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THESIS



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Sleeping In Rain

presented by

Gordon Donald Henry Jr.

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Masters degree in English

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Diane Wikowski", written over a horizontal line.

Major professor

Diane Wikowski

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SLEEPING IN RAIN

By

Gordon Donald Henry Jr.

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

1983

ABSTRACT

SLEEPING IN RAIN

by

Gordon Donald Henry Jr.

"Sleeping In Rain" is a collection of original poems written, for the most part, between 1981 and 1983.

These poems, while not thematically unified, are a reflection of the many aspects of the poet's personal artistic vision and voice. They also convey the development of that vision and voice during the course of the author's study at Michigan State University.

For two of my life's loves,
Mary Anne and Kehli

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Pine Point:

Her Breath

At first she could
move her breath
easily, wiping away
the inside of the window where
the sun held her gaze
in the glint of an axe
blade.

Logs split and tumbled
over opposite sides
of a tree stump.
His cool breath became
gestures of smoke
rolling over the edges
of his pipe in early
evening.

His hands uncurled
over woodstoves
and became her
eyes opening as
she slipped down in her
chair.

Now her breath
moves away in
slow circles, slow
circles of her hand
rubbing away breath
as she looks through
her reflection,
to the snow covered
axe buried
in the snow covered
tree stump.

Pine Point:

After Rain

Outside the tarpaper shack
dogs lie on the outsides
of her glasses; reflected
like clouds in
rain-filled tire ruts of
the dirt driveway.

Inside, a radio hums;
the volume on distant.
Through the window,
in the dwindling
space of his closing eye,
rain drops separate from
tree leaves.

The screen door closes.
Dogs bark, circling
the old woman in
the kitchen.

The old man's chin
falls into his chest.

She tastes from
her reflection in a

pot of soup.

Rain drops spread and soak
into the ground.

Rings of dream vision
expand across
pools of the old man's
sleep, and float into
a placid image of the
old woman's face
as she reaches for
the doorknob where
your face appears
on the other side
of the screen door.

Dawn Still Life

Morning streamed
sunlight revolves
dust
and glare
blasts her,
face
from a photograph
as a
mist
unwrapping
orchard of
deer stand
and move
from matted
grass with
apples
half eaten.

Pine Point,

you are black ash covered
 photographs of Korean-
 crazed uncles, burnt
 in corner rooms of
 old shacks.

you are morning gray mist
 covering the fields
 and the four steps to the
 front door of the church.

you are nicks in the doorway
 of the guild hall
 where undertakers
 and uncles couldn't
 get the casket through
 very easily.

you are wind smacking
 screen doors up against
 places with windows,
 boarded and empty.

you are windshield cracked
 afternoons lying
 shadows on spring busted

upholstery of cars turned
over in yards.

you are smoking hair
of gasolined cats
burning in wide
schoolyard eyes.

you are sinking in
a ditch like a beer
can sunk at an
angle like headstones
across the road.

you are underneath
leaves an old man
burns in the bottom
of a rusted barrel
at dusk.

you are wake songs
like smoke
whispers from stovepipe
chimneys, separating
between branches
of trees to nothing
between stars.

you are reservation migrant
drunk eyes open
against cold linoleum,
gone to a television
test pattern in the
city.

Sleeping In Rain

I

Wake chants circle, overhead, like black crows watching her will stumble through weak moments. Like when she heard the carriage outside, and went to the window with his name on her lips. Or, when she looked over in the corner and saw him sleeping, with his mouth open, in the blue chair, next to the woodstove. She saw them, dissembled reflections, on the insides of her black glasses. Moments passed, etched, like the lines of age in the deep brown skin of her face. She's somewhere past ninety now; bent over, hollow boned, eyes almost filled. She lives in a room. A taken care of world. Clean sheets, clean blankets, wall-to-wall carpeting, a nightstand, and a roommate who, between good morning and good night, wanders away to card games in other rooms. Most of her day is spent in the chair, at the foot of her bed. Every now and then, she leaves and takes a walk down one of the many hallways of the complex. Every now and then, she goes to the window and looks out, as if something will be there.

