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## Back to the Ordinary

That in between time  
when your clothes still smell of the beach  
you walked along that morning, but the stone  
in your pocket has faded from its bright  
pinks and purples; on your hands  
is a faint whiff of seaweed, and there is sand  
between your toes, the trace of surf  
still sounding in your ears. The ordinary world  
has not yet clutched you, your books seem  
unfamiliar, something someone else  
might have chosen; the couch holds the ghost  
of someone you might have known. Perhaps this  
is just another hotel room, another place to set  
a hat or a suitcase; nothing really yours, not  
the trees in the yard or the dahlias  
you planted in the garden; not the photos  
on the fridge or the paintings on the wall;  
no more than the long sand  
where you shivered at its watery edges,  
the sea anemones drying between the rocks.

## A Room Full of Light

*after Yeats' "Lake Isle of Innisfree"*

I will burn these papers, and head to a quiet shore  
where I will rent a villa, fill a room full of light,  
shells on the window sill; outside, feathers of tamarisk,  
and I will be alone, and like it.

Nothing entangled, the threads of thought long and shining  
so quiet I can hear the yellow warbler weave twigs for a nest  
in the morning's shimmer, and later, noon's hot halo  
and evening full of wings and wind.

I could catch a plane, quickly, while the restless heart is bold,  
while I can still hear the warbler, the sound of leaves  
in the breeze. But I am at my desk, the rustle is only of paper  
that freezes the deep heart, seizes the mind's core.

## Hawthorn

*Hawthorn after rain:  
wind and wet and white, blossoms  
again into green*

Hawthorn in the back garden:  
a nest for sparrows,  
made of berry and blossom.

After the winter storms, one  
flicker hunts insects  
at the edge of the patio.

Rain on a Sunday morning:  
I watch the clouds across the water  
gather, glower, and drop —

wind follows. *Watch for wind*  
he always said: a change in weather —  
perhaps a change in me.

And more to come, these oasis days —  
not the Garden, but not desert either.  
The rain falls,

wet and song-filled,  
the sparrow's cadenza  
descants above the traffic,

and the crows bully the juncos.  
This summer I'll build  
a Zen garden,

white with silence, on the patio,  
one yellow rose bush  
in the centre —

blossoms in the mind, a hint  
of fragrance,  
wind from new directions

again, sails tight,  
the boat angled and racing,  
feet bare, pay out the lines

into taut measures, wind against flashing water,  
turn  
and turn again —

green hills in the distance, gulls calling  
a lost name: and the rose bush  
among white stones.

*Note on the form:*

*“Hawthorn” is an extended haiku. Each word from the original haiku begins a stanza. Each stanza is in itself a haiku, containing approximately seventeen syllables. The form was suggested in conversation with David Kaetz, a musician.*

## Talisman for Summer

*in the style of a terza rima*

Toes curled at the edge of the deck,  
warm planks of fir and maple, the sun  
above the mast, sails full — I check

the lines, coil them in neat spirals, each one  
in its separate place, as I've been taught.

*First mate's duty is never done*

he reminds me, and I keep the sails taut,  
the tiller straight. The wind is strong,  
the ship leans into the water, light caught

in the shimmer of hull and wave, a long  
line of summer: bare legs and arms,  
happy rags of shirt and shorts, the song

of quiet evenings — the winter storm  
of stress and deadline gone, forgotten  
for a little while, a little moment worn

like a talisman: white sails in a blue breeze.

## The Perfect Hotel

It must have a bathtub,  
with faucets in the middle, so lovers  
can lie back, toes touching, bubbles  
from a small bottle scenting the heat.  
Like the room above Friday Harbour,  
overlooking sloops and schooners,  
the morning ferry from Anacortes.

It must have room service,  
a red rose in a glass vase, pewter  
tea pot, basket of croissants  
and the morning paper: the *Times*.  
Good coffee in crisp white mugs. A window  
overlooking the Thames, lighting  
the bed with neon and shadow.

It must have the sound of morning:  
a robin pecking the grass, fox sparrow  
in the cedar, rocks tumbling in the creek  
at the edge of the garden. A high bed  
overlooking the willows and aspens,  
the greens and grays of early spring  
in the Kootenay Valley.

It must have the sound of the sea:  
waves against rock, the rhythm of tide,  
arbutus branches bent to the shape of wind  
and the stutter of shoreline. A path  
winding down to water, tidal pools  
pocked with rain, the small inhabitants  
busy in their drowned city.

It must have a fireplace, with wood  
ready, and paper, and kindling, and good air.  
Smell of cedar in the grate, sound of yellow  
fingers snapping. The slow glimmer of embers,  
red against the blackened logs.

It must have books, no TV or radio, a view  
to elsewhere. Time is a distant thing  
that others wear on their wrist, and is measured  
by the light in the morning, the darkening sky.

It is the space between the waves, the sudden  
flight of an eagle across the window. It is the slow  
unfolding of bud, the rain shining the bones  
of trees on the beach, it is the sea  
drifting into sky, a no point in the centre  
where you know you have been and are no longer.