

Poetry Series

Michael Shutt
- poems -

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Michael Shutt()

Started writing after life closed in.

A Garden Fair

A cold March Wind
Encased my body
And tousled hair
While I walked through
A Garden Fair.

I did not mind
The wind so much,
For Hoosier March
Does bring forth gusts.

I'm used to it.

For, here
I was conceived,
And here
I'll finally rest
In this peaceful
Garden Fair,
Surrounded by
My Darlings
Who've gone on before.

It was not
Hoosier Wind
That chilled today,
But sad
Warm Breeze
From Pensacola -
Spewing out
A bitter gust -
A too soon loss
Enveloped Me.

I dressed for
The occasion -
From respect -
Pinstriped Pants,
An Argyle Sweater.

And no,
did not take from
An old Wise wardrobe,
Though I did
In days gone by-
When Wise
would see me
Showing off
Upon the stage,
And whisper,
'God, Jo,
That boy
Has filched
My coat and shoes.'

I guess now, Dad,
You've nothing left to lose.

You've nothing
Left to lose.
Perhaps false heart
In nearby Destin...
Destin?
Destiny my
Irish Soul.
If you fell
For false faced love
From false faced daughter,
Well, really, Dad.
Well shame on you.

Your mind was gone.
Your not to blame.
Your soul now goes
On up to Heaven.
I hope you walk
In peace with Kevin.

What did you leave
Behind, Dad?
A widowed Red Head Fair,
And then,

A son,
Not son,
You'd not acknowledge.
Even though
You had the knowledge.

And in
Last days
You did convene
A 'family conference. '
What the hell was that?
Without your loyal
Redhead Fair?
You did convene.
Spoke to the air.

I walked amidst
A Garden Fair.
And breathed
The Air of
Spirits whom
Have gone before me.
In the end,
I hope you spared
A kind word
While you're
Daughter False
Denied you entry.
Its up to me
To be your sentry.

I walked around
A Garden Fair -
And did breathe deep
A bitter air.
And yet,
Dad. Dave
Though you forgot,
And reveled in
False Babylon's air,
A Redhead Fair
Did bring you home

And sent your fractured
Soul to roam.
Unwanted son
Will bring you home.
To gently rest
In Riley's Lair.
To gently sleep
In Garden Fair.

You always were
Uncompromising
To this Sad Son
It's not surprising.
And yet,
Dad, Dave,
I'll take you there.
And rest you in
A Garden Fair.

And pray
You find
Your soul laid bare.
And find some peace
In Garden Fair.

Michael Shutt

Autumn,2013

Autumn 2013

I took a walk
this afternoon
as Summer passed
to memory,
Alone,
With just my thoughts
to keep me company.

I set out,
and saw a bright blue sky,
found comfort in
an Autumn Sun
and sauntered past
some old indifferent landmarks,
on an aged indifferent street
called Sycamore.

And thought ahead.

'What lies in store? '

As Solstice Heat in June
Bows to September Equinox;
Think, more than once,
I'd pay for Autumn
to forestall
upcoming loss.

I've always liked
the Heralding of Spring.

The Emerald Leaves
show signs of changing
to a pale, transcendent form.

And when they drop,
I know I'll mourn.

And then,
I'll ponder new born Spring,
idyll in in Season
freshly born.

And let Mums
balm a heart that's torn
with fresh perfume,
and let the gentle
Queen of Spring
enfold in Alabaster Arms
my troubled soul,
and plant fresh life
in field of
trepidation Autumn.

I've always liked
the Heralding of Fall.

Except-
This year-
when Fall gives way
to icy Winter;
Expectant Grief
is buried under
Six Feet of
cold indifferent snow.

Where can I go?

But to the
loving arms of Spring?

The seasons change
past the dying Light of Autumn.

Into Winter's
callous gall.

Thank God for Spring-

With childlike hope,
I'll always like
the Heralding of Fall.

MRR

Michael Shutt

Box Of Dust

A Box of Dust
Sits on my shelf.
Has sat,
For close
To three months now.

From Ides of March,
Until Mid June,
A Box of Dust
Sits on my shelf.

Behind closed door.

For three months
Of Eternity.

A Box of Dust-
In which,
Resides my Dad.
Did You think
Of this?

If so,
Your planning,
Dad,
Was really bad.

From snow filled March
To storm filled June-
You've sat upon
A shelf,
In Fed Ex Box,
In my spare room.

It's three weeks now
And I had never thought
That I would
Ever wish to pass
Through June's

MidSummer Night-

I do this year.

For Dad,
Your silence
On my shelf-

Frankly, Dad,

There's little
comfort there,

From that Box-

From that Dust-

Upon my shelf.

Michael Shutt

City Of Firsts: January,2013

January 28,2013

Fog creeps into
The City of Firsts,
'Cross sleeping fields
That sometimes thwart
Agrarian Hope.

And chokes out all that
Factory Smoke,
While those who till the soil
Succumb to Fog's
Sweet Dreams.

While Laborers sweat
On assembly lines,
Laboring
Three Times
and More
than their Grandparents did,
with not much gain
but stubborn Hoosier Pride.

And Minimum Wagers
Sweat in 21st Century
Hash Houses,
Feeding those who in this
City Of Firsts
Toil for Detroit,
On Machenized Assembly Lines
and punch a time clock-

And think that they
By virtue of the internet
Are equal to the bosses up
In Motor City.

Wake Up.

Your brothers of the land
Know better.

You Unioned Laborers
Can be erased
By the Corporate Class
That still dictates that
You'd better never
Ask too much-

Else the Money Men
Will crush you under
Wingtipped loafers
Made in China.

And by the way,
Ole Farmer Fred:

Just sleep those dreams
Of better harvest.

Sleep those dreams
'Neath Winter's Mantle.

Just get too pushy

Just want too much,

Like your Union Brothers,
We'll be in touch.

You'd better pack
A Farm Grown Lunch.

Oh my, what a rotten
Road to hoe,
We'll get our lunch
From Mexico.

And Unions,

We're so comfortable,

We dont care if your
Kids are starving.
The Money Boys
Need not explain.
We'll close you Factories
Down We Will.
We'll build our profits
In Beijing!

Michael Shutt

Eulogy For Sir David Frost

9/2013

Sir David Frost
did Die this week.
Should we pause,
Or even,
Weep?

Unasked questions.

Sparring-Look:

'I am not, '
Dick said,
'A Crook.'

Should we wink,
or shrug,
or Smile?

On Empire son?

It's been awhile.

Had he but gave
Just as he took,
He could have answered
'Not a Crook.'

Sir David,
Why did you not ask
in happenstance,
given the chance?

Even Ike replied
When he was asked,
'Dick's an inconsequential cog.'

And to the airwaves

Did Dick take.
Milhous said,
'I'm not a crook,
A fake-'

And by the way,
For Heaven's Sake-
'Trish and Julie
Keep the Dog.'

Sir David,
Why not ask with spite
And press about
Unending Night
In Cambodia,
And Vietnam?

Oxymoron.
Valedictory.
Milhous View
Of Peace with Victory.

Were ratings just
your guiding light?

Sir David-
Did you give a damn?

Beyond a healthy
Nielson Plate?

Just gloss over
Watergate?

You just sat back,
Let Dick go on,
Beyond the crime
of Vietnam,
and rattle on
about a breakfast
cooked in 1928.

You did not press,
'Make restitution-
Damage done to Constitution.'

You let him
prattle on,
so slick.

No wonder he's called
'Tricky Dick.'

'Why did you not
Just burn the tapes? '

Dick made you look
Like a jackanape.

You let him lie, Dave,
Let it grow.
'Daddy,
You're the best man I know.'

You let him lie,
You let him say,
'Henry K-
Kneel down,
Let's pray.'

You pitched
some softballs;
False statements took.

And let him say,
'I'm not a crook.'

You let him get
Away with this.
On Constitution
did he piss.

His answers?

Incongruous mush.

