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This collection of poetry seeks an accord between the past and everyday life. Several of the poems deal with particular sorrows and I have found that poetry transforms sorrow in the same manner language transforms what is real into what is perceived. I hope there is some joy in this collection. Were I to draw a figure of death, I would place it behind the wheel of a candy apple 57 Chevy. Poetry must set forth from "somewhere." These poems originate from the unspeakable desires of everyday life.

TAKING CARE OF THINGS

By

Travis R. Venters Jr.

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Approved by:

Fred Chappell

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TAKING CARE OF THINGS

In the mountains of Italy
Your brain blundered with words,
Willy knew all the time,
Mother gave me flowers and a cake,
"Go clean your father's grave,"
Says,
I am taking away the flag,
It's too thin,
At twelve years
Sitting in your alouse
I wanted to die and talk with you,
I had the voice
From the preacher,
He told me I should go to heaven
And die beside with you
If I believed,
Here I am
Come to comb your white stone hair,
A wife's errand,
I never saw you
You never knew me, so honest
Take it easy.

TAKING CARE OF THINGS

In the mountains of Italy
Your brain blends with earth.
Only bones shipped home.
Mother gave me flowers and a rake.
"Go clean your father's grave."
Here.
I am taking away the flag.
It's too thin.
At twelve years
Sitting in your blouse
I wanted to die and talk with you.
I had the word
From the preacher.
He told me I could go to heaven
And fly b-24s with you
If I believed.
Here I am
Come to comb your white stone hair.
A wife's errand.
I never saw you
You never knew me, so bones
Take it easy.

GERTRUDE

Raised me to be decent. Seek experience
Have patience, and others understand.
Taught me to endure the long silence
The things good words never understand.

Later, she told me all about her war
How a man was able to open her eyes.
"I knew then what I was best suited for
To be all those things he could never buy."

She lives in the strong cover of silver
Wings, a pilot's widow, without blame.
I know she made his evenings hover
In their one bare year of flame.

Now with my daughter she is free
And I see a child I could never be.

A DREAM

for H.R.M.

.....The wandering outlaw has left his own dark mind

In the darkness and rubble of Rome

To travel beyond the borders of History.

I go with him.

Disguised we slip from under Europe's sky

Tunneled by uncountable columns of smoke.

Blood sews the wind

Engines whir

Men become notes in a siren

But we are bound

The rough way through the frontier guards.

Randall in his pink shirt

Steps from his British sports car.

The boy by the well is ill.

He confides to me: You come if you want

Stay here if you want.

Jealous, Byron interupts: I have already been to Rome.

There saw fingers touch dark

Vulvas stuffed with apricots.

A nameless man appears from the road
 Draws water from the well, then takes up
 The old spiked axe we use for marking property
 And with his left hand cuts off his right.
 Oblivious to pain

He turns to me: But you should know, Travis
I was born from a gilded mirror
And Adam's seed. I guide your dreams
As the mirror guides your face.

I woke. Sunlight falls
 Dove feathered through the pines.
 Lee is folded into a dream
 Her long hair streaked with leaves
 From night's hard mat;
 Today we go the last far range
 Through snow shawled trees to Switzerland
 And sanctuary.
 We ride deer above the timberline.
 The deer make us invisible to the pilots.

Byron comes down from his sea coast
 Stone to crouch by morning fire.
 Taking a mug, he commands me to recite:

I say The pure sky
Someday too must float
Down to dust.

SHELLING THE CIRCLE

My neighbor has passed to time
 Her stately corpulence,
 Neighborly wince of conversations.
 I, a man with the men of the village,
 Carry her to the reddest clay she'll
 Ever see. Amen.

The old people are dying
 Six empty houses on great grandfather's hill.

Let them.

Spare them the day
 Their bodies stink in bed like mules
 Dumb struck in noonday sun.

We gather here
 To hinge our friend to her reward
 To beacon this ground.

Come angel,

Be quick.
 Her old friends weep,
 My eyes wander through the tombs
 Looking, looking.

Longhair. Bedford Forrest's beard.
 Bow ties and buggy rides. Box woods,
 Cedar, china berry. Quilts and woolens.
 Men extend hands towards a woodstove.
 The century crimped in a corn cob pipe.

