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# Egg Head and Other Poems

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# Egg Head and Other Poems

*by Celeste Hackenberg*

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Fine Arts degree  
at Sarah Lawrence College, December 2016.

## Egg Head

### The Chicken Egg

came first. The egg generally came first, since eggs have existed much longer than chickens.

### The Matter was Resolved

scientifically, through an analysis of chicken birth records dating back to around

5,000 BC<sup>1</sup>. How do we decide, I wonder, when a species is complete?<sup>2</sup>

### The Original Egghead

was a man, Ad-lai.  
Ad- as in *toward* lyric love poem<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Estimates vary, but sometime between 7,000 and 9,000 years ago, chickens were domesticated by humans.

<sup>2</sup> Both Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Bill Nye support the idea that an almost-chicken laid an egg that had inside a full chicken according to an article by Merrill Fabry on *Time.com*.

<sup>3</sup> A “lai” is a lyrical narrative love poem.

## **Adlai Stevenson Was Actually**

Adlai II, forever second  
to his father and Dwight D.

Eisenhower. His wife was the  
only Ellen Waller Borden.

She left to pursue  
art and literature.

## **Allow Me to Introduce**

Egg Head II, a man  
who's only free  
because he's frugal.

## **Egg Head Thought**

in fewer variables, since his goal  
was to solve all  
the equations.

## **Egg Head's Parents**

divorced, so he took  
to avoiding  
cardboard and carton.

## **Dilemma:**

Was Egg Head's mom  
a chicken or an egg?

## **Egg Head's Mom**

was an egg, liked throwing  
versions of herself at the neighbor's  
house on Halloween.

## **Egg Head was Hardboiled**

after his mom read that  
the method is “fool proof.”  
(He was her first child.)

## **Egg Head Thought**

of all the things he would never be: in a quiche, soft-boiled, over-easy, poached (at least he would not be poached), frittata, scrambled, baked in a dinner roll, omelet, sunny side up.

## **Egg Head Didn't Care,**

come to think of it, that he could not be some of these things. He never really wanted to be scrambled, to forever be linked with all those smug peppers and lewd bits of cheese.

### **When Egg Head Heard**

of sous-vide, he believed,  
like Candide, that this  
was the best of all possible worlds.

He dreamed he could have been  
a little creamy.

### **Egg Head Was Totally**

out of touch  
with his insides, couldn't tell whether  
and what smelled like sulfur.

### **Egg Head's Half-**

sister became a coddled egg.  
The years made his mom brave enough to try  
out the ice bath.

## **When Egg Head Was Sad,**

he remembered the things he might still be: steeped in Chinese spice tea and camouflaged in the nest of an American Kestrel, egg salad (he liked mayo okay), in a breakfast burrito.

## **Deviled Eggs Excited Egg Head**

but he worried about  
appearing  
immodest, or artificial.

## **Egg Head Didn't Really**

like to date because the  
labels confused him.  
What is "organic"? the USDA?



## **Egg Head Had Never**

gotten laid, not  
by a chicken.

## **At a Party**

Egg Head met,  
Over Easy.  
Drunk on rum,

tried to make  
egg nog.

## **The Next Day, Egg Head**

stayed in bed and tried not to break  
any eggshells, especially

the eggshell  
covering his brain.

**“You’re a Good Egg,”**

Over Easy said,  
“Solid.”

**Float Test:**

A good egg  
should sink to the bottom.

**Bad Eggs**

slosh around in their  
diminishing shells, all stale  
air and rancid smells.

## **Egg Head Had His Own Convictions**

that is to say,  
there are other ways  
to tell.

## **Then Again**

there's the curious  
USDA, which gives the whole  
family the same exact grade.

## **The Wisdom of Over-Easy:**

You can't be afraid to break  
your life.

### **How do you like your eggs?**

To this responded  
one would-be-over-easy,

“We’re so much more  
than how they flip us.”

### **Standing Ovulation**

Imagine laying an egg  
every 25 hours,

or having a period every  
single day, then

consider who  
is the real talent.

### **Better to Kiss a Frog**

than let him spoon you.  
It may quickly progress  
to amplexus.

## **More to Stand On**

An egg is an ego with two legs  
instead of one.

An egg could almost stand up  
and walk away.

## **The Thing About Inflated Eg-**

o, well...

## **Super Egg**

believes it's strong enough to  
choose whether or not

its yellow parts ooze.

## **Egg Head Thought**

It's easier to drop  
an idea than it is a friend  
or a lover.

