



“My hand knows
what the work will be before I do”
Marc Chagall – from the documentary:
TO RUSSIA, ASSES AND OTHERS
AGO Exhibit 2011

I am not an artist or a designer,
I am a poet and I am inspired
by art and design.
These are some of my poems inspired by
the Chagall Exhibit of Fall 2011.
MARISA TORRE – Chagall Audio Guides
Volunteer, AGO

This hand is the shadow of my heart

sometimes open and warm
a guide from the storm
sometimes closed and cold
untouched untold

sometimes ambitious in direction
with purpose and affection
sometimes ambiguous of intention
with betrayal and deception

sometimes obscure
in its function of the day
sometimes exposed
to the elements in its way

This hand is the shadow of my heart

always ready front and center
to work to play to love
always searching pockets of time
to hide to stay to love

I offer this hand
with all its limitations
I offer this heart
with all its aspirations

And this hand is the shadow of my heart

Marisa Torre ©2011



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MARISA TORRE – Chagall Audio Guides Volunteer, AGO

**Who jesters for the clown
when the curtain has come down
who lifts the weight of maquillage
worn as pathos' camouflage
in the wings' span of reality
who bears the weight of levity
often more as time goes on
we look for smiles not put upon.**

Marisa Torre ©2011



CLOWNS AT NIGHT - Chagall at A.G.O 2011

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MARISA TORRE – Chagall Audio Guides Volunteer, AGO

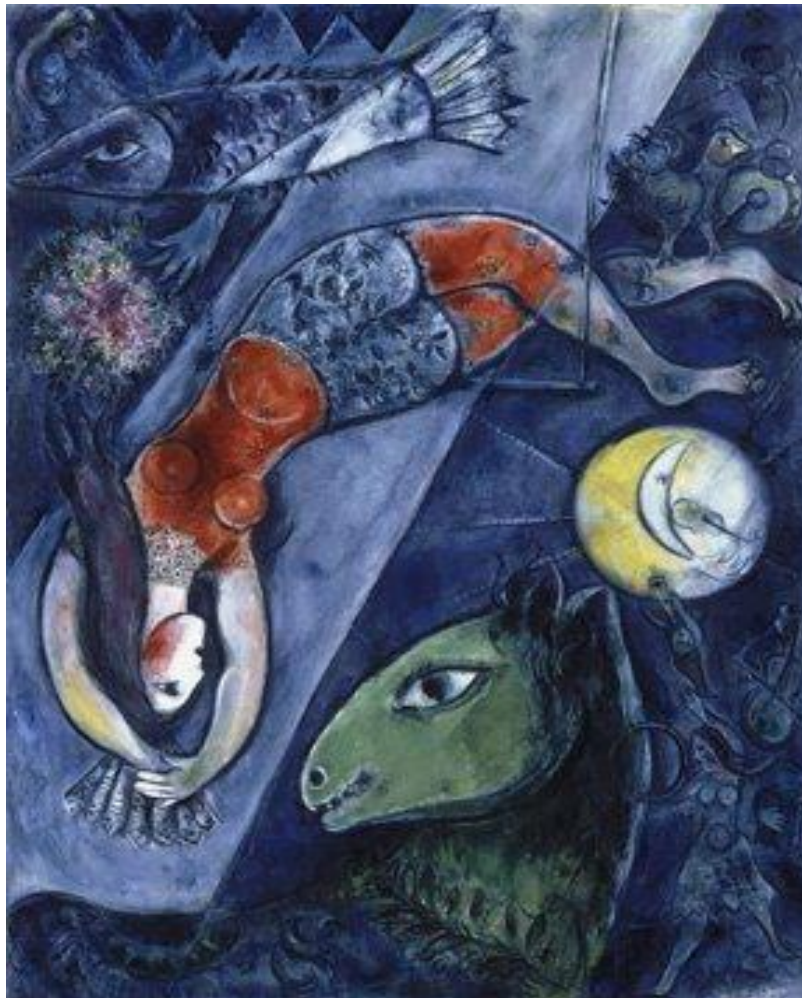
This will wash away

**cleansed in the reservoir
of a recollected deluge**

**the ebb and flow
of every sanitized recollection
wears away a layer from the edges**

**Soon there will
be only
the glimmer
of reflection
doused in doubt.**

Marisa Torre ©2011



BLUE CIRCUS by Marc Chagall at A.G.O. 2011
"For me, a circus is a magic show that appears and disappears"