Shorthair. Father's painted tie.
 A yellow piper cub. Glen Miller.
 Evening a pretty girl with a bob.
 A rose pinned to a satin dress.
 Lost three boys to the war: Tarawa,
 Naples, a curve in Alabama.
 Homefront moonshiners
 Made friends with the sporting crowd
 Rowing the river to stills
 Returning baritones
 Drunk and shelled by the moon.

Longhair. Jersey 43.
 Most Likely To Succeed.
 "Hell let the niggers in."
 Immaculate time in Ghandi's underwear.
 Dripping nudes knee deep in water.
 Cursed by this dead woman.

THE LAST VISIT

Shorthair. Waiting to carry Charlotte away. ~~There~~
Mortician has taken five years off her corpse.

The family stands: I'll take my five now.

Director gives late comers their last look.
Eyes closed beneath her glasses.

Director bends, removes her glasses
Left unfolded against her cheek,
Satin is folded, gone.

Graveside over.

Her youngest son
Carried away like a baby bird.

THE LAST REVIVAL

With grandmother, inside Palmerville Baptist Church

Angels asleep on clouds of wine
The family windows do not waken to our presence.
Still I know this way of life
Though I be given up for lost.
I watch you: stone deaf like a real stone,
You scan these walls and dream of Marys
And tombs you want to paint. Too proud
Too shy. Peering into space.
Driving to this revival
I searched the sky for angels
Like those your father saw
The day he made his deathbed famous.
"Goodbye. They are here!"

Hands reached for mine in darkness
A welcome tough as cedar, hands
Nearly hooved from farming. They still tithe.
My hands are black silk.
Why return to the Cross?
With words I cannot make you young.
The potion I offer in a phrase
Turns into a nail and you turn away.

I believe. I believe in the child
 Who stuck that ear on a Roman
 Only out to better himself in the Army.
 Thus my body is made whole.

The rest of it is oration
 "To keep us forever standing
 Faultless before the Lord."

She argues: In Beulah land
 All is laughter in the best sunlight.

My response: Accept.
 Its her night.
 I want open windows.
 Bright stars.
 A cigarette.

LINKED POEM

Horizon's line of trees
Drop petals
Into dusk, the moon
Slips on a gown.

I hear voices far away.
The angelmen
Ride out of sunlight
Into deeper heats of sleep.

A farmer walks his cows
Down a yellow path
Where both man
And cattle move equally mute.

Friends brew tea.
When I go to visit
They will say
"Here have some tea."

This graveyard smells
Of bread, fresh
Cut seconds after the oven
And the same hunger.

Thin reflections
Shine like a river
From mountains, the tombstones
Imitate the constellations.

My face dances
Across the family table,
Nearby a lake, a grove of elms,
Firefly lights of home.

In front porch swings
Great meanings are explained.
Far way behind the moon
The squeak of rusty chains.

LOVERS

Rain sweeps dust
From distant hills. The river
Floods the low bush
With its range
Terror, and flow.
Heavy clouds break open.
Thunder cuts water.
Your spine shivers
In my body.

KAZUKO'S GOOD ADVICE

"Your father?

He made you by not existing

And he will help you by not existing."

Kazuko has long black hair,
 Red-lacquered gilt. **KAZUKO** wears
 From brow to breast. He shares these rooms
 And bargains with each other.
 I bow to her black radiance
 The smell of her brown skin,
 Between us the whole world,
 She is diagnosed as a Japanese
 I pass for an American who married
 A foreign girl who talks in flowers.
 Sure, days exist, black and reaching,
 When I want to draw my knife across
 Her navel and that nose. I have lost
 And gained the toughest kind of love.
 This loss I see each next time
 It may be my body filled
 With ovaries brained with solon,
 My body subjected to subtle insult
 From boys. Then she will
 Farn words while I grow a child.

KAZUKO

Kazuko combs long black hair,
Red-dazzles glide like swans
From brow to breast. We share these rooms
And bargain with each other.

I bow to her black radiance
The smell of her brown skin.
Between us the whole world,
She is disguised as a Japanese

I pass for an American who married
A foreign girl who talks in flowers.
Sure, days exist, black and rumbling,
When I want to draw my knife across

Her navel and then mine. I have lost
And gained the toughest kind of love.
This toss I am man; next time
It may be my body filled

With ovaries brimmed with motion,
My body subjected to subtle insult
From boys. Then she will
Farm words while I grow a child.

