'dos
flick off water
fluffing up after dunks

three glider-winged
gulls dive wildly
cloud-white kites
wired to wind

3.

in my last dream
last night
I found you
waiting back home

one kiss and I woke
suddenly knowing
everything left to know
about not knowing

what it feels like
to miss something
terribly until it's
gone again for good

4.

now cloud-crowned
mountains stride
violently
toward downtown

one plus one

1.

two soaked oak leaves
flip-flop like flapjacks
up the wet sidewalk

the rest
stay stuck
glued down tight

2.

two buffleheads dive
curled necks unfurl
drive beaks deep

a minute later
they bob up
do it again

3.

two cormorants
black statues
on the dock

one head held high
the other's s-hook neck
bowed beak touching feet

4.

I hear the crunch of metal first
a big 90s American car
dark blue coasts to a stop

right front corner crushed
a man in an orange vest
rushes across the road

hoping to cope
with the discombobulation
of a day like today

so dank and gray
one plus one never
quite adds up

this morning

three gulls
swoop in just
above treetops
weave back and forth
across the road
while I walk
along budd bay

filling me
with joy
for no reason
I can think of
except, well ...

yes

January 12, 2022

after rain all week
washed air warms
eerily still

one silent gull glides
to the bay
two blocks away
without flapping a wing

at the tip of each
twig and leaf
a water bubble beads

lines of tinier droplets
define the tender
underbellies of branches

none of them
move at all
or fall

small blown-glass balls
each a snow-globe
universe overfull
of life ongoing
invisible from here

just like the one
I have to live in
every day now
where nothing
seems to come
of the nothing
already here
no one near enough
to see outside-in

off in the distance
a single gull squawks
over and over
barely audible

the only sound
mid-january air
washed clean
and warm carries

still eerily still

again

after rain
puddles wane
pain drains

again

water wells
hollows swallow
wallows follow

again

one-way wants
wander off
wonder won't

again

love shallow
fades fallow
so do you

again

5 o'clock (1/12/22)

between the hemlocks
and the house
across the street
a v-shaped
patch of sky
just barely baby blue
behind the lightest
wash of wispy whites

5 minutes later
it is all gone gray

there is a window
of opportunity
for everything
today I happened
to look out mine
at exactly
the right time
and I noticed

one of those two
is never quite enough

icy water

trickles quickly
in over the edges
of the sidewalk

rises rapidly
thigh high I try
mightily to stride

soon I am inside it
mind too numb
even to wonder

heavy with memories
that weigh only
what words weigh

thinking stumbles
succumbs dumbly
sinks into depths

where there are no
words at all none
not even the ones

I used to find
to describe why I cry
if only to myself

sunrise, through my window
(1/14/22)

1.

behind a murky mist
the thinnest
barely pink blurs

then trellises
of climbing roses
brighten the sky

treetops stretch up
evergreen pillars
push taupe-gauze taut

bare-branched maples'
many slender fingers
brush blushed skin tenderly

it all slowly melts
from the bottom up
rose petals drooping

2.

I will sit here as long
as it takes pink
to sink back to fog

wait for my walk
hoping sunlight
finds a way

even if I can't
one more day dazed
in january haze

nowhere light
might find me
less alone

3.

just one tiny
patch of peach
on the bottom right
goes slowly gray

three creepy dreams

#1: language game

1.

on stage he poses
questions empty
as rain barrels
in a dry july
she fumes waiting
to fly into a rage

2.

a baby pushes a stroller
barefoot, diapered,
too tiny to see
what if anything
might be in it

3.

he asks me: how's your luck been?
okay I say
if it had been better
I wouldn't be talking to you right now

*#2: an appointment no one told me about
at the five and dime in my hometown*

1.

mary ellen calls me zach
the peanut butter falcon
and talks about her two kids
how her son won't listen to her

2.

one poet advises
I hold on
to my madness
so I do

another prompts
do it all now
as she rushes around madly
getting nothing done

two others babble
put it all together by friday

but what?