## **Job Interview**

Egg Head put  
all his eggs in one basket.  
(Just one.)

## **What Do YOU Think?**

About all eggs  
in one basket?

The other day, I saw an empty  
carton crushed on the road.

**You Think YOU Go Stir Crazy**

staying at home all day?  
Try living in a shell.

**Mike the Headless Chicken**

whose brainstem mostly  
dodged the axe, lived 18 more  
months, half-hacked.

**No Eggs Sit**

comfortably on a wall.  
Oh Humpty Dumpty,  
you couldn't help but fall!

## An Age-Old Problem: Translating “Egg”

William Caxton recorded one fifteenth century man’s disappointment when he tried to order eggs in a pub on the Thames. Neither he nor the goode wyf coulde speke any frensche. He axyed after eggys, but she didn’t understand. When a-nother customer sayd he wolde have eyren, she got exactly what he meant. As you might guess, the hungry marchaunt threw his up hands in lament, “Loo, what sholde a man in thyse dayes now [say], eggys, or eyren? It is hard to playse every man, by-cause of dyversite and chaunge of langage.”<sup>4</sup>

## Birthday Breakfast

French toast and bacon can’t easily be made without eggs.

What is your missing ingredient?

## What’s Left Out

of the story is that no one knows if it’s possible to be one ingredient.

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<sup>4</sup> From William Caxton’s translation of Preface to the *Eneydos*, 1490.



**The Self Disintegrates**

the egg.

*“Probably one of the most private things in the world is an egg until it is broken.”*

-MFK Fisher

why and so on." (Moving through, extending beyond, and exploiting the resources of phenomenological as well as structural analysis, Benjamin's essay and Barthes's last book could very well be the two most significant texts on the so-called question of the Referent in the modern technological age.) The word *punctum*, moreover, translates, in *Camera Lucida*, one meaning of the word "detail": a point of singularity that punctures the surface of the reproduction—and even the production—of analogies, likenesses, and codes. It pierces, strikes me, wounds me, bruises me, and, best of all, seems to concern only me. Its very definition is that it addresses itself to me. The absolute singularity of the other addresses itself to me, the Referent that, in its very image, I can no longer suspend, even though its "presence" forever escapes me, having already receded into the past. (That is why the word "Referent" could be a problem if it were not reformed by the context.) Also the solitude that rends the fabric of the same, the networks or ruses of economy, addresses itself to me. But it is always the singularity of the other insofar as it comes to me without being directed toward me, without being present to me, and the other can even be "me," me having been or having had to be, me already dead in the future anterior and past anterior of my photograph. And, I would add, in my name. Although it seems, as always, only lightly marked, this range of the dative or accusative that addresses to me or declines for me the *punctum* is, I think, essential to the very category of the *punctum*, at least as it is put to work in *Camera Lucida*. If we were to bring together two different aspects or exposures of the same concept, then it would appear that the *punctum* aims at me at the instant and place where I aim at it; it is thus that the punctuated photograph pricks me, points me. On its minute surface, the same point divides of itself: this double punctuation disorganizes right from the start both the unary and the desire that is ordered in it. *First exposure*: "It is this element that rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument: the word suits me all the better in that . . ." [*Camera Lucida*, 26]. (This is the form of what I was looking for, something that *suits him*, that suits and concerns only him; as always, he claims to be looking for what comes to him and suits him; what agrees with him and fits him like a garment; and even if it is a ready-made garment, and only in fashion for a certain time, it must conform to the immutable *habitus* of a unique body; thus to choose one's words, whether new or very old, from the storeroom of languages, as one picks out a garment, taking everything into account: the season, fashion, place, fabric, shade, and so on.) The word suits me all the better in that

: every other night, on TV, someone says: I love you)

## I.

French is indeed the language of love,  
a Google survey confirms:

the most popular translation *je t'aime*,  
close second to *bonjour*.

I was in an underground market in Nice  
the first time I heard

the foreign words  
collide, flung so fast and dense in so little air

I couldn't speak. *Je dois partir*,  
they echoed (I must leave). I've never been

fluent, but sometimes it comes to me.

## II.

In second grade, Mrs. Cameron  
suggested immersion. She said I had

an advanced command of the material,  
perhaps since I once transposed the *e* and *u*

in *blue* and gave her an awkward kiss after  
school, though none of that really meant

anything.

## III.

Some words stay closer to the root  
*am*, as in *être*, to be:

amorous, enamored, polyamory, paramour,  
 amoral. To have, *avoir*, (animal quality).