'Hush, Hush, '

Dick said.

'There's always Slush.'

Why not press?

Why did you falter.

Why did We

Trust more Uncle Walter?

'We're Haldeman, Erlichman,

Mitchell and Dean.

Our job was to see

That the White House

Stayed Green.

We may have had flaws,

Like bending the laws-

But, God only knows,

It was for a good cause...'

Could there be true disputation?

Power,

Greed,

And Blind Ambition?

Is there any

question then?

Wrongs done by

The President's Men?

And much too late

you came on strong.

But, Milhous shook

his lying jowls.

And Dick sat back.

His disdain-regal:

'When the President

Does it,

It's always Legal.'

Why not shout out then,
Why not brook?
You gently let him
off the hook.

And say, again,
'I'm not a crook.'

Political containment?

Entertainment?

'18 minutes won't
see the light.'
And Milhous said,
'Just oversight.'

Your final shot
Would prove your best-

You asked.
Did he apologize?
Or fill the airwaves
With more lies?

He simply said,
Half sly,
Half bored:
'They stabbed me.
I gave them a Sword.'

Then said,
with great Nixonian frown:
'The people?
Well, I let them down.'

And then,
Dick took your
Queen with Rook.

Said one more time,

'I'm not a crook.'

A Talk Show Host.
That was your bread.
The Ghost of Murrow
Shook his head.

And so,
You said,
In Tricky's Maelstrom:

'Hello!
'Good Evening! '
'Yes! '
'And Welcome! ! ! '

Sir David Frost
did die this week.
Should we pause?
Even weep?

You let that bastard
off the hook.

And let him say,
'I'm not a crook.'

MRR

Michael Shutt

For F. Scott, On Your Birthday

On this day,
The twenty fourth -
September, 1896 -
A lass of Ireland
she did give
Her name, plain
Molly Mcquillin,
From her betrothed -
Brave heritage -
Francis Scott Key
Was in your veins.

Oh Jazz Age
Generation Bow
Before your Prophet -
Callow youth
Give praise to
Herald,

Chronicler;

To Flaming Youth;
Tender the night,
The Last Tycoon -
To Gatsby
and Nick Carroway,

Could you but see
the way you paved.

In Chareleston's time
Before you took
That fateful drink
From bathtub brewed,
oh did you think?
You swilled to fill
Your tortured soul.

You only boozed

To take respite.
My God,
How Tender Is The Night?

And so to Princeton
did you go-
oh Princeton Tiger
Have a blow;
In bathtub gins
Foul haze,
you strove-
Beyond your colors,
Black and Gold.

Pale Ivy's dreams-
New Jerseys
petty circumstance-

This Side of Paradise
you held
A generation
in your spell.

Oh Amory Blaine,
oh what the hell?

Oh damn
Beloved Infidel.

Oh Gregory Peck.
Oh what the hell?

Damn.

Break midwest's anomaly.
from St. Loo-eee
your ancestry,
Called forth from sainted
F. Scott Key-
'Hey Frank, '
You rotgut progeny-

As you did
after war torn night,
Mid rockets glare
And twilight's gleaming,
Can you see the
lonely gleaming?

The Jazz Age Prophet
has his meaning.

In bitter love, Scott,
did you fall.
A Jazz Age
White Hot Baby Doll.

Oh, Zelda,

Sad.

She crisped
Your Soul.

With follies made-up/

Zelda the toll.

You added to
His Goddamned Soul.

So Zelda,
did you give a damn?
Your fragile mind
I cannot blame.

But, really, Zelda,
what the hell?

Through Tender Night,

Through Gatsby's Spell,

what Side of Paradise

You lied?

You Goddamned
rum tossed harridan.

You raved,
You screeched,

J. Gatsby died
A bitter dream.

You never gave
A goddamned choice.

You raped his soul
You crushed his voice.

So go on Scott,,
no judgement here.

Drink deep that
Goddamned draft of beer.

And in a fiery blaze
you went.

Your Soul,
I pray,
to Heaven Sent.

You cursed your
Blessed Wedding Banns.

You damned him
Daisy Buchanan.

And Scott,
Through fears,
And tears
Ans years
fierce bottles battles
have you fought.

Damn, Last Tycoon,

A heavy draught
deep in your gut
Gin's demons haze.

Jay Gatsby,

On false pond you laze.

Love's battle's
fought and won.

Into Green Light's Eternity,

In back laid bare
And snubbed nose gun.

Oh, Scott Fitzgerald,

From your soul,

Cast out
gin soaked debauchery.

Your words are only
What we need
Descendant of
Francis Scott Key.

'Oh Frank.'
'Oh Frank! '
Oh can you see?

The triumph of
your progeny?

Great Gatsby
Lives in memory.

In antique mirror

I turn my gaze.

To Princeton's
errant son I raise
A glass in loving memory.

To J.G.'s father,
Lord the Fright.

How Tender Is
The Forlorn Night?

And so, F. Scott,
of F. Scott Key;
Dear Last Tycoon,
Your life's a boon-

For Jazz Age
Disaffected Youth.

This Autumn Eve
Still shows the truth -

For Gatsby's
halcyon fair days.
Through Flapper's Eyes,
Past Charleston's haze,

still look we to
a tender night-

to J. Gat's doom,

to that green light.

Goddamnit Scott-

That fateful drink-
For cursed gin
You paid a toll.

You gave your soul,

And yet,?

And Yet?

You gave your soul.

Yet how we strive?

Your words, Fitzgerald,
How they last.

A forlorn generation hence;

Fitzgerald,

Gatsby,

still row forth,

Against the current,
Souls we cast-

against the current,
Into the Past.

Michael Shutt

For Jack Kennedy-'A Thousand Days'

A Thousand Days:

Has it been
just fifty years
since you left?

Left us bereft?

I don't care
what people say-
Conspiracists will
always have their day.

What matters now
are all the words
and thoughts
you left to us today.

A Thousand Days.

History replays
in black/white footage,
Kinescope.

You're just
a movie memory-

But Jack,
in looking back
through fifty years
we hear your voice.

You message,
Vision,
still gives hope.

A Thousand Days.

That's all you had,

from Passing Torch,

Then you
were gone.

'Ask Not.'

Ask not what
our God has wrought.

It matters not
five decades since,
the circumstance
of your foul death.

It only matters,
JFK,
what you once said
one frigid day.

In this land
of hypocrites,

Who quote you-
but forget your words-

In this strife torn
Land of Bounty:

Ask not.

Instead,

Ask what you
can do.

Ask not
what your country
can do for you.

In asking this,
your countrymen

can look with hope-
past present haze-

And realize promise
of too short
Thousand Days.

November 22,2013

Michael Shutt

For My Grandfather

For Grandpa

For my Grandfather.
Raymond Walter Riley,
December 23,1909-
July 11,2003
Written 11/11/2013

Upon an Emerald
death bed,
bleeding Red,
and far below
Your Dignity.

And spewing forth
unimaginable,
unsought,
and undeserved pain
and agony-

Example shined
as how a Man
should die.

With Grace.

With Courage.

Screaming to
the last
His hard
Won Dignity.

'Attention should
be paid, '
unto nobility
and simple, honest,
noble Souls
like Yours.

Through scores
of years well paced
and gently lived.

Oh, Red.

It did not
go unnoticed.

Not by the people
that You
Daily Graced.

Your Family.

Friends.

You graced them through
Four score years
and more.

Simply by
Your loving,
daily presence.

And I,
Your Grandson,
bowed before
the bed on which
You died
in agony.

It was
not fair,
the pain
You felt.

July Eleventh,
Twenty Aught
and Three.

I knelt,
and swore,

'My Hero, '

'Your Darling Bride,

Your Loving Daughter,

Baby Sister

Will not want

for Warmth,

for Love,

for Comfort
of Past Memory-

You hold
them dear,
and dear
they are
to me.'

'You hold
them dear,

Your Baby Sister,

Red Haired Daughter,

and, without you,

strong but faltering Wife.'