The Picasso inspired poems, AGO Toronto Spring 2012

The moon is a guest at my window
nudges my attention
with the warmth of its glow
I look into my empty room
and feel the darkness
end at the pane on my sill
when I turn off the light
and let it in.

Your love is a guest in my heart
nudges my affection
with the warmth of its glow
I look into my empty life
and feel the darkness
end the pain of my will
when I turn off the light
and let you in.

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Picasso, AGO Toronto Spring 2012





via Poetry For People Who Hate Poetry

**To whom does art belong
the inspiration or inspired?
This mind this muse
just cause confused
and keep its claim
conspired.**

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Pablo Picasso, L'Acrobat - AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

The Picasso inspired poems, AGO Toronto Spring 2012

I see the light
outside my window
watch it glow to a glare
and dim to dusk

I see the light
inside my television
watch it flicker to
fantasy
and validate the void

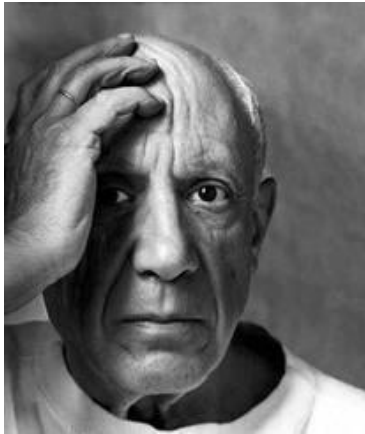
I see the dark
outside my window
watch it become
tomorrow
and the irony of today

I see the dark
inside my television
watch it become
yesterday
and the sun rises
as I fall asleep.

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The Picasso inspired poems, AGO Toronto Spring 2012



**I don't know
I think
I feel
I see**

But I don't know

**I believe there is something
that follows me
as I chase it
to it's inevitable confusion
And it's all naught for nothing**

**I've become negligible
lead to believe
I command attention
to it's inevitable dead-end
Of all I hold meaningful**

**I appear to hide my isolation
surrounded by exclusions
I have followed my faith
to it's inevitable betrayal
And retreat to the reception of my web**

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The Picasso inspired poems, AGO Toronto Spring 2012

I forget his face

there was pleasure in his voice
warmth in his smile
music in his eyes
and the command of his hand
an invitation to dance
as he lead me to our place

But I forget his face

our moves in sync
our rhythm our step our sway
we spin we turn we touch
we travel the floor
his fragrant aura binds us
as he leads me through our pace

But I forget his face

our breath in sync
our rhythm our sweat our sway
his insistence on my attention
and attention to my preference
we will be again
at this time this place

But just right now
I forget his face

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Picasso, AGO Toronto Spring 2012

**Winston Churchill had a war
upon his hands
upon his shore**

**Said he once to intrepid men
“We may have been found out again**

**Our garden town of Coventry
is set to see artillery**

**Hitler’s Reich in foul fettle
set his sights to test our mettle**

**on this garden town of Coventry
resplendent English villagery**

**We must take the blast lest we overt
our regiment revealed covert”**

**Alerting Red Cross and proximity
repenting mortal misery**

**in wit-worn thought and sullen soul
he allowed this rape
and horrid toll**

**As a father loses a
daughter to save the
family
as great a loss to
Churchill
is his cherished
Coventry**

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Walter Trier, AGO

The face born of la belle époque
age's eloquence acquiesced
steeped in yester's elegance
etched in the days of graceless times

Of two world wars
devastation deprivation
depression indignation
prohibition

Of automation aviation
telecommunication
man on the moon
and mini-skirts

**Of grit in her charm
and grace in her struggles**

Age's eloquence acquiesced
steeped in
yester's elegance

What will my own
face portray
should I live to see the day
that youth grace not
this facial skin
but still fulfills
this heart within.