We were drunk  
 on absinthe outside the Moulin Rouge when Stephanie

(Stéphanie) kissed me.

## IV.

Marina Tsvetaeva's poems to Sofia Parnok were tucked away  
 in a corner of Shakespeare & Co.,

her pages opened, brave to love  
 another woman in Soviet Russia. I aspired to become

an amorist, too, send our moans  
 beyond the tousled hostel bed in Montmartre.

If Parnok was Russia's Sappho,  
 I would be France's.

My lover, the age that I was when I loved him.

## V.

*Amour* once English for 1. love affair,  
 2. an illicit or secret love affair,

always carries a "suggestion of intrigue" and is now  
 only thought of as French.

Obscene still resembles obscène.

$\Omega_\lambda$  (and this can be simultaneous)

To say, “it’s 5 o’clock somewhere” is really to meditate on the theory of relativity. I’ve tried making myself at home in the bars of different time zones. Many degrees separate me, between meridians, as my body parts age, pass through parallels, sift their own distinctive breed of gold from dirt quaking every filter. There’s nothing strange about listlessness or these lungs. That they breathe tampered air, or that the liver stays hidden, filling itself with bottom shelf liquor. So often, we must consider the cost to keep on running, whether we’re like Maybelline ads, worth the price of our skin, which by now is ruddy if not rouged. Possibly, we have always been rose-stemmed. A cold one before noon has remained an old taboo, even after Einstein proved it’s all the same inside the vacuum. I could be any of the places I’ve lived so far and maybe all of them.

at the drive-in

because we couldn't

shoot in the first place because

the first place was

tragic maybe,

or perhaps film noir, we had

to try over buy

different cars. he leaned

on the horn in the dark,

invisible to me and loud-  
bleeding.

*Believe*

we are glass, we are light

as champagne. let's put

off the headache, project our

dead star.

## 634 East Georgia

Our rent went up. In the time we'd been away, living in other places with floors we didn't have to paint. No industrial blue flakes chipped through to gray concrete. The apartment was chosen on a whim in the gust of an inland night. I was as usual, restless. At \$225 a month each, we could afford extra heat. That was the summer I left California, and every cell in my body swelled full of salt, missing coast. Vancouver seemed close enough, without too much rain in the summer. I spent the first night alone, sped the wrong way down Commercial Drive to McDonald's, in a hurry to feel familiar. I have missed the continuity of his kindness. How gracefully he drove. Me, throwing up bile and steering from the passenger seat. By then it was fall; I was sick from the cold. The ad still reads, "Great for artist and students." For eight years, I have fluctuated between near extremes: inventive to invented, poor to impoverished. We were crowded there, in 180 square feet, though I hung a curtain from the tree branch, to keep us separate. If we moved back now, the miles would crush us. He has sold his Nissan pickup with the sun-worn blue paint.



## 46° Fahrenheit

I'm getting used to lower temperatures, as peach preserves cross the border of a colder coast. They appear in Fahrenheit, in season. I learn by feel, press them to my cheek, tin cans or conch shells. Our equations are only real as their corresponding numbers. Are we half a circle away from boiling? Last summer was several years ago and counting. He announced his favorite month was May, his stage name Billy December, then sung his way from Ojai up to Canada. I recorded "Billy Felix" in the acoustics of my bathroom on Vancouver Island, using a second-hand cassette. Sent it southwards like an SOS, that wrong winter I was snowbound. The word *unseasonable* is not ill-timed. Instead, it seems to be reflexive. Farmer's Almanac, El Niño at least two ways of guessing. New York has hardly noticed yet, ten days to Christmas, that the sun's been strange. Perhaps a change of interval, his visit closer by degrees. We keep importing weather from both ends of our split continent, worn with distance.

## Below Freezing

Never grew  
cold enough to miss you

without winter.  
Just a little wind in Sacramento

every year. Our  
lives were heavy then,

a quilt  
I couldn't lift.

When I left, you  
rented a cabin at Lake Tahoe. We

wore rain boots  
in the snow until our feet turned black,

smoked cigars  
to celebrate having lungs.

The temperature  
dropped, but couldn't shake

us awake.  
It was so late by the time

the seasons changed.  
I ought to have loved you then

naked and warm  
under the blanket, alive

just the way I would have  
wanted.

## Solo

Once I was a unicorn 2 of hearts loop-taped to the front of my boyfriend's guitar  
faced down, tattered-faceless. I sang songs in the rain with *h* words like *hoo-ha* and  
*hey*, lay flat by his sound hole to play voiceless vowel.