On your bed
of cruel
and undeserved agony-

This unfair fate-

A primal cry
at last unfairly
leaving Life-

A loving
unknown cloud
of fortitude descends
and leads you up
to generous choirs
of Angels.

Your Grandson
never heard You
cry in pain.

And God's
unknowing mind.

Well,
who among us
can explain
that shattering pain
that came to you,
and through you,
came to me?

July Eleventh.

In the year
of Twenty
and Aught Three?

I never heard you
gasp in pain
from hammered thumbs
in sweat stained barn,

or broken shoulder
neatly won
while toiling on
much precious Farm

of Family.

The daily pains
that you endured
through honest work
in all the years
came out
that night,

and sadly,
finally,
sang to me.

July Eleven-
in Aught Three.

I know that I
will have to plead,

Dear RWR,

Please, God.

Forgive me.

As you cried up
to God above-

and pleaded-

'Michael,
Let me up! '

I forced you back
on bed of pain,
I'd never heard you
cry or scream.

And yet,
You cried,
You screamed again.

In no way
earned this
unjust pain.

Your last words-

Seared in memory:

'Do your best,
Grandson,
For Family.'

I put my ear
down to your lips,
my weight held down
your troubled spirit.

'Promise me, '
you gasped,
with red rimmed
eyes of blue,

'Grandson'-

'It's the last
I'll ever ask
of you.'

Your eyes with pain,
my eyes with tears,
looked through
the years
that I was Graced
to have You
in my life.

A promise made
'tween You and me,
the final morning
of Your Life.

July Eleventh.

Two Aught Three.

Before I thought
to call a hearse-

Your body,

Straining,
Sweat soaked,

Warm;

I called a Nurse.

Before You got
that final shot
that eased You
to Eternity.

You looked on me
one final time,

and gently said,

'You are
the last
of Mine.'

And as your
iron-clad Farmer's Grip
relaxed on life,
began to slip
to much missed Family
gone before,

and well won peace
and Love Eternal,

Elysian Courts
of Basketball,

and never rain parched
Heavenly Crops,

You stopped,
My Darling,
One last time-

And whispered,

'Please take care
of Mine.'

With tear drenched face
I kissed Your lips,
one final time,
and said,

'Just close
Your eyes Sweet Man.'

'Go into Light,
past unearned pain
this Midwest Night.'

'Your Sisters,
Father,
Your young
Mother wait.'

'Step past
this life-

what stretches forth beyond
can not equate
all You've know
in Earth's cruel gate.'

'Grandpa,
Let go.
Don't hesitate.'

You seemed

to calm.

I kissed again
Your cheeks,
Your brow.

And softly said,

'I will always
Love You.'

A promise made
I vowed I'd keep.

And it was late.

I sought some sleep.

And so,
I was not there.

But when
I laid me
down to sleep,
I prayed to God
Your Soul
He'd Keep.

And then
You died,
before I waked-

And knew
that gently God
Your Soul
did take.

And when I woke
and realized
You breathed Your last,

I howled.

And held Your
still warm body
in my arms.

And knew the loss
of You would never pass.

The pain,

The loss
of You
would always last.

A Howl-

Harsh tears
poured out of me.

July Eleventh.

Two Aught Three.

And from that wretched
tear stained night
till now,

I've thought each night
before I go to sleep.

The Promise made to You
was not so hard to keep.

Just three weeks
to the day and
twelve hours short,

Your Love-

Your Harriet
did not have
the strength

without Your strength
to face a life
without You in it.

So,
She journeyed on.

I sat with Her.

Caressed Her Hair.

Your little Sis
and grandson
held her hands.

Your Pastor, Chuck,
invoked a Loving Prayer.

Then She was also gone.

I kissed her cheeks.

I stopped the clock.

Then closed Her eyes.

On August First
of Two Aught Three.

And years went by.

And Dave did die.

Our circle tightened,
gathered close-

But Darling Grandpa,
I well remember
what You said.

'Look out for,
care for Family.'

I've tried.

Please bestow a blessing
on my head.

As I take care
of family.

I will.

I always will,
Dear Doc-

Though clock winds down,
Your Sister frowns.

It's just Her and
Your Daughter now.

I always will,
because I know
someday You'll ask
well past this
Veil of Tears,

and once again,
in God's good time and grace,
I'll see You
in a better place.

And we'll embrace.

And you will see
I kept my word.

Made on Dark Night.

July Eleventh.

Twenty and
Aught Three.

For Grandpa

For my Grandfather.
Raymond Walter Riley,
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Forgive me.

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to God above-

and pleaded-

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my weight held down
your troubled spirit.

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Your body,

Straining,
Sweat soaked,

Warm;

I called a Nurse.

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gone before,

and well won peace
and Love Eternal,

Elysian Courts
of Basketball,

and never rain parched
Heavenly Crops,

You stopped,
My Darling,
One last time-

And whispered,

'Please take care
of Mine.'

With tear drenched face
I kissed Your lips,
one final time,
and said,

'Just close
Your eyes Sweet Man.'

'Go into Light,
past unearned pain
this Midwest Night.'

'Your Sisters,
Father,
Your young
Mother wait.'

'Step past
this life-

what stretches forth beyond
can not equate
all You've know
in Earth's cruel gate.'

'Grandpa,
Let go.
Don't hesitate.'

You seemed
to calm.

I kissed again
Your cheeks,
Your brow.

And softly said,

'I will always
Love You.'

A promise made
I vowed I'd keep.

And it was late.

I sought some sleep.

And so,
I was not there.

But when
I laid me
down to sleep,
I prayed to God
Your Soul
He'd Keep.

And then
You died,
before I waked-

And knew
that gently God
Your Soul
did take.

And when I woke
and realized
You breathed Your last,

I howled.

And held Your

still warm body
in my arms.

And knew the loss
of You would never pass.

The pain,

The loss
of You
would always last.

A Howl-

Harsh tears
poured out of me.

July Eleventh.

Two Aught Three.

And from that wretched
tear stained night
till now,

I've thought each night
before I go to sleep.

The Promise made to You
was not so hard to keep.

Just three weeks
to the day and
twelve hours short,

Your Love-

Your Harriet
did not have
the strength
without Your strength
to face a life

without You in it.

So,
She journeyed on.

I sat with Her.

Caressed Her Hair.

Your little Sis
and grandson
held her hands.

Your Pastor, Chuck,
invoked a Loving Prayer.

Then She was also gone.

I kissed her cheeks.

I stopped the clock.

Then closed Her eyes.

On August First
of Two Aught Three.

And years went by.

And Dave did die.

Our circle tightened,
gathered close-

But Darling Grandpa,
I well remember
what You said.

'Look out for,
care for Family.'

I've tried.

Please bestow a blessing
on my head.

As I take care
of family.

I will.

I always will,
Dear Doc-

Though clock winds down,
Your Sister frowns.

It's just Her and
Your Daughter now.

I always will,
because I know
someday You'll ask
well past this
Veil of Tears,

and once again,
in God's good time and grace,
I'll see You
in a better place.

And we'll embrace.

And you will see
I kept my word.

Made on Dark Night.

July Eleventh.

Twenty and
Aught Three.

For My Love, On Her Birthday

Her Birthday
is a gift to me.

That started first
on Feb the Fith,
way back in 1965.

Although I did not
know it then.

The day,
Her Day,

and though,
not knowing,
my day also,

when my Heart's Heart
first graced this world

with Kindness,

Beauty,

Wisdom,

Love;

Her Birthday
was a gift to me.

Although I did not
know it then.

Who was this child?

Who was She then?

And who would

She become,
when She first loved me
in the High, Sweet Summer
of Her days?

Swaddled,

Sweet,

And Loving,

Warm...

I guess not much
has truly changed-

She still is Sweet,

and Soft,

and Warm-

Though sleeping in
a different bed,

She would grow
into my Love,

and dazzle me.

