

X-1

Will Owen

performance lyric

*

Introductory Information

Concept: *X-1* is a long performance lyric for an actor. This script can be used across the spectrum of scripted, solo performance modes: reading to listeners, recital storytelling, empty stage monologue theater, and one man play supported by mummer-actors and sound- and video- commentary -- that the mummer-actors can "dance to", largely by mimicing/echoing the move-and-gesture of those who appear in the, possibly documentary, video companion-works.

Synopsis: The plot -- such as it is -- of this performance piece is a man wakes up, gets up, and goes to work in the morning. He lives in an apartment with his wife and children in a large metropolitan area, and takes a subway train to work.

Scene Breakdown: The performance's three sequences follow the man who gets up and goes to work from dark-before-dawn through first-light to full-morning.

*

X-1

§

Night untouched by any dust of stars
wherein somewhere this earth spins bound
to her tiring spark of sun, does not at all,
and so holds all. As behind my eyes,
waking, 'tween the tug of lethal dark
and the insistent, breaking swells of memory --
tumult-rays of consciousness afire --
to the sweat and perfume in the sheets and curls,
I force up daily cares.

Work on time. Ache in the back, my hands
like hunks of straw, I breathe the cold
waiting for the turn: so slow, so light,
such mass so vast in its sheer --
part glistening part hid -- pellicle of life,
turning for the umpteenth trillionth time
her dark side to the light. The woman
like a column by my side in the flare and fade
of headlights by the panes, the keening -- damn,
bet it wakes the baby -- of torque to gears
from a truck in the artery outside,
shoulders over, shudders, deep again in sleep.
All senses touch-triggered for the cry
I fore-envision what there'll be to do.
The time it took to make me this!
all synapsed over and feeding back, cortexing,
holding past and comparing present fact.

From inconscient Eden days
of chattering flocks in the rustling trees
their bonds so tenuous as much a quickening
harmless happenstance or sudden blur
that makes a member prey, disrupts them
hurtling in throat-streaming fear.
So much time, time to the jump to
the band of hunters, strewn, intent
and still for hours in the high savanna grass

dusty green by the drinking pool, waiting on their plan
as each attends to his thoughts disjangling
of anxiousness at discord growing, failure's consequence,
or of the harmony of success, himself and brothers
all peers no rivals, or of the mem'ry of the children
scrabbling on the ledge before the cave,
or just replaying in mind his part for when
the killing starts: lips and loins tightening
at the step and stop of little deer sidling to drink,
wait, wait, crouch, uncoil and cry,
and stand astride the Earth on just two limbs,
quick, the closest, our both eyes in front so strange
burning on their parallax to hurl the stones --
they've turned to run -- ours hit, stumbles! keep your parts!
you grab the neck, you each the legs,
fall upon it, knees splayed across its ribs,
quarter jerking at my back, heart
furiously tremulous under my thigh,
hand cupped above my head and down
the heavy flint axe to the head against the ground
and up, and down, to hack again --
hot and dark the blood spurts on my hands, so wet.
Oh the triumph of its smell that fills my head.

Now that we killed it, what can we do but eat it?
We could as well live on shoots and nuts
grimly gathered by the women and their cubs --
their work is work, ours ritual.
As on the buoyant trudge back to the fires,
to their stridings' lope, the carcass' sway,
the men take up a rough and rhythmic cry --
how warm it is inside this shared success
balm'd by voicesong trembling on the mind --
so look not out and think not on
as how from yonder ridge we're but a worm
of inching figures 'cross the vastness of the plain.
Already, like a chill breath wafting past my back,
I'm coaxed to searching me, worry on,
where -- and will we find? -- I'll take
them hunting next, for the effect of these
triumphant slaughters in forging simple beasts
into a single pride of primate silverbacks,

ecstatic in fraternal union, wears off quick
as bit by bit by challenge and reciprocating pride
mimicked desires shrink each member back
to individual, and the gyre of jealousies,
malcontent and rancors widens out
into undifferentiated warrior rage.
To check their compact's dissolution, men,
choked and foundering and not understanding why,
slouch out of the now poisoned bliss
of daily life's bucolic habitude
and cast about for one to sanctify,
empty the life out, and have that slake --
it's not the bleeding but the making bleed --
the rivalry that at their ties so cancerously burns,
for a time subsides, but ever rears in each again
to re-engage the rise and wane
of violence and peace that eternally returns.

