

Tattles and Titbits:

A Poetics

Will Cordeiro

When I grow up, I want to be a wunderkind.

*

Whatever objects we see are actually opaque, and so the act of looking itself is a form of blindness.

*

If writing is a calling, it's the *writer* who does the calling, crying out, "Oh, Muse, why hast thou forsaken me?"

*

One lover to another: "I have begun to have faith in your solipsism."

*

My heart is like a delicate, ancient manuscript—if I read the words, I might damage the text.

*

Whims go at me, and I wimble along at one go.

*

We riddle ourselves to be rid of our ids.

*

I was desperate enough to try telling the truth.

*

Some poems act like antibodies, which attach themselves to the infections in language so that others can come along and destroy them.

*

I don't want to be redeemed; I don't want to *need* to be redeemed.

*

I would try to speak in prose, but it always seems too posed.

*

History will erase you—history will *keep* erasing you, with any luck.

*

Of course there are many sides to each truth; we should emphasize the one that's turned away from us.

E&F V.X

*

Poetry is what resists *translation* almost successfully.

*

Edison failed thousands of times to make a light bulb; but, eventually, one went off in his head.

*

All poems are one poem—what rubbish!—unless it means that each poet is still trying to redact her predecessor’s work back to the Neanderthal’s first utterance of “ah!”

*

A morality: evil is more exhausting than good.

*

To make poetry one’s bread and butter is to eat caviar for breakfast. Poetry should be as wholesome as moist lunchmeat.

*

Prose is another word for spiritual laxity; poetry helps us get the skinny on the soul.

*

Meaningward the language wends against its windy words.

*

Perhaps few people really look because they've been taught
it's impolite to stare.

*

The eyes see the world, but the soul sees sight.

*

Only through small effects do we get large designs.

*

In order for something to have many meanings, it must first
have at least one.

*

If you see through too much, you risk going blind.

*

Why do people write fiction? To make sense out of reality.
Why do people write poems? To make reality.

*

Poetry is language in a supersaturated state.

*

Don't take the idea of your "self" too personally.

*

Without language there can be sense, but no nonsense.

E&F V.X
*

Revise away, the last draft remains as impulsive as the first.

*

Humor is the recognition of terror at one remove.

*

It is our distrust of narrative that has made narrative interesting again.

*

The cells scream and the galaxies whisper.

*

We only exist as the occasion to be other than we are.

*

I'm never sincere. I mean it.

*

An editor is required to examine each manuscript with gynecological indifference.

*

Don't find your voice—*throw* your voice. Identity is the soul's ventriloquism.

*

We speak a dead language, which only the continual vivification of poetic activity can resuscitate.

*

Keep on writing your odd odes to obsolescence and maybe something will keep.

*

An author, like a hangman, should probably remain anonymous.

*

A small town is, like the mind, a whole universe: a prison where the doors open outward all day.

*

Oblivion has kissed my open mouth: O, the abyss has whispered sweet nothings in my ear.

*

We are all minor characters about to get written out of our own lives.

*

Ignorance is nine-tenths of the law.

*

A poet is someone who takes pleasure from putting his footwork in his mouth.

E&F V.X

*

The heart gets broken until it's broken-in.

*

Does idiosyncrasy result from being in synch with one's self?

*

What's usually on the line, in poetry as in law, is what's *between* the lines.

*

Take your time or it will take your life.

*

A poet doesn't write for an audience, but to create an audience. Every good poem teaches you how to read.

*

We are an age without a saving vice.

*

Out of squibs and squabbles, babble and baubles, drips, dribs, and dabbles, a poet makes a life.

*

Our habits make up half our habitat.

*

I spend hours trying to begin. I bite my tongue, and yet my tongue keeps growing back.

*

How many wise books weren't written because their authors had learned to keep their mouths shut?