Although I did not
know it then.

And in the Gold Days
of our youth,

Her Sweetness,

Kindness,

Beauty matched with Brilliance,

made my self-involvement reel-

On looking back,
I wish I'd had the fortitude
when She passed by me
in the halls,

I wish I'd chanced
a kiss to steal.

Although I did not
know it then,
some pain I'd cause
in days to come.

Like butter on
a precious vellum folio-

Like angry wine stains
on pure Irish linen-

She blotted my transgressions out.

And though, I did not
know it then,

Her dear pure Soul
would wrap me in
forgiving arms of Love-

Make good the Night,

and lead me to
a Gentler Dawn.

And so,
I pause,

And say a pray of Thanks
for Feb the Fifth of 1965.

And for the Blessings

brought into my life,

One Year,
and One Month Less.

I know it now.

Although I did not
know it then.

Happy Birthday, Darling.

February 5,2014

Michael Shutt

For Philip Seymour Hoffman

PSH

Born in '67,
gone too soon-

on a lonely bathroom floor.

Oh, Phil,
why did it
end this way?

You had so much
to give.

More greatness
lay in store.

Instead,

It ended,
by Yourself.

On a lonely
bathroom floor.

You left behind
a legacy of
strife filled roles-

Ambitious Souls-

With darkness,

Angst,

And Tenderness.

And now
an empty

future looms;

No more Tonys,

No more Oscars,

Just a final
Curtain Call.

Taken on
a lonely
bathroom floor.

We grieve
for You,
that Vicious Demons
led You to
this state.

And contemplate,

And mourn,

The loved ones,

Children,
left behind.

The awful waste
of Passion.

Greatness.

And so,

Capote's Channeler,

and Brendan Flynn,

and Lester Bangs,

and Freddie Miles,

And last,
not least,

The Master's Voice

is memory.

It died alone.

In unknown pain.

On a lonely
bathroom floor.

Feb.2,2014

Michael Shutt

Goodbye, Rockford

'I've thought a lot
about Jim Garner
in the week
gone past.

Since he passed.

I always
loved you,
Jimmy.

Hell.

If Obits
written across
a country
mean anything,

America loved
you too.

Charming,

Amusing.

Witty.

Urbane,

and yet,
you never got
too selfsome sure,

to ever
be above us.

Or forgot
the daily man.

You were
so Cool.

Cowardly Cool.

Rockford would
talk his way
out of a fight.

And watching him
on Friday Nights,

You truly were
the definition
of the way to live,

On Jacks
and Queens.

Week
After Week.

I watched you
every week.

Hell, Jim.

We all did.

And loved you.

How could I
Not think
Of Jim Garner
on this week
gone past?

My thoughts
now go to
growing up,

With tongue

in cheek,

And You,
So Cool,
So Mild
and Meek.

And I,

Dear Jim,
What Great Escapes
I had
at Woodland.

Seeing you
up on
the Screen.

What a grand
prix screen
you laid before
my late Stepdad-

And he would tell me
Watching Files

How when He
was a Lad...

How a
Riverboat's Bell
made him smile,

and He'd tell me
of Maverick.

Fare thee well.

How could I
not think
of Jim Garner
this past week?

How Sweet
It Is?

Remembering now.

Romance-

That Murphy
brought to
Sally Field?

And brought
to you
a Golden Nod?

From Hollywood?

I think
you'd rather been
back home
in Norman.

Move over, Darling.

And,

Seeking Home,

a home
you found.

And made
a near
Six Decades
love nest there.

For that alone,

while waiting
for Jim Rockford
on each

Friday night,

You'd go
into my files.

The thrill
of it all
in my young
children's hour-

My God.

Jim.

You kissed
Julie Andrews.

And not
just once!

At Sunset.

And
at Twilight.

Damned right
that I think
of Jim Garner
on this night.

The thrill
of it all
comes to this,
Cash McCall.

Your legacy's
not in a
gold Trans Am.

But almost
60 Years
worn in

a wedding band.

And in
Korea.

And called
air strikes
upon Yourself.

How many
lives were saved.

When calling
down bombs
on yourself.

And you
refused the honor-

Recognition
Twice.

In the Hour
of the Gun?

I'd say
that sealed
your Legacy.

As a Man.

The rest,
Jim,

Just were
Heartsongs.

And Rockford's Files
can now
no longer speak.

But what

can Speak
Speaks of

a Gentleman.

More than
a Movie Star.

Is that
not better
than a trunk
of Oscars
hidden in
a golden
Trans Am trunk?

I feel
such damned loss.

Thinking of
James Garner
this sad week.

Michael Shutt

Her Well Remembered Hair

03/10/2014

Well Remembered Hair:

'To what
can I
compare your Hair?

The perfect metaphor eludes.

A breath of air?
A sultry stare?
A Bagatelle?
A Summer Day?

To what
can I
compare your Hair?

Its shining,
vibrant, attitude?

Unalterable compass
to my heart-

No matter what
the Latitude.

A day in June,
would make me swoon-

Or kissing,

under Harvest Moon.

Black tresses fall,
upon my chest,
while nuzzling deep
in Winter's Breast.

To what can I
compare your Hair?

While I am here?

And You are there?

While,

lonely-

both,
Love,

We go separately
through days?

Cold,
uncaring miles:

Indifferent Calendar,

You have no power
O'er Us-

You cannot ununite
United Hearts-

Cold Calendar.

You cannot fathom-

Break-

The secret smiles
we share-

Her Goodness,

Kindness,

Grace.

All that I see and feel,

While feeling her
soft hand in mine;

while running fingers through
the Glory of Her Hair.

And so,

Past seconds,
minutes,
hours,
and days-

Past all this life's cruel
melancholy bonds-

Her lovely,
Hair-

Pain streaked,
it's true-

It Sings
to me.

With selflessness-

With sacrifice-

With fortitude.

I don't delude
myself at all,

I know
Her Soul-

I see

the toll

that daily,
Sacrifice of Self
has made.

So I can say
with certitude-

Through strength
of Sure and
Certain Love:

I do reject.

I do dismiss:

Distance.

And lying Time's
vile lassitude.

At long last, Love,
It's simply this-

Midst Summer,

Spring,

Fall,

Winter's Kiss...

The bliss of finding
one lone strand,

When I,

when low,

As oft I am-

The gift of just
a single strand-

Blasts all
Comparisons.

And in that
Single Strand,

At last-

Comparisons aside-

I gently,

Softly,

Find a bit
of heartfelt,

strongly prayed for
peace.

Today.

Tomorrow.

And the past,

of bliss.

Within a comb,

or bathroom floor,

or pillow where
I lonely wake.

I do not hesitate.

On seeing-

touching this
small bit of You-

It gives me hope.

It summons strength,

and Faith in Future
comes from such

a simple,

sublime,

unthought Token-

And I
gain Grace,

without You here-

Within a
Single Strand

of well loved,

longed for,

well remembered Hair.'

For my Marcy

March 10,2014

Michael Shutt

How I Hate To Say Goodbye

How I hate
to say, 'Goodbye.'

And watch You
drive away.

And stand,

And wait
until You honk,

and raise my hand,

and go inside.

And trudge upstairs
to Nothingness,

and linger
for a moment
on the couch

which still
has but a trace
of warmth,

from You.

And finally sink
into my chair,

and wipe
back tears,

and know
that You
are no more
than five
minutes out-

It might
as well
be years.

And watch
the bright Day
of your presence
slowly fade
to lonely night.

I miss
You so.

Oh, Darling.

How I hate
to say 'Goodbye.'

January 31,2014

Michael Shutt

Independence Day,2014

The Fireworks
are going off.

The unwashed masses
yearning to
breathe free
are celebrating
their Liberty.

With Oscar Mayer-
and Pabst Blue Ribbon.

You can't get
much more
Red White Blue
than that.

Across the Land,

unsightly,

unwashed un white hands
dare to believe
the promise written

Ten Score
and plus
in Philadelphia Summer.