Sure as you're born that truck stirred up
rustling in the crib. To big efforts' small snorts, handlets
clamber up the bars to get the head turned up
over the rail -- how proudly she displays -- her body up afoot and
lets
out a yowl to order the world up out to play.
Leaving sleep to the world that deeply stays behind,
I bend up, skew over, unfold up out of bed and sway
towards the arms and squeals that won't quit longing till I find,
and clasp to mine, those eyes of pure, raw faithfulness
that can only be a child's. I lift up my daughter,
head curls onto my shoulder, and I surge to the moment's fullness
till I'm stopped by the memory of all I'll have to have taught her.
So, watchful, to my father's heart inchoate heat,
I walk my babe on creaky knees and freezing feet.

§ §

Dawn, accepted in starfade silence as this mote
keeps moving on its moment to moment
constant renewing reaction with the drag

of that vast and dimming, distant conflagration,
drives in 'cross the sea up onto these shores
and here, unshrouds the buildings' slabs --
while up the avenue the net of lights,
low and long above the canyon floor
twitches from still amber to winking,
signal red and green along the gray --
while up and all around in the myriad
interstices webbed within each set of all those walls
countless homes unnestle, every member
girding on the habits of the day,
readying to pour, pour out, pour on
this city's thriving only, only life.

And so, so does mine. -Daddee!
(The other rug rats are up and thriving.)
-First finish so you're ready then --
then there won't be time so tell me now,
to the smells and clanks of cooking starting,
the table settings' tocks and tintinnabulations,
feet thumming, pipes squealing, water coursing,
and everybody talking at once -Daddy, why...

Oh how through all this present and with no
clear occasion, furors of past still enmesh me?

Now with me still, our visages, young,
intent through riled sleepiness
in the ashen fluorescence of hangars at night,
each blinkered to the task then at hand
not by conviction nor discipline
but by the entropy of others depending
each do his work right, till our tending
was done and we'd slip from our ward
rethinking our jobs for any step missed.
And then the aircraft, big as a trailer home and taller,
dragged out so smooth from cavernous glare
into the dark, deep lavender room of tropical dawn
eased past past our eyes --
hulk-angled sheer of mottled green steel.
Central, tunneled in behind the wing roots,
culverted in the fuselage's strongest part,

so set and still, I knew its fit in there so well
by practice, for in our work we only changed it,
never worked on the deep, delicate insides of any --
the square-nubbled creeper growth of pump lines and sensor cables
wreathing the shell where berth the serried
twirler parasols of fan slats, the jagged can-ring
of combustion chambers, and the blackened spikes
of the turbine blades. And it's now,
wiser and more learned, I wonder more
at how these engines hold together, holding and disgorging
the thrust of so so many shredded carbon chains.
Out on the flight line -- the transformation zone
where just airplanes are burdened into weapons --
the ending night's damp breezes slurried cool
by our arms and our faces, mixing with kerosene and curses,
sweat, and the squeakings of bomb-loading jacks.
With the sudden first rays of the hot day to come
the midget schoolbus with the pilots drives out;
they bobble down dangling hoses and helmets,
pistols and lifevests, their walk an inkling
humpty-dumpty, all the stuff round their torsos topping legs
tube thin in G-suits tagged with black boots
for big farmboy feet. They walk into the stand of planes,
taking possession, in the welter of men moving,
munition carts, ladders, extinguishers, umbilicals
and the noise of APU's and fuel trucks
each makes his checks and good luck rigmarole
to invest his machine as his own,
warily admiring and judging the youthfulness or usedness
of his lovely, laden, long and gawky
wide-winged contraption with the cocked-up canopy
open, up above his head against the sky.
Like that, in a practice old as men and war
been organized, as hypaspist and hero,
equerry and knight, we're dispossessed
of the panoply we care for, and fade out to the back --
but in comfort at the hierarchy this affirmed --
leaving the fighter-bomber jocks to their mission charts
and checklists and the thoughts behind their eyes,
eyes vivid and flat, so live yet like dislodged
from body and mind from the burden of the habit
that insists on driving out, day in day out,