II

Motion falls apart in silence, tumbling, as wind turns choreographed snow through tangents of streetlights. I am alone; to be picked up later at the Saint Paul bus terminal. I fucked up. Dropped out. Good, it's not what I wanted. What is a quasar? The tissue of dreams? Fuck no, there are no secrets. There is nothing hard about astronomy, sociology, calculus, or Minnesota winters. Those are just reasons I used to leave. To go where? To go watch my hands become shadows over assembly lines. A voice clicks on in the darkness. "We are now in Saint Paul, and will be arriving at the Saint Paul terminal". Let me guess. In five minutes. "In ten minutes" the driver says. It figures.

III

My uncles's eyes have long since fallen from the grasp of stars. Now, they are like the backends of factories; vague indications of what goes on beneath the tracks of comb in his thick black hair. He was waiting when I arrived. Waiting, entranced in existence. A series of hypnotic silences, between words, that had to be spoken. Silences leading me to a beat up car in a

dark parking lot. I am too far away from him; too far away to be leaving for something further. I don't believe he doesn't like me. That's not it. It's something I saw when his shadow exploded into a face as he bent down, over the steering wheel, to light his cigarette.

IV

The cold white moon over houses too close together. Front windows, where shadows pass in front of blue lights of televisions. I am one of them now; a sound on wood stairs. There is a sanctuary of dreams waiting for my footsteps to fade.

V

The old woman dreams she is up north, on the reservation. It is autumn. Pine smoke hanging over the tops of houses, leaves sleepwalking in gray wind, skeletal trees scratching ghost gray sky. She is in the old black shack. At home. Stirring stew in the kitchen. The woodstove snaps in the next room. Out the window, he lifts the axe. He is young. She watches as it splits a log on the tree stump. He turns away and starts toward the house.

He is old. He takes out his pipe and presses down tobacco. She goes to the door to meet him. She opens the door. She tries to touch him. He passes through her, like a cold shiver, and walks into a photograph on the wall.

VI

The mind bends over, in the light through a window, down and across the body of Jesus Christ as he stumbles through the sixth station of the cross. It comes to me sometimes, when I close my eyes. September sun in the old church. Smoke of sweet grass in stained glass light. Red, blue and yellow light. Prisms of thought behind every eye. Chippewa prayers stumbling through my ears. Old Ojibwa chants fading away in the walk to the cemetery. I look at the hole in the ground. I look at the casket beside it. I look at the hole, I look at the casket. At the hole, at the casket, at the hole, at the casket, at the hole.

The clock glows red across the room; a digital 2:37. My cousin lies in darkness. Another figure covered up in sleep.

VII

Dust swims in sunlight of an open door as dreams
evaporate in the face of a clock.

IIX

"Get up, I said. It's raining. It's raining
and you, lying there. Get up old man, I said." It
is my uncle talking. He found the old man where he
lay in the rain. He had fallen asleep and fallen down
from his seat on an old bench I tried to set on fire
when I was ten or eleven. They buried him in the cool-
ness of Autumn coming. Weeks and years after, the old
woman thought she heard his carriage outside the window
of her room in the city.

IX

Cities of snow melt, blurred in liquid between
wiper blades. We are waiting for the light to change.
My uncle is driving. The old woman is waiting. Not
really for us. Not for us, but waiting. The light
changes in the corner of my eye turning away.

I will see her this morning. This afternoon I will be gone. Another bus. Home.

X

I can see the room never moves for her. It is not like snow falling, like leaves falling, like stones through water. It is a window, a bed, and a chair.

XI

As the old woman touches me it is like air holding smoke. I am something else. Vestiges of prayer, gathered in a hollow church. Another kind of reflection. A reflection on the outsides of her black glasses. A reflection that cries when eyes leave it.

As the old woman touches me it is like air holding smoke. I am something else. Fleet anguish, like flying shadows. A moment vanishing. A moment taken, as I am being.

As the old woman touches me it is like air holding smoke. It spins it. It grasps it. It shapes it in a wish. After that, there is a mist too fine to see.

Waking On A Greyhound

From far away
Rice Lake loons
call
the distance
darkening,
in whatever was
dream, fading
as crows
lift, piece
by piece,
from dead
on the side
of the road.