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Alex Colville, AGO



When my son said things like,
"What's up doc?" and "Yaba daba doo" and "Cowabunga"
I knew where he got it.
This poem came to me after he popped into the laundry room
one day to ask me "What's Hiroshima?"
So many ugly images of war flooded my mind;
bombs, mutilation, death, destruction ...
I looked at this beautiful cheery little flower of a child
and all I could muster was "Why?"
"Cuz! It reminds me of you! Hero She Ma!"
I just wanted to cry and laugh and cry.
"But it's a really sad story from the war,
you should ask Nonno about Remembrance Day"

**Little flower tell me
what see you from your bed
how does this life present itself
and save you in its stead**

**In a world where every future
is determined by the past
how do we grace your presence
and make your presence last**

**The sins that do precede you
taint your petals as they bloom
how will you bend to wind and light
and maybe lose your seeds too soon**

**Little flower tell me
why do you choose the grave
how well you serve your purpose
and the innocence you save**

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Wm Blair Bruce, AGO

Sunset take me with you
I have no need of night
a deeper darkness dwells within
by love's forsaken light

Sunset take me with you
don't allow this day to fall
I'll chase you where you lead me
Keep the shadows very small

Sunset take me with you
don't leave me here again
I am drowning in my wake
As I lean beyond my pane

Sunset take me with you
But you don't answer when I call
I too will fade into the night
its calming coolness quiets all

ROSES AND RIPPLES ©2006 **Marisa Torre**



Verner: Sunset on Muskoka River, AGO



Thomson: Sunset on Algonquin Park, AGO



Wm Raphael: Sunset on Pointe Claire, AGO

William Kurelek painting, AGO Toronto



I saw time on a
snowflake
hurrying towards me
land in my hair
and leave a strand of silver

I saw time on the wind
rushing towards me
land on my face
and leave a line of truth

I saw time in the rain
storming towards me
land on my head
and leave a stream of thought

I saw time in the sunshine
blazing towards me
land in my eyes
and leave a reflection
of you

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I am the future
I fumble with footing and
phonetics
I grow with every grasp of
every truth
beyond my youth
and I am the future.

I am the present
I prevail with practice and purpose
I build on opportunities grasped
the truth I endure
manufacture and mature
and I am the present.

I am yesterday
I yearn with years and yield
I only rise with relevance
and a grasp to hold
the ways of old
and I am yesterday.

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I have known your sadness
it lies behind your eyes
and your smile
and every day
your heart heaves heavy
and you can cry in a crowd
even without tears.

I know this sadness
it lives behind my eyes
I carry it with me every day
in the deep dark little wee pit
of my heart
and I can cry in a crowd
even without tears.

We will always know this sadness
it will hide behind our eyes
and our smile
we will carry it every day
in a locked up little pocket
of our soul
and we will cry in a crowd
even without tears.

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Hendrick ter Brugghen, Melancholia, AGO- Art Gallery of Ontario

There has been a minute change
on my clock
It has taken this hour into the next
out of the past
present the future

That same minute change had the power
to jump a square of the week
flip a page of the month
and present the future

There was once a minute change
on my clock
that brought me
to a whole new
calendar
into the next century
and millennium
out of the past
present the future

All from that minute
change on my clock.

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The Gusderman clock circa 1610 AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

This fence collapses beneath me
crackles as it splinters
the integrity of my confusion.

I have definitely decided
to build
a fence of bricks.
I mix my mortar carefully
lest it congeal unevenly
and I should look foolish
leaning entirely to one side
and not the other.