to instants of -- every filigree nerve cell already loaded --
at the glimpse of the SAM's glint -- synapse lightning --
skewtwist blood bloated, hurtling plain terror.
They clamber up, strap in, the cowlings hood down;
the turbines spin up, our mouse ears go on,
the fuel's streamed in, the last tentacles loosed,
and muffled we'd loll so coolly regarding
as more big engines pile on --
all other sounds crushed and the airfield becomes
into its own: safe suburb of war.
Crouched over, gangling, stalked figures
of armorers move 'round spindly
supports of the craft, plucking the pennants
that droop like olive-green catfish whiskers
from the tips of the eels and clusters of iron that hang
balled up under the body and wings.
The plane captains signal, decibels cream up;
hint of a tremor at their engine cases' elongation,
they tip their great weight to momentum,
wag-turn, beaks swiveled ahead, the burnished,
snouted helmet in the plexiglass encrustation
like the bead of a crustacean eye,
they trundle for the taxiway like a line of bristling gods,
as through beyond the spume rending from their end nozzles
the green palette-knifed trees line of jungle shimmers and squirrels.
And we'd turn away, thinking of breakfast
and the morning's first smoke, looking to cut out
a vehicle to ride to the runway's end --
swing into some pick-up bed and lank down
onto part parts and tool ends, garbage and junk --
tearing, from afar seeming so slow on that concrete prairie,
down the line like daring any authority
that might've still cared, to rein us back in.
Parked at the runway's end, chortling inanities,
freeing the still fresh children in us --
the longing for home, the will to trust,
the wild wonder at the luxuriance of the world
barked out in rills of throat-straining laughter --
all blanketed quick at the drawn screech of the planes coming on,
reminding us to get back on the betrayed adolescents --
the mean talk of troops, the urge to debauchery,
the hidden pain of personal place and past spited by the world

paid for and affirmed by making born-to-lose come true --
up howling climbing heavy, flicking shadows,
down from where they go by the steel wing edge
the cardwork of rice fields emeraldly recedes
specked in brown backs of men bent to the land.
We almost always kept our mouths shut
to thoughts of where'd the bombs dot down
finishing their fall, for them who'd lawyer
of what all for and for whose advantage was this
were known as posturers for approbation
breaking the anonymity we so fervently maintained.
Like all common soldiers of most modern wars
to its causes and ends or anything
more than its moment at hand
we completely indifferent, with reason remained.
Trailing deepening, guttural reverberations,
hieing away to nailpoints in the sky,
they'd wend to time over targets beyond our ken,
leaving back in the quiet, darkling,
on the mind's eye blind side, the creature,
soldier, child or parent, gape-eyed, fear-froze
or legs slashing running,
as there by design or indifference
jets blurred through the treetops doppler shift past release --
chest shook for whole seconds in the afterburner's cry
like nothing in nature, thunder without end
til the munition's parabola arc be broke
and some life more be slammed to smithereens.

-What's that? -I'm watching. -But you're not seeing.
-Daddy, why? -First stop that, stop eyeing down
the knife blade's back, hand perched from forearm
o'er the table edge, flatsteel tweezed
by finger and prehensile thumb,
waiting for her to addle into your sights
to cutlery bomb your crawling sibling's noggin.
-Be glad you missed and what came down by her ear
and clattered, now's a toy new-found in her hand.
-Dad, why do things fall down? -Cause they
got no thrusters and airfoils to keep them up.
Look, finish your cereal or you'll be late for school.
-Can't, the fleet's still at sea. -Eat them anyway! and...

And look not wrong in times to come
on my rash stilling of that wild power
that deploys the spoon-size carriers complete
with chips of escort ships and even slivers
of submarines sogged and silent underneath
on hard campaigns triumphant cross that sea
of grade A homogenized vitamin D
ocean wide in the open oh of cereal bowl.