Crow's Untitled Hunger

Crow wraps
a mask
(elaborated
on from a
fencepost
memory of
a face sun
blasted in
a morning
window)
around himself
and jumps,
from a once
lightening
struck dead
tree, screaming,
into a weird
spectral
white faced
float
from a sky
wind rushes
away.

From sky

masked Crow
lands at your
feet.

The weight
of the mask
topples Crow,
maskface down.

Beak pokes
through an
eyehole and
sticks in a
light snow
wet ground.

Realizing that
the mask
didn't scare
you, from
the steaming,
pierced
dead deer,
Crow writhes,
struggles and
slips out of
the mask.

Then

lifts and carries
caws in leaving
stunned beneath
sun punctured
cloud.

Caws diminish
into the
creak of
wind rubbing
cedars
and the
mask empty
at your feet
forming an
imprint in
the earth.

Leaving Smoke's Place

(for Smoke and Claudia)

Black

wings sun glanced

green, crows

circle and half circle

snowfields before scattering

over old barns falling

slowly paintless

against the sky

across the road.

Your car shivers

to start, windshield

trembling, Sky, Blue

barked breath floating

white through

fences behind his

back and the door

opening she waves from.

At the stop sign,

the prism hanging

between door curtains

still turns
sun colors
on the kitchen
floor.

On M-66
something or the wind
moves outside
and turns his head to
windowed dusk's sun
leaving behind barns
with glazed empty
snowfields
beyond the prism
still.

Three Times Crow Ate Good
(or, Whatever Became of the Lone Ranger and Tonto)

Just recently
Crow
spilled a
bag of
mixed nuts,
heisted from
sleeping campers,
onto highway
51.

Four
racoons
knocked heads
and got
run over
by a gold
Impala with
a bad muffler
racoons know
from miles
away.

Crow landed,
ate asphalt scorched

raccoon and
darted
from eyes
and windshields
between Winnebago
and Airstream
tourist traffic.

In early 19
something or
other, Tonto
hid 16 huge
stones in Lone
Ranger's luggage.

Silver's travois
was making
ditches in
the desert.

Lone Ranger
whipped the hell
out of Silver.

Usually cool
Silver sweated
bullets then
lathered at

the neck.

Silver died
near Palm Springs.

The Lone Ranger left
Silver and
pointed at the
travois then
at Tonto.

Tonto quit,
took Scout,
got a new
agent, did
Othello on
Broadway, became
almost acculturated
and then at the
age of nearly 107,
became a
country and western
singer who was
blacklisted
through the
efforts of
the moral majority
for singing

the following
 song in a
 Texas shopping mall.

Tonto's Song

I knew this guy and he wanted to fly
 so he moved in with a couple of birds.
 He learned how to soar and he learn't how to land
 but he never quite mastered the turn.

Well, he was soloing one day when this sign got in his way.
 It was the Coppertone girl and her doggy.
 The dog had her pants, he was showing the girl's tan
 to some people on the road to Chicagee.

So, the flying man he finally did land
 after crashing through the girl's rear end
 and it seems strange to me to sing you this you see
 about my now dead friend.

'Cause he told me why, why he wanted to fly
 and I swear this is the reason I was told
 he said he did not want to die in an automobile crash
 with some asshole out on the road.

Well the moral I guess is that you can do your best
 but you must somehow some way beware.
 Whether you're walkin' ridin' flyin' or drivin'
 you can run into an asshole anywhere.

Getting back
 to the desert scene,
 Crow had
 eaten, pecking,
 Silver until
 Coyote came
 with three
 brothers.

From there

Crow

started

following the

stumbling, thirsty

Lone Ranger

from the sky.

Back and Forth

She dreams

of crows combing
sky empty,
of sun
on his face.

She wakes

to walls.

She dreams

a blue dog,
coat carrying
dusk light,
ambling into
curled sleep
at his feet.

She wakes

to walls
murmuring.

She dreams

the scent of
cedar and
a scratchy

radio
distant
in his dozing.

She wakes

to walls
murmuring
senility.

She dreams

of lit rain
dripping
on the porch
from his
hat bill
as her name
passes his lips
to her father.

She wakes

to walls
murmuring
senility
incoherent.

She dreams

herself a
child, pretending

for a moment
she looks
older in
her reflection.

She wakes
to walls
murmuring
senility
incoherent
in moments.