Confusion settles evenly
conglomerates my cowardice
with a facade of illusions
and I envy
the gullibility of those
entirely on one side
and not the other

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G.A. Reid painting, AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

I can see the clouds
billowing above the willow
waving in the wind
rippling upon the puddles
swollen from the
melting snows of April
becoming
May

Only I
am still
beyond this moment
beyond this breath

While thoughts of you
are
billowing beyond my
will
waving my resolve
rippling upon my heart
swollen from the
melting dreams of you
becoming
what they
may

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From my book
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A Breezy Day, F McGilivray Knowles, AGO

There was once a tree
that I had seen
many times before,
but never quite this way.

It was young and strong and beautiful
entirely unaware of its own inherent grandeur

And I knew that one day
it would grace the horizon
with its majestic presence

STRONG with the richness
of all its roots could provide
PROUD with the breadth
of all its limbs could acquire

It would be there to shelter and sustain
it would be there to set the highest sights
its roots would secure its home
its limbs would release its bounty

You are
young and strong
and beautiful
entirely unaware
of your own
inherent grandeur.

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from my book
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AGO painting: At Silver Heights, 1931 L.L FitzGerald

I am the future
I fumble with footing and phonetics
I grow with every grasp
of every truth
beyond my youth
and I am the future.

I am the present
I prevail with practice and purpose
I build on the grasp of opportunities
the truth I endure
manufacture and mature
and I am the present.

I am yesterday
I yearn with years and yield
I only rise with relevance
and a grasp to hold
the ways of old
and I am yesterday.

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Holy Family, AGO Art Gallery of Ontario

I make no demands

I turn to the sun
I turn to the moon
I turn in as December
I turn out as in June

My relief is in my colours
as rejoice or reprimand
I keep you when you're lying
I keep you where you stand

You have had your way with me
you have had your say
you have had your play with me
you have had your pay

The tempest and the
temperate
have guided fate and
hands
I keep you as you keep me
And I make no demands

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from my book
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Paterson Ewen - Northern Lights 1973 AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

Tell me my newborn
what is your command
your wailing wiles have won you
to my breast within my hand
the arms that do receive you
are warm with love's embrace
as is now forever shall be
our own redeeming grace

Tell me tiny tot
what is your command
to reach so far above you
and take your life's first stand
in footing and phonetics
every mystery unfolds
the hands the hearts that guide you
as you struggle to take hold

Tell me little child
what is your command
every question an adventure
as you try to understand
every limit has it's challenge
as you try to win your way
with the sandman with the sunset
with the sand box with the day

Tell me as a student
what is your command
your present does redeem you
your future's in your hands
today you walk a double step
today determines destiny
the path you pick will place you
in the realm of what will be

Tell me as an adult
what is your command
your stature firmly planted
in my heart and trembling hand
the world that does await you
leaves me here to keep your place
of reference and of refuge
when your path exceeds your pace

Let me tell you dear
this is my command
to keep us close to heart
as I release your hand
this age that does receive me
is warm with love's embrace
as was once forever shall be
our own redeeming grace

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Hepworth sculpture – Art Gallery of Ontario