Coats and mittens for the hoary cold,
commotion by the door, the instants
actions, as the press of delay strong on
disnexes us from this node where our habits intersect
and reels us out the door toward the elevator box,
to fall, and start to mark time to the schedules
whereby we mete out the life of our days.
Time, like music listened to is ever past
on to its next note that must come
or it's just sound struck against the ears and dumb
untwined by memory to any that was last;
our pasts, like symphonies after in recall
are dismemberments scattered in abstraction
the bits named and roughly ordered by our present action
and not, not, not what we were at all.

Aye, so hold and let me force me to be still
as the growing children's prattling haunts back up
from present distance, and I make me will
to see, minding hard to dishabit the rack-up
of the years from me, you, with all the lust
of eyes caught by a beauty by surprise:
the burgeon of flesh at movement thrust
into the mind as rushed heart and breath recognize
the vex in eyes, the brazen color at the mane,
the longing up the legs, the skin
from cheek, to neck, to breasts by clothes as all make swain
for their passing instant this man I'm in.
That they by will as much as habit stay untaken
is by will's lust as much as vows willed unforsaken.

Aye, and so what more is one kiss more
but a practice-deadened suckling at wet lips

if not purpose fixed, in the mind before
to let the body lead, blind and insurgent to the hips?
Bend back saplinged on the arm behind your waist,
my knee down past your thigh like I would furl
you to my chest as you twist up to kiss: in haste --
for the child at your neck obstrepering's a jealous girl.
So going I now set to down my workday
keep in thought that's presence and not words' folderol
your face resplendent -- as it is 'spite time's decay --
like love's emblazonment upon my soul.
That my love is willed more strong than time
stands as witness the lasting of this rime.

§ § §

Day, hurly-burly as the workforce in the street
arrogates the city to its sway
that of a sudden like bushwacked from within
spills inside-out gutted by the light.
Its cars, a cold infestation,
spersed with humps of trucks and buses
teem in files that flow and clot
making a whinnying and untiring din
as in scads they skim the bands, laid long, away
between the bases of the building groups,
receding, cutting the crosstreets, the whole
grid hidden, sunk in the strange terrain
that in gray and umber reaches to the horizon haze.
Down there the crowd, like a great spiracle net
trickles and shims, knots at street butts
and laces, grained and sinuous,
tight to the crook at the buildings' feet,
distending to little figures that can
be made out on their own, then co-jumbling
into agulated dark conglotments, jammed,
insect thick, along the sidewalks of the city.
And there I am, with you, on more other one --
limbs agaiting and aswing,

ball-jointed to the torso hooped out on the ribs
from the bulb-tipped vertebrae stack,
all to wrists and neck encased in clothes --
speck, in an eddies of so many
scuppering, scrambling, down the subway drains.

Underneath in the big duct junction
the portion of the crowd we are, in stutter-motion
stalling, till combed into files through turnstiles,
and released, re-mangling, criss-crossed down
stairs and corridors, everybody in controlled stampede --
til whoa...we slow to the sound of no train coming,
to trudging deploy along the quay to wait.
Wait, each hooded in the mask and carapace
made by walk of life and money's immaterial effects:
steely detachment, I've mine and ever will;
goaded exhausted, pummeled numb by years
of daily hewing for evanescent wages;
pressure dropped, taut to break amok
or slowly drug all self away, from the insistent
corneredness of broken and despised;
or more like you and me, half-happy --
nagged and timorous, knowing --
yes-it's-mine-to-answer-for
this life in city public places
but-I've-got-no-way-or-time-to-now,
so leave me hide riveted to mesmerizing screen
or intent in inward..what? Thought?
Though in fact I think we are so keen
on who all exactly holds a place to every side --
looks shot out, aimed and furtive like sniper fire,
to mark in how the face, the stance, the dress
of every to the judgment procedure of our mind's
practiced algorithms instantly betrays
the person's roots and present station
in this turbulent matrix, our relentless mix
of visage hues and prints, self-stories
and ethno-histories, truths and disguises,
systems of survival, ways of making livings.
There, down the concrete pier in the violet-gray light,
tesserae of heads aperch the still and shifting,
each form discrete yet part, like some band of primates,

afoot, strangely between rest and action --
the fellow-citizens, with nothing more in common
than attending for the whisper-distant skree and thrum
of train a comin' down the tracks?