She dreams

Beyond Recognition or Reconciliation

Coats lie over
a suitcase near the
door.

A voice leaves the
room from her hand
on the radio dial
upstairs.

The blue scarred
moon shakes
loose from the
gauze grasp
of storm rapid
clouds.

He shudders
movement in sleep
on the sofa.
The bottle falls
from his
hanging open hand.

Headlights
expand shadows

across walls
in television
humming darkness
he licks his lips.

In car windows
she becomes
schools of stars
running from
the blown out
wing of a match
flame.

Distant rooms
murmur
old soldiers
frightened breathing
further into
sleep.

He startles awake,

stumbles to piss
and thinks
only the
sofa, its
imprints on
his face, as

the bathroom
light comes on
in that mirror.

Alcohol Vitreous
North Chicago, Ill.

Yellow newspapers
sail into shadows
between streetlights
refusing to cover
the trembling sleeping
legs of old men as
they dream
in busted glass
of cold VFW doorways.

You imagine yourself
in glass.

Reflected in an empty bottle
as it flashes from
your hand, and
explodes piece by piece
into a flock of light,
falling, then lying
down at the base of
a wall.

Stations

Afterthought echoes of frost
disperse somewhere between the
swirling snow,
and the drunken sailors
waiting for the 1:35 to Chicago.
The tracks rumble
and the all night cop
pushes a burning
cigarette between boards
of the arrival platform.
The ember ashes fall and fade
next to a bottle,
an arms length
away from the
frozen body.

It Is Time To Leave

Tranquillity transpierces time.
Smoke coughs from stovepipe
chimneys of despondent tarpaper
shacks. Voices rise from the
distance and faintly fade away
between stars.

On the stand near the bed
the flame of the gaslamp licks
for air inside glass surrounding it.
The flame dies in darkness.
The quilt on the bed is pulled
back and then pulled over
exactly as the pillow is depressed.

Tranquillity transpierces time.
Emerald grass sits dew jeweled
beneath the mist of early morn.
The whiskey grass across the road
bends and bows to the will of
the wind.

The first chants come through
the window in scattered Ojibway.

Dogs bark between words.

The front door swings open,
and the line to the cemetery
waits outside.

Outside White Earth

Vision and breath
travel away in
the smell of rain.
Next to a pickup
an old man stands
sleeping drunk,
hand on zipper.

Leave him.

There is the liquor store.
Jukebox shadows of music
coming back around again
and again.
Torrents of faces,
chased glasses
and wives,
shapes of smoke
opening mouths opening
restroom doors almost
as frequently.

At the touch of a hand
leaving, rain fills
your ears from the
roof, crumbling you
awake. You

stand,

hand on zipper,

face against a phone

number

on the paint

of a peeling wall.

For A Moment

you walk
through
cooler air.

a drunken
smile passes
you between
trees.

near distant
fires elders
hands come
apart in stories.

"It was the season of the dream word, the after harvest,
turned over in the mouth, chewed and swallowed, and
sequestered in the spaces between stars, words, eyes,
lips, ground and tree leaf, coming together, coming alone
together, in anguish, of blue forests, turned gold, red,
brittle, dying, dusk in water, the sky shifting, clouds,
thrown, in the wind, the moon, early in the sky, un-
covered, creaking boards of paranoia, in long sleep,
in shacks, stumbling drunk, from where, home, war, stum-
bling, alone, puking, together, like birds heard, gathered,
singing hard in this and all other silence, overhead,
thankfulness, encountered in penetration of night air,
wrestling cedar smoke away, sightless, moving away . . .

you are within
the warmth
of fire.

the drunk
falls into
footprints
in dust.

" . . . These are people moving away, too close, cities,
glass alleys, barroom mirrors, bank windows, yesterday's
news, in wind, against fences, factories. This is what
I mean by that story, that story, this is what I mean;
we mean together , alone."

the drunk
lies to
see:
in the space
between the
old man's
hat lifted
in one hand,
and his other hand
through his hair,
birds
lifting, floating
like burnt black
paper, fluttering
against the moon
rose white.

Shell Lake

There is
the penetration
of the smell
of Autumn wrestling
pine smoke
moving
into the
startled
whisper
of wings
over water.

