LIVE TO RIDE, RIDE TO LIVE

I've seen the best grinds of my generation
destroyed by monogamy,
insecure and lobbied together poorly.

Capitalism emptied of gray hair,
its changing body, a useless clock,
money like memories,
housing like earth dugout,
cheating like the night on the day—
only lies trickle down.

O world, our earth
our homes
our bodies
our heaven
between us
rock of rocks
keep us stable
keep us whole
keep us alive.

O lightning
of *the grind*—

to be a surfer
riding music,
Quixotic dress and flowering phones
decorate the fish
swimming in the body.

Tate's donkey rides me
down the river
as ravens punctuate the sky—

I did what I wanted.

WHY SHOULD I FALL IN LOVE

What's left but the stove's swollen eye
without your diffuse, merciful taper,
creature of bark and water
and the arm's embargo?

Every branch becomes
mortality's terrible lace,
cleated with threats.

Vineyard of terror
where you let your mind
find a delectable day,
the relief—

for the hand to unfold mine?
And the face! opening upon,
the steam of mornings—

just to miss you dressing.

If the earth keeps on
with its moaning of mushrooms?
Leave me to rot
in my autumn—

alone as a single step,
the winters' drifts
in their loss, would fall
into the boiling ocean,
into the dream,

your ankles,
spidery with time, and your hand—

where would that go?

EAT SOMETHING GOOD, AND SHUT UP ABOUT EVERYTHING

Eat it
like acid on silk,
eat through it.
Watch the white t-shirt
at the kitchen sink's mouth
as the rain baptizes our young subway hands.

Eat your heart free from its buggy predators,
the plain wood and nails of it
are a hanging door
freed from its hinge,
an eternal horse we all feed
gulping down the flood's sour will.

Someone is still saving up.
Something is needle and brush
stuffed in the sliced potatoes of winter,
a cold hand pressed to my cheek.
I can't seem to pick my feet
up from the ground; they are
frozen fish under a pond.
But, here I am
alive and all-consuming—

spring, again,
which makes everyone
hungry for everything!

Eat sex galaxy to galaxy.
Eat your loneliness—
four limbs spinning on a linoleum strip,

eyes damp with clay, cascading down
wherever you've been dancing, the rain!

You're all this room needs.

I will open it up and study its guts,
build something new:
        a soft cop knock,
        a wrist that never
        goes red to wringing.

Mine has tucked my dreams
        into the arch of a date palm.

Eat that drunken Christmas twinkle
in the yard, with the cat,
or at Great Aunt Jewel's funeral. Eat
        the gravestones
of Birmingham, Alabama.
Eat the bowl of unsalted peanuts
        on a table between all of us.
Eat those who once loved
        like teenagers.
Eat
Ingmar Bergman
when he left Sweden and the letter
he wrote to his critics,
        I'll see you bastards
in my next movie.

JOE SAID

You got this thing you do
goin over the top,

but you need to come in
and tone it down.

Joe said
good poets follow the rules
and great poets
break them, and I'm sure
he did not say
that originally.

He also said
a poem should be as
a bowl of bean soup
on a winter's day.

Walking back to my cabin,
bunnies out of nowhere,
like babies, you just want
to put them in your jaw,
roll them around like an atomic fireball,
put 'em in your pocket, ask them
what to do about your looming debt—

because you know they'll
just run your pants off—
nothing to be done. Just
live,
you stupid human.

Joe said sentiment
is the difference between
poetry and prose. Heaney
has an envy test. Hugo
picks the fly shit from

the pepper. Gilbert
doesn't want you to be happy
when you read his poems;

he wants you
to be miserable.
Orr
wrote of the four temperaments
while I
am still looking for Tillie Olson
standing somewhere,
ironing. Lorine,
ironing.

Joe said:
Art is not about entertainment.