It gives us something, how we remember,
or hang on to some kitsched version of
wherefrom and why we wound up here
from somewhere else to hew to a new aculturation:
native -- from where when? -- nomads trekking
afoot cross ice and land bridge, and driven,
or choosing? why -- or investing profiteer
or settler seeking refuge, by violence conquering,
or taken, shipped by force involuntarily enslaved
or tired, poor -- or other? -- immigrant,
driven by poverty or hope or both? -- or maybe just
by happenstance, like took place by mistake?
Whichever way, each in our pursuit of happiness
interprets for themselves, a relation to roots --
at once showed and hid, lived up to and lived down --
to outfit the call-my-name-out role we play,
and so become, by collusion of our interactors.
Like role to actor when both on stage are one,
like keel to sails when underway both make one counterpoise,
our legacy from our forebears, deeply weighing,
steadying countervails under the banged and skidding hull
of our self's small errant craft
as our ambition, topside, strains to keep the high
sails bellied, taut-trimmed to changing fortune's winds
as we stay our life's course down the wreckful seethe
of churning hurricane of our social sea.

And then the rising, nearing cry: the crowd
perks up slovenly bristling, as from down
the tunnel's bole, train, like some screeching swamp snake
with bright eyes comes curl and gliding on a pale lit night
through the arches made by mangrove roots
sending the moonlight skimming on the ripples of its wake
like headlight light skates down the steel lines of the rails.
With the rush of a wind that bursts so stainless,
and the big front square that leads it ploughing in,
it slides tight to the jetty down the soot-gray

channel that beds down the track, as brakes asqueal
oppose friction to hurtling, and slow
from feverish incandescent scribblings
the wand lines' reflections on metal skin
to languid doodlings of dull light.

The mush-blur of the windows staccatos down
and them inside etch out to persons held in space --
stopped-still, it walls across like a steelglass berm --
and down the rank of doors all gaped apart,
like in a twinkling of startled minnowing
the permeation of stepping outs and stepping ins
is like a specialized cell's osmosis,
being done by trains by hundreds,
in this subsystem of the city's economic life.

The beeper sneels and all aboard and well away
it buttons up and power overcomes the weight
pressing it on to sustained inertia; all inside
to the rock and tuggle intermittently asway,
our faces shut down to expression in the crush
that hordes the car as it scuttles through the burrow,
sardined in, in a way we none could stand
were such closeness not postulated fleeting.
I sway gently too, another head up-held,
hair cut so or thus, or not, combed or fixed
this way or that, exempling a common set --
another of the myriad combinations from
the human spectrums of curliness and color --
amid the smells that here from one or there another
make cringe askance or draw entranced that sense:
personal bathelessness, clothes worn and worn
without a wash, or human redolence disguised --
sprays, soaps, perfumes, tobacco, alcohol --
breaths aged and stale, or now and then
like bearing pheromones, sweet enough and beckoning.
The men, they're there, but aie! the women,
from youth to years more than mine,
take me in fancy passing as I take
the eyes, the cheek and neck to shoulder down
to her body's turns, the smells and feels-to-lips
of skin, the budging bones and squirming weight
of delirium blossoming beneath -- in vain imaginings

(and not ashamed enough), of turning them to me
in instant carnal proof: all, on my merry way to work.

Each face of all who serry round my sight
bespeaks it seems so clear a story --
its very particularity telling...
a story of particulars untold -- untellable --
but intelligible stark like the reality in eyes --
of biology and sociology crossgrown in one:
in the limn of the features,
parents, and theirs and theirs;
in how taught and how carried,
the stamp of own will and experience,
and in the living of our glance -- like stowed
away half-hidden, the calm, the stress --
the range-raging spectrum like of frequencies
scintillating to their tone and overtones
of self and society, person and humanity
all with our own mix of empowerment
and humiliation, obligation and resentment.