#3: the doorway

won't close right
or lock
is too narrow even
to squeeze through

on either side
there is enough room
to make a whole other door

January 20, 2022

last night wind wailed
rain flailing sideways

the few leaves left
left in a dither

this morning gulls glide
around icy skies

bright blades slice
blue to pieces

waxing wolf moon

if while you're putting away the dishes
you happen to glance out the window
and are stunned by a waxing full moon
you weren't quite expecting tonight
pale yellow open-globed tulip floating
just above the roof tip of the red house
across the street you know in an instant
you can see it only because you believe
it was always already there way before
even columbus and his men came ashore
where the people living there happily
who we now say were too naïve to see
those three huge ships floating in
were really just putting away dishes
so they could go out on the beach
to watch the waxing full moon
pop up over the far edge of the sea
bigger than all the ships in the world
so why would they bother to fill up
their fully open eyes with something
so silly as smelly bedraggled men rowing in

I am

way too
here not
to fear

how bright
light hides
inside fog

where it won't
even try to find
a way out

still life

leaf-shadows quiver
on the sofa back

one spear of sunlight
thrusts through

the almost
closed door

slicing apart
the floor

filigrees of leaf
and wrought iron

chair back
shadowbox

on the wall
beneath a painting

of orange clouds
at sunset

fresh tracks

when I walk in the woods
now on fresh fallen snow
I can see in my mind's eye

the man with wide boots
a big dog always on his right

the couple side by side
one set of prints
broad and grooved deep
one narrow and flat

the lone woman
with boots the size of yours
always coming toward me
no matter which direction
I start off in

until this morning
a foot of new snow
it was just me
every step like the first
I took without you

***and I think to myself
what a wonderful world***

after days of gray
morning sun
rises blindingly bright

the bay lays
itself out
absolutely flat
a layer of jade
carved out between
stands of hemlock
lining each side
bowing heads down
a hundred feet deep

a few buffleheads
float motionless
fleeting foreverness

as soon as I enter
the woods I notice
the path-side trees
have moved so much
closer than yesterday
near enough now
to reach out to me
one after another

a slight brush
a gentle touch
a high five even
and I reach back
“friends shaking
hands saying
how do you do”
we’re “really saying
I love you”

if you don’t believe
that last sentence
stop reading this like
right now I mean it
stop like right now

. . . okay now
still here with
ears to hear
you know for sure
we are “*really*
saying I love you”

how I reached back
to thirty-some trees
no strained stretching
clambering off
the path touched
five times more

than yesterday
without even trying

and I know why
so I'll tell you
on my way back
up the blacktop path
to the lot alone
maybe 100 yards
ahead a mother
with her little girl
just heading in
holding hands
and I heard her yell
“look, *there's* somebody!”
as if it was a miracle
not to be there *alone*

yes little girl
I *am* somebody
no longer alone
at least today
after all that gray
sun so bright
and all those trees
reached exactly
the same conclusion
“look, there's *somebody*”

and if you didn't
stop reading
and have reached
the same conclusion
as this poem well
that little girl
those trees and me
the sun the bay
the baffleheads
still sitting still
as I drive off
we're all reaching
to say back "yes,
you're *somebody*, too,
look, there, *you're*
somebody, too"

gobsmacked

one of my minds
saw what was there

another saw
what wasn't

neither could
find happiness

today they saw each
other now we can

every day

you stay away
helps me
more to heal

sunrise, 2/7/22

high up
in a wedge
of blue
half a dozen
tiny clouds
popcorn puffy
huddle up
whispering

down below
treetop skimming
flimsy sheets
of lacy gray race
fast as tattered banners
pulled by planes
a few ragged
patches of pale
pink dragged along
winter leaves
in a rushing stream

today I will
ride that flume
of gray and pink
wildly while
my head wakes
then rise up

where air
stands still

listen carefully
to overhear
everything
those little clouds
murmur only
to one another
until I know
in my bones
all that they do
and I don't

february 16, 2022

from just above the huge
hemlocks half a block away
tall black backlit hulks
haunting the background

the bright snow moon
floodlights my back yard
filling it with a filigree
of the bare maple's branches'

fractal shadows clinging
to every nook and nuance
of grass garage even me
no matter where I move

today I talked for a while
with a group of students
about the first book
I wrote after you left

I would tell you every detail
of the fibonacci filigree
of feelings that clung
to the wide lawn between us

but you were there
for all of it of course
so why try to unwind
shadows we surely shared

february 24, 2022

1.

half a dozen buffleheads
zig on the wing
up the upper arm

of budd bay zag
back hyper-fast half
a mile in half a minute

skid to a sloppy stop
swirl in circles
chasing each other

wild wing-flaps slap
water every which way
I watch and wonder

playing bathing mating
fighting no idea
after a while one slides

off to the side and settles
then one by one all wind
down dunking in to fish

*in order to see normal
orderliness in order
it sometimes helps
to see disorder first*

2.

