

# Sons



Spiny lizard on yucca  
Bury spade tip in clay  
Scoop it watch him  
Scrape with plastic toy  
The ground gives  
Slowly  
Loosen its roots  
With water  
Pat warm dirt and mulch  
Hello Tree  
Hello Tree  
Hello Tree

His hand on you  
Asleep and darkness  
Where no moon tonight  
Breathe him in

Chocolate milk drips  
From table to floor  
Over apples I cut  
Tears come and his little  
Dance of frustration  
It's okay  
It's okay  
Morning in curtains  
Light on my pages  
And kiss

Soon to grow  
A bow and arrow  
In his hands  
My cowboy  
My dragon  
The cars spin  
On a circle  
Of roadway

Play catch-the-moon  
Children laugh as handfuls  
Of pecan moon and sycamore  
Pod stars scatter  
From the sky's dark  
Bouncing on the dusky  
Vinyl trampoline

Show them

A man

What that could be

Sweeping scarecrow

Hay off the porch

Fall moon blank

Blue sky runic

Figures of cloud

Barely made out and the black

Wingspan of an owl

Lows under the boughs of

Hackberry hedge

A sound

In him pulls

Out of his skin

Climbs a tree

Are you able  
To be in these roles  
And absorb  
That look  
Of their sweet eyes  
And go with them  
And come back  
New again

No bears no lions  
Not even the clouds  
Hold forms  
We can name  
Against the terror  
Of a second  
Coming  
That darkness  
And pressure  
Warm hands  
His breath  
On my cheek  
At night  
The error  
Of the mind's  
Indifferent  
Observance  
Of signs

Soon we go  
Home  
Home  
Where we are  
To play in the swaying  
Shade of late day  
When I come home  
Bare feet  
On pink gravel  
Wagon and tricycle  
My cave mind  
Arranged in the play  
Of my boys  
These children and  
Going west  
The sun

Walk cold surf  
Bare feet in grey  
Tide coming in  
Golden Gate  
In mist while pelicans  
Glide to the surface  
We are watching  
Them come and  
Go along headland  
Dunes and tourists  
Stand by a dock  
My arms heavy  
With him moving  
The cut  
Of his face  
On me

Soon it will end  
The plane goes up  
It is sucking  
Three hours  
After security  
In the air  
Over the West  
We see clouds  
Against window plastic  
In the tedium  
Wobble  
Piss into stainless steel  
Bowl and blue anti-  
Bacterial liquid  
Wipe hands  
On our jeans

They are here  
And dying too  
Call it entropy  
Or whatever  
Will you deal  
With this fact  
Tell them  
When it comes  
Goodbye  
And go inside  
With the rest

A kiss

Goodbye

Goodbye

A kiss

These days

In a book

Far away

In the dusky

Homecoming

Of our post-

Human

Hearth

We look  
For home  
And go  
On pretending  
It's a place  
On a map  
But no map  
Retains  
The heat of it  
He falls  
Or a furry caterpillar  
(Blackish – yellow)  
Stings with sharp points  
And enters bodily  
Disturbing the substance  
Of memory

Watch him  
Hold a China-  
Berry branch  
By the house  
Where neighbours  
Play with their kids  
And the damp buggy  
Fall mosquitoes pester  
Drink a beer  
To keep cool  
Words

No answers  
To the question  
Naked flapping  
Penis in the cold  
Of morning  
Watch them  
Watching *Sesame Street*  
We are here  
We are here

It's not enough  
And that's okay  
Home happens  
Perfect and  
Strange in its  
Mobility  
Inside the wild weird  
Writhing of sleep  
Hungry forms  
Twisted on the floor

We ran around  
In the new backyard  
Gravel under our toes  
New oak growing  
On ragweed  
The boys quarter  
Vietnamese  
Nearly naked  
In north wind

Hold him these  
Cold nights  
Never close  
Enough  
Never thought  
Forms could hold  
So fast

And what is it  
We are bonded to  
New jeans and a blue  
Chambray shirt cowboy  
Boots and a leather belt  
Holding the Chinaberry  
Balanced like an ape

Parrots flew by  
We were dressed in warm clothes  
And coloured scarves  
Covered the youngest  
Penguin cap on his brother  
Sunlight on soft leaves  
Evergreen shade by the fence  
We dumped mulch  
Swept the trailer  
Ate bean tacos for breakfast

Late they sleep  
And the dark house  
Sounds the sleeping  
They drift in dream  
Wind out the window  
My bare feet on cold floor  
Waking he moans out  
And sleep again  
Comes to the house