A corner
of geese
flocked
across the
lake,
in the
corner of
the eye
gone.

Flight Longs For The Vacant

The sky sits like
parted lips
before spoken
words.

Ashes twist
and disappear
at the velocity
of dreams.

The helicopter
turns to go back.

The sky sits like
lips after spoken
words, as you hand
the urn to her mother.

Untitled

The ocean catches the sweeping
glance of moonlight
and the palms move like
you do during the Star Spangled Banner.

The cliff laughs at the futility
of the jumping waves
and the razor movements of
the iguanas lend eeriness to the darkness.

The cliff rises like nothing
I've seen in Chicago
and the night birds
whine out in darkness above it all.

The air currents twist him
with decreasing distance
and motion is not
the same as it was just moments past.

The rock waters wait
with the waves
and there is no expression
as he floats and drifts in darkness and speed.

Antonio loses his
unsmoked cigarette and I scream.
It's neither white nor smiling
between lifetimes, and we are neither
dancing nor freezing from world
to unworld . . .

But Antonio just floats face
down away.

Darlingest Senator Somewhat,

I had a
tropical
fish, Lucid-
you could
see its heart..

I used to put
headphones
on the fish
tank and
play Django
Reinhardt
records to
get it to
come out
from underneath
a shipwreck.

Two thick snows
into winter
on a snow thick
evening, the
lights went
out
as I
was looking

at light
through a
fingerprint
on an empty
wine glass.

When I
stumbled
out to get
a candle
I heard
four high
notes
in the darkness.

It was strange,
not so much
the sound
as the timing.

In candlelight
I saw Lucid
stuck in
a depressed
b, gasping
silver
on my upright
piano.

Well Senator,
I've been
drunk most
every day
and I can't
bury Lucid.

So I'm sending
what remains
of Lucid and
those things
associated
with Lucid.

I'm sending:
20 pounds
of blue
stones,
a 10 gallon
fish estate
including:
a sand dollar
I found in
San Diego,
Fire Coral I
got from
Talafofo Bay
off Guam,

(don't touch it),
a fish tank
filter and
the album cover
of "Living and
Dying in 3/4 Time"
which
I opened
up and used as
underwater
background.

Because what
was a fish
to me, is
now music
to me,
and what's
music
to me
may not
be Lucid
to you.

Signed,

the Disreputable
I.M. Theissue?

Nogales

You are the 156th
melody bartered,
sound for sound,
into the bottom of
the blind man's cup.

You are the fifty-first
pair of shoes to
refuse the dusty
child's shine and eyes.

You are the something
or other thousandth
to know that
you'll never know
who loved Rosita
because the wall
crumbled into the
street.

You are the thirty-
thousandth pair of
ears to hear that
"It's cheaper than K-Mart".

You are the 23,698th pair
of eyes to pass velvet
paintings of John Wayne,
Elvis Presley, and other
undressed figures.

You are the billionth
throat to carry
tequila away at
less than you'd pay
elsewhere.

You are the 900th
pair of eyes to hide
under hands when
you come back into
the sun.

You are one of the
few hundred
to be photographed
alone with a sleepy
burro.

You are one of the
few questions
passing unanswered
through the customs line.

You are the last
to hear
the air conditioner
blowing, as the
electric car
window
rolls up to
blue sky and
coolness spreads
onto your skin.

Autumn Night
(The Silly Allegory Within)

Night turns
Sunday.

A car parks
in your silence.

Your eyes turn
to the moon
from her reading
in a chair.

Car doors
open like
bad violins.

There are
two sets of
footsteps

on the neighbor's
walk to the
door.

keys come
out of a pocket.

Enter Nostalgia on
the broken wings
of memory, into
a room where Bombarto,
in a wrinkled tuxedo,
stands, under "Hegel's
Vacation 1959", an elbow
on the mantle.

Nostalgia: Where
is he? Bombarto:

Who? Nostalgia:

Epilogue, who
else? Bombarto:

Who knows, he
missed four cues
last week.

Nostalgia: Four
cues.

(Enter Humdrum
(a shopping cart
repairman) from a
hallway leading to
the john where
he watched his washed
hands drain from

a sink full of water).

Humdrum (to Nostalgia):

fuck youse? Is that any
way to treat someone
who's here to fix your
one bad wheel?