I woke late today
frost ice-pack thick
on the carport roof

now noon sky blue
sun done bleaching
crazed white away

half a year in half a day
half a dozen fly half
a mile in half a minute

so wild on wing and
water all I do is
watch a while

*some days what's out there
matches so exactly
what's in here I wonder
is that half also this*

3/09/22, at woodard bay

1.

mountainous fountains
of ferns spout out and down
both steep sides of the path
flash frozen mid-air last fall
still winter-stiff as this wind
splicing splines of white caps
into lines of wine-dark waves

on the abandoned rail trestle
hovering hauntingly mid-bay
maybe a hundred herons
huddle up head-tucked
under hunched shoulders
dreaming of nest-building
any day now in these tall trees

2.

there is an end to everything
even winter no matter how long
it lasts for those willing to wait
without wanting what winter
withholds at land's last fingertip
pointing out toward open water
wind stinging cheeks pink

until one day a hundred
herons take wing at once
scatter every which way
and whole forest floors
of ferns flash forward
fluttering emerald feathers
dazzled in endless light

walking by budd bay, 3/10/22

between a ground-
bound mound
of sheared wool clouds

and a ragged band
of black bangs
dangling down

the bottom layer
of a parfait of grays
ladled to heaven

six snow-streaked peaks
of the Olympic mountains
float in mid-air

levitated by sunlight
no longer either
here or there

four or five
seagulls glide by
all grays and whites

trying to show
airborne mountains
how now to fly

this poem

is a joke

get it

?

I have no idea

what that bird is
in my backyard
singing away at
dawn and dusk

such a song
I never heard
a bird I cannot
ever see and

me sitting here
typing away
at something
exactly like this

that cannot
possibly sing
like that I would
try to make up

a few words
that sound
something like
that song but

no poet ever
could do that
even shelley
surely never me

but come over
any day you
want at dawn
or dusk and sit

for a while
with me and
you will not
need a poet

to tell you how
a bird you never
see can sing a song
you never heard

03/11/2022

“me gotta go”

hank williams

sunlight on
sallow skin
so soothing

mirror water
peers clearly
into everything
anywhere near it

one merganser
paddles away
moving even

me

oh

my

oh

string theory

at the border between
me and you two waves
waver, collide, collapse,
choosing how to collude
toward a new amplitude
that works well enough
for at least one of us
to say stay and play

3/13/2022

*“the thing about a beautiful morning
is you’re sane all morning long”*

birds of chicago

after all that rain last night
which I dreamt through
while time climbed an hour
upward in an instant

the sky is skittles-berry blue
a few flirty clouds flitting
about willy-nilly like I am
this walk all a chaos

mountains bounce up
and down on the bay
buffleheads hunker
on shore sleeping one off

splashing robins scuttle
clouds in puddles
one white plastic fork
crowd-surfs grass blades

st. patrick's day green
as the hats on dozens
of runners I wander
among on east bay drive

where a million blossoms
burgeon in pods
of pressed pink petals
loaded to explode

as I am till a sign
says "oly 5k finish line
you made it" so I'll stop
this poem and head home

hope

arises on
the wild

side of
want riled

wondering
what is hope

when hope
gives up

what it
hopes for

no doubt

I'll believe it
when I say it

I'll see it when
I believe it

gender reveals, 3/17//2022

1.

in 1871 susan b. anthony traveled
to olympia which must have taken
like forever to meet
judge bigelow who lived
right down the street
from me owned
half the town then

she says *“dined at judge bigelow’s—his wife splendid—
met some members of the legislature—voluntary vote
invites me to address legislature tomorrow at 2 p.m.”*
where both votes for women’s suffrage failed

under the pear trees in front of the house
hundreds of flashy daffodils make a splash,
splendid

2.

that brown-wigged merganser
mug thrust forward
like she's mad as hell
speeds mig-like
spoiler feathers flaring
to run off some interloper

3.

three tag-teaming geese-couples clash
on the far-front corner of budd bay
necks stretched out and lowered
to water level like tank barrels loaded
to fire lunging at each other screeching

in the end nothing
seems to get settled
all six floating waywardly
glancing askance
pretty much
where they started

4.

one bullfrog croaks hopefully
from the tiny man-made marsh
in the wet science center plaza
assuming he's not there alone
which he isn't—if you count me

what?

1.