Fireworks.

Pageants.

Pomp.

Parade.

Past Victories
gone long ago.

Past Concord.

And past Lexington.

Past Valley Forge.

And Ardennes Forest.

Past the Battle
of the Bulge.

Past Gettysburg.

Past Vietnam.

Past the 49th Parallel.

Afghanistan,

Iraq's foul hell.

The Trumpets sound
with clarion voice.

And yet.

With sparklers,

Strident voice,

Americans deny.

Those unwashed masses
simply yearning to
breathe free.

And turn their backs
upon the blood which
came before.

Land of the Free...

Damn.

What's the score?

In the end,
I think we lost
the War.

July 4,2014

Michael Shutt

Lead On, Macduff

'You're Not
the Son
I wanted.'

When you
were born,

Not at all.'

'My Son would star
in Basketball.'

'Not on a Stage.'

'You made me Rage.'

'You're not the Son
I wanted..'

'When you were born,
I said,
'I have my B-Ball Player-'

'Not a half man
on a stage-'

'You make me rage.'

'Damn you!
Get into
a Real Man's
Physical Arena.'

'Instead of all
you could have done-'

Yes Sir!

'You chickened out-'

Yes Sir! !

'Sought Solace in
a Queen's Thee-A-Ter...'

'Your not the son
I thought I'd bore-'

'To Shoot, '

'To Foul, '

'To Drive, '

'To Score.'

'When Home Team's down,
To steal the ball.'

"Son? '

'What Son? '

'I will not make that call.'

I said,

'I have my
B-Ball Player.'

'Instead of
Man's Arena,

You went to
a Quant Queen's
Thee-A-Ter: '

'To Shoot;

To Score; '

'When Home
Teams Down-'

'I wished
for Fortinbras.'

'What Father
ere could ask
for more? '

'Upon a Basket,

Goals to keep.

And I got
Guildenstern.

and Rosencrantz.'

'Got not Iago-

Him I
could respect.'

'Nay.'

'I did not sire
The Great
Bill Russell.'

'Just Macbeth.'

'I got Macbeth.'

'Macbeth scored not
a three point shot.'

'At least,
he had the guts
to put a knife
in Duncan.'

'At least
he had
the guts
to murder sleep.'

'You never forced,
my son,

a three point foul.'

' Foul is Fair.

And Fair
is Foul.'

'The course of my
true love did not
run smooth.'

'Why could
you not
be what
I wanted? '

'Come in
Fourth Quarter,

Sink a
palpable Hit? '

'Though this
be madness,
There's still
method
in it.'

'I think I'll take
an unforgiving nod.'

'In apprehension
of my Lutheran God.'

'And you,
unwanted son,

the Winter of
my Discontent.'

'What's in
a name? '

'By fearing
to attempt,
to find yourself? '

'So change your name.'

'My stubborn mind,
from fear
it is exempt.'

'I'll not budge-'

'My truth is
righteously spent.'

'My ambition's made
of sterner stuff.'

And in reply,
'Dad',
I have finally
had enough.

It is the cause.

YOU are the cause-

Lead on, Macduff.

Lead on, Macduff.

Life's Casino

The worlds casino
cashes in-
without regard
or one missed beat,

Unless you count
time's ticking clock
which marches
coldly on
without regard

To Hearts,

To Hopes,

Or even
happy happenstance.

It's just a rigged
Roulette Wheel,

Wheel of
False Faced
Lying turn of fortune-

Seeking easy Megabuck.

Damn you,
lying Lady Luck.

Yes.

The wheel is rigged,
and only Saints and Suckers
think that they
can ever beat the House.

And cash filled
thunderstorms roll in,

leaving only
foolish cavaliers
to tilt at teasing
taunting windmill slots.

Tomorrow's gone.

But still comes yet.

Time marches on.

The Future's set.

Set by Omniscient
Casino owner who deals
from decks stacked full
of Half Faced
Kings and Queens,
and Spades
and Jacks:

'Buy a ticket!
Take a chance! '

Even though the deck is stacked.

Even though the game is rigged.

You're lucky ticket
came up empty.

Poker?

Blackjack?

21?

'Forget it, pal.
You're losing, Son.'

'Don't you know
the winner always

is the House? '

'So have a drink on us.'

And pay us, Pal.

And have another drink.

It's free.

It's on the house.

Michael Shutt

Meditation On 9/11

Meditation on 9/11
By Michael Shutt

The sky was blue
The country calm
A peaceful time
Before the storm.

And then we heard
Manhattan scream.
We rubbed our eyes.
Was this a dream?

Across our land
We held our breath;
Twin Towers fell
And filled with death.

We watched
Our Knights
Fight deadly fights
NYPD, FDNY,
Marched into Hell
Which fell like night
On lovely day.
So many lost.
Oh, do you see?

And then a cry
Came from D.C.
The fires grew higher.
Oh Say Do You See?
From Washington,
From NYC.
Our best flew to
Eternity.

False Sons of Ishmael
raised a cry

And blackened
Pennsylvania's sky.
Perverted hate,
'Allah Akbar.'
Beginning their
false 'Holy' War.

Doomed passengers
on 93
Worked to inflict
a Righteous toll.
The Lord's Prayer
still upon his lips
Brave Beamer said
'Come on, Let's Roll.'
They sacrificed
For greater good;
Their funeral pyre
a field. They stood
True Patriots,
With blood they won
Respite for
battered Washington.

Then, in despair,
Ghosts from our past
Rang in our ears
With words that last:
F. Delano 'Fear Not
Fear Not.'
And JFK
'Ask Not,
Ask Not.'
'Do not lose Faith, '
Old Reagan said
While burying
Our Sacred Dead.

Manhattan wept,
D.C. was scorched -
Yet through the haze
We saw a Torch.

Oh say, my country
Can you see
The glorious torch
Of Liberty?
Across our Homeland's
Sorrowed gaze-
A light fought through
The hellish blaze.
And then I saw,
Say, can you see
Our lovely Lady Liberty?

Her jaw was clenched,
Her flame held high,
'Be strong New World
Although you cry.'
'Fight though this night,
Fight through your pain.
Thine Alabaster
Cities gleam.
Your purple mounted majesty stands guard
Oh Land of Liberty.
And though your heart
On sorrow lies
Look up into
you Spacious Skies.'

From farmer's field
And hunter's wood,
Find Strength,
Find Hope,
Find Brotherhood.
Press On Brave Country,
Oh Can't You See
This gentle land
Of Liberty, Your greatness
is not gone from thee.

America,
America,
Be not fear's slave.
Land of the Free.

Home of the Brave.
Sep 11,2012 ·

MRR

Michael Shutt

Memorial Day 2013

On this weekend
As we mark the
Unofficial start
Of Summer,

Of long warm days
And sweet cool nights-

Hazy days-
May through September-

It's not a bad time
Just to pause,
To just recall
Our Nation's
Common loss,

And take a quiet
Moment to remember.

We pile in cars
And bitch about
The price of gas,
While speeding past
Flags sadly at
Half Mast.

We travel-
Make our common drives.
Grill Burgers,
Hot Dogs-

Oh,
Our happy lives!

Memorial Day
Is oh so very nice.

Do you remember why?

Do you remember sacrifice?

Do you recall
We still are at
A time of War?

Remember those
Who gave their lives
So you could cook
Upon your grill?

Do you remember
Those who've gone before?

Remember pain,
And guts,
And courage,
Fear,
And sacrifice?
So you could cook
Your Hot Dogs
On your grill?

Some of them
Will not come back.

'Buy me some peanuts
And Crackerjack.'

Do you remember
Those who've gone before?

Do you remember
Valley Forge?
Gettysburg?
Or Normandy?

The Ardennes Forest?
Vietnam?
San Juan Hill-
Korea-

Desert Storm?

It might be good
To think on this
While cooking
Hot Dogs
On your grill.

Afghanistan?
And foul Iraq?