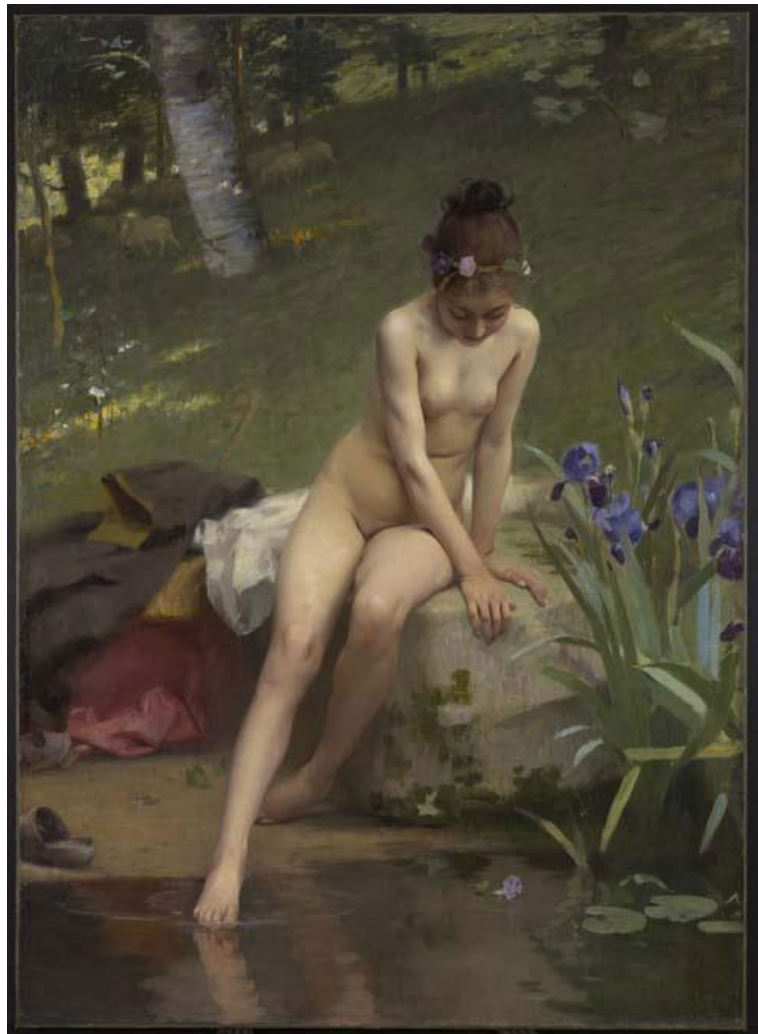
Iris in the garden
Iris in the room
too soon the temperate leaves us
and the heat does wilt your bloom

But your foliage remains
your leaves are straight and strong of hue
still and gracing in their presence
though your blossom does subdue

Ever green all through the summer
evergreen although the fall
again the temperate leaves us
and the chill does wilt us all

Your place is stead in garden
you're placed instead in room
soon the springtime
stirs your slumber
and the sun
unstirs your bloom.

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painting: Paul Peel, The Little Shepherdess, 1892
at AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

I like a fork
with long tines
the elements of graceful design
in gently curved elegance
with aesthetic contours
of form and function
enhancing any hand
elevating any cuisine
to an epicurean experience

And it holds more food.

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photo: FRANK Restaurant AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

I remember when
a dime was like a dollar

You could get
a big bag of chips
and a piece of gum

Mom could get
a pound of pasta
and a can of beans

Home was your whole world
and school was your social life

Nothing was yours and
everything was possible

Your class-room was
so big and
your play-clothes were
too small

Your past was being little and
your future was to get big

Run to the store
play in the street
fun and freedom was
always just outside

We had chores
responsibilities
and manners

And a dime was like a dollar.

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Richard Hamilton Cut, Paste, Print
AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario til June 2013

I envy the raindrops
as they fall from the sky
little streams of fantasy
flowing into each other

I envy the raindrops
as they form upon my window
little clusters of lovers
absorbing into each other

I envy the raindrops
as they form their
puddles
little families of ripples
radiating to each other

I envy the teardrops
as they roll onto my
pillow
little rivers of despair
for they have each other

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From my book
ROSES AND RIPPLES
©2006 Marisa Torre



photo: AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario: SquidLondon's 'Bird Squit' Umbrella
With unique colour-change technology from shopAGO's Living with Design series

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MarisaTorre@live.ca

Who jesters for the clown
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who lifts the weight of maquillage
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often more
as time goes on
we look for smiles
not put upon

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from ROSES AND RIPPLES
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David Bowie exhibit AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario Sept 25 to Nov 27

I forget his face

there was pleasure in his voice
an invitation to dance
there was warmth in his smile
music in his eyes
and command in his hand
as he leads me to our place

But I forget his face

our moves in sync
our rhythm our step our sway
his fragrant aura binds us
we spin we turn we touch
we travel the floor
as he leads me at our pace

But I forget his face

our breath in sync
our rhythm our sweat our sway
his insistence on my attention
and attention to my preference
we will be again
this time this place

But just right now
I forget his face



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Love will give us life
life will give us breath
breath will give us hope
hope will give us time
time will give us age
age will give us death
death will give us unity
unity will give us
Love



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Manasie Akpaliapik, 1989 RESPECTING THE CIRCLE
AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario



Parrot parrot
Pierrot
tell me tell me
what you know
pretty feathers
over down
echo words
to be our clown

Parrot parrot
Pierrot
what you hear
is all you know
what we say
is like the cage
we build around us
as we age

Parrot parrot
Pierrot
coloured brightly
fly and go
tell me tell me
what you see
who's the clown
you or me?