There is a child I often hear myself
Recite to strangers taking census of my life.
I don't know why. She arrived one clear
Night when the stars swarmed above

An avenue of cherry trees. Mura,
You change my past. Homeseed. Here
You are doing just fine without me.

.....

What should I say?

Your daddy is a goatboy, was a kept man
My last lifetime, was a girl myself many times,
Has been beetle, bird, and tree.

That sort of wisdom won't keep the wolf away.
Today she learned to say "wonderful."
Told me tales of angels riding Bambi
And time opened in my ears.

Kazuko brings me a bowl of black
Grapes, she knows how easily I become ill.
How easily I sweat when the ghost whispers
To me while I shave. She has known

VISITS TO MISS HANFORD

The horse rising with evening light
 Me a thousand lifetimes. She knows my eyes
 Are lost hydrangeas, that I am hung
 With ovaries filled with rainbows:
 That I am a flirt but have loved her

A thousand times.
 With quiet ceremony she slides open
 Her paper door. Outside a man is watching
 The milky way. He steps through.

Before he died. This place holds the track
 Of a wagon, rather would rotund as
 Nearly every Sunday afternoon.
 But let this one coming in from the street
 Say, "My Joe Brian, you say such wicked things."
 She let her request, "Walk by to your Wilson
 bridge. The water hills are in bloom
 and let's put those evil spirits
 behind us out of road."

I stood there watching my suspect from the door
 blood to death in the road. I was a witness
 How many words struggled did she bring down

VISITS TO ORTON PLANTATION

The heron rising with evening light
Rustles on the wings of night
As Lady Caroline is brought by Samuel
Through the channel rice
Between my landing and the dark Cape Fear.
Fresh air abides with us like grace
As the ocean brings its tides to my sound.
Her pale yellow silk dress
Glow in the boat father painted white
Before he died. This place needs the touch
Of a woman, father would remind me
Nearly every Sunday afternoon.
But let this one coming in from the river
Say, "Why Joe Orton, you say such wicked things."
Then let her request, "Walk me to your Chinese
Bridge. The water lilies are in bloom
And let's put these evil spirits
Behind us out of reach."

* * *

I stood there watching my sergeant from New York
Bleed to death on the sand.
Some piney woods straggler did the job,

We was walking out from Fort Fisher, we took that place
 Maybe you heard.

I was too tired to shoo away the deer flies.

Father, it was a terrible thing. I hope God might be
 More kind to me.

Next day, a detail took him off picket
 For a proper burial. I can't help feeling he was too good
 To get put in such a piss poor place.

People here must be half nigger themselves to live
 So long near bad water and these goddam bugs.

I pray to get back in one piece, and if you don't need me
 To work, I might go to Michigan.

One of the boys says its too nice a place to miss.

Let them keep this hole

When we get done.

* * *

Grandmother Meigs poised on the edge

Of the torn irises of her eyes

Sees the morning light

Descend the neo-grecian columns.

"You know when I was at Chowan

They had columns on a long porch. They

Were so pretty we all went walking there."

Did you go to school there?

"Yes, a long time ago."

Where is Chowan?

"Chowan is in the eastern part
At Chowan."

She takes her cane to tap the stem
Of an orange Carolina lily,
And smiles to see it sway from her blow,
A dash of color by the weathered bridge.

I wish for something definite I could tell her.

If I could read
The sentence of her spotted hands,
Wisdom would lift me
Ascending in the form of a white bird
The long arch to Heaven to descend at last
Enlightened.

But you can't do much with this world
She knows so turns away to see live oaks,
Spanish moss, the deep Cape Fear, then ponders
Precisely like the rustle of pale yellow silk

"Where are the others?

Waiting for me? Well, I'm ready to go."

A WALK IN SHINJUKU, JAPAN

PAST & PRESENT

Shinjuku is a green room
 where chancing conjunctions
 flick light off men
 Back to a chrome trimmed room.

 Through a thousand speakers
 In the back of shoe shops
 Electricity rolls:
 "You can't feel the children of the revolution."
 We pass an immense girl.
 She fondles a sun of orange and yellow poppies.
 Wearing white on white, she is bound
 For the land of black light,
 Saxophones, fingerings, men on account.

 A green room with birds more beautiful
 Than Whistler's dreams.
 Bounded on one end by a stripper
 Who poses three times on stage,
 And on the other by Earl Krishna freaks
 Who love and sing into a frenzy.