Do these places
Cross your mind
While loading up
On beer and cake?

I bet our warriors
Would be happy
For a char-grilled steak.

And so, remember,
As you gather
With your children,
Husbands,
Wives.

You're grilling out.

Because our best and brightest
Gave Their Lives.

Michael Shutt

Midwinter Sonnet

I miss You on
this cold midwinter night,
I miss Your warmth,
Your passion, heat, and love.
I miss the Sparkle of
Your eyes in light.
I miss the gift of You
from God above.
My heart is heavy,
barren, dark, and bleak.
The emptiness envelops
me with strife.
Time matters not,
hours, days, a month, a week.
Without You, ennui
fills lonely life.
The only hope I have
in time to come,
Is ticking clock that
brings me close to You.
From darkness to the glory
of the Sun-
From hopeless storms
to gentle skies of blue.
I thank You, Darling,
from this time and place.
You saved my soul with
sweet and gentle grace.

10 January,2014

Michael Shutt

Ode To The Tea Party

On this lovely Autumn Eve
A nation holds collective breath.
Minority, can you believe?

They'd rather see
our nation die,
than swallow pride.

Than compromise.

The nation holds its frightened breath.

Minority,
It does not matter.
You've lost the slim majority.
Bad sportsmanship
Holds selfish sway.
'Screw you, Barack,
We want Our way! '

'And screw the helpless,
hungry, poor.
Don't vote for us?
We've more in store.'

'We'll vote to starve
your kids,
we dare.
We so hate damned
Obamacare.'

'We have so goddamned
spite to spare.
Just cut the tax
for Millionaires.'

'So screw the Unions.
Screw the teachers.
As for the poor,

We'll screw you more.'

'Kid that's dying,
Boy, that sucks.
No insurance?
Well, that's your luck.
A child that's sick?
Well, damn your tears.
Healthcare for all?
That stokes Our fears.'

'Our fears are stoked-
Through Brothers Koch.'

'Hungry, poor?
Go help yourselves.

Forget Election,2012.'

'Beat and Cold?
Well, here's the key.
Just sit by us,
Minority-'

'Just join our ranks,
And sip our Tea.'

Politics,
To Righteous Heights?

Patriots?

McCarthy-ites?

'Hear Our Message?
Truth,
Distortion?

Or Political Extortion? '

Americans-
It's our own fault.

These bastards have us
by the throat.
Go to the polls,
and vote them out.

And if we don't,
just Cruz on by.
Don't vote,
and you accept the lie.

America.
Land of the Free.
Find your guts.
Don't drink the Tea.

September 28,2013

MRR

Michael Shutt

Oh Israel

What are
You doing,
Israel?

This is not
the way.

I hate
the hate
that forced
you to
this state.

This
is not
the way.

Babies?

Who can tell
their nationality?

They look
the same
to me.

Does not a
Jew bleed?

Or innocents
of any stripe?

Those babies
look the same
to me.

This is not
the way,
oh Israel.

You win
the War.

Yet lose
the Peace.

And what
rough beast
have You,

oh Israel,
unleashed?

Oseh shalom bim 'romav
hu ya 'aseh shalom.

Oh, Israel.

I pray
for you.

The babies
look the same
to me.

Amein.

Michael Shutt

Oh Little Town Of Sandy Hook

Oh Little Town Of Sandy Hook

Oh little town of Sandy Hook,
Grief fills your streets tonight.
This tragedy has
Torn your heart-
Your streets are
Dark,
Not bright.
Your children
And your teachers
Rest in eternal light.
And in your tears

And all your fears,
We pray for you tonight.

A winter day,
Kids on their way,
They told their parents 'Bye.'
This season of
The Prince of Peace,
Why did they have to die?

And in harsh rounds
Of gunshots,
So many children fell.
That madman turned
A time of Peace
Into a time of Hell.

I cannot comprehend
The loss those families
Mourn and grieve.
Oh little town
Of Sandy Hook,
Your nation mourns with thee.

December 14,2012

Michael Shutt

Old Redhead

Well, old redhead,
Mom, did you think
Your Errant Son
Wouldn't write for you?
In this dark night
we suddenly find
upon us?

Dear Mom,
I write with
tear in eye,
Confronted by
Life's Circumstance.
So shout to Heaven,
Soul Unfurled,
'It's You and Me
Against the World. '

I well remember
long ago
song played
on ghostly radio,
in Yellow Mustang,
top not great -
Remember night
to Kokomo?
When top gave out?
You gave full throated
Irish Shout!

The snow came in,
you made me laugh.
How could I ever
forget that?

To Heaven Cried,
A Prayer Unfurled -
'It's You and Me
Against the World! '

I well recall,
I can't forget
stark Belvedere's
harsh machinations.
From Hershey sent
false salutorians-
Cheap call, collect,
How efficacious -
From life then
did he make secession -
'Our Father,
Lord,
Which Art In Heaven. '

And so began
from TR's fury,
and cards dealt from
Fate's Dealer's Deck,
It led you to
Dear Carolyn Bantz-
Then,
Aces High,
Dave came to dance.

'Carolyn! Carolyn! '
'M. Jo! M. Jo! '
You two went sweetly
back and forth.
'Dave Wise could be
Your perfect Mate! '
And Dave showed up,
with Ray in tow.

And on that night,
Though Dave would say,
'Mike,
I will never be your Dad'-
Dave came into
my room that night.
And caught me
reading Jefferson.

He simply asked,
'Mike, do you know? '
Though Kevin
had gone on
to Heaven.
'Do you
understand those words? '

I gazed on Him.
I understood.

Dave said,
'I'll never be your Dad.'
But looking back,
was that so bad?

Dave loved me,
Though He'd not say so.
Was that not Good?
Though not his son,
I Understood.

Then Mom,
against drunk
Sherfick's Banns,
You placed your heart
into his hand.

And off to Orleans
Did you go.
I have to say,
Forgive me me now,
You truly think
I did not see?
For in your bathroom
Dave did hang
a stunning,
hubrised photograph.
Could I forget
Burt Reynolds ' pose?

Oh, come on, Mom,
and laugh with me!
It simply was
His Vanity!

A Stepdad!
And StepGrandma too!
And with Sweet Mildred's
Gentle Love,
She touched our hearts,
She touched our hearts.

I crashed my car.
And she was there.

Let's not forget
our stuttering friend -
He'll be with me
until my end.
An Uncle,
Brother,
came to our door-
His bus was lonesome -
Khakis, Chambray Shirt,
Mis Spoken,
My heart went out
to Him at once-
I guess you've always
known my heart is soft -
I'm always for the underdog -

I loved Ray.
Can I make that clear?
'Hi, M...M...Mike,
Is David here? '

I'll dwell a bit,
On Ray. You see?
He's one who transformed
me to Me.

I can't do less.

I know you see.

He showed up
dressed in L.L. Bean.
My heart went to
this gentle man.
Deserved much more
than a Coffee Can-
His fortune made,
Lived in a bus.
He finally came
home to stay.
At 7160, Wynter Way.

Ray came.
Became our family-
Taught me so much -
Did you know?
He told me of
his Garden Church-
A church of Leaves,
Of Nature's Live-in
Presented from
a stammering pulpit,
and taught me
'Sometimes you may
Get More.
And Sometimes
You'll get even less.
Just live your life, M'M' Mike.
Breath Life's Air.
Remember,
Life is Seldom Fair.'

'R ' R ' Remember when
You t ' t ' tell your s 'story.
W ' what's n ' not forbidden
is 'm 'm mandantory.

This week in February -
Anniversary -
I came home from

an Ego Show.
Dave on the phone -
And you on checkered couch-
You held my hand-
you did not crouch -
And said,
'Baby,
Rays gone to Eternity. '

It is a simple tale to tell.
Ray, in a Hash House,
With a dear familiar gesture,
Put his hands behind
his head,
As You, Dave, I
Did see so often -
Put his hands
Behind his head.
You took my hand,
and then you said,
Our Ray,
Our Ray,
Our Ray
Is dead.