At times I liked to be gripped by something, rattled in the back seat of his truck,  
strings buzzing. Turns lulling me hard-pressed, ho-humming. Him gripped on the  
wheel, driving something that sounded like half of us.

For awhile all I saw was space maybe a few fuzzy shapes I'd traced with the tip of my  
horn, bumped in on corners as he drove. I had wings and knew I could change  
position, but stayed underhand. One day, I waved, gracefully swallowed the song. The  
audience booed as I drowned him on stage.

## Cinco de Mayo

We sipped mini bottles of Patron Silver  
and watched the ants in Capital Park:

one grabbed hold of a twig three times its length  
and stumbled under it, like a college kid  
carrying a three-seater couch.

He abandoned it, we speculated, having given up  
his efforts to impress the queen. But three  
left turns and a quick land survey prepped him  
for round two.

I said maybe we can help him lift him closer to his goal.  
You said it's impossible  
to know this ant's plan.

Sometimes I go in circles too  
and wonder if anyone's watching.

## Rapid Eye Movement

I was old last night. Today, my body not yet blued by any heart attack (or pre-heart attack), keeps pace with the drive. We go just slow enough to miss all of our reflections breaking in the rearview mirror forever. We've been so many cars, so many different people. I think of how I'll change, stay in one season long enough to make a new tradition. The seasons pass and then they come again. There is another me with teeth that wiggle out each night so I wake up tired, afraid to chew anything but bread and soft cheese. The mess in the basement on Kensington comes to every other house, apartment, room. Toys, terrors and half-packed things, pictures of women I'll never meet. My family, in technicolor, towers over me, at times so much larger than I am, then smaller. Every morning I see the dishes waiting in the sink, pick up the sponge and cry.

## LOOP...ENDLOOP

When I was a teenager, a woman on Oprah said “anxiety is selfish energy,” and I believed her. She was on TV. My mom watched too, every weekday afternoon from 4-5pm, for explanations. More technically: we hoard worries in our DNA. Infinite loops cued by biology charge through neural circuits, like commands. Does “self-ish” mean simply to resemble the self? and if so, how much are we like our computer? As a toddler, I sent my request to Romper Room. In blue pen, “please say ‘Celeste’ when you are looking out at us watching. I am.” “I see Johnny and Michael and Mandy and Sam...” Somewhere between my mailbox and the screen, that missing letter. We don’t write ourselves into or out of this code.

6:47am EST

Einstein keeps Googling what's wrong with him, gets caught in the maze of Psychology Today. Is it Holiday Blues or Seasonal Depression? Maybe he has a problem with procrastination. Reminder: life goals have no deadlines. When I ask him why he hasn't yet unveiled his theory, he replies, "Sometimes, my thoughts seem so vague that they're hardly worth mentioning," and "Every time I hit the snooze button, I run exactly that many minutes behind." Historians don't pay much attention to Einstein's love life, though Mileva Maric was crucial to his scientific success. As wife, she sacrificed mathematics, her own shot at the Nobel. Bore two sons, one daughter the two boys survived. Four months after they divorced, his cousin Elsa took her place, a second Emma Darwin. Mileva fell ill, and Einstein won the prize.

## I vs. Them

Quantitative research has been conducted  
at the University of Texas at Austin<sup>5</sup>

on *I*

and its (lack of) power.

Those who communicate with high instances of *I*  
are not CEOs, are not rich or highly esteemed.

They are women and children, presidents in trouble,  
George W. Bush at the peak of the 9/11 crisis.

The more cause for worry, the more focused on *I*.  
With each *I* that appears, compounding evidence  
for depression.

Clues to Plath's suicide  
imbued in the increasing  
frequency of *I* near the end.

*Regard me sadly; she wrote, I disappoint them.*<sup>6</sup>  
In her edits, this is a line (she didn't think)  
she could change.

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<sup>5</sup> James Pennebaker has conducted extensive research on pronoun use and its underlying meaning. See *The Secret Life of Pronouns*.

<sup>6</sup> From Sylvia Plath's poem, "Sheep in Fog," re-written two weeks before her death.