I don't
want to

want what
I want

no matter
what

2.

there's something
about aboutness

that's not what
this poem is about

out like a light

last night's worm moon
was a whirligig-wild
blinking light in a blur
of spinning wings

today the sun's
a tiny bleach stain
on an endless bolt
of gray charmeuse

water

*“it is the earth’s eye, looking into which
the beholder measures the depth of her nature”*

1.

a lone bufflehead
bobs on ripples
in the middle
of budd bay
her partner
jets instanter
out of nowhere
kaleidoscopic
whirls of blacks
and whites
on the wing
glides in side-
wise sidles
over beside
her then
together they
dive down
under water

I want to think
they seek dark
to nuzzle and
kiss secretly
out of sight
but 30 seconds
later they bob up
40 feet apart
paddle fast back
together then
do it all again
down and up
down and up
down and up
over and over
together apart
together apart
together apart
over and over

I watch long
as I want then
walk on wishing
I were . . .

2.

I hear the piercing
beeps first then
spot that jet black
swoosh perched
in a white birch
above a reed pool
in the middle of
the plaza mottled
mate waiting 5 feet
from a mosaic of
the quote above
about depths
measured this one
no more than a
foot deep about
the size of my house
but ideal it seems
for these marsh
and meadow
lovers to make
a living and a life
on the wing
that slice of red
centers earth's
eye and every
redwing I ever
watched as a boy

by the lake's
edge flies by in
my mind's eye
just to say hi

3.

one pigeon
rests breast-
deep iridescent
in a small pool
so peaceful

I try to walk by
quietly but
look too closely
and it flies off

I will regret that
rude intrusion
the rest of the day

4.

two randy gulls
flap around
on the arm of a
tall pole squealing
one failing to
mount both fly
off in pursuit
one of the other

the plight of all
lovers in flight
at least for a while
in early spring

a few birds a few weeks later

1.

on the peak of a metal roof
white slices on an indigo sky
two gulls bob heads up
and down rhythmically beak
past beak sharp clear bleats
repeated keeping the beat

one mounts wing-flapping
wildly both screech
in tandem then settle
suddenly glide off wide
sails sliding over still water

2.

a dozen purple martins
dart and zing above
the upper finger
of budd bay flash
white bellies barrel roll
defying gravity and belief
chirp their multi-note
bird-perfect songs
then perch for a few
seconds at bird-box homes
nailed to tall poles
in the middle of the bay
to deliver their trove

3.

at the corner of east bay
drive and olympia avenue
a crow pecks away at
a clear plastic fast-food
tray clicked closed
shielding three donuts
from its eager beak
then eyes livid with ire
cries wildly and flies off

two new birds

1.

pink dimpled
skin head
hook-beaked
thin-necked
thick-thighed
forty feet up
on the flat top
of a wind-lopped
dead hemlock
a turkey vulture
turntables
clockwise
step by step
wings spread
wide to dry
in the sun

2.

that popsicle
stick dark tail
sidewise-flicking
tiny brown
round mound
on the ground
beak-picking
bewick's wren
twitchy as I am
fiddling with
my camera
then bam gone

3/27/2022

*“welcome everything, refuse nothing,
reflect everything, hold nothing”*

chuang tzu

breathe . . .
in more me

breathe . . .
out more free

in more me
out more free

more me
more free

me
free

see?

3/31/22

*walking downhill toward town just after dawn
and I am so happy knowing it's all over*

"so the last shall be first"

Matthew 20:16

a white cotton blanket
clings to greening mounds
the other side of town:
a sleeping child

layered gray flannel
smothers steep peaks
on the far horizon:
dryer screen lint

two resting goldeneyes'
breasts shine blindingly
bright on black water:
yin-yang bling

spring overwhelm
came just like that
yesterday to today

nothing to something
all at once and I
am speechless

except for this I guess
a few clunky analogies
all I can think of

all I can ever think of:
something next to
nothing,

like, I mean, y'know,
this season, like,
I mean, y'know,

my head, like, I mean,
y'know, this poem:
the last of *first* at last

Paul's other books:

Poetry:

insta-poems (2023)

light/waves (2022)

first: my newer tiny poems from (t)here (2022)

slights: my new tiny poems from here not there (2021)

In the Dark (2016)

Harvest Moon (2016)

Li Po-ems (2016)

Mornings After: Poems 1975-95

Beginning Was (1980)

Personal Essays:

waking up (2023)

In Dreams . . . (2022)

Living Hidden (2021)

Harvest (2020)

Spring Forward (2019)

The Imagination (2019)

A Mind of Winter (2019)

First, Summer (2018)

Last Spring (2018)

This Fall (2016)

Scholarship:

Re-reading Poets: The Life of the Author (2011)

Writing/Teaching (2001)