Nostalgia: It's four
cues, and we don't
use shopping carts
here.

Humdrum: 4

Q's, isn't that
an old high school cheer?

Bombarto: you
must know it

Nostalgia, you're
an old high
school cheerleader
aren't you?

Nostalgia (screams):

It's four cues!

Humdrum: You must know it.

A cheerleader screams

"give me a Quuuuuuuuuu,"

then the fans

scream "Quuuuuuuuuuu."

That's repeated

3 more times, then

the cheerleader
screams "what do
you got?" And if
the fans can add
they scream "four
Q's".

Epilogue (aside,
from the fireplace):
that's my cue.

(Enter Epilogue from
the fireplace on hands
and knees between
Bombarto's legs as
he continues to stand,
elbow on the mantle).

Nostalgia: It's four
cues! I tell you, four
cues!

Epilogue (aside, still
on hands and knees): I
know. I'm here.

Nostalgia: Four cues!
Four cues! Four cues!
Four cues!

(Exit Nostalgia screaming)

Exit Bombarto running
after her, exit Humdrum
who takes the open seat nearest

you).

Epilogue, alone, stands,
lifts a
brandy Bombarto
left on the mantle,
shakes it softly, takes a sniff,
then gulps the whole thing
down.

Epilogue:

Nostalgia aches
for reality. It's
not a disease it's
something in the
air. Some kind of
wind rasping
some kind of
tree on a roof;
or last night's rain,
gutter running pieces
of yesterday's news
into a storm drain.
This is what it's
all about. Nostalgia,
Humdrum and
myself this is
it. Us, and you as

you turn

to her face
her eyes closing.

As the neighbor's
door closes

you lift your near
empty beer and watch
reflection in the room
race on the tilting can.

Black Caterpillar

A black caterpillar
wanders up your
unrolled sleeping
bag.

You pour a beer into
the campfire. It
flashes a little more
yellow.

You drain the
last of a third
can of beer.

You roll over
in your sleep
as the caterpillar
crawls into your ear.

6 o'clock Monday morning
shifts pharmaceutical
factory smoke in the
frame of your
apartment window.

A thin gray
rain laughs
on your car
as you pass through
a yellow light.

The guy down
the line says
"caps on the
bottles aren't
tight enough".

You want to tell him
the janitor hasn't tried to
wash it off and his name's on the
bathroom wall
underneath "fuck you".

In the parking
lot your boss walks
through exhaust
smoke in your
sideview mirror.

On Tuesday your boss
asks to talk to you
on Friday about Saturday night.

They will honor you
for forty years service.

At the dinner the
roast beef is dry,
the potatoes are cold
and the smoke is
burning your eyes.

A few jokes about you;
they hand you a certificate.
They want you to make
a speech.

You want to talk
about the roast
beef, the potatoes,
but you feel yourself
ready to say thank
you.

You don't. When
you open your mouth
a butterfly flies
away with your
tongue.

And bangs,
something like
one raindrop
into a closed window.

Street Art Fair

A blond
jewelry
maker says
"you're
lucky you
got one
of the last 3
gold butterflies."

An old
man in
maize
and blue
says "now
this is
realistic",
in front of
a fire hydrant
behind
a woman's
batik
phosphene
display.

A man
with

a sitar
worries
about
his Persian
carpets and
the kid
with a
Coke.

On a
stage
a musician
glances
one eye
at his
watch
in a blues
harp note
draw.

All wearing
the same colors,
everyone
in a family
of 4
pushes you
in a rush
toward

an ice
cream shop
door.

You stop
and rest
against
a brick
wall
near a
folksinger
singing
with a guitar
case, full
of returnable
cans, open
in front
of him.

A man
within
hearing
distance
says to his
singing along wife,
"A guy
in front
of me in

the liquor store
line was telling
another guy about
how he saves
50% on his heating
bills by burning
catalogues in the winter".

You decide to
go into
the liquor
store yourself;
the
man in line
in front of you
doesn't
say anything.

You pay
for a beer
and the
cashier
says, "sorry
you can't
open that
beer in here,
check
on the ledge

outside
there might
be an opener".

...there
is no
opener
much less
a ledge.