©1988 Marisa Torre



Arnaud Maggs exhibit After Nadar,
AGO Toronto

If only to be stronger
to temptation,
doubt, sorrow
but sometimes the lamp-post crumbles
and still the lamp light shines

If only to be weaker
to temptation,
doubt, sorrow
mediocrity always strikes
a match
but the lamp-light
shines alone

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AGO, Toronto.

Last night they came to take
my children away
they held me fast with guns at bay
isolation
indignation
violation
but steadfast in my protection
I threw pens and papers to fight them off
and still they'd look at me and scoff
I struggled and screamed and chased their car
until they'd driven much too far
with pounding heart and heaving breath
a bolt of silver pierced my chest
the blood of my life
splattered
drenched my clothes
dripping draining
down to the ground I dropped
I missed the road and hit the bed
at last awake and safe instead

©1987 Marisa Torre
for Amnesty International



Rubens, Peter Paul. The Massacre of the Innocents – AGO Toronto

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It was a day just like today

same sort of texture in the air
same sort of colour in the sky

the season spread its essence
the time of day held nigh

It was a day just like today

this fragrance filled each heavy breath
this feeling filled each sigh

I remember how it captured me
and all my fantasies denied

It was a day just like today

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Vétheuil en été, 1879 Claude Monet – AGO Toronto

It was supposed to rain

It is the natural order of life
that you plan your garden

You study the landscape
for the trajectory of sun and shade
you toil the soil
for the benefit of aeration and drainage
you nurture the seedlings
for the future of harvest and fallow

And it is supposed to rain

But the clouds have passed on my fruited plain
reaching towards
them
sown and grown
on the hard work
and application
of my irrigation
pool
as profound
as it may be

But it was also
supposed to rain.

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Paul Peel - The Adoration 1885 AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario

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I had that moment
today at the fridge
I looked at everything available to me
and realized I wasn't hungry
I turned away and did something better

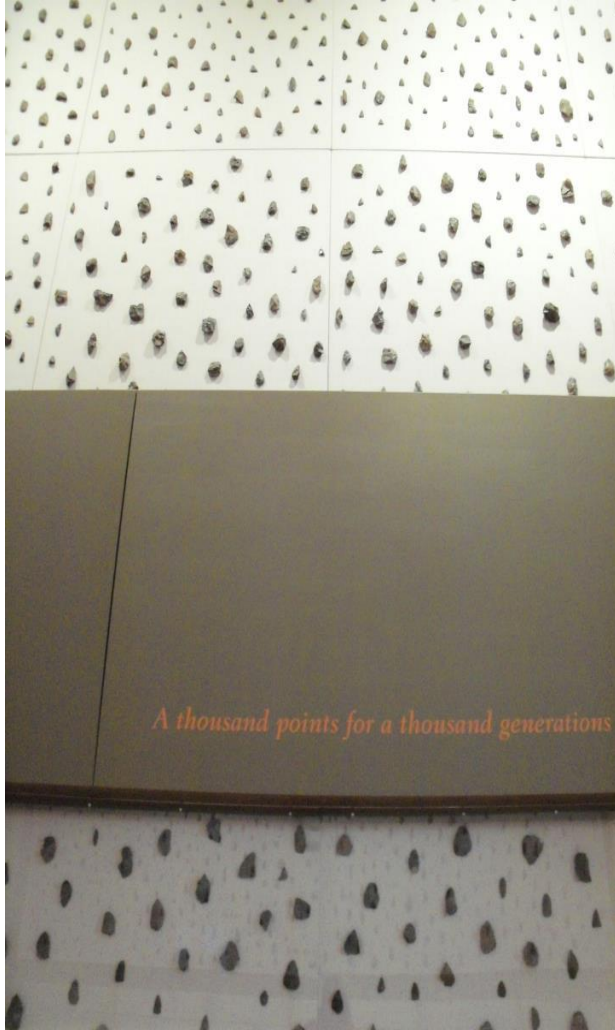
I had that moment
tonight at the bar
I looked at everything available to me
and realized I wasn't desperate
I turned away and did something better