These so many lives and lives --
the trainsfull in the tunnels now,
and above, scattered in light of day, more many,
chock-teeming the crust that strangely surfaced,
astride its rivers, mottled, leeches to the land --
though their multitude strong outflows
any imagination's hold, they're still
but just this one city's sum of lives today.
So what's it boot to task the mind
to compass in clear focus so many more
individual lives, zillions many,
more than every one of all the seen and unseen
wave-sending stars that light and hide in heaven --
or manyness as cells alive in your body's room? --
that in the sprawlopolies of this planet's cities
and bourgs and settlements and empty
countryside inbetween are now living,
spending themselves out -- and all of yesterday's
that down the generations now are spent:
lives, lives, lives and lives, their action
like the rending and re-pairing of helixes,

mind-numbing many, engendering before to after
down the rollick of generations down...
to me and you...so inescapably planetary,
so completely here now in this fixed expanse
and city, sharing this co-location, and what
political ideas?

And there I am, with you, in the din
of the subway wagon like in some container cabin-car
packed with tense, mute primate cubs,
as I sense my face -- how it clutches to my head --
looking out on yours, so clear, so close,
so far away yet so beside before me now
in this and every room that sort of trainlike,
orbit'lly careens, taut-dragged on that sliceline,
'lipically sway and trundling --
oval-hewing carnynride -- out from the sun's star-core.
Strange how unbordered a face is from
the head that has it, like their history from
the people living it, as I lean and loaf
and this train rocks on, and I sing my song
for you and me in this world today we're in.
And thenwhen the ride end's stop here comes,
like start talking in the newcalm of idling noise?
Like that velocity's cease'u'd broke us out --
escaped the down-pull habit-tug of intersocial silence,
wide and cold as interstellar dark
bridged only by the kindlybright of starlight song?

And so, are yours and mine the eyes
and visages of the women and men --
though we each have our own distinct ambition
can still -- at least enough -- all share the will
of being truly esteemed each by the other
by being worthy of that mutual trust? --
who dream a version of that equal
dignity for all, enabled by just self-government
to live afire for daily life led in liberty?
Maybe more for maybe staying out of poverty,
like living that quiet consumer life,
hope and praying it's not our own
rights that trampled'll cry out for redress

lashed under the strapping potency
of everywhere's them bullyboys who rule
lusting to be feared cause they're themselves afraid?
Go on and name the ways there was and are
of projecting the living of real democracy --
no matter what you call it it's always
an exhausting, and so ordinary practice --
and out of practice, the inevitable entropy
to klutzitude and cruelty, and liberty wisped away.
So don't get fooled what they'll still call it --
demi-thisthat-yeah-but-gimme-gimme-power-to-me! --
so what beyond the words-blah makes it for real?
You tell me.

The naturalness -- to...me and you? -- of to-secure-these-rights --
like there's no other reason -- no ifs-and- --
that effectively securing rights for each and all
is only end to justify any power of state?
Is there, like a net of shared memory-roots,
knit from the struggles to reach for freedom
a gnarling deep and stubborn in the social metaground,
branching and rebranching broad and deep below --
as above the candletrees of leaves reach up and high,
the wealth of leaves like lives during their year
budding, spring up-turning to send light synthesized
deep nurturing into the stock below, and fall and burning,
shout out of an honoring blaze of color, giving way
for re-generation next that season's cycle brings?
In the stillness of bright Summer you have seen
the deep green wooded hills rolling furtherward
in the richness of their raiment of leaves,
each, on every of so many of
the earthland's trees, so naturally in place
and all -- from so many -- in an ecosystem one.
Like sunlight that in warm resplendence shines
on the lattice interlay that leavely clothes the land,
can love of liberty like light suffused
through greenform granule leaves' cells
by transforming action keep alive together --
by so many lives -- giving out the oxygen
others need for breathing free and port
the vigilance that keeps roots strong
like glucose grows the ties that bind?