I remember how distinct  
From birth each  
Movement of limbs in air  
Gulping breath  
To reveal the pitch  
Of what each is  
Apprehended by appetite

Halloween  
Skeletons dance  
By the images of  
Dead pets  
My son  
Naked in morning  
Brightness  
Yellow leaves spin  
In the grass

How much of you  
In them leaves  
The urgency of past  
Generations  
Taking up  
The broom he is  
Sweeping straw  
Off the steps  
A moment in him  
Almost medieval  
In acute vividness  
Of form

Their eyes are big  
In candlelight and  
Birthday cake  
Glow in the dark they  
Sing and delight in  
Mystery of rituals  
Urging us to achieve  
Our roles

What is it you want  
In you to bet  
What can be said  
Against all that can't  
In them they measure  
You by a cast  
Of metaphor in  
Genetic thrusts  
Of creature love  
Formed by the stress  
And relief of play

Show them a man  
You will be  
A word: dragon  
Great horned owl  
Lion  
Names bring  
Moonlight on gravel  
Dressed in silken scarves  
A pirate's sword  
And whisky  
Glow in our skin

Halloween glow stick  
Broke in his mouth  
Floating like violet mercury  
His lips bright from the car window  
Quickly inside  
Wash him then search  
Trash for the label to read  
The relieving word: non-toxic  
The dump  
The dump  
Of any shit place  
The plastic and washing  
The glowing fluid I  
Hold his mouth  
Scared he won't  
Look at me

Will there be fish to eat  
One day  
Breaking flesh  
To feast  
With a lightness  
And assurance  
Will our children  
Have enough  
An ancient question  
And terror of not  
Living up to what  
The many tides of people  
In us have made

I see him through a window  
In the yard by the salvia  
With a stick and wonder  
What strangeness gave us  
To see in the other  
The likeness of our ways  
How our acts speak  
Through temporal spans  
Now holding a pill bug  
Inspecting the coiled density  
Of the thing taking note  
I wonder what it is  
We are doing

And when it comes  
To goodbye  
No one survives  
Except in memory  
What we take  
We keep inside  
And tell again  
The stories  
Of an informing other  
In us to let us  
Be

Imagine him  
As you one day too  
The flesh gone to nothing  
Scattered in some field  
Of emptiness  
A darkness through which  
We go not  
Alone but in them  
So loved the world  
Disappearing forever  
A dream or so  
It would seem  
In that vanishing

Naked finger paints  
Morning through a window  
Willow and salvia bend in a moist  
Southern breeze  
We are watching  
Each other and a painting  
Arrives from sticky red-and-  
Blue palms and fingers

One day nothing  
Will happen of  
Any importance  
The birds will sing  
The sun will do its thing  
One day nothing  
Will happen and  
Shift silently  
Through us

My sons play  
In dirt and plastic  
Toys lie sideways  
A buzzard passes  
Its shadow on the yard  
I will tell them how it is  
Like nothing we can know  
So love remains  
In images we carry  
Of the dead and their words  
Become our body  
Of feeling

Keep going closer  
To something out of reach  
A god of ancient form  
Long dead in a temple  
Sacked by the children  
Of a future no deity  
Can apprehend

These hard days  
Come along without warning  
The car will not move  
It obeys inert logic  
Nature whose child in us  
Haunts my habits of feeling  
Cat in a window  
He rides a limb as orange  
Twilight lines the clouds

Reading *The Hobbit*

By candle

Gandalf arrives with adventures

He curls next to me

Warm in the sheets

Brother sleeping

Another room

An organ of sheetrock and lumber

Between us

What we see

Plays in the dance of

Shadows the room

Absorbs with us

Listening

Days vanish  
Their morphology  
Depends on  
That  
That  
Sweet son  
In his towel dripping  
Water on the floor  
Winter darkness out the window  
Naked spine and shoulder  
His wet hair  
Sleepy he leans on me  
And the sudden kiss

You hear in them  
A voice or find  
Some physical trope of  
Surprise like the way  
He holds his head or  
Turns a phrase  
The world is host  
On the verge of ruin  
The seas die  
The land fries  
And we move  
Small on the husk of it  
On that membrane  
Make our words  
All we are  
In the world

New day  
In the ways of new  
Beings  
Spinning in pistache  
Shadows  
As movement  
Accumulates  
By perceptive  
Duration  
Through my sons  
To me enter  
Anon