

For Art's Sake

propriety is a joke best left

to the knowing

don't like the tendency of my wit?

don't take Life so seriously

Death is what you should be

worried about

these dishes are for show

don't clap between movements

the discerning eye undresses all

artistic inevitability is a bowel movement

the failure of Culture to civilize?

doomed to fail all along

and, hell, do you call this

Civilization?

dialogic imagination democratizes nothing

this Art is brought to you by....

Art is a luxury afforded by

a society freed from brute necessity

you should be thankful to those who pay

they buy both supporters and critics

let people argue about nothing

while things of real consequence proceed  
and if you should make too much noise  
you'd do well to remember  
the applause of the masses will drown out  
the gunfire  
and you will indeed be the object of contemplation  
as a head over the fireplace....

metronome

i toiled for years at

the piano

i was good at it

but it never came easily

all the while the metronome

lorded over me –

click, click, click...

i wasn't patient

i gave up convinced

genius was something

you do, not something you

worked for

many years later now

in the midst of incredible noise

people all around me

i stand head aloft

at a tilt

seeming listening

for something no one else

hears –

click, click, click, click...

## Mine Games

I live in a land of mine games

Place your bets as black dust

Coats the lungs

I live in a land of fairy tales

Where promises of wealth

Come chained to the promise

Of unhappily ever after

I live in a land that is gorgeous

Almost Heaven

Peaks of Mountain Mamas

Wild and Wonderful

I live in a land held

Hostage

By those who have

No roots

No morals

No Human Values

I live in a land of mine games

And while trapped beneath

The promise of riches

Suffering, suffocating

Surrounded by darkness

And the removal of

Majestic mountain tops

Man still cries

For that for which

Man still dies

a dream lost

my dreams have escaped me  
in ways I never knew they could  
swept away by a current  
they morphed into driftwood  
and floated down stream  
wishing not to be understood  
but longing for retrieve  
why am I in pursuit  
almost happy to watch them leave  
no desire to chase them  
they faded into the light  
gone forever out of sight

## Odometer Reset

someday is now  
tomorrow is today  
your lies are what you see  
my truth has no hold on you  
never will I be good enough  
to give you what you need  
way out in the distance  
my love wanders at his will  
inside this rectangle  
resides a truth so pure  
snapshot of expression captured  
deep within my essence  
realization established long  
before expression was provided  
tongue tied and twisted  
heart made of gold  
somewhere over the past  
there must be a connection  
one that started a millennia ago  
is now in wrestling the truth  
and trying to convince that  
everything expressed is cloaked  
in a pure lie when really the only lie  
that ever existed was to deny that  
love is real and has landed outside  
waiting to be seen through the blinds  
of layers of fears and lies that move

nothing because light years is not a  
speed because it would produce an encounter  
that would mean love and love would  
collide meet and reside  
odometer reset

Snap

I dangled from the  
Bar of the yellow swing set  
Beside the red slide  
I kicked my legs wildly  
And the black-and-tan mutts  
Would leap nip at me  
Growling  
In sudden bursts of action  
Drool spraying  
Snap  
I fall to the ground  
-- I think the mutts  
Knew it was all a game  
But  
In the final analysis  
Who knows?

The Dead Live Here in Bluefield

Look at the fence  
Which keeps nothing in,  
Nothing out  
Look at the abandoned house  
Which looks back with broken panes  
You never really “live” here  
But you live here  
Look up at Tiffany Manner  
Atop the hill  
No lights on  
No trains pass on this track  
You look at the graveyard,  
Imagine the inhabitants  
Rising, sprouting from the ground,  
Staggering to the elementary school,  
Hammering on the doors  
But no one’s home  
What haunts the stores  
On Federal and Bland Street,  
Buildings as old  
As the community itself,  
Too ramshackle to designate  
As “heritage sites”?  
Where are the rattlesnakes,  
The black widows?  
The people are as poisonous  
Don’t jump from the MLK Bridge –

They'll push you  
No end of churches here,  
But they're all damned  
You imagine tumbleweed afire  
Bumbling along,  
Burning the whole thing down  
But nothing's worth it  
Just go to sleep  
Deep cold sleep  
Or maybe hitch a ride  
Down the long, twisted road  
To the mines  
You get off, thank him, wave goodbye  
Then enter the shack,  
Spend the night  
Nothing left but the  
Drugs to put in your arm,  
A small useless lamp,  
And rats  
To keep you company

## Too Little, Too Late

let us sing a ditty  
of dubious intentions,  
strong emotions,  
wrong decisions,  
things too little,  
too late  
ugliness and everything else  
blended into an  
undifferentiated whole  
no one will know the truth  
if truth there be  
most won't remember  
those that do will laugh  
and we continue on  
against cold winds  
expecting at any moment  
to encounter something  
that at long last  
will run us down...