I think, instead
of GreenStamp's death,
That Night,
In Feb,
In 81...
That night marked me.
Marked my soul black.
Though only
seven years had passed,
Two Seven August,
'73.
The boy in me,
the inmost boy,
that inmost boy
that night he died-
You held my hand.
And I said 'damn.'

Upon the death of
H. Ray Graham.
I think that he
deserved much more
Than ashes in a
Folger's Jar.

I see Dave on
The telephone.
I see you on
the checkered couch.
I see now,
Part of me was done.
That searing night
In '81.

And through
the years,
Years interweaving,
With Riley Kendall's
Shock Filled Leaving,
A Prayer to Heaven
have you hurled.
'It's you and me against
the world. '

In Decades Since,
I broke Dave's heart.
Though not like
Whore of Babylon.
With cold reserve
Dave shouldered on,
Even though his
strength was tested,
by lying daughter,
Bitch of Destin.

I've tried to make up
for past.
And let him know,
though Dave was Wiley.
I Am Grandson

Of Raymond Riley.

And damn my past,
Damn it, I say.
Dave,
I'm not the same today.
'Michael Raymond, '
I hear you say -
'Don't curse
And carry on that way.'
Love of Rileys,
Hear my cry!
I curse because
I cannot find
another way
to ease your mind.

And now,
Dave lies at Heaven's Door,
I owe him more
than he can know.
'I will not be your Dad,
He said.
Well, that's all right.
You were always measure.
Slip past earth's bonds,
and find the Son
You always loved.
And always treasured.

It's all right, Dave.
I understand you.
Just know, Dad,
I have always loved you.

Mom-
Despite TR,
and S. J's madness,
I lift up my heart
in gladness.
I'll shout to Heaven
'Thank You Dave!

Your steady, honest
voice I've heard.
You couldn't love me
as a Son.
I knew that.
And I understood.
In my mind's eye,
You make me glad.
You may not want it.
But you're my Dad.

And so, my Redhead.
Here we are.
We'll cast our fate
on Northern Star.
As Riley's Daughter,
You never brooked.
You always gave.
You never took.
Find Strength and Peace.
To Heaven Hurlled.
'It's You and Me.
Against the World. '

From you son, Michael.
February - March,
2013.

Michael Shutt

Oscar Night 2013

Oscar Night
2-24-2013

Pampered babies
Stirred themselves
to walk a carpet
made of Red.
Face-Peeled Women,
Toupeed Men,
Got up at noon
To look so good.
Hooray,
Hooray For Hollywood!

Tinseltown sends
out it's finest-
Kids in ghettos
watch in hunger.
Secret Ballots!
'Vote your faction! '

'I'm hungry, Mom.'

'Lights, Camera, Action! '

From greed
For Gold
can come no good.
Hooray,
Hooray for Hollywood!

'What are you wearing! ? '
'De Laurenta! '
'Lord, their gonna
cut our lights off.'
'Who did your hair? ! '
'Fredrick on Sunset! '
'Kids need shoes...'
'Good Luck To You! ! ! '

'It's so Fabulous
To Be Here! ! ! '
'Mom, no heat.'
'Oh babe I know. '
'Envelope Please,
The Oscar Goes To -'

Bang on door.
'Your rent's past due! '

'My God! !
Belugala's Delightful! ! ! '
'Mom, I want
a Happy Meal.'
'Weren't those flashbulbs simply Frightful! ? '
'Hardee's has
a bargain deal. '

The Brightest Stars
In Studio Heaven! ! !
'Dear Lord,
how do I feed all seven? '
'I'll go to Church,
plead to the steeple. '
'My Thanks to all
the little people! '

'I Want That! '
I did once exclaim.
Now I hang
my head in shame.

From lust for gold
can come no good.
Hooray.
Hooray for Hollywood.

Michael Shutt

Prayer For Mom And Dave

In the midst
Of Death,
There is Life.
In the midst
Of Sorrow,
Hope.
From Winter Ashes,
Roses Bloom.
From Darkness,
Light.
From Pain,
Joy.
From Suffering,
Perseverance.
From Confusion,
Wisdom.
From Loneliness,
Friendship.
From Loss,
Promise,
And Assurance
Of Eternal Life.
Oh Lord.
My God.
In these times
I feel forsaken.
I listen
For Your Voice,
Yet Do Not
Hear It.
I long
For Your Touch,
Yet Do Not
Feel It.
I Strain
For Your Peace,
Yet Cannot
Grasp It.
And Yet,

I Know.
And So,
I Raise
A Joyful Voice
Unto You,
Lord.
In You
Is Our
Hope and Strength.
In You
Is Our Light
In Darkest Night.
In You
Is Our Resurrection
And Our Life.
In You
Is Our
Hope,
Everlasting.

Praise God
From Whom
All Blessings
Flow.

03-16-2013

Michael Shutt

Robin

Robin

What is it now?

About a month?

Just four short weeks
that passes like
a day,

Yet cruelly seems
so long?

Eternity in
31.

The clock
ticks on.

And those
you left behind
shall n e'er again
laugh quite as loud.

Or see ourselves
the same way through
your wizened eyes.

Our upturned lips
will never have the lilt

That sharing
through your
crooked grin

And, in sharing,

Our grins
turned crooked too.

Sweet solace,

Mixed with
Laughter,

Tears.

Dear Robin.

God.

In dark of night,

Your joy,

Your heartache

always brought us through.

But what of You?

We cant imagine
what you went through-

The crawl
to Darkness
from the Light.

What led you to
the stepping through
life's foul
and final curtain.

You went off script.

But then,
You always did.

But this Improv,
Old Friend,

shocked in a way
you never thought
it would.

Your brilliant
Stream of Consciousness
led you down
a prim rose
path of pain.

And Joy
and Genius
ended in
a lonely knot
of leather.

Carpe Diem.

I guess
you seized it, Chief.

We only pray
you found
some peace-

And sweet surcease,

Oh Captain.

Oh,

My Captain.

Michael Shutt

Sonnet For Gandolfini

The news shot out from CNN and Fox.
A bear like actor went unto his death.

Fans of the craft at once knew what
They lost.
While cable pundits could not
Catch a breath.

New Jersey's native son
Had gone to rest.

Far too soon in native Italy.

The hands of time will prove
He passed the test-

Just watch 'Soprano's
If you want to see.

But more than that he brought
A brilliant poise,
To characters as all
Great actors can.

He shunned the lights of Hollywood,
The noise...

Craft always basic as career began.

And as he's laid to rest
I hang my head.

The Great Soprano,
Gandolfini's dead.

MRR

Michael Shutt

Spirit Of Santa Claus

Spirit of Santa:

Why is it,
in our modern age,

when He shows up,

He's clapped
in chains?

And carried off
without His Sleigh?

I well remember
Edmund Gwenn-

Nowadays,
His Home-

Asylum.

The way we treat now
Man in Red
should make Us bow
Unfestive Heads-

Should make Us cry-

Should make Us pause-

This Day
and Age;

The way we treat
Poor Santa Claus.

I well remember
as a youth,

His mall worn mauled

Red Suit
seemed truth.

But in
Black Monday's
Digital Age,

The Young
in Us Forgot.

The Young
in Us
just turned
the page.

The Young
in Us
just turned
the page,

past fancies of
poor Clement Moore.

The Young
in Us
just turned
the page-

No thought,
No Light,
No Hope
No Pause.

But, Yes-

Virginia-

There is a
Santa Claus.

He lives
each and
every month,

He lives
in every
one of Us.

When we pass by
a fellow traveller
on the street.

When we pass by
in Autumn's Pause-

When we pass by
in Summer Heat.

When we pass by,

Give Drink,
Give Meat,

A fellow soul
upon Life's Street.

When we give,

And when we pause,

Oh Yes.

There is
a Santa Claus.