 Here God will exist for the price of an orchid.

A WALK IN SHINJUKU, JAPAN

Shinjuku is a green room
Where charming companions
Flick light off men
Back to a chrome trimmed room.

Through a thousand speakers
In the back of shoe shops
Electricity rolls:
"You can't fool the children of the revolution."

We pass an immense girl.
She fondles a can of orange and yellow poppies.
Wearing white on white, she is bound
For the land of black lights,
Saxophones, fingerings, men on account.

A green room with birds more beautiful
Than Whistler's dreams.
Bounded on one end by a stripper
Who pees three times on stage,
And on the other by Hari Krishna freaks
Who love and sing into a frenzy.

Here God will exist for the price of an orchid.

PRINCETON

INSIDE A RIVER

I walk through the serene
 Accomplishment of the Princeton cemetery.
 The wind blows.
 Movement in the grass, sunlight
 Off a marble orb, clean white
 Softness, hearts
 In the cavity of my thoughts.
 My feet balance a system
 Infinite and durable.

Undressed, I could not raise my camera.

Green bamboo leaves sparkled against his black robe.

He strikes the bell. Lesson must soon begin.

My bride lowers my shoulder.

We decide to leave early for the north.

BESIDE A RIVER

Evening light of the temple bell
Hurries past clean hotels beside a river.
I hear the buzz of a passing fly,
Watch a few white butterflies near my campsite
In mountains across the river
From Shuzenji. The monk was handsome
As he walked to the bamboo grove,
And as if he were a mother suddenly seen
Undressed, I could not raise my camera.
Green bamboo leaves sparkled against his black robe.
He strikes the bell. Zazen must soon begin.
My bride touches my shoulder.
We decide to leave early for the coast.

TALK AND TOBACCO

Appalachian pine, dried out

In a room designed with old things
 In mind, we lay spent in any language
 Or location.

To side my skin

A spiral of crushed chrysanthemum burns in the corner.

She has a tiny mole near her angels ladder.

We are three days out.

Precedents exist for this: Pierre Loti,

Gauguin, Stevenson on his Isle, Kafu Nagai in Washington.

The girls have

"And are we any different?"

Deer with highland

gold and verdure.

Only ninety years ago

In the west, the Ohio

Discovered beside a river:

"What shall we become?"

The tribe divided:

Coyote-people kept wild;

quaker-people went to territory

hidged place to Chief Payote.

TRACKING

Appalachia pine, dried out
So sparks go up,
Cherokees in a settler's dawn.
I stand in the smoke
To hide my skin
And spermy smell.
Flames prowl near blue tents.
We are three days out.
Hair seems longer.
The girls have
Full figures
Beneath highland
Wool and corduroy.
Only ninety years ago
To the west, the Otos
Counciled beside a river:
"What shall we become?"
The tribe divided:
Coyote-people kept wild;
Quaker-people went to territory
Hitched plow to Chief Peyote.

WRITING IN A CAFE

Behind my table

A child's write **DRUNK AGAIN & OTHERS**

In the park

A man is walking. Spring.

All is lower green around a slender path.

The green pigeons

Black blue water;

The man is someone's father.

He is alone.

Blue sky.

He will disappear with the next step.

In the park

One tree survived the war.

That child, did he have a place to go,

Or like me just simply get

WAITING IN A CAFE

Behind my table

A child's watercolor:

In the park

A man is walking. Spring.

All is lemon green around a cinder path.

Two green pigeons

Splash blue water;

The man is someone's father.

He is alone.

Blue sky.

He will disappear with the next step.

In the park

One tree survived the war.

That child, did he have a place to go,

Or like me just simply go?

DRUNK AGAIN

Oh that moon is a hard working gal.
She has to come all that way,
Fight off the stars, fit into air traffic,
Get through clouds,
Bounce off roofs, put up with small bodies
Of water who always ask her out;
When she has made it past all that, then
She must negotiate my myrtle tree.
At last she arrives
Breathless by my white iron table
Where I wait deep in my cups
For some advice about a girl.

SHARING THE GUEST BED
WITH MADAM CHANG

Do you want to be free, the Roshi asked
One morning in the mountains of Izu,
Then stop being so secure and stylish in your dreams,
They are the manure of the lazy animal of your little self.

I forgot his words, Madam Chang
Until down in Macon, I lay in the soft bed feathers
Of your sleep where you were a little girl
Dreaming of China, of Victory, of Man.