I had that moment
just now at the screen
I looked at everything available to me
and realized I wasn't interested
I turned away and
I did something better

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Iain Baxter, Television Work AGO - Art Gallery of Ontario



Before this rose
there was the seed
of a thousand roses before it

Before this kiss
there was the dream
of a thousand kisses before it

Before this child
there was the seed
of a thousand children before it

Before this life
there was the dream
of a thousand lives before it

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The greater part of this day
has met with the small of my back
I have lifted
and loaded
more than my goal
I have earned what I owe
and I am spent

The wee hours of this morning
have met with my big dream differed
I have planned
and practiced
further than my goal
I have invested
what I know
and I am sold

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Cornelius Krieghoff painting, AGO Toronto

Kurelek - Reminiscences of my Youth, AGO

Those days come back to
me now

in the stillness of a
moment

behind a song on the
radio

a fragrance in the air

or an image I've seen
when my eyes have
lingered
in the distance or on the screen.



It churns up something inside
that spreads all over me
 sometimes salty with tears
 sometimes sweet with smiles
sometimes from
the milk of human kindness
or the cream of the crop
sometimes from
the twisted minds of menace
or a twist of fate

They come back to me
and I go forth with my choices
I'm going to take my lemonade
and shine in the shade
instead of sucking on my lemons
and fading in the sunshine.

I used to find it so easily

I could just go where it was
and it would come to me

I could just look around
and make my way to it
retrace my steps
and get right there

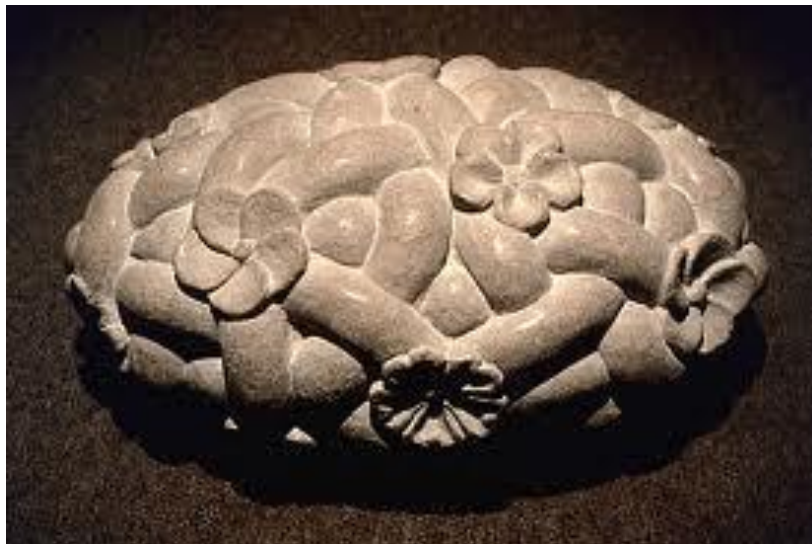
I used to find it so easily

Now it just takes me longer
and then it's always a stretch

Now I search til I'm dizzy
and then resign to my place
retrace every step
and then lose direction

I used to find it so easily

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Ted Rettig at the Art Gallery of Ontario
ALETHEIA
my favourite Easter Egg

I don't know what to do

I wish I was hungry
I could spend half an hour
getting something to eat

I wish I was tired
I could spend an hour
getting some rest

I wish I was sick
I could spend a day
getting some sleep

But I am fed
and rested
and healthy

And I don't know what to do.

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