I feel, I bet like you -- yeah, you,
riding here for this trip 'long with me --
that we could lose something big together,
like too tired to fight the sell-out of self-government
by our paltry mere assent or just indifference,
abdicated directing say on institutions' power.
And to keep it like maybe's still dreamed
how it gets gone best be understood:
our couragelessness at the enormity of it all,
and the heart-sickening dismays and disfulfilments
of strangeness too often winning 'genst neighborliness,
enables the Potemkin democracy montied up on us
leaving us the lonely licence of consumer crowd
conned out of responsibilities that are self-reliance.
And so, and more and more as years add by,
in all eyes that in querying instants pierce by,
look for your indictable co-conspirators
in the dull business of unstinting vigilance,
and the stubborn wilfulness to start
on what can be done -- and moved to it
by some hard sense about power:
before government can be for or of it must first be by.

Stops are gone and mine's upcoming,
train trundles down, twist and squeeze by --
one last woman's perfumed hair past, reels me --
out, and herd with the crowd-stream for the stair treads,
and look up through the shaft-square of sun
where planes atilt of office towers creen
into the brightness of the day,
and up into the street, beneath the sky,
to join the torrent of the atomized
in crosscurrents rushing for the loci where we'll burn
our daily life, proudly giving of our best,
to keep avid and in action our little set
of relations economic that's our little job
in this vast, luxuriant organisys that is the massive,
virulent enagement of this world spending and getting.

Without, street and workplace, within, the anxious tumbling,
queasemire of relations so likely misapprehended,
so pride goading us to thwart experiences' humbling,

as we face by how far we fall from who we intended
in the lock-on we get from others that's the best mirror
of who we are in our human, social nature -- our sole,
most real person? So, self-wisdom is improvising with little error
to our interactors' counterpoint our self-melodied role?
But for all who are here home in this political space,
the framework's inescapable, and applies to all:
knowing, owning -- sentiments and property -- and its story on your
face --
the codekeys to our lived by rote, social-relational.
So tell me as we dog past, down the sidewalk on our way,
what's the more to all us separate others of the city's denizens
ever caught in a typical daydream? See, can we say
there's any community, played for real by you and me as citizens?

Oh world so unintended when this pack
of lifeless stuff lucked into this orbit 'round
this nothing-special star -- the exact track,
just temperate enough for conjoining 'cross ground,
and sea and air -- sowing itself, evolved down time -- this web,
envelope of life that itself in living is so
a selfsteering internex that minds the flow and ebb
of life itself in its unceasing stop and go...
Oh... Oh well, for God might well be our best
imagining of some here-below-Him generating powers,
that yet can take all honest prayers to one rightful rest
despite myriad God-conceptions and briefness of praying hours.
Life's own creation, in its step by step to next, is time's defiance;
in that devine that is evolvment, put firm reliance.

Aye, then when in youth's rampant prowess
I lived ignorant of limitations and decline,
undrowned and gleeful in that torrent of excess,
that big-city living that made the world feel all mine,
I needed no future and so no community;
but acts of time, like marriage, children and ambition
bound me in their liens, ending lone immunity,
turning me from one of all indulgence to a man of some volition.
Now the ways I've left past to take on this brazen work --
sleep at any instant's lull like only soldiers can,
double-backed blind bucklings in the concrete warren-work --
I miss like I never thought I'd miss them then, like every man.

But still, for all any work's truthfulness and lasting glory,
it won't, as well as your children's bring-up, tell your story.

This land, looked on from up where
the orbiters laze in gravity's embrace,
looks like any other -- one more sea-flanked there
you can point to on the planet's face.
From that far up I know it's tough to see
who else is standing there, like you, like me.
Is it enough that just enough -- barely --
go with who you got -- of who-us, here, you see
'll cut the usual slack and get to work --
move up -- too long in the line -- of insistent will
for real self-government -- that I know I'd rather shirk --
for that ideal of power held in common in a city on a hill?
It doesn't matter how you came to it;
the soul thing that counts is you keep to it.

How can I, that person there
will a better bond with you
who've got your own life and troubles --
God, I know.

So here's to you, in the glimpse of our eyestouch
in recognition there's no alternative
to politics, that's always being broken
by the usual conspiracy of dunces
putting us in the fix of permanently fixing
what's always broke -- oh my volunteer!

You who love liberty, heartily;
resisting the licence
that all us sinners far prefer.

So I don't know 'bout you but
whatever you're headed for and got to do
have a super-great day --
me, I'm just cruising to work this morning,
and it was great to see you.