You became the first Chinese-American-Jewish princess.
I became a poet but the mystery is we both come
Through the same inner gates to the world.
We both shall die in rising mist.

This room, the power of Victorian taste,
Is yours forever, Madam Chang. Here you are saved
From invasion and secure from demons. Here your fragrance
Remains delicate. I leave with morning light.

WAKING

Dreams hover above my lips
Trying a return to heated depths.
Thinking you touched me
I woke, alone,
Your absence like a revolver
Beneath my pillow.

TOKYO SPRING

Warm weather after a long winter
Mongolia's snow drifts to other mountains.
Tokyo sparkles with easy money.

The great bomb of new fashion
Has been dropped again, the designers
Disappear in an updraft of silk ties.

A new scarf floats over the grime
Left of salted winter streets. Parisian colors
Tick in a wrist watch.

Is it because I am so far from home
I notice these things? How much I need believe
These gay wraps will keep me clean.

TO A CONFSSIONAL POET

The praying mantis likes sweet meat
Juicy near the bone. It makes him mad
And then he writes his encyclopedia
Of dear derangements. He wins the prize,
Is eminent in his domain, turns mean.
His skillful jaws break and chew
Each life that comes too near.
Hungers of a darker sort
Bring his own fierce body
To the acid of his demanding mouth.
Green eyes bulge with joy
Until only the head remains
Singing sweetly of the insect world.

TIDES

The half moon moves above the sea,
 Yellow lights shimmer from a fishing pier,
 The beach is lost in the ocean's face.
 I am here celebrating my thirty-third year
 And a marriage changing as the waves.
 I watch from a balcony. Our room is painted
 Green. Beyond our motel's palmettoes
 Wife and child walk over heaps of shell.
 I am caught in a slow stroke
 To be known, great, loved, nothing between.
 They wave and I wave back.
 Next door kids from State drink and mate.

THE HERBALIST 500

Green light. Orchid of speed,
My demon, move the gears of my Chevy.
Let us take the road like Dracula
On a three day pass.
(I must tell the Marion Chamber of Commerce
Their trees are filled with rebel vampires.)

By the time we get to Conway
A few corn rowed deputies
Have made night a nigger ear.
They are the deputies of Soul,
Ain't no sheriff in Cut & Shoot county.
A drunk is dialing long distance
From a parking meter. Someone is answering!
Near the Intracoastal Waterway
A palmetto grows
From the navel of a naked girl. Ah lovely town,
Streets cobbled with rayon brassieres,
Stores leak with the ballet of rust.
I see Spengler rise from his grave
To go eat chicken.
Radio churns his shroud to buttermilk.

Mimosas sweep the Pee Dee bottoms,
In the distance the sound of summer
Sizzles in the dynasty of butter and alligator grease.
Orchids reach in through the wind
To fondle my memory of windows.
Roll, Ocean, Roll.
Roll eastward the course of empire
And good weather for peach crops.
Roar, Chevy, Roar,
Thy tailpipes are next to Godliness.
Take me to distant Africa's untuned moonlight,
I want to sleep in the sleepless swells of sand
To sparkle for girls,
Risking it all for the winner's circle
Of their wild camellias.

NINE LINES FOR WILL NORMAN

What meaning adheres to is not meaning
(Brain is not mind) but an operation
Without end (there is only Now): there is
No order beyond events (they invented by the love
Of order), the space between knower and the known
(Slight seam, erotic abyss) brings out
All objective things (the langue of desire
Is never the parole of impregnation); so that
I in a world of I-am-not will never cease.

ECLOGUE

ECLOGUE

Outside my country house, beyond the garden,
The grass given by the wind, the wind, the wind,
To narrow strips of harvest earth which in the morning
Light most reveals a bank of plow and mellow earth when
Today I spent time with expert work's thread,
Listened to Mickey Redberg, and watched with delight
Which entered my house like a sword.
The wonder what have I to teach a child? I wonder too.
I know that the way which says of itself, I am the way,
Is here less than a half address.

My daughter must create her own wonders for things
We have kept to ornament her home. The stuffed animals,
The goldfish, and the scattered crayons are easy suggestions.
The curtains are from a temple in Japan.
The basket is from Peru. I expect her to fill it with
ascending treasures.
The rose decanter is from my grandfather's house.
A scent of crushed lime, whiskey, Challapines, and ink
Before the shadow of a man, her father.