**Figure 5: The normalized depression in melting temperature (black) and melting**

My body can be measured. Against a flat wall, without shoes, I am 5'8." Or, to the discerning eye, more like 5'7" and 3/4. Until age 14, the size of my feet matched my grade, from 1 to 8, then splayed in junior high to 8.5 wide. I don't remember what bones feel like when they grow, or what I weighed at 19, though my driver's license said something like 57.6kg. In grade 9, Jessica told all our friends about the water bra I used to inflate A's to B's. I'd done the same only backwards on tests. No one cares for brunettes with big brains and flat chests. I have since given up counting cups, and the luxury of every-six-week salon haircuts, to become a heart on stilts in a daily freak-parade teetering under the gray nervous tissue of its brain. No one fixes these things anymore. Of course they never could. They can't even agree on what they're called or how they work. This computer was assembled beginning in 1985, with the technology available at the time, and keeps crashing.

## Locked Out

I never thought of myself as mentally ill. Just that something's always messing up my plans. Even Dr. Bredenkamp said it was normal at the start. Teenagers tend to be dramatic, as they discover the wounds adults have gotten used to. The first time it hit hard, I was fifteen and believed it was just a figure of speech. But when Peter said, "this is the closest we can possibly be," he meant it. He left the smell of sweaty whip-cream in the air and on me, cemented to my worn-out pubic stubble. Rocking felt good, I remembered, not sleeping in my room. White walls. I laundered and tried to re-fold time. To wake up in my house with everyone still in it, or back at my locker where he first asked me out. The nurse at the psychiatrist's office said she used the mood chart I created to help other patients make sense of their patterns. The nurse in the psych ward said if Peter were her son, she'd keep him away too.

## Insecure/Preoccupied

Attachment is cyclic,  
 my mother's warmth baked into  
 brownies, love a drug I ate,  
 a big steaming tray full of feel-  
 good chemicals, feels like

running my sticky three-year-old fingers through  
 white dust crushed on the bathtub ledge, white  
 crushed up pills on my tongue, white pills  
 with chocolate in the toilet bowl. "Look mom,  
 I pumped my own stomach!"

Attachment is cyclic,  
 chemical. I got a prescription  
 (just in case) depression was passed down  
 from my grandpa (undiagnosed),  
 through my mom (incurable) and out

an endless leak of green bile. Sixty Tylenol  
 carefully counted and purged with sixteen-  
 year-old fingers. Residue of sixty Tylenol stuck  
 sour to my tongue as doctors  
 pumped me with "antidote."

Attachment is cyclic,  
 he said "This is the closest we can possibly be,"  
 then went to find more. The pills, his  
 mother's aging face  
 inches from mine,

"We care about you.  
 He's only sixteen."

## Wednesday Children

“You’re only as happy as your saddest child,” my mother tells me when she sees that I am better now. Like Better is some wholesome small town I have moved to and stayed, just north of New York City. The necessities are settled, white-knuckled in place: enough walls, a roof without any water leaking down. I am thirty. She was twenty-two when she knew she’d have to push me out, two weeks late and three pounds overweight. On the first Wednesday in April, there was sun instead of rain. Nonetheless I was plagued, full of woe. Born badly. The nursery rhyme says she, a Saturday child, works hard for a living. Both of us do. Her monotone job, my lengthy commute. My sister, born two years later, is full of woe too. We have nothing to do with the mood we were conceived in.

## Homecoming

There's the window to my room on the seventh floor,  
where a nurse was once stationed

on suicide watch. I hadn't expected  
my best friend to come, or her laugh

when I joked *If I jump, the snow will break  
my fall*. The psychiatrist was worried

about the color of the town, "Don't  
paint it red," he said, and I shook

his hand. With his pen, he sent  
me back in

my parent's house, with the dose of drugs  
I left for myself, enough

to get through  
high school, to keep the basement clean.

I brought you here to see  
what it's like to live alone. Stuff

a towel under the door when you smoke  
your pack of cigarettes. Keep it

from getting in other peoples' lungs.

## 25 cents

Unlike loonies, which differentiate themselves by virtue of being round, heavy, and yellow, Canadian quarters look just like American quarters that have lost a little weight. The machines at the laundromat all have springs built to eject wrong currency, no matter how you insert it. *Coincide* is the action faulty money takes to die. In her blog, my therapist back in California contemplates the root of *decide*, reflecting on its relationship to other purposeful endings. When people *de-cide* to get married, they might begin to mourn a loss. Like my ex, she forgot to consider the prefix. I arrived at his apartment on P Street in Sacramento during the recession of 2009, undeterred with hot feet. For six years I made my case for a never-would-be wedding. By the time he agreed, I'd moved out east to try again. On the floor of the laundromat across from my new boyfriend's gym, a quarter from my trip to Montreal. I had gone to decide between them.