When we do this
past Shopping Deals-

When we stop,

And see what's real.

And get beyond
Black Mondays Steals,

And go beyond
Our Silent Night,

And pray
for one
who's had a fall,

This sings
in Us,

It makes
Us Whole.

Fear Not!

Sing,
Sing!

Past Silent Fright:

In Age Old Truth
There is
True Light!

So
Hark,
my fellow
Pilgrims Sing-

In Summer,
Winter,
Fall,
and Spring-

Sing Songs
of Sweet Yuletide Delight!

'Merry Christmas
To All-

And to All-

A Good Night! '

3 December,2013

Michael Shutt

Suicide

Oh,
You lying,
Jaded Bitch.

You constant companion.

Always there,

In the back
of my mind.

You cheap trick.

You easy,
Two Dollar Whore.

Tempting.

Reassuring.

Deceitful.

Present Pain
makes way
for future torment
for those
left behind.

And yet,
there is attraction
in the stilling
of a so
unquiet mind.

That is
your cheapest lie,
you bitch.

Unending end,

to unending pain.

Should I end,
or cast the dice?

It's a
50 50 Crapshoot.

The problem is,
the odds
are with the House.

And never
in your favor.

Safe havens?

Respite from
the constant torment
brought each Day,
and Month,
and Year,

of unrelenting pain?

Hell.

When Life's
Cruel Lease
shows up,

and pins you
to four walls,

You take a breath.

And fill
your lungs
with intermittent joy.

While Storm Clouds
in a foul late

August Sky,

Break the promise
of foolish,
Naïve Youth.

Michael Shutt

The Old Gent

- - - - - Forwarded message - - - - -

From: Michael Shutt <gatsbyshutt1909@>

Date: Tue, Oct 8, 2013 at 9: 20 PM

Subject: The Old Gent

To: 'gatsbyshutt1909@' <gatsbyshutt1909@>, Marcy Lane
<marcy_lane@>

The Old Gent:

They closed their eyes
and clasped their hands-
Gave Thanks before
they broke
their Morning Fast.

Amid a hash house
filled with groups,
and couples.

Just grateful for
the time
they had together.

After Grace
her gentle
hazel eyes
looked past
his eyes of blue,
and settled on
A Gentleman.

Alone.

Whose aged and
care worn face
was young
when Normandy
was stormed.

He quickly glanced,
and saw
the object of
her dear concern.

And in that moment,
both their hearts
were melted.

A Dear Old Gent
sat by Himself,
amidst a room
of strangers.

Rough hewn
and Hardened Hands
Clasped and Unclassed-
Fingers unknowingly,
Unconsciously,
finding their
silent lonely way
back to
a simple
Wedding Band.

She was
no longer there
to hold his hand.

Lovingly,
and without thought
caressing such
a simple
Band of Gold,

and looking to
an empty seat
across from Him,
while thoughtless diners
nattered on-

Maxwell House
inexorably turned cold.

Who did he see
in an empty chair
across from Him?

With just
a cursed cane
for company?

A cursed cane?

And no one
by his side?

His loneliness
broke both
their hearts.

An Empty Chair.

And in his memory,
a much loved missing bride.

With rheumy eyes
he looked around
at happiness
he once had known.

Now left-

With just a Ghost,
A Cane,
A Prayer of Thanks
for Company.

A single
cooling cup
cup of coffee
by His side.

His mis-matched shirt
and pants did not
demean His Dignity.

He bowed His
silver hair-
gave thanks,
for memory.

Before He
even thought to drink.

A loneliness
seemed to
fill His Soul
while gazing at
an empty chair-

While longing for
an absent Bride
He wed in 1939,
and danced the
night away
before Glenn Miller died.

Only Good
can come
from Giving.

Quiet Acts
of Kindness
have Great Worth.

As long as they
remain unspoken.

In silence,
acts like these
can only help
the living.

Their eyes locked,

and without
a word,
agreed Ten Dollars
was well spent.

To give back to
a lonely Bridegroom.

Bereft of Bride,
His Love,
His Life-

Thank You, Sir-

You Dear Old Gent.

October 9,2013

Michael Shutt

Time's Tell

Time's Tell.

As I
go in
Mid Summer
of my Life.

Look back,

Beyond,
a wayward
misspent youth.

And time
I spent,
before the
Butcher's Bill
came due,

And forced me to
reflect upon

A life
I never
thought much on.

Unthinking-

Just ignored
an Hourglass' Sands,

And it's unthinking
sec to second thinking-

When I was Young,
and thought
myself Immortal...

Ignored

Inexorable Dropping
of the Sand.

And found myself,

at Fifty,

on an
Unforgiving Beach.

Where tide rolled in,
and sundered squandered
dreams of High Breathed Youth.

Without a pause.

Without a breach.

Gray Hued Tides
of Memory
now pour forth.

Cold riptides
on the Soul's
cold barren Shore.

Cold roiling tides
roll in-

And smother
pompous Dreams
of Youth,

That proudly
screamed to Heaven
on a Distant,
Byworn Shore.

The Clock
is running,

Young Man

says to Old.

Grasp that
Gold Ring,

Or else,
your clasp
be cold.

If Ye
not reach,

Your Gravestone
be inscribed-

You never Lived-

Not Living,

So Ye Died.

July 5,2014

Michael Shutt

Unknown Journey

I don't know
which way to go.

I don't know
which path
to take.

A Crossroad,
and vast acres
of uncertainty
stretch out
before me,

Leaving only
questions without answers
in their wake.

I don't know
which path
to take.

I navigate into
a unknown shore-

benignly blessed
by nothingness.

And Darkness looms,

And yawns,

And mocks,

against the beachhead
of my doubts.

My compass whirls;

The landmarks

on my map
are marked in red
by yellow indecision.

I contemplate.

And contemplate.

And contemplate
some more.

And hating
being Time's
lackluster slave,

I think I'd welcome now
the Peace,

and Silence,

of the Grave.

Michael Shutt

Wake For Psh: February 2014

Tonight you have
an Irish Wake.

Damn, Phil,
Dammit, why?

Why?

I'm sure your Partner,

Children,

weep beside Your Bier-

As do we all,

Those whom Your
great talent
could appreciate.

At first,
the shock-

the disbelief-

that you could
leave us too
damned soon.

But after Shock,

the anger did
set in.

And also Empathy-

The anger for
your family
you left behind

in needle's trail.

You stole from them
a loving soul,

You stole from us
a performances
we now
will never know.

And still we feel

an empathy
for your poor
tortured scar filled soul.

Those left behind
cant understand,

but pray for you,

P.S. Hoffman.

But, still, Phil.

Still.

Dear God.

The waste.

Michael Shutt

Why I Write

Why I Write

By Michael Shutt

People have asked me-
Hey Mike-
Why do you write?
Is it because there's
Money there?
Oh hell. Please.
Don't make me scold.
I do not write for
Caesar's gold.
Or maybe 'cause
There is a cause
You care about
And want to give
A big shout out?
Do you think you
Are such a sage
When you see your name
On a written page?
Oh, hell no friends
It's simply this-
Life's worn me down-
A pale cold kiss
Now spurs me to
Put thoughts to paper.
Life's a dream-
A fleeting vapor.
And so in writing
Do I find
A bit of me
To leave behind.
To say that I once
Breathed Earth's air.
To say that once,
Once,
I was here.
Oct 26,2012 ·

MRR

Michael Shutt

Winter,2014

Winter,2014

Another wintry
body blow,

Another ruthless
foot of snow,

may finally be enough
to push me off
an icy cliff.

Relentless,

Frigid,

Cold,

Unfeeling-

Numb I'm not
to it's cruel meaning,

Leaving naught
but pain
and lonely
empty yearning hearts
in Blizzard's pass.

I pray
my heart-

and heart's Heart-

can survive
the distance forced
by five sleet filled
unsympathetic counties.

Damn you,
Old Man Winter.

Dante had in mind
a very special place
for you.

Michael Shutt