ECLOGUE

Outside my country house, beyond untended roses,
The grass gives way to wheat fields, and peach trees,
To narrow strips of harrowed earth which in late evening
Light most resemble a break of plums and chilled white wine.
Today I spent time with grandfather's Virgil,
Listened to Mickey Newberry, and conversed with sunlight
Which entered my house like a guest.
You wonder what have I to teach a child? I wonder too.
I know this: The way which says of itself, I am the way,
Is here less than a half embrace.

My daughter must create her own memories for things
We have kept to ornament her home. The stuffed animals,
The goldfish, and the scattered crayons are easy concessions.
The curtains are from a temple in Japan.
The basket is from Peru. I expect her to fill it with
Astounding treasures.
The rose decanter is from my grandfather's house.
A scent of crushed limes, whiskey, Challiapines, and ink
Inform the shadow of a man, her father.

The evening raga on the stereo captions sunset,
 Purple mingles with jasper, my daughter dances after
 Fireflies, and Kazuko forgets her motherhood to follow
 Through the grove, I linger by these screens.
 I cannot answer well friends who elegize
 My writing table with letters like half eaten fruits.
 Buddha stares at me from a Japanese stamp.
 She burns incense at our temple and takes another lover.
 From Greece, like a torso, a thick manila envelope.
 He has danced naked in retsina and seen God.

*

You will never be a pederast with me.
 My unlocked door meant only that I'd lost my key.
 (I hear him mock the couplet.) Your bragging
 Caused no fear. I gave up boys when I turned eight.
 Oh yes. I worshiped older guys, watched them in school
 Johns ejaculate in contests then immortalize girls
 Lined up upstairs for ice cream

You starved yourself for Spring,
 Read Salaambo, sought the town, slim boy from Milo.
 And you have brilliance. I met you
 At an April show of monochromes, red organic things.
 A breeze graced your Bedouin air.
 You did resemble Egypt we all agreed.
 But I never sniffed your green carnation.
 If you must remember, remember right.
 Yet. I owe you much. Even so, Jim
 I am not your private musk. When you see God
 In such circumstance, keep my name from it.
 Listen. Hear my child.
 She laughs away all my night thoughts.
 Match her lyric with your free verse!

*

Her words:

"Excuse me for my long absence. Certainly, something
 In my mind prevented me from writing. I was possessed by the
 Illusion you come back alone and we meet.

"I visited England at the beginning of the month. I
 Think I've told you about my boyfriend there. We met after
 A year and 8 months and decided to get married in future.

"I want you and your family to be healthy, otherwise
 I am afraid I cannot enjoy our company. If these words
 sound egotistical, for you, please excuse me. I went to
 Jindai-ji and had amai-zaki....."

*

Sodomy (but pure sodomy?)
 Adultery (but pure adultery?)
 Enchanted in a tower?
 Ovid fails. St. Paul hates.
 Fools sneak around
 And keep their sins
 Like pets.

A man never multiplies.
 (but he does get divided.)

"Come on outside where its cooler!"

1938

A red temple like a ray of sun

THINGS TO DO TODAY

Starts at the edge of a dark canyon

The place where wind and birds fall apart

There blank robed priests sit

By railings which frame an endless sky

We cannot see the bottom of their eyes

We cannot hear their words

Unless we join them, there is nothing for us to say

HOMAGE

A red temple like a ray of sun
Rests at the edge of a white abyss,
The place where mind and brain fall apart,
Where black robed priests sip tea
By railings which frame an endless mist.

We cannot see the bottom of their cups,

We cannot hear their words.

Unless we join them, there is nothing for us to say.

ACCEPTANCE

Within your body rainbows grow
As pasture land for angels. Listen
And hear their songs.
Have no fear for the Vale of Bones
Your bones make seed there already.
Pass through. The way is difficult but clear.
So angels will not take you for a danger,
Carry with you a spray of flowers
And wave it gaily as you come into their camp.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

Keep narrative simple.

Forget carefully.

Check recurring word patterns.

Don't fear "the oriental."

Avoid the boredom of "to be."

Treat participles like distant cousins.

Have faith. (In whatever.)

Remain quiet in midst of stale controversy.

Admit grammar as sexual lubrication.

Don't be a sucker for images.

Courage.