## Recurring Dreams

By now I'm accustomed to crashing into the lake. Always the same sharp turn and too much wayward velocity. My boyfriend says we fear heights because we sense potential energy, veins tilt toward the fall—tip our blood, hot-flushed like mercury. My love is going under water, or it's gone in without me.

## Doppelg ng

When I'm not thinking I'll call our smallest cat Angie. Sometimes I call my boyfriend by my ex's name, but stop at the more innocuous syllable. "Bil," before it hits *l* and *y*, can sound like the beginning of *baby*, I love you too, *baby*. Moving on can look like an arc of a circle, stretch over and pause – resist the temptation to curl under, tuck back. Both sets of cats were my idea. Two years prior, I left Angie and her adopted brothers with him, believing they would never be enough to call family. My new love had a belly that wriggled full of bloody fur and insistent clawed cells, a kind of foothold I thought I'd been wishing on myself. The veterinary assistant teased she was a slag and reminded me all kinds of children come with a twenty year commitment. We decided on three. Angie and the boys, as far as I know, are alive.



## Spirit Animal

I loved her through an opening  
in the internet, my pet, called

urgent and wordless for me  
with just a picture. *Survival*,

we are sisters from another species,  
wounds in winter. Desperate

to find ourselves  
indoors before the storm.

In cat years, she might be sixteen  
and already a matriarch. Me,

I am childless and getting older.

She shares her kittens. We both  
keep secrets, how many lives  
we lived before.

## December 7

Today is my first love's thirtieth birthday. His three-year-old son is at home, baking a cake. I picture the mother's hair red, responsible, tied back, and remember I'm not in the kitchen. Nine or ten months before Arthur was born, we toasted our pending remains with champagne and red wine, then some beer, maybe cocktails. There would be no flight back to California, I told the airline, *due to pressure systems, haze*. My passport fell several hours behind—clung to midnight, imbibed drunken echoes by a streetlight in Gastown. "I still... I haven't stopped... the scent never quite went away," I yelled on forever. The next morning, when he refused to see me, I wrung my intestines into the koi pond at Sun Yat-Sen Garden—watched the fish fizz out prisms of liquor, gills gasping to distill. In my dreams, the child was ours and he just never told me. Fifteen years is a lifetime, crumpled in the sheets of his brother's bed. Each of us then half of who we are becoming. Every year, we light a different number of candles, make silent wishes, and blow out old flames. *Cosmopolitan* says we've been wrong about dessert, just like sex. To keep it fresh, always slice down the middle.

**20% ABV**

Tonight two alcoholics slurp marsala from the pork. We pour just one cup to keep us wanting. Is it myth that heat detoxifies the meat? Knock on fire. Chop another clove. Drench mashed potatoes under half a stick of melted butter. I am not familiar with the contents of the last twelve hours before he went to work. Lace of my left boot frayed, I imagine, in his struggle to remove it. Both tongues stuck out like mine at 10pm when he found me stumbling near our house. Bits of glossolalia, untamed id – soggy bread crumbs thumbed together to dry out by the morning. “I knew you had a crush on her,” broke the silence. She and I had finished three glasses each, and two bottles of wine – red and white. The black sky, my mind wasted around a dream I never meant to have and don’t remember.

11:09

There are more than fourteen hundred minutes in a day. Most times cycle past, simply and forgotten. A few mornings a week, my friend texts “Make a wish” at 11:11 but I don’t see it. I spend all night staring at my phone. He doesn’t text again. When people ask me whether I am going home for Thanksgiving, I ask them what they mean by home. There are three cats sitting in the window, a man who says he loves me even more than he knows. It’s been fourteen years since I lived with my parents and sister. Fourteen years since 1109 Kensington, the K-blocks, our neighbors on Kilwinning and Killarney. All of my childhood friends have gotten married. Many of their parents have divorced, died, or survived some kind of cancer. There’ve been some loves of my lifes, some tries at making my own family. Every time I look at the clock, it’s 11:09.

(though secretly)

you'll wait  
for my affairs  
to end, send  
emails to the  
wrong account  
because you  
know i'll check.  
the letters  
stopped, like  
the "love"s  
you used  
to put at the

end. i'm trying to end  
up with someone else.

i wonder  
if you see the  
pictures of us  
on Facebook,  
the ones  
my dad posted,  
since you're not  
my friend. i saw  
the comment  
you left on his  
post about pedaling  
a bicycle in  
reverse. am i

perverse to take pleasure in your connection to my family?