



SHINE IN '09

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I THINK THESE THINGS ARE BECOMING POEMS

and it's that feeling of home
now that the reeling has gone
and I've found a place to leave
my dog and my bike
when I leave them.

Altana says, Not lost
but is hidden.

Like the chances you're given:
each a street you have driven
or the places you've lived in,
even cabbies don't know
where to find them.

We're alone but for
ebony and shade,
and the choices we've made,
and the plans we have laid

whether stayed or astrayed,
and the faces I shave
when I see them.

NOT BOMBS

Isla says, If you eat that
I will be impressed. So
I eat it, of course. We find
little Mexican squash. And then

she pulls out her knife
and is cutting into bread
and avocado.

We pack the sandwiches with grapes,
there are people spilling out of bars, it's Sunday.
It's been a good one.

I go home
and get some work done
before sleep. The image
of Isla
with her knife on the ground
in the street.

WE LIVE IN AN OVER AIR-

conditioned world. Ali is crazy in love.

In Austin, Ashley's sail is

“unfurling

into the universe,” which Brian

has come to expect. His reader said the next girl

would be like the last (crazy)

but the push and the pull

still confuse.

To Ali, it's the only way,

the only way to love—

even read this in *The Times*. Easy

love is not love

just as easy work

is not work. Be like flint

and steel in

to the other. Together

make fire and

burn out. Sleep easy
at night?
You are doomed.

AREN'T OUR LIVES BEAUTIFUL, TOO?

I sit with Preston on the sidewalk of Potrero Hill.

It's been a

week.

I am eating ice cream
and sipping beer. Sutro Tower
in the distance
then not. It's my favorite thing
to watch cars silently
crest hills in pairs
of lights roll through intersections
—what traffic signal
here?

Clouds pass between
and behind Twin Peaks. Lights wink
back at me. Preston begs
to lick my spoon
and is scared of the homeless

collecting bottles. I give him my empty
and a full one too
and think about home. It's late but laughter
in the garden. I worry
what it's like to be young
and live in San Francisco. Try to pick
my roof out
of the streets below.

GENERAL THEORY OF RELATIVITY

Having run a red light on my bike in the night,
I told the police drunks are driving tonight

who stumble and mumble of muggers and thieves
who don't mean to deny or to lie or deceive
But don't be naïve! There is murder out there!

And the murders say there are worse things to fear,
there are serial killers who stalk and who scare
but these lunatics say, There is no terror here!
The real killers sleep in the White House tonight!

While the real killers sleep
let me run this red light?

THE GARCIA TWINS IN LOVE

are glowing. Nikki blushing in the kitchen
is a beautiful day. I remember once,
Danielle and I at
Four Barrel laughing. The barista
rule: namely, don't pass notes
to baristas. Since flirting is a given,
Danielle argues it's not
a technical violation
if the barista asks *you* out. And Nikki one day,
bringing home a rocking chair for her man,
says Listen. You push that girl
against a wall and lay one on her!
Despite the cold snap
they keep our new apartment
warm with that feeling of a friend
receiving good news. In this way, the winter passes
until a party in the panhandle
when we count down the new year
at five after twelve. Drink to another
like that.

PACKING OLD CLOTHES TO SELL

she says feels like
packing for a trip
back to college
to visit an old self
or inhabit it.

Holds a dress up against her:
I'll need this and
need this, too. Won't ever
fit
the things she needs.

When she gets married
the next month
she'll have the lightness of someone
whose closet is empty
or the heaviness of a suitcase
impossibly full.

TYLER GOT DERAILED

and ate shit
on 16th
during the San Francisco marathon.

He'd been recently threatened
by the 21st Street Kid
on the porch of our place
in the morning.

Here's something about calming measures:
speedbumps are the worst. People drive faster
between them
than without. Careful—they'll floor it
and brake.

PRESTON LOOKING AT THE SKY

My chest still
seizes certain
sounds every
time.

That last week we woke at dark,
drove the open
Golden Gate and up
a hollow Tam.

Ears back and heart
beat,
watched the meteors.

Hour.

Leave the car in the twighlit night,
door ajar
so to see ourselves.
The tone, repeating,
keys in the ignition.

I crouch to say goodbye. The breath of life
impossible to miss in Preston looking at
the sky.

CHICKENS ON A FENCE, PORTLAND

sunlight! but I am late
for a wedding in which the groom's
sister and the bride's
daughter and the bride,
of course,
will be beautiful. I am all over Al-
berta and Mississi-
ppi, watchless but watching
hurry in the eyes
of passers-by. I'm embarrassed
by a text I sent
last night, but what are you gonna do?
Wander
into a printer's shop
and find a letterpressed poem by Creeley, perfect.
"Ann made this," says the woman
at the counter, points her thumb
behind her. But all that's there
is the press rolling,
rolling the ink
down the page.

NOVEMBEARD

By October,
I've decided to take a mulligan
on my 25th year. Nothing

in 2009 counts
anymore, I tell Isla
over coffee.

You should grow
a Novembeard, she says. Isn't that
a thing? My look blank and clean-
shaven.

Or, you know,
a January moustache.

OAKLAND SPRUNG A LEAK

You go away
for twenty years. Come back. Things will be
different. Ricky
two hours once
disassembled planes. OAK.

Every man
a tool box
but from no man
a sound.

You know me.
Couldn't. Father gone,
brothers came to blows
on that.

Married Chinese. Twins
in an old house.
Empty house, two-hundred grand.
How many fucking haircuts is that?

Old Tribune building,
the Old Tribune. Tallest,
then City Hall. So one day,
they put a pole on top!
Flag pole with a red light.
Tallest again.

Every man
a hair cut
first day of work.

But that was the old place, which
they promised he could get back.
Then Oakland sprung a leak
and ran right out through BART.

WHAT!

It is a new decade, young
Mexicans on the corners
of your neighborhood sell strawberries
and the garbage cans in the park shout,
you will be fine!

So what, you almost got doored
on your bike, it's happened
to all of us! I think that this is the year
your dog will behave!

Rain? Please. I missed my flight
and look at me.

Planes. Plains! We live in San Francisco
for god's sake, let's go up Bernal
in bloom. No, lady, you needn't worry,
you'll love again and you'll get home safe.
Now get in the cab, darling, you will be fine!