So you
can't
open
the beer
until you
get home
and you
can't get
home
because
someone
else is
driving,
and they
like it
here and
their cap
was twist off

and their

beer's

open.

Deaf

The silence of motion
runs in the depth
of the eyes and lies
flat like the quiet
on this side of glass.

The Stone, the Aardvaark
and the Hourglass Dream

Poem

not finished, he
was writing
when

a stone
came through
the window
with glass in
lit shards,

falling into
lamplight

on his paper,
falling in
shards

on the paper
making the
words
underneath glass
appear larger
than others.

The stone
stopping at
the fingertips
of his
left hand,
bracing the
paper in
writing,

the same
hand
that held
the stone
when the
writing hand
dropped
the pencil
and ripped off
the note
tied to
the stone
(naturally).

The note said:

Dire Seer,
Sometimes stones go
through the wrong windows.
Sometimes your stereo's louder
than your neighbor would like.

Not this time, this is
 a poem stone, it is a
 gift somewhat greater
 than the cost of a
 window. Keep it with
 you when you write, it
 will give you a poem,
 signed,
 the
 epic
 narrator

P.S. An aardvaark sleeps
 at your door.

So he
 went to
 the door,

found
 the aarkvaark
 sleeping on
 the welcome mat,

a rope
 around its
 neck, the
 rope wound
 around the
 house and was
 tied to a
 cottonwood

outside the
 stone shattered

window.

At the
aardvaarks
neck,
wrapped over
rope, in
paper,

another
note.

Say dude,
With every gift
comes another note
and another reason for
the epic narrator to
lay a surprise on you,
goodbye forever,
the epic
narrator
P.S. The aardvaark...
well, it craves coke.

So he
took
the aardvaark
in and
sat it
down on
the couch
turned
the T.V.

to a baseball
game, and
he opened a
bag of nacho
cheese flavored
chips, and
he popped
open a Bud
and he set
the chips
and beer
in front
of the aardvaark,

and he
went
back
to his
desk and
wrote poem after
poem about
stones and
being stoned.

He wrote poems
about:
pea gravel,

the space
between
railroad
tracks and
ties,
his flower
garden border,
the island
in his pet
turtles
terrarium,
kidneys
and gall,
Crazy Horse's
vision,
pictographs,
4 faces
in a mountain,
Mary Magdalene,
Gorgon strippers
that pulled
garbage bags
off their hands
at the precise
moment they
pulled the
last string
to nakedness,

Rainy Day Women

12 and 35 and

how it's

approximately

47 and about being

alone.

And it

was at

that poem

about

Rainy Day

Women

that he

remembered

he was not

alone.

That

there

was the

aardvaark,

and he jumped

up from

his desk

and he

ran in

to check

on the aardvaark,
and the aardvaark
was snout
to linoleum
sucking
flour from
the kitchen
floor

when it
realized
it wasn't
coke it
went
beserk

and it
picked
up a
sledge
hammer
the poet
was trying
to fix his
typewriter
with, last
night in a
drunken

moment,

and it
smashed
everything,
tables,
the T.V.,
the nacho
chips;
then
the aardvaark
looked at
the poet
then it
chased
him
into his
study.

Where it
smashed
the poets
desk,
which
sent the
stone
skidding
across

the floor
where it
spun and stopped
at the
aardvaarks feet.

Then, light
caught
the head
of the
hammer
as the aardvaark
aimed
for the
stone,
and the stone,
was hit;
again
and again
it was
hit,
enough
to be smashed
into nothing
more than
sand
that
the poet

stared
at
before
grabbing
the sledge
hammer
and killing
the aardvaark;
but still
the stone
was sand.

Sand
that
the poet
swept
up and
poured
into a
glad bag.

Sand
that the
poet
kept
in his
pocket
always,

even
when he
slept.

Yes even
when
he slept
and dreamed
again
and again

of sand,
an hourglass
paper
weight,
on a stack
of stone poems,
and time and again
time running
out, each
time all the sand
in the bottom
of the hourglass
and from underneath
that, one poem
lifting and flying
out the

unfixed
window each
time he lifts
the hourglass
to turn it.

And with
each poem
out
the window,
the dream
shifted,
to the aardvaark,
each time
a little
more decayed
on the
death
platform
the poet
made in
the cottonwood.