

Ten Poems

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But Wait, There's More

The spray of shiny spoons fanned in a circle.
The huddle of plastic bowls encircled

By concentric wrap; four more steaks.
Six more knives, a stake

Plunged in the moist center
Of flesh rotating in its concentric

Huddle, seared on the axis
Of its very being. Ask us

Anything. This knife can slice
Through a tin can; ice

Can stay frozen for up to 24 hours.
They'll be gone in an hour.

See, you will not melt inside.
You will be seared on both sides,

An audience who eats
While pre-heating,

Who bites further into flesh
Than is flesh

And wishes for sleep
While still dreaming. Asleep

At the wheel, hard tread of road
—Towards what? more endurable road?—

And the dark eclipse of screen
In the distance. As Seen

On stilled to ellipsis, pinprick suns,
Bright mouths open for every other sun.

Choose Your Preferences

The catch is that you can't.
Scrabbled down to bedrock
That sunblanched

Array—narcoleptic tree
Beside the dust-kicked barn,
Stiffened scrub-brush crabgrass

And the dusty paths, rusted
Shovel tangled in a line
That laps the bright horizon.

Against the sun, one antique user set
Forty miles from any living thing
In a backlit ring. And with its

Descant hum, information
Gathering, one bright cloud
Primed to thunder over.

Ghazal (Morning)

Have you ever been in bed
And wanted to go back to bed?

You could say a dog is a reason to get up every day—
What if I don't want to get up every day—

Or that there must be something in the paper
That will flood down the street like any other paper.

Have you ever been in bed
And wanted to go back to bed?

Ghazal (Afternoon)

Someone outlawed ice-cream trucks;
Now only the rumble of long-distance truckers.

Outside the streets are empty
And the air, sucker punched. Emptied.

Even the sun has a sound:
A dark whale sounding.

Viola or violin, live or radios played.
And the children. What else, playing.

Ghazal (Evening)

There is always someone shouting in the street
Or someone shouting in the street to be quiet.
Only a short time ago there was light, half-light—
Gone like a sponge plunged in water.

Now an aureole around the toilet's tank, the fridge,
The light and liqueur—love's dumb hum.

Love's companions, the shades. You could say
They go or I go, but no one is going anywhere.

Rake

Of course you wind up in a heap.
Don't mistake this for remove.
Love can be a parallel, a rack-
and-tine array with teeth
For every groove. It isn't cheap.
It's only earth. For whatever
That seems worth. As if leaves
Minded when they fell. That
To be seen is to be swept away.

Bill

Right away, you're old news:
a sheaf of past hungers and crimes
shoved under some pile. Tedious
illustration—some say accusation—
of long-ago trials. Illustrate for all

that you're worth: You might
as well detail the facts of my birth.
I prefer circulars, greasy-laid plans
that come off on your hands.
They lie, as I do, in particulars:
Something for sale in some aisle.
Where I went, who I saw, what
I tried: I'm not what's inside.
And still you arrive—you won't go—
So let's see. Let's see what I owe.

Ring

It's foolish to say I hear bells,
but I think that's the name,
"Bells." ("Bells 2"?) It was playing
the day I met you, informing
the world that you're mine,
you'll come when I call, your
heart lit to the ceiling, loopy
with feeling. A brilliant cut
snapped open, snapped shut
in full circle, trilling, you
want me to answer. I do.

Hi-Tech Hotel Valencia, Spain

Laptops in the lobby
And a spangle-steel

Frieze on an angle:
It is. Conceptual,

Your hotel. Intellectual.
I can't figure the knobs
In the shower or why
Cut-glass divide is a style.

I need doors. Privacy.
Performance anxiety,

You've said. The night-
stand has programmable light

For the bed. And four feet.
Dirty feet, spread on that white.

They

Is it better when they're on
the way or already know

what they're doing? One
thing's certain: They've

studied the problem.
They've got people

for this. Someone
is sure to be on

the way. Buzzing,
Omniscient they:

Hive that holds
the honeycomb—

Guileless cloud,
Predictive task.
An intent needle.
They've said that

they're coming, and
There you stand for the
step on the stair, the knock
and the cough and the silence.

Waiting to see who it is.